
Cutting Your Teeth with the Basics: *Leadership Opportunities at Infantry OSUT*

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There is a continuous discussion centered on which force is more important, the operating force (U.S. Army Forces Command [FORSCOM]) or the generating force (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command [TRADOC]). Truth be told, they are equally critical to the U.S. Army's mission of winning the nation's wars. Both afford Soldiers and leaders incredible opportunities and experiences, and in every leader's career there is a time in which one may need to operate in one or the other. The aim of this article is to describe to Infantry officers, from second lieutenant to major, why they should actively consider assignment to an Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Moore, GA.

Real-World Mission

Every day is the most important day and mission in Infantry OSUT. The mission of Infantry OSUT is to transform civilians into lethal Infantry Soldiers and leaders of character who can

fight and win the nation's wars. As cadre, leaders stand at the front door of the Army and affect the first impression that tens of thousands of Infantry Soldiers have of the profession. The culture leaders create directly impacts the competence, morale, pride, and diligence of Soldiers and leaders across the branch and Army. This responsibility is significant as leaders will also interact with families and friends of loved ones who've dedicated themselves to serving our nation. For many, completion of Infantry OSUT is and will remain their greatest accomplishment, and as cadre, leaders get to personally witness the pride families and friends have of their sons and daughters, and the gratitude they express to the drill sergeants and cadre for transforming them. It is exceptionally meaningful and formative to experience this firsthand, and there is nothing like it in the Army.

1LT Patrick Compston, an Infantry platoon leader with Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 58th Infantry Regiment, 198th Infantry Brigade, briefs trainees during an operation order for a mission on 24 March 2023 at Fort Moore, GA. (Photos by CPT Stephanie E. Snyder)



Brilliant at the Basics

During the 2023 Maneuver Warfighter Conference at Fort Moore, SMA Michael R. Weimer said our Soldiers need to be “brilliant at the basics.” The basics originate in Infantry OSUT and at Fort Moore. All Infantry officers attend the Basic Officer Leader Course in 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment at Fort Moore. The purpose of that curriculum is to produce Infantry platoon leaders who can lead platoons in brigade combat teams (BCTs) across FORSCOM. However, not all FORSCOM units have the same training trajectory or mission, and not all officers remain platoon leaders throughout the entire time in their first unit of assignment. It’s more than likely that newly arriving Infantry officers serve on a staff before or after their platoon leader time — which distances them from the basics as it prepares them to become company commanders in a battalion. Truth be told, there is no greater way to become brilliant at the basics than by becoming a leader in an Infantry OSUT company. Every day, leaders are required to review the doctrine, understand the principles and standards of assigned tasks, and then supervise their proper execution. To do this takes extensive research of the lesson plan or critical task and the subsequent practice of it. Leaders get repetitions of infantry tasks executed to standard here in Infantry OSUT more than anywhere else in the Army. If leaders want to become brilliant at the basics, then they should want to be the one instructing and supervising the basics.

Preparing for Command

The make or break for any Infantry officer is success as a company commander. Company command is often referred to as the greatest job in the Infantry. For leaders, it is the first time a unit’s success directly depends on their ability to lead it. Battalion and brigade commanders generally make their assessment on a leader’s potential within the first three to six months of command. Put differently, their box check — whether leaders will receive a highly qualified or most qualified evaluation — will likely be determined in the first half of command. In other words, company commanders do not have too much time to figure out what the whole command thing is about — they must be prepared to command a company on day one.

Taking command or even assuming an executive officer position in Infantry OSUT will familiarize leaders on the basics of taking command in a FORSCOM unit. Leaders will learn about training management, the eight-step training model, how to run a company training meeting, command supply discipline, medical and personnel readiness, and how to administer non-judicial punishment and other administrative tools. It is better to learn these systems in Infantry OSUT when the stakes are low, than to learn it in FORSCOM, when the stakes are much higher and the evaluations bear a greater weight on a leader’s file and future. Additionally, there is a myth that leaders who spend time in Infantry OSUT will be behind their peers who attend the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) and immediately return to FORSCOM. On



1LT Shaun Clifford, an Infantry OSUT platoon leader, leads a 10-mile ruck march on 13 January 2024 at Fort Moore.

the contrary, leaders will be ahead of them in real experience by having learned how to command a company — and can lead a company on day one of command. Therefore, come to Infantry OSUT to learn how to command a company in FORSCOM.

