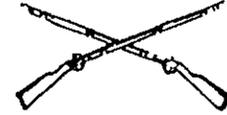




Commandant's NOTE



Major General John W. Foss

Chief of Infantry

Our Army has always sought leaders who are tough, flexible, resourceful, and competent. Especially today, our operations doctrine emphasizes the point that maneuver warfare will place a premium on small unit leadership, unit cohesion, and independent operations.

Accordingly, we recently modified our basic officer course by including in it a 7-day tactical leadership course — the “TLC” — as part of an intense and continuous 13-day FTX that focuses on squad and platoon training. The TLC moves leadership, BTMS, and tactical training out of the classroom and into a field environment as part of our continuing efforts to give our infantry units in the field better trained and tougher second lieutenants. Thus, the TLC’s major objectives are to teach our young lieutenants how to train, how to fight, how to lead, and how to build a team.

The TLC is based on 20 squad-level tactical drills that must be performed to standard within time limits and under increasing levels of stress. (The officers can go as much as three days and two nights without sleep.) The drills, which are dismantled ones, form the foundation for the light and mechanized infantry training that occurs during the follow-on FTXs. The drills include many of the tasks that an infantry squad is likely to encounter on a modern battlefield — knocking out bunkers, clearing trenchlines, acquiring targets, distributing and controlling fires, breaching wire obstacles, conducting dismantled assaults, reconnoitering woodlines, and thirteen other ARTEP-related collective tasks.

On two different occasions during the TLC, each lieutenant is placed in an evaluated leadership position. He is then required to put into actual practice the leadership principles and techniques he has been taught in his classroom instruction. The student is both trainer and leader of a squad of his peers, which must carry out one of the prescribed drills to the required standard. His rating depends on how well his squad does on that assignment.

To emphasize leadership — and to add an element of stress to the course — the 200-man basic officer company is “scrambled” into 20 ten-man squads. Each officer squad leader then has only about two hours to train his

squad for the assigned drill, rehearse it, and successfully carry it out. (All the lieutenants have received instruction on key tasks before the TLC, so the training in the drills is not as difficult as it might be otherwise.) The squads execute four drills daily, each under a different leader, and then go immediately into night combat patrolling.

Following these seven days of training, the basic officers are moved to a new training area for the light infantry FTX, which focuses on the light infantry tasks in which the officers were drilled to proficiency during the TLC. During the FTX, the officer-students execute platoon movement and fire-and-maneuver tasks, a deliberate daylight attack, a limited visibility attack, a deliberate dug-in defense against an opposing force, security and combat patrols, and withdrawals not under enemy pressure. All of this is followed by a tactical cross-country march of from five to twelve miles.

The TLC and the light infantry FTX set the stage for the mechanized infantry FTX that is held later in the course when the basic officers are challenged to put together all of their infantry skills in a demanding and fast-paced exercise.

The young lieutenants who have completed the TLC have all been positive in their remarks about it. They feel they have learned a lot about themselves, about how a unit comes together, and about how to train, lead, and fight. By the end of the TLC, they say, each “scrambled” squad had become a cohesive unit and felt it had performed well.

Because of their value, the 20 drills are being made a part of the training program for light infantry units. Training packets may also be developed for units in the field, both Active and Reserve Component. These packets would explain how a TLC can be laid out, what support requirements it would need, and how it might be conducted.

We feel this is an invaluable course for what it is designed to do — turn out tougher, better trained junior leaders. By doing this, the Infantry School again demonstrates its commitment to excellence and to preparing infantry leaders for any battlefield.