

COHORT Company Training Program



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In an effort to restore its former sense of cohesion and teamwork, the Army has developed a unit-based replacement system as an alternative to the individual replacement system that has predominated since World War II. The key element in this new manning system is a regimental concept formed around Project COHORT (COHesion, Operational Readiness, and Training). The primary goal of COHORT is to improve unit cohesion and to stabilize personnel turbulence at company level. It will do these things by keeping a company of soldiers and their leaders together for three years, throughout their training, their stateside assignment, and their initial overseas deployment.

Clearly, the process of taking an entire group of soldiers straight from their One Station Unit Training (OSUT) and assimilating them into a regimental company requires a well considered training strategy. Not only the soldiers but also the company's leaders have to be trained in a somewhat different way. Unfortunately, though, there is no standardized program for COHORT company training. When the 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry, 7th Infantry Division (Light) was scheduled to get its first COHORT company last year, the battalion's planners, therefore, had to come up with a strategy of their own for conducting COHORT training.

The purpose behind the battalion's training strategy

was to increase the effectiveness of all its training and to ensure that the COHORT company was properly assimilated into the parent battalion.

This training strategy, which became the keystone of all chain of command, individual, and collective COHORT training within the battalion, may also be useful to other battalions that are getting COHORT companies. It is based upon ten principles.

Develop a high-quality training program for the chain of command and the leaders. The key phrase here is "chain of command and leaders," as opposed to "cadre" — a training center term and a misnomer in a COHORT unit. The chain of command is just that, and these people are scheduled to remain with the COHORT company for its entire three-year life cycle.

These leaders must be confident, competent, and motivated, and a good train-up program is the key to their success. The program the battalion developed for this purpose is six weeks long and consists of the subjects shown in Figure 1.

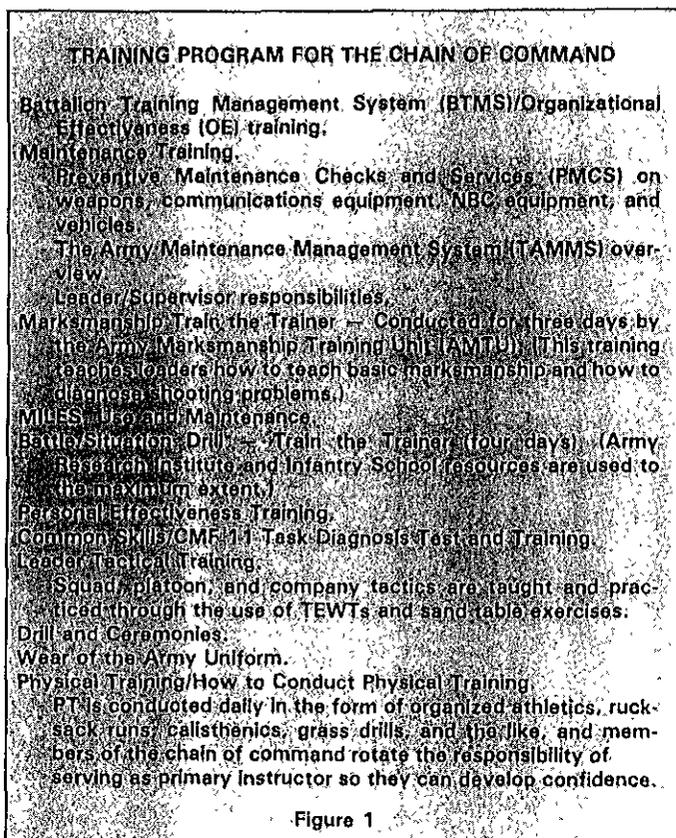


Figure 1

Visit COHORT units during their OSUT. The battalion commander, the company commander, the first sergeant, and the key members of the chain of command visit their COHORT units during OSUT. (More on this later when we discuss transition training.)

Become thoroughly familiar with the OSUT program of instruction. COHORT leaders must know what is in the OSUT program before they can develop the individual and collective training that will follow it.

Integrate the necessary individual training up front. Once the COHORT leaders are totally familiar with the

OSUT POI, they develop their training plans. The first items they put into the plan (in the priority shown) are the critical tasks and skills that are not taught in OSUT, not taught to Soldier's Manual and ARTEP standards, taught but not tested in OSUT; and (for sustainment) taught and tested on mid-cycle and end-of-cycle tests in OSUT.

