

# Thunderbolt Blast

Armor School Newsletter

Vol. 3, Issue 3 JUNE-JULY 2014



## Armor News



MG Scott Miller, second from left, assumed command of the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence on 11 July. MG Miller received the colors from LTG Kevin Mangum, the Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. Outgoing commanding general, MG H.R. McMaster is standing second from right and the MCoE Command Sergeant Major, CSM Timothy Guden is standing to the right.

Read more here: [http://www.army.mil/article/129992/Maj\\_Gen\\_Miller\\_takes\\_command\\_of\\_MCoE\\_Fort\\_Benning/?from=RSS](http://www.army.mil/article/129992/Maj_Gen_Miller_takes_command_of_MCoE_Fort_Benning/?from=RSS)

## Armor School and OCOA

**194th ARMORED BRIGADE: 19D OSUT TRAINING.** July 7th, 2014 marked the return of M3A3 CFV 25mm gunnery to 19D One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at the Maneuver Center of Excellence in Fort Benning. Fox Troop, 5-15 CAV executed Bradley live fire for the first time in years, giving sixty-seven Soldiers in Training their first gunnery experience. Reintroducing Bradley gunnery proved a rewarding event for the Soldiers in Training well worthy the Herculean effort re-certify Cadre on tasks not taught in years in order to safely conduct the training with inexperienced 19D10s.

The experience of firing the 25mm from the M3A3 CFV did not make the Trainees experts by any means, but it gave them the baseline knowledge and confidence necessary to operate the turret safely under supervision. They also received a healthy appreciation for the capabilities of the weapon platform that many will be exposed to at their first duty assignment and throughout their career. In an Army of increasing budgetary constraints, this gunnery may be the only Bradley Live Fire experience an Initial Entry Soldier, as well as their Cadre, may have for a lengthy period of time if not assigned to an Unit in mission ready status. This will undoubtedly prove vastly important to ensuring that the Cavalry community retains the skills necessary to employ the M3A3 during periods of low usage across the force.

**OCO A: THE DRAPER ARMOR LEADERSHIP AWARD.** The Draper Armor Leadership Award is awarded annually to promote, sustain, and recognizes excellence in leadership within Armor and Cavalry units. The award also recognizes individuals who exhibit excellence in leadership and training, or who make significant contributions to the force. The Draper Armor Leadership Award packet is due 15 NOV to [usarmy.benning.mcoe.mbx.armor-ocoa@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.benning.mcoe.mbx.armor-ocoa@mail.mil) For more information visit <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/OCO A>

## From the Chief of Armor's Turret

It's been incredibly rewarding to see Armor & Cavalry continue to grow and advance as the world's premier branch for Mobile Protected Firepower and Reconnaissance and Security. The past year has yielded significant progress for Armor & Cavalry as we continue to focus on producing agile and adaptive Soldiers and Leaders and modernizing the Maneuver Force.



A priority this year has been the development of Armor leaders through a series of programs, to include the reinvigoration of the Starry Writing award, the execution of the Sullivan Cup Best Tank Crew Competition, and implementation of the Maneuver Leader Development Strategy and Self Study Program. These initiatives have proven successful in challenging our Armor leaders to continue their ongoing professional education, and keeping their skills sharp and relevant.

In training and leader development the Armor School has worked hard to update our instruction of new Armor Lieutenants and new Tankers and Cavalrymen. The Armor Basic Officer Leader Course and One Station Unit Training for 19K and 19D have been improved to make training more physically and mentally challenging, more focused on the core competencies of Armor & Cavalry, and more relevant to the current and future operating environment. In fact, across all training at the Armor School we have looked to promote mastery of the basics and maximize the opportunity to increase the skill sets of our Soldiers, NCOs, and officers.

**OCOA: Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC).** The Armor School successfully conducted a series of Branch Orientation Briefings on Fort Knox from 8 June 2014 to 17 July 2014 in support of the Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC). Leaders from OCOA, field grade Officers from across Fort Benning, and junior Officers from 3/1 IBCT on Fort Knox were instrumental in providing these briefings to over 2000 cadets who attended this course. The feedback from cadets was positive, with many of them showing genuine interest in selecting Armor as their choice for their career management field. We focused our briefings on providing the cadets with relevant information regarding the roles and responsibilities of platoon leaders in the Armor branch, the future of the armor force, and highlighting the achievements of our young leaders while promoting the importance of diversity across our formations. This event exceeded our expectations, and proved that our branch has been, and will continue to be, one of the most sought after choices for cadets in ROTC during their branch selection process.

