

# Thunderbolt Blast

Monthly Armor School Newsletter

Vol. 2, Issue 6 JUNE 2013



## Armor School Soldiers

**194<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED BRIGADE: RESUMING BASIC TRAINING.** A new chapter in the history of Initial Entry Training (IET) at the Maneuver Center of Excellence began 19 June 2013 when the 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade welcomed three battalions to its formation: 1-46 Infantry, 2-47 Infantry and 30<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General battalions, which had belonged to the recently discontinued 192<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade. With the addition of 10 BCT companies and a reception battalion, the 194<sup>th</sup> resumes conducting basic combat training and inprocesses every civilian volunteer who reports to Fort Benning, GA, for IET. This adds a training load of more than 15,000 Soldiers per year to its current mission of providing the Army with 19D, 19K and 91-series professionals. The Soldiers and civilians of both brigades devised new systems and synchronized resources to facilitate continuity of operations with minimal impact on the training mission. Upon reorganization, the Battle Hard Brigade's footprint extends from Harmony Church across the installation to Sand Hill. As the transformations of the brigade completed, so did COL Kevin MacWatters' time in command, as the deputy Armor School commandant, COL Scott King, assumed command of the brigade June 25. If you have any comments or concerns, please call or email CPT Nicholas Bryan, (706) 626-5942 or [nicholas.a.bryan.mil@mail.mil](mailto:nicholas.a.bryan.mil@mail.mil).

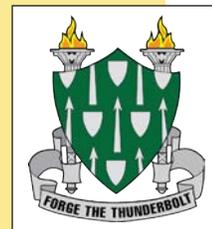
**316<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY BRIGADE: RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE LEADERS COURSE.** The brigade continues to make progress on shaping the "reconnaissance leader of the future" strategy with the addition of the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course (RSLC) to the brigade from Ranger Training Brigade. The addition of this course to 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron greatly increases the depth of reconnaissance training available in the brigade and nests with MCoE's overall strategy. The transfer of RSLC to 316<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade in no way changes the level of excellence at which the course is taught. The course specializes in small-unit reconnaissance tactics, specialty communications, patrolling and insertion techniques. RSLC teaches the skill or "science" of gathering and reporting intelligence. The target audience of RSLC is squad and team level with an emphasis on dismounted reconnaissance and security. Furthermore, the course is not limited to infantry Soldiers. RSLC has proved beneficial to many military occupational specialties, as the course has trained Armor, Field Artillery, Signal Corps and Military Intelligence Soldiers, to name a few. The brigade is extremely proud to bring this top-notch course on board and further develop the "functional training brigade" concept, and we encourage unit commanders to send their best reconnaissance leaders to attend it. MCoE reorganization continues with the addition of 197<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade courses to further 316<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade's number of courses. Please send comments or concerns to MAJ Roy Bolar, (706) 626-8206 or [roy.l.bolar.mil@mail.mil](mailto:roy.l.bolar.mil@mail.mil).

## Armor Branch and OCOA Personnel Notes

**RENAMING ALL BCT RECONNAISSANCE UNITS TO CAVALRY.** The Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) has proposed to standardize the names of all brigade combat team (BCT) units that conduct reconnaissance and security missions to increase uniformity, clarity and efficiency. This recommendation will rename all BCT squadron/battalion and troop/company-level reconnaissance organizations to "cavalry squadrons" and "cavalry troops." If approved, the following names will be obsolete: armored reconnaissance squadron (ARS); reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition (RSTA); reconnaissance squadron, recce troop, recon troop, motorized reconnaissance

## From the Chief of Armor's Turret

The Army recently celebrated 238 years of dedicated service to our nation. Throughout our history, select men and women have stepped forward to defend our country and their fellow citizens, and in doing so, have come to exemplify the values and commitment that makes our country great. On the eve of celebrating our nation's independence, let us never forget our freedom was born and endures as a result of the sacrifices of those we have the honor of serving – our Soldiers and their families.