Assess the soldiers' proficiency in individual skills. The battalion's COHORT units conduct this assessment during the seventh to ninth weeks, after the squad ARTEPs. They assess not only the proficiency of the individual soldiers, but also the leadership and instructional abilities of the squad leaders in teaching their soldiers critical individual skills.

Conduct a leadership development program for COHORT leaders. During OSUT, ten soldiers who exhibit outstanding leadership abilities and potential are selected and designated "COHORT leaders." Nine of these soldiers serve as fire team leaders and one as an 81mm mortar squad leader. To further develop the leadership abilities of these designated leaders after OSUT, the battalion developed a 42-hour COHORT junior leader training program, which is outlined in Figure 2.

The battalion command sergeant major, the company first sergeants, and (in the case of map reading) the scout

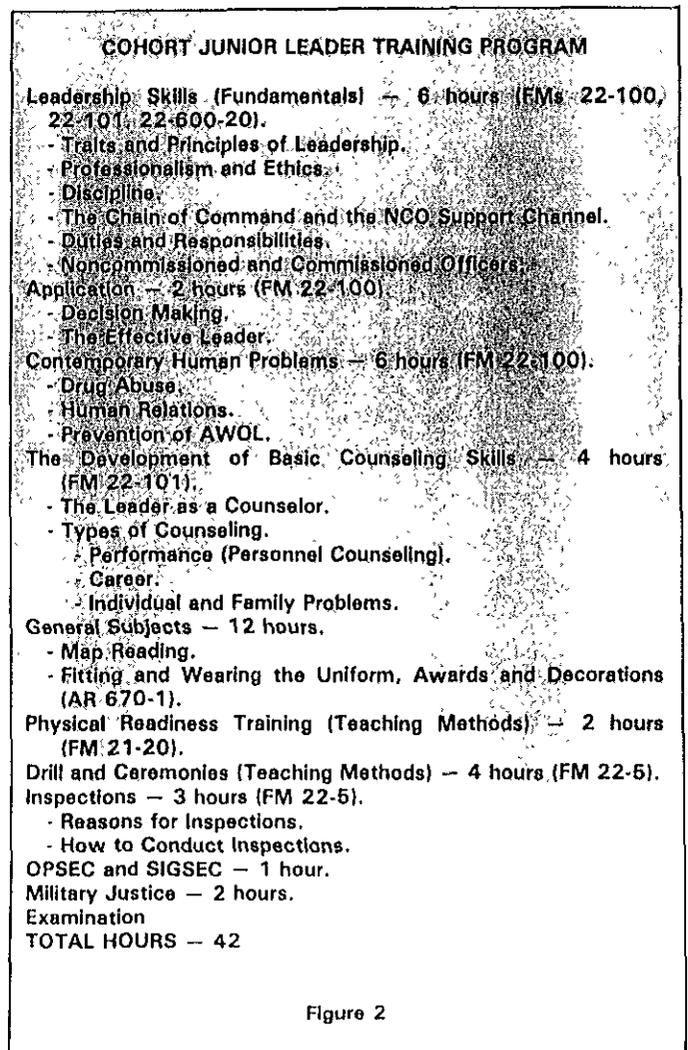


Figure 2

**COHORT INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE TRAINING PLAN
(Rifle Company)**

WEEK 1 (Fill Week):

Day 1 (Wednesday):

- Initial briefing by First Sergeant and introduction of the chain of command.
- Personnel Asset Inventory (PAI).
- Linen issue and room assignment.
- Command-supervised chow.
- NCO-supervised activity (getting settled into barracks).

Day 2:

- First Sergeant in-brief.
- PAC Inprocessing (half of company).
- CIF issue (half of company).
- Company Commander welcome.
- Squad Leader time.
- NCO-supervised activity (until 2000/2100 hours).

Day 3:

- Company Commander in-brief (standards, training overview).
- Regimental history and punch-bowl ceremony.
- PAC Inprocessing/CIF issue.
- Assignment of duty positions, weapons, and protective masks (rotating by platoon).
- Company Physical Readiness Training.
- NCO-supervised activity (until 2000 hours).

Day 4 (Saturday):

- TA-50 layout inspection (First Sergeant).
- Identify shortfalls.