Developing Leaders and Learning from Leaders

Before assignment to an Infantry OSUT unit, leaders must understand one thing: Drill sergeants train trainees. This central fact drives much of the effort and activity as a leader here in Infantry OSUT. An officer’s time, then, is spent preparing the drill sergeants to plan, prepare, and execute the training; to supervise the proper execution of the training in accordance with lesson plans and TRADOC Regulation 350-6, *Enlisted Initial Entry Training Policies and Administration*; and to develop the NCOs in such a way as to prepare them to return to FORSCOM better than they arrived. Many of the drill sergeants will return to FORSCOM to become platoon sergeants. Developing NCOs to lead a FORSCOM platoon and execute large-scale combat operations is critically important, and it provides leaders the opportunity to develop their own leader development methodology while educating themselves on the requisite material. Having this in their “kit bag” before they become a company commander will be crucial to leaders’ future success. Equally important is the chance to learn from NCOs, especially the first sergeants, who’ve recently come from FORSCOM units across the Army. Their observations,

experiences, and knowledge are invaluable, and will help leaders generate self-awareness — molding your personal, leader, and command identities.

Preparing Yourself

Fort Moore is home to more functional schooling than any other post in the military. If leaders are serious about warfighting, then they will take the time to attend one or two functional schools while assigned to an Infantry OSUT unit. I cannot think of any battalion or brigade commander who would not permit an officer to attend the Ranger Course or other schools while assigned here. If necessary, the brigade holistic health and fitness (H2F) team will even work with leaders to develop a physical training (PT) program to prepare them for the more physically demanding courses. Assignment to an Infantry OSUT unit on Fort Moore is an opportunity to “Be Moore” (as

the former commanding general of the Maneuver Center of Excellence, LTG Curtis Buzzard, used to say). In addition, whether your assignment to Infantry OSUT occurs before or after MCCC, Columbus State University will work with you to pursue a master’s degree in a variety of disciplines.

In sum, an assignment in an Infantry OSUT unit at Fort Moore is a rewarding opportunity for a variety of reasons. First, it is a real-world mission to transform civilians to Infantry Soldiers, and seeing the pride of families whose sons and daughters complete this transformation is unforgettable and fulfilling. Daily, leaders will observe and participate in basic combat training and infantry skills training and testing, after which they will naturally master the fundamentals. Furthermore, command in Infantry OSUT is a hefty responsibility, but it is also the best opportunity for leaders to cut their teeth and prepare for future commands in FORSCOM units.

Leaders will have time to develop themselves and others while learning from incredibly professional and experienced NCOs. Finally, leaders will have a greater opportunity to attend functional schools during their assignment in an Infantry OSUT than likely any other time in your career — take the time to prepare for the future. An assignment in an Infantry OSUT is above all else a vital element of the Army’s mission to win the nation’s wars. However, whether in TRADOC or FORSCOM, it is also the greatest place for leaders to prepare to do this.



1LT Blake Walters, an Infantry OSUT platoon leader, mentors a trainee during the buddy team tactics live-fire exercise on 3 April 2024 at Fort Moore.

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Updated Army Techniques Publications Released

The updated **Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-06.11, *Brigade Combat Team Urban Operations***, is dated September 2024. The ATP provides doctrine on combined arms missions, tasks, and activities executed by brigade combat teams (BCTs), their subordinate and supporting elements, and associated enablers in the urban environment.

https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN42031-ATP_3-06.11-000-WEB-2.pdf

ATP 3-21.71, *Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad*, is dated October 2024. ATP 3-21.71 provides techniques, and procedures for the employment of the Bradley-equipped mechanized Infantry platoon and squads in multidomain operations.

https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN42245-3-21.71-000-WEB-2.pdf