**The season of change:** As summer arrives, leadership throughout our Army renews itself in the all-too-familiar form of numerous changes of command, and the Armor School is no exception. As we await official announcement of the 48<sup>th</sup> Chief of Armor, which we expect in the coming weeks, the school witnessed the colors of our Armor and Cavalry OSUT brigade change hands. We extend a special thanks to the outgoing 194<sup>th</sup> Brigade commander, COL Kevin MacWatters, for his efforts in producing highly trained tankers and cavalrymen these past few years. In addition, a debt of gratitude is owed to the current 194<sup>th</sup> Brigade commander, COL Scott King, for his tireless efforts while serving as the deputy and then interim Armor School commandant.

**Ongoing initiatives:** As our Armor and Cavalry forces continue to adapt at pace, we must also be mindful of the enduring importance of the fundamentals. The Armor School has developed an ongoing initiative that we hope will serve to inculcate the fundamentals of reconnaissance and security within our Soldiers. The intent is to provide a dynamic means to communicate the lessons of these respective fun-

troop and dismounted reconnaissance troop. All BCT platoon/squad-level reconnaissance units will be cavalry organizations and will be referred to as "scout platoons" and "scout squads."

**LTC PROMOTIONS.** The FY13 LTC promotion preposition list was recently released, and we wanted to provide you with some insight and analysis on where Armor Branch stands. This year Armor Branch had 47 officers selected of the 61 considered in the primary zone for 77.04 percent. This was higher than both the Army and Maneuver, Fires and Effects (MFE) percentages of 71.8 percent and 71.7 percent, respectively. However, we were lower than the Infantry Branch, which had 80 officers selected out of 98 eligible, for a percentage of 81.6 percent. Five of 67 (7.5 percent) of Armor officers considered for below-the-zone promotion were selected. Again, this was significantly higher than both the Army and MFE percentages (5.2 percent, 5.4 percent). Infantry Branch had eight of 106 officers selected below-the-zone for 7.5 percent as well. Unfortunately, of the 11 above-the-zone Armor Branch officers considered, none of them were selected (Army: 9.7 percent, MFE: 13.5 percent, infantry: 23.5 percent). The primary zone numbers identify a downward trend from the previous year's selection rate of 88.1 percent. We expected to see this downward trend due to previously announced reduced promotion rates. Of the officers selected for promotion, 91.5 percent (43/47) had at least three above-center-of-mass ratings in their last five OERs. Once again, this promotion board proved that "quality" key developmental time was better than "quantity" key developmental time; the average time spent in key developmental time was 26 months. Only 38.3 percent (18/47) of the officers selected held brigade S-3/executive officer positions. Of our 14 officers not selected for promotion, one officer had a GOMOR on file, two officers had fully qualified reports and 11 officers had center-of-mass ratings during their key and developmental time. The Officer Personnel Management Division's Armor Branch team stands ready to field your questions and concerns. Phone (502) 613-6046, DSN 312.

## Capability Managers Updates

**LIVE-FIRE TRAINING FOR SBCT CHANGES DIRECTION.** In the next quarter, the Director of Training Development (DOTD) will release the new Training Circular (TC) 3-20.1, *Direct Fire*. This manual will change the way the Army and the SBCT conduct live-fire training on mounted platforms. The new manual builds off concepts established in the Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT) gunnery manual published in 2009. All platforms, stabilized and non-stabilized, will use the same methodology in training their crews. Crews will be trained to conduct offensive and defensive engagements vs. stationary and moving targets. Recently 3rd Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, conducted an Infantry Carrier Vehicle (ICV), Fire Support Vehicle (FSV) and Mortar Carrier Vehicle (MCV) live-fire using the draft version of this manual. The crews who shot the new standards said that it was challenging and taught them how to use the weapons on their platforms in ways they never had before. They all felt more confident in their systems and looked forward to platoon-and-higher training events. Units desiring an advance briefing on the manual and its concepts can contact Jack Cooper, [Jackie.r.cooper8.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:Jackie.r.cooper8.ctr@mail.mil), (706) 545-0849.

