



'On Point' Shares OIF Lessons Learned

JOE BURLAS, ARMY NEWS SERVICE

A little more than a year after the end of major hostilities, the Army released May 25 its first major study on operations that liberated the Iraqi people. Hard copies of *On Point: The United States Army in Iraqi Freedom* are available through regular Army publication channels, and an online version can be viewed at <http://onpoint.leavenworth.army.mil>.

The book is not intended to be a definitive history of what exactly occurred during Operation Iraqi Freedom, but an overview, according to its three coauthors.

"Soldiers see what is in front of them, not the big picture (in battle)," said retired Colonel Gregory Fontenot, *On Point* coauthor. "We wanted to communicate clearly and effectively what happened. This is the story of America's Army."

And it is a story primarily intended for Soldiers and defense officials, with a secondary audience of family members, Fontenot said.

Borrowing on Saddam's threat of the "mother of all battles," Fontenot said they could have used one command's 650-slide "mother of all briefings" after-action report as the basis for their study, but most Soldiers would not endure reading nothing but dry facts.

The authors — Fontenot, Lieutenant Colonel E.J. Degen and Lieutenant Colonel David Tohn — said they purposely wrote the study as a story, not just dry history. They avoided heavy use of military jargon, he said. And they used vignettes and quotes from Soldiers throughout the

Central Command area of operations to highlight the study's discussion of what occurred.

In reviewing the deployment phase of the operations, the book describes plane loads of Soldiers arriving in theater, often with nobody in charge to meet them and the ensuing search in the dark as 300 Soldiers try to sort out which duffle bag belongs to who.

The Army does a good job of looking at and learning from its failures so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future, Degen said.

Fontenot said the authors realize that the study is one-sided as there is no balance of perspective by including enemy sources.

"We know this is not the perfect book, but it allows us to use it as a starting point on discussions of what occurred," Fontenot said.

And some of the study's insights have already impacted the way the Army currently trains. Tohn credited the study for the creation of an Iraqi village at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana, and a cluster of similar villages at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.

The team collected more than 2,220 audio interviews, 1,500 video interviews, 236,000 documents, and 79,000 photos for the study in May and June 2003. That research material is archived at the Center of Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for future studies.

The first draft of the book went to Army senior leaders in August. Two drafts later, the book was approved for publication in December.



Specialist David Foley

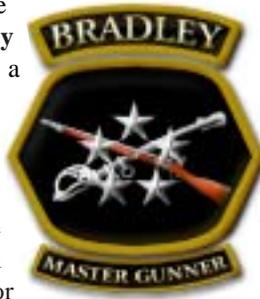
THE INFANTRYMAN COMES HOME

Visitors to the Home of the Infantry this summer will once again be able to gaze with pride at the statue that has become a symbol of all those infantrymen who have committed themselves to creating and preserving this great nation. The Infantryman, as he is called, has been created anew and in bronze. The new figure will replace its predecessor, who has stood in front of Infantry Hall atop a stone and concrete pedestal erected in 1964. The earlier figure was constructed of polyester resin and bronze-impregnated epoxy over a steel frame, and had been moved only once, for cleaning and restoration in 1988.

The unveiling of the new Infantryman, timed to coincide with Fort Benning's Independence Day celebration and festivities on July 1, 2004, marks the beginning of a long tenure for this prominent symbol of the Infantry's proud heritage. The Infantryman is perhaps the most-photographed member of the Fort Benning community, and this is appropriate, considering the prominent role the U.S. Army infantry has played in our nation's history.



The Bradley Master Gunner School is responsible for three courses. The first course is the **Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) Master Gunner Course**, a 13-week course which teaches a master gunner candidate common corps critical master gunner tasks and maintenance information for ODS models and below. The second course is the **M2A3 BFV Master Gunner Course**, a five-week add on course which teaches a master gunner graduate additional specific requirements and maintenance information for the M2A3. The third course is the **Infantry Pre-Command Course-Bradley (IPCC-B)**, a one-week course associated with reintroducing field grade commanders and command sergeant majors to the BFV.



More information can be found on the school's website at www.infantry.army.mil/29thInf/courses/bmg/index.htm.

Master Gunner Train-up:

The Master Gunner Course cadre have developed an exportable CD to assist master gunners with candidate train-up. This master gunner job aid can be used in several applications in the field with BFV crew sustainment training as well. Due to the size of this CD, we are unable to make it available on our web page; however, it has been distributed to master gunners in each major command. If for some reason you are unable to get a copy of the disk through your unit's master gunner channels, you may contact the Master Gunner Branch through e-mail at mastergunneroperations@benning.army.mil. Remember, you must be a graduate of the BFV MG course to receive this disk.

