

First 22-Week Infantry OSUT Companies Graduate

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The pilot class for the 22-week Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) graduated on 7 December at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, GA.

The pilot program resulted in significantly fewer Soldiers leaving the class — less than 6-percent attrition compared to 10-12 percent for the 14-week Infantry OSUT.

This pilot, which began 13 July, expanded Infantry-specific training to bolster readiness, lethality, and proficiency before Soldiers arrive at their first duty station. The pilot program accomplished this by expanding weapons training, increasing Soldiers' vehicle-platform familiarization and combatives training, adding a 40-hour combat-lifesaver course, increasing land navigation, and adding a combat water survivability test.

At the graduation, MSG (Retired) Leroy A. Petry, a Medal of Honor recipient who served with the 75th Ranger Regiment, served as the distinguished speaker.

“The extra time and effort that was demanded (of) you may have been difficult, but I look at you as the lucky ones for doing the 22-week course,” he said during his remarks. “You have a better starting point than anyone before you, including myself. The skills that (you) learned in the heat and the dirt and the mud and the woods and the cold and the tireless nights and the early mornings and the physical training and weapons training were... to prepare you to be your best, to be resilient, to be more successful.”

Soldier Lethality

The pilot OSUT is, according to SMA Daniel A. Dailey, “the first step toward achieving the vision of the Army of 2028.” The Army Vision, published earlier this year, puts forth that the Army 10 years from now “will be ready to



Soldiers stand in formation during the graduation ceremony for the pilot class of the 22-week One Station Unit Training for Infantry Soldiers on 7 December.

(Photos by Patrick A. Albright)

deploy, fight, and win decisively against any adversary, anytime [sic] and anywhere, in a joint, multi-domain, high-intensity conflict, while simultaneously deterring others and maintaining its ability to conduct irregular warfare." The capabilities the Army is developing to achieve this are "centered on exceptional Leaders and Soldiers of unmatched lethality."

Soldier Lethality is one of the Army's six modernization priorities, which were developed to prepare the Army for a war with peer or near-peer competitors.

COL Dave Voorhies, commander of 198th Infantry Brigade which conducts Infantry OSUT, said his brigade's part in advancing Soldier Lethality has less to do with innovations and more to do with establishing firmer fundamentals: marksmanship, physical training, land navigation, combat lifesaver skills, combat water survival, Soldier discipline, and more.

"If we do our jobs appropriately, if we professionally mold these kids into Infantrymen, they'll be able to out-PT their team leader, outshoot their squad leader," Voorhies said. "They're going to be as good if not better than their combat lifesavers, maybe as good to help medics out. They're going to be qualified on the machine gun, maybe two, so there's fungibility where you put them in your battle roster. They're going to be the ones certified in combatives... It's what you expect out of those that close with and destroy the enemy."

Although much of future warfighting involves integrating new technologies into mission execution, Voorhies said some of the training was a deliberate step away from that.

"We're so tied to cellphone technology and digital technology — and our enemies know that — that we've got to be experts at the basics," he said. "Experts at the basics means knowing what you're doing without technology — you know, map and compass — and they loved it!"

"More Successful"

The 22-week training cycle, in addition to being novel for the trainees, was also new for the instructors and leaders of the two companies that participated in the pilot — Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 58th Infantry Regiment, and Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment.

Much of the instructors' stated task was to increase sets and repetitions for the trainees "so that they'd be more proficient," said LTC Stephen Bourdon, commander of 2-58 IN.

"We didn't really focus on fancy new tasks; it was just more sets and repetitions, including more night tasks that we hadn't done before, to make them more proficient on stuff that we were already doing," Bourdon said. "And at the same time, even though it's not written in the POI (program of instruction), what both battalions tried to get after is... can we get the light bulb switched on early by having them here for more time, doing more concurrent training? Doing more sets and repetitions, can we make them more adaptive Soldiers and think a little bit on their own and for themselves earlier and (be) more self-led. And basically it would amplify their learning curve on all those tasks if we could accomplish that early. That was an intangible we tried to get after earlier."

"Not only are they doing it in a classroom environment, now they're doing it in a field environment and getting more comfortable when the conditions change," said LTC Frank Adkinson, commander of 2-19 IN. "They're applying it where Infantrymen actually apply it. So they're going to go to a squad and not only be comfortable executing a task but executing that task in a varied environment."

Future Training

Following the Infantry OSUT pilot, an evaluation will take place. The 198th Infantry Brigade will conduct after action reviews (both internal and external, informal and formal) and will brief to the U.S. Army Infantry School leadership, to the Maneuver Center of Excellence leadership, and ultimately up to U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command on what resources are required and more.

In addition to being evaluated during their training by the Directorate of Training and Doctrine at Fort Benning and the Army Research Institute, the newly trained Infantrymen will also be evaluated at their next duty station 90 days after graduating. Voorhies said ultimately the Infantry Soldier, as a combat platform unto himself, is evaluated by U.S. Army Forces Command.



As part of the pilot to extend Infantry OSUT from 14 to 22 weeks, trainees received instruction on the M240-series medium machine gun on 21 September.

“They need to grade our product,” he said. “Is the differential between what you’ve been giving us at 14 weeks and what we see at 22 weeks great enough to merit the investment of resources? I personally think it is. But I’m not them, and they’re going to have to tell us.”

After an evaluation, the 22-week Infantry OSUT is scheduled to begin in October 2019. All Infantry OSUT instruction will become 22 weeks by October 2020. To accommodate this change, the 198th Infantry Brigade is scheduled to grow by three battalions between February 2019 and September 2020.

Read the complete article at: <https://www.army.mil/article/214765/>.