## Regional Training Institutes

**TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD'S 136<sup>TH</sup> REGIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE.** The 1-136 (Armor) is a certified Institution of Excellence within the One Army School System (OASS) providing 11-series, 13-series and 19-series NCOES and Military Occupational Specialty-Transition (MOS-T) courses for the Army National Guard, Army Reserve and Regular Army. The Armor Branch teaches 19D10 humvee/M3 MOS-T, 19D2/3/4 transition and 19D30 ALC. Camp Swift, TX, is the primary training location for these courses and boasts a total of 11,722 acres available for training, including 7,928 acres of light-maneuver land and 3,794 acres of heavy-maneuver land. Facilities available at Camp Swift include two Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) sites, Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer (VCOT), Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT), IED-D lane, confidence course, Engagement Skills Trainer (EST), Call for Fire Center, Mine-Resistant, Ambush Protected (MRAP) Egress Trainer (MET), two land-navigation courses, the full array of light-weapon ranges, Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) and humvee driving course, and an Urban Assault Course. The ATRRS school code for the Texas RTI is 1017. The 136<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Institute itself is located at Camp Mabry, TX. Camp Mabry is an 800-plus-acres facility established in 1892, making it the third-oldest active military installation after both Fort Bliss and Fort Sam Houston. Camp Mabry is home to the Joint force headquarters of the Texas military forces as well as the headquarters of the Texas National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard and many supply and training buildings and facilities.

**ARMY NATIONAL GUARD (ARNG) (BRANCH CHIEF-ARMOR).** The ARNG is represented at the Armor School by LTC David Guido, an ARNG AGR Soldier on the Armor School staff, who reports directly to the Armor School commandant on all Armor issues within the ARNG force. He liaises with the commanders of all ARNG armor and cavalry units as well as the regional training institutes (RTIs), and works directly with the TCM-ABCT, TCM-BfSB and TCM-Stryker at the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, GA. Direct all ARNG armor and cavalry issues and questions to LTC Guido at (706) 626-2306 or [david.a.guido@mail.mil](mailto:david.a.guido@mail.mil).

damentals in a manner that resonates with our Soldiers, while also serving to stimulate discussion and deeper reflection throughout the community. The first step of this initiative features the publication of reconnaissance and security fundamentals posters, which visually capture the essence of each of the fundamentals and provide an abridged doctrinal definition (already downloadable at <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/fundamentals/>). The second phase of this initiative, which is in development, will provide vignettes demonstrating the application of each fundamental of reconnaissance and security within the context of a historically significant combat operation. These vignettes are still in development, but interested troopers and tankers are invited to provide input to our efforts at <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/fundamentals/>.

Looking out deeper, toward the end of the fiscal year, planning is underway for the 2013 Maneuver Conference, which will occur 9-13 Sep at Fort Benning, GA. Due to ongoing fiscal realities, invitations within the maneuver community will be limited, but the conference will be broadcast over DCO Connect for public viewing. As we draw closer to the conference, our Website and Facebook page will have the most up-to-date registration information, conference events and times.

Please do not hesitate to tell us how we are doing by contacting me directly at [john.c.hermeling@mail.mil](mailto:john.c.hermeling@mail.mil).

Forge the Thunderbolt!

COL John C Hermeling

## From the CSM's OP

Greetings, maneuver force! I hope you all had a wonderful time celebrating the Army's 238<sup>th</sup> birthday and have fully recovered from the nighttime festivities! There may be armies older than ours but certainly none better in the world.

The CSA finally released the long-awaited, often-debated and certainly anticipated list of brigade combat teams that will deactivate in the next four years. He also made official the addition of one more maneuver battalion to each remaining BCT. This will make for a seamless transition for the vast majority of our Soldiers. The CSA had to make some very tough decisions, and we owe it to him to keep our Soldiers motivated and our civilian communities informed on this process. Please make sure your senior and especially junior leaders are communicating the correct message and talking points in line with CSA's intent.

Summer has officially started. The kids are out of school, vacations are underway, mov-



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	MGMT Staff	(706) 626-1406	LTC Joseph Jasper
	ARNG Liaison	(706) 626-2306	LTC David Guido
	Armor Historian	(706) 626-1491	Dr. Robert Cameron
	OCOA Director	(706) 545-1352	George DeSario
	OCOA SGM	(706) 545-7725	SGM Gregory Proft
	OCOA (EIA, DRAPER)	(706) 626-TANK (8265)	usarmy.benning.mcoe.mbx.armor-ocoa@mail.mil
	<b>ARMOR</b> magazine	(706) 545-2698	usarmy.benning.tradoc.mbx.armor-magazine@mail.mil