BFV Master Gunner Course (010-ASIJ3)

The purpose of the Master Gunner Course is to train noncommissioned officers in the rank of SGT(P) through SFC (11M, 12B, 13F, 14R, 19D and 03 USMC) to design and implement BFV gunnery and turret maintenance training programs.

Performance Outcome

- Maintenance and maintenance management of all Turret weapons systems and components.
- Establishment and conduct of BTI - XII.
- Development of a short-range training program for a battalion-size BFV unit from preliminary gunnery through platoon gunnery (BT XII).
- Turret gun system malfunction and troubleshooting management of COFT training programs (senior/instructor operator).

Prerequisites

- SGT(P) thru SFC 11B, 11M, 12B, 13F, 14R, 19D w/D3 ASI or 03 (USMC).
- Certified on BGST within the last 6 months.
- Meet height and weight standards IAW AR 600-9 upon arrival.
- Meet APFT standards IAW FM 21-20 upon arrival.
- IO certified/recertified within the last year. To include the

Bradley Advanced Matrix.

- Division BCE certified and recertified within 3 months of attendance of the course.
- BNCOC Graduate (**waiverable by the BDE Commander**).
- Bradley Table VIII qualified from either the BC's or Gunner's position meeting the following criteria: (**Waiverable for MOS 12Bs only**)
 - AC within the last 9 months.
 - NG within the last 12 months.
 - RC within the last 18 months.

MOS 12B Alternate Requirement in lieu of BT VIII. Students who are waiving the BT VIII prerequisite, due to resource constraints, will be required to fire the Bradley Advanced matrix (BAM) exercise 204 and receive a rating of "P" as a crewmember (Gunner or Commander) in the Unit of Fire Trainer (UCOFT) prior to attending the Bradley MG Course. They will also be required to bring a printout of their BAM 204 session summary reflecting the passing score and a memorandum signed by the first O-5 in their chain of command requesting waiver based on alternate requirement completion.

M2A3 BFV Master Gunner Course (010-F24)

This course trains selected NCOs to assist unit leaders in the planning and implementation of digital gunnery training programs and maintenance training (turret and fire control) in digital force units that have been or will be equipped with M2A3 BFVs.

Information

This course is for master gunners who will be holding positions as master gunners in M2A3 equipped units. The course is five weeks in length and will generally be scheduled to begin the first Monday following the completion of the prerequisite 010-ASIJ3 course. NCOs who have previously attended the prerequisite Master Gunner Course and are already in A3 units will be afforded the opportunity to attend and receive the A3 add-on training.

Bradley Pre-Command Course (010-F21)

This course is designed to reintroduce field grade commanders and CSMs to the training, maintenance and training device systems for the BFV. The course is attended by those officers designated to command BFV units and by those CSMs to be assigned to BFV units.

Prerequisites

- Active Army field grade officers who have been designated by Department of the Army to assume command of a BFV unit.
- Reserve Component field grade officers who are commanding or have been designated to assume command of a BFV unit.
- Active Army CSMs who have been designated to assume the position of CSMs in BFV units.
- Reserve Component CSMs who are presently serving as CSMs of BFV units or have been designated to assume the position of CSMs of BFV units.



RANGER TRAINING BRIGADE NOTES

Teams Compete for Best Ranger Title

The 21st annual David E. Grange, Jr. Best Ranger Competition was held April 23-26 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

This year, two teams from the 75th Ranger Regiment took the top two spots of the 60-hour nonstop competition. Staff Sergeants Colin Boley and Adam Nash edged out Sergeant First Class Matthew Wilson and Staff Sergeant John Sheaffer for first place.

In 1982, Lieutenant General David E. Grange, Jr., initiated the best ranger competition with the intent of having the finest Ranger buddy teams in the Army compete against each other in an extreme test of endurance and stamina.

I think the initial concept of this competition was to pull the best two men from an infantry squad or platoon, give them a maximum of two weeks to prepare, and then put them into the gauntlet of this nearly three-day event. The fact is that SSG Boley from the 75th Ranger Regiment did just that. Boley had only just returned from Afghanistan days before he was asked to compete and less than 10 days before the killer competition. That is true warrior and Ranger spirit.

This competition, like all other best ranger competitions, was different from previous years' events. It started like most with a PT test. Instead of one set of push-ups and sit-ups and a two-mile run, these competitor's had to compete two sets of push-ups and sit-ups (two minutes each set), and an unknown distance run of 8.4 miles. The unknown distance run set the stage for a grueling first day. The days continued with these following events:

Day 1

PT tests, unknown distance run (8.4 m), moving target range, spot jump, litter carry, canoe race, and a road march. Of the first day's events the event that is, without a doubt, the defining eliminator of teams is the road march. Prior to the road march, the two events that led to the destruction and breakdown of many teams were the unknown distance run and the litter carry.

