

Thunderbolt Blast

Monthly Armor School Newsletter
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Armor School Lines of Effort

SHAPE THE FUTURE FORCE. As we prepare for the 2013 Maneuver Conference in September, we are increasingly aware of our branch's exciting future. Based on what we've learned in our own wars and in the Israeli experiences in Lebanon and Gaza, it is apparent that armored forces are the decisive element in the combined-arms team. Our initiatives to shape the force will focus on our branch's ability to provide mobile, protected, precision firepower to the combined-arms fight. This is our unique contribution to the fight, and we will ensure this continues to be the case. From upgrading the Abrams and improving our reconnaissance and security organizations, we are looking across the formation to remain the combat arm of decision. The Abrams initiatives will give us increased situational awareness, mission command, crew protection and firepower. We are studying options to ensure our reconnaissance and security elements can fight for intelligence and win. Our scouts and cavalrymen must be able to maneuver tactically with adequate protection and mobility to accomplish their missions.

TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. At Benning, we are incorporating many exciting initiatives into our courses and training. First, we submitted the request to have a stand-alone Mobile Gun System (MGS) Master Gunner Course. This shortens the training from 16 weeks to 8.5 weeks, reducing the time these critical NCOs are away from their units.

Recently the commandant of the Ordnance School visited 3-81 Armor's Blended Rotational Interactive Training Environment (BRITE) program. He left impressed with the Royal Lions' innovative method to solve the problem of how to ensure each student learns maintenance as quickly as possible against the constraints of time and physical space in vehicles.

SULLIVAN CUP 4th QTR FY13. Dates and more information to follow.

CAVALRY CUP 2ND QTR FY13. Armor School will conduct the inaugural Cavalry Cup for reconnaissance troopers in 2nd QTR FY13. More information to follow.

Armor Schools

316th CAVALRY BRIGADE "DESTROYERS." The 316th Cavalry Brigade educates and trains officers and noncommissioned officers to lead, train and command armor and reconnaissance formations as part of a combined-arms team. All Armor Basic Officer Leaders and armor and cavalry functional courses are taught at world-class facilities on Harmony Church, Fort Benning, GA, as part of the Armor School and Maneuver Center of Excellence. The brigade is organized into three squadrons (1st, 2nd and 3rd Squadrons, 16th Cavalry Regiment) and provides instruction through multiple courses ranging from initial-entry training for newly commissioned second lieutenants in ABOLC; to officers and NCOs from TRADOC and FORSCOM reconnaissance formations in the Cavalry Leaders Course and the Army Reconnaissance Course; to master gunners on all M1 series platforms (M1A1 SEP, M1A2) and the Stryker MGS; to the M1 Tank Commander's Certification and the MGS Commander's Certification courses. Subsequent editions of this publication will highlight specific courses, including the target population, objectives and prerequisites for enrollment. CSM Clemens

From the Chief of Armor's Turret

I'm proud to be serving as the 47th Chief of Armor and looking forward to working with you to ensure Armor remains the combat arm of decision for our Army. Maneuver, speed, firepower and shock action are just as important today as they were in the past!

Let me first report to you that the Armor School is fully integrated with Fort Benning, the Maneuver Center of Excellence and the surrounding communities. Most of the facilities the Armor School occupies are either brand-new, state-of-the-art facilities or recently renovated to modern standards. Soldiers and families are doing well here. One of our top priorities is to continue improving the Armor School to provide the very best-trained Armor Soldiers and leaders to the operational force. We want to ensure the Armor School is doing everything it can to help support you as your Armor officers and enlisted Soldiers prepare for combat operations.

One goal of this bulletin is to provide you an opportunity to tell us what's on your mind. Each month, we will pose a question to generate discussion for a specific topic. We will open a forum for the next 20 days at the following link (<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/usaarms-armor-force-discussi>), where you can respond to the current discussion topic. We will summarize the inputs from the forum and publish in the next month's bulletin. The input you provide will be used to help shape policy and decisions regarding the development path of the Armor Branch.

This month's topic will focus on the organization and capabilities of the Armor Bri-



and COL Davidson acknowledge that leader education and training to providing agile, adaptive, decisive officers and NCOs to your formations is our mission, and we encourage you to provide feedback to ensure we are putting steel on target! The Destroyer Brigade Website can be accessed at <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/316thCav/>.

194th ARMOR BRIGADE “BATTLE.” In order for the institution to produce highly adaptive and quick-learning Soldiers, the institutional Army must become highly adaptive and learn very quickly. It is our duty to create and maintain training environments that instill, cultivate and fully develop the 21st Century Soldier competencies in our warriors. The 3-81st Armor Battalion has developed and instituted the integration of an ambitious plan to adapt the way Soldiers train. This plan is called BRITE, the Blended Rotational Interactive Training Environment concept. The Mobile Classroom Trainer is one of the new technologies that will support this transition. The MCT provides audio, visual and kinesthetic training concurrently in a single training event, maximizing instructional efficiency with increased student engagement. Through BRITE and the MCT, we will use technology as a tool to significantly challenge our Soldiers while reducing our attrition rate to graduate Soldiers who have the skills to be successful.

