

# A Fitness Badge

CAPTAIN MICHAEL T. MCEWEN

In spite of a few sore muscles and joints, most soldiers seem to feel that the Army's increasing emphasis on physical fitness is a positive move. They are also smart enough to realize that they, as individuals, benefit immensely — in terms of personal health and well-being — from reaching and maintaining a basic level of physical fitness.

Now that these grass-root attitudes have developed, it is time the Army went one step farther and adopted a fitness-related military badge, one that would have a high degree of glamour associated with it and enough prestige to merit wide-spread interest and acceptance.

This proposed Combat Fitness Badge (CFB) would be given to soldiers who demonstrated a continued level of individual fitness in the physical skills their particular specialties would require of them in actual combat. It would have to be recertified annually, and a soldier's right to wear the badge would be dependent on that recertification.

It might be argued here that the requirements for a number of the Army's present badges include a high level of physical fitness — the airborne wings and the air assault and expert infantryman badges, for example — and the soldiers who earn these badges wear them with pride. But obviously not all soldiers in the Army can (or should) receive the training that would earn them one of these badges, and those who do earn them do not have to maintain their high level of fitness to continue wearing

them (although many do, of course).

What, then, should a CFB program contain? Here is one possible program:

First, the present Army Physical Readiness Test (APRT) would be a key part; it is already well integrated into our current training programs and is considered the basic tool for assessing an individual's strength and fitness. For CFB purposes, though, a soldier would have to score at least 75 points in each event instead of the minimum standard of 60 in each event. (Several performance levels are shown in Figure 1.)

Then, because a soldier in combat could reasonably be expected to face water obstacles or water hazards, this CFB program would also include a water performance test. The combat

water survival test, which is now required of all Ranger and Special Forces trainees, could be used; it is a good performance indicator, it has been standardized, and it is already integrated with other training.

The third requirement would center on weapon qualification. The Army's basic standard for weapon qualification today is the lowest score a soldier needs to qualify as a marksman with his individual weapon. This score, of course, is different for each weapon and for each qualification course. To earn the CFB, using today's standards, a soldier would have to qualify as a sharpshooter or better with his individual weapon. This should not be beyond the capability of many soldiers, particularly those who are willing to work hard to improve or to

APRT PERFORMANCE LEVELS AND PROPOSED CFB STANDARDS					
AGE GROUP		17-25	26-30	31-35	36-39
	SCORES				
		Pushups (Men/Women)			
APRT Minimum	60	40/16	38/15	33/14	32/13
CFB Minimum	75	55/27	53/25	48/21	47/20
APRT Maximum	100	68/40	66/38	61/34	60/30
		Situps (Men/Women)			
APRT Minimum	60	40/27	38/25	36/23	34/21
CFB Minimum	75	55/42	53/38	51/28	49/25
APRT Maximum	100	69/61	67/51	65/41	63/31
		Two-Mile Run (Men/Women, Time in Minutes)			
APRT Minimum	60	17:55/22:14	18:30/22:29	19:10/24:04	19:35/25:34
CFB Minimum	75	16:06/19:23	16:28/19:48	16:50/22:29	17:04/23:50
APRT Maximum	100	13:05/17:10	13:40/17:25	14:20/19:00	15:05/20:30

NOTE: Ages 40-60 have maximum times only.

Figure 1.

FIVE-MILE ENDURANCE RUN STANDARDS FOR PROPOSED CFB				
MAXIMUM TIME IN MINUTES (Men/Women)				
AGE GROUP (17-39)	17-25	26-30	31-35	36-39
	44:50/53:35	46:15/56:15	47:55/60:10	48:55/63:55
AGE GROUP (40-60)	40-45	46-50	51-55	56-60
	50:00/65:00	52:30/67:30	55:00/70:00	57:30/72:30

Figure 2.

maintain their proficiency.

Finally, this CFB program would have a separate endurance test — a five-mile run. Using the present APRT standards for the two-mile run, it would be simple to construct a performance table for a five-mile run. (A proposed table is shown in Figure 2.)

This particular CFB program would be easy to administer and could be done within the time now allocated for physical training and for weapons proficiency training in most units. It would be an excellent morale

booster for all soldiers, combat arms or otherwise. The badge itself would also be an important new indicator in personnel evaluation because it would indicate continuing performance rather than a one-time accomplishment.

Other CFB programs could be devised as well. In all, though, the CFB standards should not be set so high that they could not be reached by most soldiers who were really interested. And the selected tasks should be easy to administer and should not require special facilities or

a great deal of equipment.

The badge's design should be a distinctive one. One possibility is a winged foot within a wreath in an oval design similar to that of the airborne wings or the air assault badge. Another would be a short sword or dagger on a rectangular badge similar to the EIB.

If a CFB program such as this one could draw strong command support, it would give soldiers a good incentive to exceed the minimum standards that have been established for their physical fitness. Thus, it would also become an important factor in increasing a unit's basic combat readiness.



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## Relief in Place

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A relief in place is a complex operation and one that is designed for a specific purpose — to replace one unit with another on the battlefield. Often a relief is conducted to replace a unit that has suffered heavily, but it can also be used to strengthen a sector, to remove a unit for action elsewhere, or even to replace a unit from another country within a combined area of operation. For any of these purposes, a relief in place

operation requires a great deal of planning, coordination, and preparation before its execution phase even begins, and the latter phase alone has been known to take as long as ten days.

Unfortunately, though, a relief in place is often confused with a delay, a withdrawal, or a passage of lines. As a result, it is largely taken for granted and receives far less training emphasis than it should. Commanders at all

levels need to understand it better and see that it is included in their exercises whenever possible, because commanders at all levels become involved in the entire process.

Once a decision has been made — for whatever reason — to conduct a relief in place, the higher headquarters must publish warning orders as early as possible so that subordinate commands down to platoon level will have enough time to prepare