Day 2

One of the Ranger mottos is "Not for the weak or faint hearted." Right after the road march, competitors went into night stakes with no sleep. Night stakes consisted of call for fire, vehicle recognition, radio operation, call for nine-line medevac, and demolition tasks. At approximately 0700 of Day 2, the Rangers started day stakes. Day stakes consisted of the Prusik Climb, 292 antenna, weapon assembly, two mystery events (hatchet throw/bow and arrow shoot and stress fire), M18A1 claymore, and knot test. New this year in day stakes was the timed stress shoot, which involved a 1.5-mile run, sewer tunnel navigation, M4 shoot transitioning to 9mm pistol to an M203. Any competitor can tell you the hardest minute of Best Ranger is the vertical climb with the Prusik stirrups to the top of the 70-foot rappel tower.

The Rangers went straight from day stakes into the night orienteering course from Camp Rogers to Camp Darby where they attempted to find 12 points. The orienteering course, like the road march the day before, was the killer task. It is lonely out in the dark woods and easy to just quit.

The teams finished up Day 2 at about 0700 when they arrived at Camp Darby for only one reason — to go through the longest mile on Fort Benning, the Darby Queen obstacle course.

Day 3

The Darby Queen has 26 obstacles and is 1,000 meters long, most of which seems uphill. The teams then trucked out to Victory Pond for the water confidence course consisting of the log walk, rope drop and suspension traverse. After making a poncho raft with their equipment, the teams helocasted into the water and swam half way across the pond. The final event was the three-mile buddy run to the finish line.

This year's event started with 19 teams and finished with only eight. Seven teams fell out during the road march and four others left sometime late Saturday during the orienteering course. Just to finish the

best ranger competition is deemed a success, and the competition cannot be compared to any other event in the world. It tests the intestinal fortitude of the best warriors in the Army. SSG Boley's example of fitness and skill straight from the ranks is exceptional. It should not be the exception but the rule. Rangers are and must be ready every day of the year not just on April 23.

Rangers lead the way!

— CSM Douglas M. Greenway
Ranger Training Brigade
Command Sergeant Major

2004 Best Ranger Competition Results

1st place - Staff Sergeants Colin Boley and Adam Nash, 75th Ranger Regiment

2nd place - Sergeant First Class Matthew D. Wilson and Staff Sergeant John Sheaffer, 75th Ranger Regiment

3rd place - Captain Corbett F. McCallum and Staff Sergeant Jeffrey D. Lewis, 4th Ranger Training Battalion

4th place - Staff Sergeants Eric Buonopane and Robert Ossman, 5th Ranger Training Battalion

5th place - Captains John S. Serafini and Paul W. Staeheli, Joint Security Area, Korea

6th place - Captains David Bragg and Brian Hoffman, U.S. Army Maneuvers Center

7th place - Sergeants First Class Brent Myers and William Langham, 5th Ranger Training Battalion

8th place - Captain Kevin M. O'Connor and Staff Sergeant Joshua K. Carswell, 4th Ranger Training Battalion



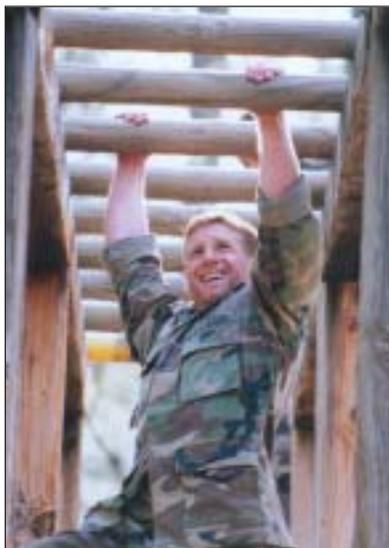
Private First Class Eliamar Castanon

The top two teams cross the finish line of the final event, the Buddy Run. From left to right are Sergeant First Class Matthew D. Wilson, Staff Sergeant John Sheaffer, Staff Sergeant Colin Boley, and Staff Sergeant Adam Nash, all of the 75th Ranger Regiment.



Photos by Bridgett Siter

Top, Captain David Bragg of the U.S. Army Maneuvers Center, completes the water confidence portion of the Best Ranger Competition. At right, Captain John Serafini navigates the Darby Queen obstacle course during the final day of competition.



Specialist Nikki St. Amant

Staff Sergeant Joshua Carswell leads the way during the litter carry event. Carswell and teammate Captain Kevin O'Connor finished eighth.