## TRADOC Capabilities Managers

**TCM-ABCT: STANDARD SCOUT PLATOON FORCE DESIGN UPDATE.** The Standard Scout Platoon (SSP) Force Design Update (FDU), approved 1 Jul 14 by the VCSA, completes an effort that began in 2007 identifying the requirement for scout platoons to operate in three sections with 12 scouts each. The requirement was based on Soldier-level task analysis for dismounted reconnaissance and mounted and dismounted security missions (each section maintained a dismounted observation post for more than 24 hours). The first FDU implementation began in 2009; it strengthened the ABCT scout platoon from 30 to 36 personnel and retained five Up-Armored HMMWVs (UAHs) and three Bradley Fighting Vehicles (BFVs). This 3x5-vehicle mix maintained an unacceptable risk, as UAHs lacked survivability, cross-country mobility, and the ability to overwatch BFVs during tactical movement activities, while leaving the sections' dismounted strength at 10 scouts, not 12. The 2014 SSP FDU replaced the five UAHs with three BFVs in ABCT cavalry squadrons satisfying the requirement for the scout platoon to organize into three sections, each with 12 scouts and 2 BFVs. It also provided the platoon with the ability to organize into two balanced sections when METT-TC factors required. As BFVs become available, ABCT combined arms battalion scout platoons will adopt the same TOE design.

## Armor Branch Personnel Notes

**OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE (OPMD): FY15 MAJOR'S PROMOTION BOARD CHANGE.** The Army has shifted the Major's promotion board from October 2014 to Spring of 2015, starting with cohort year group 2006. Shifting this and subsequent Major's promotion boards does not appear to have any significant effect on timelines for today's officers. Armor branch is currently updating our officer professional timeline tool and assessing the effects of this change. Armor branch will publish this updated professional timeline for all Officers in the fall branch newsletter. Upon receipt of the update, we recommend all Officers sketch out their professional timeline to ensure they account for all critical key developmental assignments, educational experiences, and personal objectives.

Check the Amor Branch website for the latest updates and contact information for your assignment officer. <https://www.hrc.army.mil/Officer/AR%20Officer%20Home>

**ENLISTED PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE (EPMO): NCO BROADENING ASSIGNMENTS.** With the advent of Positions of Trust screening criteria, several Armor branch broadening assignments now require further in-depth records screening. During the screening process, we check the Soldier's security clearance and background. Some Soldiers will have had their Personnel Security Investigations (PSI) completed from a previous investigation if their S2 updated their background checks. At a minimum, Soldiers should have their National Agency Check/Local Check (NACLC) completed upon arrival to their first duty station, and then updated once every ten years, or as required. We are seeing a large number of instances where young NCOs are missing or have blank NACLCs, precluding these NCOs from branch broadening opportunities.

With a completed NACLC, our assignment managers have the ability to screen NCOs for broadening assignments such as Drill Sergeant, Recruiter, WTU Cadre and others. If NCOs fail to update their clearances, they remove themselves from assignment eligibility for these opportunities. All Soldiers should check if their PSIs have been completed via their ERB, Section II – Security Data to determine if they have met the minimum requirements for assignment eligibility screening. This field should not be completely blank.

We have spent considerable time and effort on the modernization of the Maneuver Force. This includes standardizing the Scout Squad, Platoon, and Cavalry Troop, executing an ABCT Capability Portfolio Review, and updating the 19-series Key Attributes, Skills, and Other Abilities in support of Soldier 2020. We've sustained the effort to provide an Improved Light Reconnaissance Vehicle and Mobile Protected Firepower to the IBCT, while modernizing platforms and equipment we currently employ.