WEEK 2 (INDIVIDUAL TRAINING WEEK 1):

- Diagnostic Evaluation Individual Skills
- Battalion Commander/Command Sergeant Major in-brief.
- M16 Zero
- M16 Field/Practice/FCGMC Firing (1 day)
- M16 Qualification (1-day)
- Maintenance/Driver Training

WEEK 3 (INDIVIDUAL TRAINING WEEK 2):

- M203 FAMFIRE (and qualification for designated gunners)
- LAW FAMFIRE
- Hand Grenade/Claymore Familiarization
- Protective Mask Fitting/NBC Proficiency Course
- Driver Training

WEEK 4 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 1):

- Battle/Situation Drill Training (Rifle platoons)
- Crew Training/Drills (MG crews)
- Drivers/Maintenance Training (Mortars)

WEEK 5 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 2):

- Squad Training: Movement to Contact/Hasty Attack (ARTEP Task 9-1), Antiair Ambush (9-2); Recon Patrol (9-3); Raid Patrols (9-7), Ambush Patrol (9-8) (Rifle platoons)
- M60 Training/Qualification, .45 Pistol Qualification (MG crews)
- Mechanical Training/Crew Drill, .45 Pistol Qualification, Driver Training (Mortars)

WEEK 6 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 3):

- Squad Training: MTC (9-1), Squad Raid (9-7) (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Crew Drill, Gunners Exam, Section Training (Mortars)
- Sub-caliber Live-fire (Mortars)

WEEK 7 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 4):

- Squad Training: Battle/Situational Drills (Rifle platoon with MG crews)
- Squad Training on ARTEP tasks 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, 9-7, 9-8 (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Rappelling (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Section Drill, Tactical Training (Mortars)
- Sub-caliber Live-fire Training (Mortars)
- Rappelling (Mortars)

WEEK 8 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 5):

- Squad ARTEP (9-1, 9-2, 9-3, 9-7, 9-8) (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Section Live-fire Training (Mortars)

WEEK 9 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 6):

- Squad Post-ARTEP Training (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Squad Live-fire Reaction Course (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Introduction to Airmobile, Helicopter Rappelling (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Crew, Section Training (Mortars)
- Gunners Exam for the Record (Mortars)

WEEK 10 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 7):

- Platoon Tactical Training (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Movement to Contact/Hasty Attack (9-1, 9-2) (Rifle platoon with MG crews)
- Antiair Ambush (9-3) (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Section Training (Mortars)
- Sub-caliber Live-fire Training (Mortars)

WEEK 11 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 8):

- Platoon Tactical Training - Area Recon (8-5), Recon (8-6), Raid (8-8), Ambush (8-9) (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Platoon Attack Course (Live-fire) (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Live-fire Exercise (Mortars)

WEEK 12 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 9):

- Platoon Tactical Training (ARTEP Mission Recon (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Sub-caliber Live-fire Training (Mortars)

WEEK 13 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 10):

- Platoon ARTEP (Force-on-Force) - 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-6, 8-6, 8-8, 8-9 (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Mortar Live-fire Exercise (Mortar section)

WEEK 14 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 11):

- Post-ARTEP Tactical Training (as determined by commander) (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Platoon Airmobile Operations (Rifle platoons with MG crews)
- Crew Section Drill (Mortar section)
- Gunners Exam/Mechanical Training (Mortar section)
- Maintenance (Mortar section)

WEEK 15 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 12):

- Company Tactical Training; ARTEP Tasks 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, 7-4, 7-6, 7-9 (Leader oriented), 7-11, 7-12.
- Mortar Sub-caliber Live-fire

WEEK 16 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 13):

- Pre-ARTEP Training (Company)
- Mortar Live-Fire ARTEP

WEEK 17 (COLLECTIVE TRAINING WEEK 14):

- Company ARTEP.

Figure 3

platoon leader conduct these training sessions, which vary in length from two to four hours, every week for four months. This training greatly improves individual proficiency and confidence.

All the soldiers who are selected as COHORT leaders are appointed acting corporals and billeted together in NCO rooms. These soldiers are then taken out of the squad they trained with in OSUT and placed with a new

group, primarily to improve their authority and positions as COHORT leaders.

Use drill training to link individual training with collective training. Battle drills and situational drills are used to support collective ARTEP tasks. Quality drill training such as this helps develop individual skills and teamwork.

Allow post-ARTEP time for training the soldiers on their deficiencies. Once the soldiers' shortcomings have

been diagnosed on an ARTEP, they are immediately re-trained on any tasks necessary to bring the unit to peak proficiency. (A two-week period of post-ARTEP training is best.) The battalion commander permits his company commanders to use their good judgment and initiative in the short-term planning of quality training exercises.