Armor Branch and OCOA Personnel Notes

ENLISTED PERSONNEL TRENDS. Just wanted to give you all a heads-up on a couple of trends we have noticed here at Human Resources Command. One, DA photos are out of date or non-existent. Inform your NCOs to get their DA photos updated. By regulation, once a Soldier pins on his/her new rank, he/she has 60 days from date of promotion to get a new photo. This may seem petty, but the number of eligible candidates turned away from nominative positions (IG, Drill, EO, ROTC) because they do not have an up-to-date photo is pretty high. The number of times Enlisted Personnel Management Division has had battalion commanders/CSMs calling asking to get a Soldier into one of these assignments, only to tell them the Soldier will not be considered due to an outdated photo, is way too many. Two, many Soldiers are unaware of the High School Stabilization Program available per AR 614-200. Soldiers with Family members in high school may request stabilization from PCS movement. Students must be enrolled in DEERS and must be under direct care/custody of the Soldier submitting the request. Soldiers should submit their requests no earlier than March of the student's sophomore year and no later than the beginning of the student's junior year. Ensure Soldiers do not wait until we place them on assignment, especially 19Zs. – LTC Shawn Vail, Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate, shawn.michael.vail@us.army.mil, (502) 613-5667, DSN (502) 983-5667.

FY12 LTC PROMOTION. The FY12 LTC promotion list was recently released. This year, Armor Branch had 75 officers eligible for promotion; 59 were selected, or 78.7 percent. We also had five BZ selects out of 79 (6.3 percent) and 0 out of five AZ selects. Our BZ selection rate increased from last year (5.4 percent to 6.3 percent); however, our PZ rate dropped from 89.6 percent to 78.7 percent. We believe this drop was due mainly to year group size (47 last year to 70 this year) and does not indicate a downward trend. Overall we believe the branch is right where we need to be, and we have yet to see any significant trends.

FY14 LTC CSL. The FY14 LTC CSL board has moved to the right. The new dates are 12-28 Sep 12. The MILPER message that pertains to the change is <https://www.hrc.army.mil/Milper/12-233>.

SSC ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014. Here is a quick note clarifying the SSC board and slating process. There will be one board to select folks attending SSC (5 Sep 12) and then a small window of time before a panel to conduct the slating occurs. SSC selection results will be published around the end of the year (December), and those selected for schooling will find out their schooling opportunity in the April 13 timeframe. As of right now, only those letters that discuss extenuating circumstances for SSC selection should be submitted. Another MILPER message will be sent to the force in the fall (September) discussing letters of recommendation for SSC slating opportunities. – LTC John Cushing, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, john.m.cushing2@mail.mil, (502) 613-6046 (DSN 312)

BRANCH VISITS. Armor Branch is interested in visiting your officers and NCOs. Please contact LTC Cushing or LTC Vail if you are interested in setting up a trip. Our latest trip to NTC opened our eyes as to how important interviews and face-to-face interactions are.

OFFICE CHIEF OF ARMOR ACTIONS. Working update for DA PAM 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, Chapter 9, so that Knowledge Skills Abilities Other (KASO) will provide relevant and current information for Armor Branch officers to assist both today's and the future unique features of the Armor Branch. This defines what course and developmental assignments an officer should attend for his timeline. We are developing for the first time physical requirements for officers.

We are also updating DA PAM 600-25, *U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Professional Guide*. KASO to provide relevant and current information for Armor Branch NCOs to assist today's and future unique features of the Armor Branch. As with the officers, this defines what course and developmental assignments an NCO should attend for his timeline.

gade Combat Team scout platoon. We've included a link (<https://www.benning.army.mil/armor/armormagazine/content/IssuesCAC/2007/ArmorMarchApril2007web.pdf>) to an article that will provide a 30-year overview of scout platoons supporting heavy brigades.

The right combination of stealth, mobility, survivability and firepower is desired for scout platoon platforms to allow the platoon to survive and rapidly acquire targets – day or night – communicate across great distances while operating in a complex environment. Given these considerations, what should be the optimal organization of the ABCT scout platoon? What platform or combination of platforms do you recommend, limited to only those currently in the Army inventory? Are there any special devices that should be carried by one or more of these platforms (i.e., mast-mounted sensor, LRAS3, etc.).

It's truly an honor and privilege to become the 47th Chief of Armor.

Forge the Thunderbolt!

Giddyup! 47

From the CSM's OP

If there is one thing for sure in the Army, it is change. As an Army, we are changing our doctrine with Army Doctrine Publications and Army Doctrine Reference Publics. We are instituting Army Learning Model 2015 and changing our combat formations with BCT 2020. Here at the Armor School we embrace change as we welcome COL Paul J. Laughlin as the 47th Chief of Armor.