In this period of change and intense activity we have pursued a comprehensive plan to stay connected with the Armor community, and promote the history and tradition of the branch. **ARMOR** magazine has undergone significant revision to keep leaders informed about branch-related issues, and promote dialog and discussion across the force. This year we opened the Armor & Cavalry Gallery at the National Infantry Museum, and in August we will complete the renovation of Fiddler's Green. Both facilities display our proud history as an Armor force throughout the ages, and are available to Tankers, Cavalrymen and their friends and family while visiting or stationed at Fort Benning.

As part of the Maneuver Center of Excellence, The Armor School's accomplishments have been many and significant. I am honored to have been a part of this outstanding team, and I know they will achieve excellence across all areas as they continue to serve the Tankers, Cavalrymen, and Families of our Army. As I pass the reigns to Brigadier General Scott McKean – our next Armor School Commandant and the 49th Chief of Armor, I wish him the best of luck, fully knowing he will truly enjoy his time at Fort Benning.  
FORGE THE TUNDERBOLT!

BG Lee Quintas  
"48"

## From the CSM's OP

This summer, always a time of transition, has been incredibly busy here at the Armor School, with no sign of letting up. The incredible team here at Fort Benning has done an amazing job. We have been at the cutting edge of ensuring that Armor is an exciting part of the most highly trained and professional land force in the world. Soldiers here at the Armor School make sure that the Cavalry and Armor force is uniquely organized with the capability and capacity to provide expeditionary and decisive land power anywhere in the world. Whether it is proposing solutions on how to reorganize the Army to be a better war-fighting organization, rewriting doctrine to capture lessons learned from 13 years of war to make our doctrine relevant to the future



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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 Anthony Bailey	CSM Michael Belle
		<b>5-15 CAV</b>	LTC Michael Birmingham	CSM Samuel Roark

316<sup>th</sup> CAV BDE 

	<b>COL William Thigpen</b>		<b>CSM James Westover</b>	
		<b>1-29 IN</b>	LTC Richard Surowiec	CSM Ricky Fields
		<b>1-16 CAV</b>	LTC Jeffrey Paine	CSM Eric Littlejohn
		<b>3-16 CAV</b>	LTC James Hayes	CSM Jason Detty

199<sup>th</sup> IN BDE - ABOLC

		<b>2-16 CAV</b>	LTC Dennis Atkins	CSM Jerold Pyle
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- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ARMORMagazine>
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- USAARMS DIVIDS: <http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USAARMS#.Us1-TfuF2TM>
- <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/563/thunderbolt-blast#.Us1-ePuF2TM>
- <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/562/armor-magazine#.Us1-EvuF2TM>
- Fundamentals of Reconnaissance and Security: <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/fundamentals/>
- Maneuver Self-Study Program: <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>

or helping to set the priorities in an Army that is getting smaller at every turn, the Armor School has been involved.

The Cadre here have done an amazing job through the surge months of the summer. Not only have we wrapped up the reorganization of the Maneuver Center of Excellence without any loss of training or impact on students but, we have continued to add rigor and evolve our courses that are pertinent to the operational force. The 194th Armor Brigade and 5th Squadron, 15th Cavalry have led the way, conducting a comprehensive review of 19D OSUT to both ensure the tasks taught meet the demands of the force and that cavalry scouts in training have time built in to focus on the platform they will encounter at their first duty station. Over in the 316th Cavalry Brigade, the 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry has continued to move forward on a Department of Precision Fires. First, they (in conjunction with the Department of Training – Doctrine) conducted a review of the “Integrated Live Fire Training” manual hosting master gunners from around the Army. Second, they are continuing to develop an integrated master gunner training program that highlights the best of both master gunner schools while maintaining the platform specific knowledge. None of this would be possible without NCOs who are experts and involved!

I unfortunately have to close this column by bidding farewell to the 48th Chief of Armor and the Armor School Commandant, BG Lee Quintas. BG Quintas’ time here has been to short, but he has made a great impact on the School and the Armor Force and will be sorely missed. He leaves us to move on the storied 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss where he will serve as the Assistant Division Commander for Operations and continue to affect both the Armor and Maneuver force as a whole. We here at the Armor School bid him a fond farewell and know that we will see him again soon. SCOUTS OUT!

CSM Michael Clemens