**194<sup>th</sup> AR BDE** 

	<b>COL Scott King</b>		<b>CSM Robert Tompkins</b>	
		<b>1-46 IN BCT</b>	LTC Matthew Scalia	CSM Eugene Dydasco
		<b>2-47 IN BCT</b>	LTC Christopher Bresko	CSM Daniel Dennison
		<b>30th AG (Rec)</b>	LTC David Welch	CSM Nyeedra T. Edwards
		<b>1-81 AR</b>	LTC Dawson Plummer	CSM Dean Lockhart
		<b>3-81 AR</b>	LTC Jeff McCoy	CSM Anthony Wagner
		<b>5-15 CAV</b>	LTC Michael Birmingham	CSM Samuel Roark

**316<sup>th</sup> CAV BDE** 

	<b>COL David Davidson</b>		<b>CSM Michael Clemens</b>	
		<b>1-16 CAV</b>	LTC Mark Brown	CSM Eric Littlejohn
		<b>2-16 CAV</b>	LTC Oscar Diano	CSM Bradley Feltman
		<b>3-16 CAV</b>	LTC Andre Mackey	CSM Michael Williamson

**TCM**

Mr. John Miller	TCM-ABCT and TCM-Recon	(706) 545-2517	john.w.miller.civ@mail.mil
COL Ed House	TCM-IBCT	(706) 545-2078	claud.e.house@us.army.mil
Mr. Selby Rollinson	TCM-Stryker	(706) 545-5364	samuel.m.rollinson.civ@mail.mil

**Army National Guard Regional Training Institutes (RTIs)**

	School code	958	1016	998	1012	1017	997
	Location	Gowen Field Armor SME Site IDARNG Boise, ID	ARNG Res. Tng Ctr Smyrna, TN	Camp Shelby Hattiesburg, MS	Fort Indiantown Gap Annville, PA	Camp Mabry Austin, TX	Camp Ripley Little Falls, MN
	ARNG RTI	1-204 <sup>th</sup>	2-117 <sup>th</sup>	1-154 <sup>th</sup>	1-166 <sup>th</sup>	1-136 <sup>th</sup>	175 <sup>th</sup> Regt
<b>M1A1 Tank Commander Certification</b> 171-S13M/19K2/3/4		X					
<b>Scout Commander Certification</b> 171-S13X/ASID3		X	X	X			
<b>Cavalry Scout (MOS-T)</b> 171-19D10 (HMMWV/M3) (R)		X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Cavalry Scout Adv Ldr</b> 171-19D30-C45		X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Armor Crewman (M1A1)</b> 171-19K10 (M1A1) (R)		X		X			
<b>Armor Crewman (M1A2)</b> 171-19K10 (M1A2) (R)		X					
<b>Armor Crewman Adv Ldr</b> 171-19K30-C45		X		X	X		

*Courses highlighted in yellow are not yet supported with required equipment.*

ing trucks are loading household goods, and the heat is on here at Fort Benning. I'm sure that scene is playing out for most of you. Some of the moves here have not been that far. COL Scott King, most recently the interim commandant and, before that, deputy commandant of the Armor School, took command of 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade this past week. Our best to him as he continues to mold and shape the Armor force from a new battle position! No word yet on the 48<sup>th</sup> Chief of Armor, but we have a new interim commandant in COL John Hermeling. He's the lucky winner of both the commandant and deputy commandant "hats."

Another momentous holiday occurs this week – 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the nation's 237<sup>th</sup> birthday. I've actually talked to some of our youngest Soldiers who don't realize the U.S. Army is older than the US of A. I can't think of any better way to say how the Army and the United States are connected than to quote the CSA: "The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army strong!"

I wish all of you, your Soldiers and your families, the happiest and safest of holidays this 4<sup>th</sup> of July! Thanks again for all your service, sacrifice and dedication to make this the best Army in the world!

**Armor Strong!**

**Thunderbolt 7**

**Upcoming Events**  
9-13 Sep 13 - Maneuver Warfighter Conference

**Armor School Links**

- MCoE:** <https://www.benning.army.mil>
- Armor School:** <https://www.benning.army.mil/armor/>
- ARMOR magazine:** <https://www.benning.army.mil/armor/ArmorMagazine/index.htm>



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