Stress marksmanship and live fire. Marksmanship and live fire training are of primary importance to an infantryman in a COHORT company, and a significant amount of time is devoted to training leaders in these areas. In training, the battalion conducts squad live fire exercises and executes ambushes and movements to contact in the live-fire mode. Known distances (KD) ranges are used regularly, and live fire training is sustained throughout the year. (A light infantry soldier has to be able to put his first round on the target.)

Conduct a thorough transition program to turn OSUT soldiers into FORSCOM soldiers. This final principle of the training strategy is a very important one; the manner in which a soldier is received into the unit is sure to have a lasting impression on him.

During the last week of OSUT, the battalion commander, the company commander, the first sergeant, and the other key members of the chain of command are present in the unit and at the graduation ceremony. After coordinating closely and carefully with Training Center leaders, the members of the chain of command participate in a formal ceremony in front of parents and drill sergeants, exchanging the guidon and the designation of the OSUT unit for those of the new regimental unit. Someone reads the unit history, explains the heritage behind the unit crest, and pins distinctive unit insignia on the uniforms of all the new members of the re-designated unit. A simple and well-planned ceremony such as this will pay huge dividends in morale and unit esprit de corps, and it will help inculcate into each soldier a strong sense of belonging.

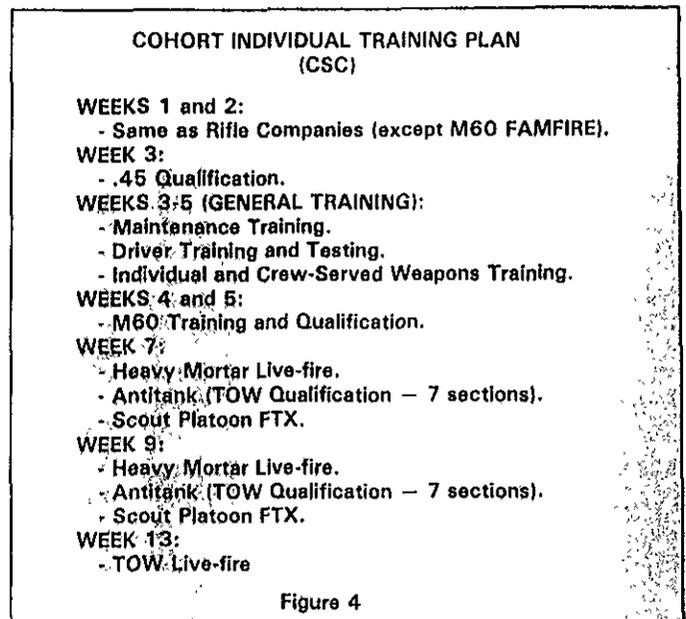
At this point, the new soldiers — at last a part of their regiment — have high expectations of what the “real Army” is like, and it is the duty of unit leaders to plan and conduct realistic, innovative, and challenging individual and collective training. The battalion developed and is executing a 17-week program for that purpose. (See Figure 3.)

The first three weeks of this program are devoted to continuing the transition process and to beginning skills training. To ease the soldiers’ transition from the controlled, sterile environment of OSUT, a gradual loosening of control is implemented. Leaders are present and visible to the new infantrymen after regular duty hours. The first few days after they arrive at the new installation, the soldiers are given a post familiarization and orientation, which includes such subjects as Army Community Services (ACS), Red Cross activities, family housing, medical care, recreation services, and a tour of the local community. Their family members are also included in this orientation.

Of paramount importance to each new soldier is the

regimental punch bowl ceremony, in which each new soldier is formally assimilated into the regiment. This rite of passage, which includes a slide presentation on the history and traditions of the regiment, concludes with a number of toasts: The brigade commander toasts the regiment; the battalion commander toasts the battalion; and the company commander toasts the company. After this ceremony, all the soldiers of the COHORT company are considered full-fledged, bona fide members of the regiment.

The collective training phase, which follows this transition and individual training phase, occurs during Weeks 4 through 17, with the Soldier’s Manual and the ARTEP manual being used to set the tasks, conditions, and standards for all the training. (For a combat support company, the training plan has been revised slightly to provide training on the weapons that are unique to that unit. (See Figure 4.)



This entire training strategy was developed to serve as the overriding philosophy for the planning and execution of all COHORT training in the 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry. Although it is still too early to conclusively evaluate the effectiveness of the COHORT training programs that make up this strategy, great strides are being made in improving morale and proficiency, unit cohesion, and esprit de corps.

If this program is successful, the end result should be cohesive, combat-ready companies made up of soldiers who are skilled and tough and who understand the personal commitment required to be an infantryman.

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