COL Laughlin and his lovely wife, Judi, come to us with a vast amount of knowledge and experience that will make the combined-arms team here at the Maneuver Center of Excellence even better. This newsletter is the first evidence of getting better. We want to hear from you – commanders, command sergeants major and other senior leaders of Cavalry and Armor forces. Tell us if the product we give you is lacking in something or needs additional skills. Our No. 1 one mission is to provide you the Soldiers, NCOs and officers you need to close with and destroy our enemies. Your feedback is crucial to that mission, and I encourage you to visit our Websites and Facebook pages, or just be old-fashioned and give us a call.

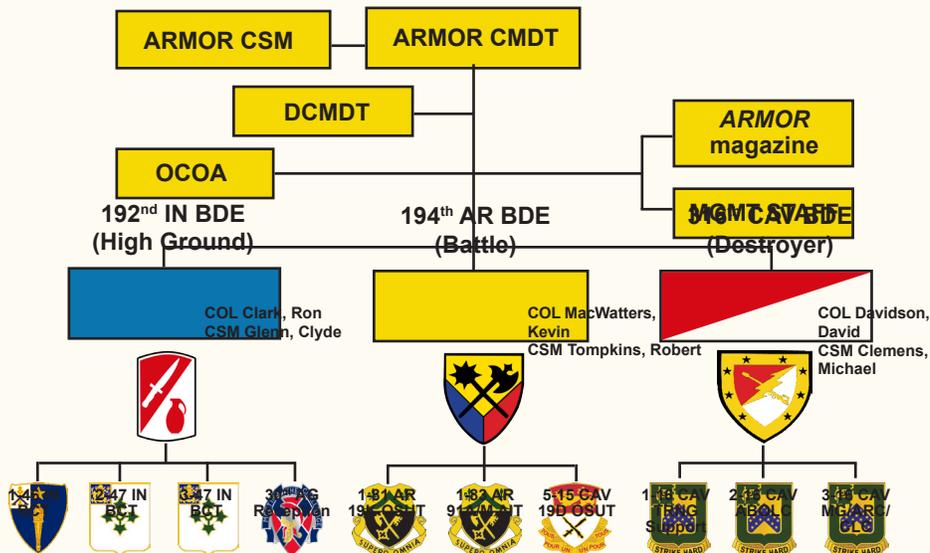
I'm honored to serve as Thunderbolt 7 and with the 47th. I'm looking forward to our great teamwork, both here and with all of you as we continue to make our mobile, protected and lethal force the best in the world!

Armor Strong!



Thunderbolt 7

The Armor School



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>
 Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/USAARMS>

Administrative note: discussions will be conducted on milSuite (<https://www.milSuite.mil>), a collection of on-line tools and applications for secure collaboration, as access is limited to DoD CAC holders. If you're not already a milSuite user, you may have difficulty accepting the invitation to the Armor Force discussion group, so please sign up for an account. Please use the link in the Chief of Armor's Turret, Page 1, or navigate to the group by navigating to the milBook portion of milSuite, clicking on "Groups" in the top ribbon and searching for "USAARMS Armor Force Discussion."

HQ USAARMS			
Armor CMDT	(706) 545-2029	COL Paul Laughlin	
Armor CSM	(706) 545-8169	CSM Miles Wilson	
DCMDT	(706) 545-3815	COL Scott King	
NG Liaison	(706) 626-2306	LTC Scott Fowler	
MGMT Staff	(706) 626-1406	LTC Matt Boal	
Armor Historian	(706) 626-1491	Dr. Robert Cameron	
Operations NCOIC	(706) 545-0529	MSG Noah McConnell	
OCOA	(706) 626-TANK (8265)	email OCOA	
Excellence in Armor	(706) 626-TANK (8265)	email Excellence in Armor	
ARMOR magazine	(706) 545-2698	email ARMOR	
192nd IN BDE			
COL Ron Clark		CSM Clyde Glenn	
1-46 IN BCT	LTC Brown, Cale	CSM Dydasco, Eugene	
2-47 IN BCT	LTC Feger, Kyle	CSM Dennison, Daniel	
3-47 IN BCT	LTC Thompson, Travis	CSM Svenson, Todd	
30th AG (Rec)	LTC Kidder, Stuart	CSM Reddock, Earla	
194th AR BDE			
COL Kevin MacWatters		CSM Robert Tompkins	
1-81 AR	LTC Plummer, Dawson	CSM Lockhart, Dean	
1-83 AR	LTC McCoy, Jeff	CSM Wagner, Anthony	
5-15 CAV	LTC Koloski, Andrew	CSM Roark, Samuel	
316th CAV BDE			
COL David Davidson		CSM Michael Clemens	
1-16 CAV	LTC Brown, Mark	CSM Martin, Valmond	
2-16 CAV	LTC Diano, Oscar	CSM Feltman, Bradley	
3-16 CAV	LTC Mackey, Andre	CSM Williamson, Michael	
TCM			
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