



## CENTERS RELEASE LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS HANDBOOK

CENTER FOR ARMY LEADERSHIP

The Combined Arms Center - Center for Army Leadership (CAL) at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., has released a new handbook aimed at formalizing procedures for one of the most difficult periods any leader might encounter — transitioning into a new position of leadership.

The Leadership Transitions Handbook provides leaders at all experience levels a systematic approach to transitioning into a new position, according to CAL officials. They said the book provides an approach that can be tailored to meet the needs of both new and experienced leaders.

“The challenges of leadership are often greatest when there is a leadership transition, resulting in a shift in roles and responsibilities,” said COL Bruce J. Reider, director of the Center for Army Leadership. “While the Army transitions leaders with regularity, it has not formalized this significant event in its leader development process. It is imperative that leadership transitions occur efficiently and effectively particularly during this era of persistent conflict and high operations tempo.”

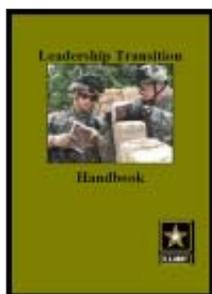
Preparing to take command or to transition to any new position of responsibility is a natural progression for Army leaders and is something that has always been taken seriously by those designated for it, but there has not been a systematic or standard approach that is taught or used to guide young leaders during this period of transition.

Conducted properly, the transition period can lay the groundwork and provide a framework for action that helps minimize uncertainty and create the conditions for success, CAL officials said. Having a plan for the transition ensures leaders can maximize the opportunities and mitigate the challenges that arise during the process, they said, adding that the new Leadership Transitions Handbook will help make these transitions more successful.

Sections in the Leadership Transitions Handbook include:

- Understanding yourself and the organization;
- Conducting an initial assessment and building credibility;
- Team building and establishing routines; and
- Sustaining organizational operations.

The handbook is currently available at the Center for Army Leadership AKO Web site at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/376783>, on LeaderNet at <https://leadernet.bcks.army.mil/>, and at <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cal/index.asp>.



## POLICY CHANGE EXTENDS RCPs

C. TODD LOPEZ

A recent extension of retention control points (RCP) means Soldiers in the rank of staff sergeant and above will be allowed to serve the Army longer, should they desire.

An All Army Activities (ALARACT) message, dated November 8, spelled out the changes to retention control points. The changes, which became effective November 1, increase RCPs for E-6s and above by as many as three years in some cases. The ALARACT also changes the maximum age for enlisted Soldiers to 62 years.

The increase in RCP — called “high year of tenure” in the Air Force and Navy — is a force-shaping measure meant to allow experienced noncommissioned officers to stay in the Army longer.

“This is not designed to address any specific shortage,” said MSG Patrick Johnson, retention operations NCO with Army G-1 at the Pentagon. “Rather, it is to provide an avenue for our experienced NCOs to stay in longer if they wish, and to stabilize the force longer. It’s good for the Army and good for readiness.”

The change to RCP applies to active-duty Army Soldiers and to reserve-component Soldiers in the Active Guard Reserve program. Changes have been made to the RCP for Soldiers in the grade of E-6 and above, and include:

- SSG, 23 years
- SSG (Promotable), 26 years
- SFC, 26 years
- SFC (Promotable), 29 years
- 1SG/MSG, 29 years
- 1SG/MSG, (Promotable), 32 years
- CSM/SGM, 32 years

The RCP defines the maximum time a Soldier may stay in the Army at a certain rank. If a Soldier in the rank of staff sergeant has served 26 years and hasn’t been promoted to sergeant first class, he or she must retire. The ALARACT additionally says a Soldier must leave Army service at the time of their RCP or age 62, whichever of the two comes first.

*(C. Todd Lopez writes for the Army News Service.)*

# ARMY TRANSFORMING NCOES

## New Curriculum Being Tested at Forts Benning and Knox

CHRIS GRAY-GARCIA

A redesign of the Army's NCO education system (NCOES) will bring its curriculum closer to what has been taught to officers in the past, said CSM Ray Chandler of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA).

Chandler and his staff have the lead in making changes to courses taught at the Army's 30 NCO academies worldwide. He said the changes are on schedule to be implemented by September.

The changes include renaming the Army's intermediate-level NCO courses. The Basic NCO Course, known as BNCOC, will become the Advanced Leader Course. The Advanced NCO Course, or ANCOC, will become the Senior Leader Course.

"We've got a better-educated NCO corps than ever before," Chandler said, "so we've had to update the curriculum to take advantage of that higher education level, to support the full spectrum of operations in this era of persistent conflict."

The updated courses will better prepare Soldiers for greater decision making and leadership responsibilities required in the global war on terror, Chandler explained. He said the new NCOES curriculum will focus more on the kind of critical thinking and problem-solving skills formerly reserved for officer-level instruction.

The Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, is the Army agency charged with implementing the NCOES transformation. As the academy's command sergeant major, Chandler has been at the forefront of that effort.

The new curriculum is being tested now at Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Benning, Ga., and Chandler said it is expected to be ready for all of the Army's NCO academies by September.



SGT Mary E. Ferguson

*CSM Ray Chandler of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy challenges more than 150 commandants and senior NCOs from NCO Academies throughout the Army to share their experiences during the 2008 Commandants Workshop April 15-17 at Fort Bliss.*

"What we've been charged with is providing a cadre of flexible and adaptive leaders," said Fort Benning's Henry Caro NCO Academy commandant, CSM Zoltan James.

"A lot of these guys are leaders who have been in combat; they know what the fight is, and it gives them a forum for capturing and sharing that knowledge," James said about the new curriculum. "We put NCOs into situations where they need to think for themselves, instead of providing them answers based upon a training plan. We have changed our training culture by using that process."

Curriculum at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy is also being adapted to reflect the curriculum at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., said Chandler.

"CGSC has made its entire curriculum available to USASMA, which is in the process of adapting our curriculum to meet their needs," said CGSC Deputy Director, Marvin L. Nickels. "Adapting applicable portions of our curriculum will save them time. More importantly, it makes lots of

sense for the Army's field-grade leaders and most-senior noncommissioned officers to share a common frame of reference."

Sharing that frame of reference, Chandler said, is exactly what the updated sergeants major course aims to facilitate.

"We have a very large gap between what CGSC teaches its majors and what we've been teaching sergeants major," he said. "We want to marry those two skill sets together to capitalize on both their experiences to better support the commander."

While the NCOES redesign aims to meet the needs of the Army in the global war on terror, it focuses equally on the professional development needs of Soldiers.

With the new curriculum, Chandler said they are better and more educated Soldiers when they graduate.

He also said the increase in the curriculum will provide Soldiers more college credits.

*(Chris Gray-Garcia works for the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs.)*

# LANGUAGE PROGRAM GIVES SOLDIERS HEAD START ON DEPLOYMENT

C. TODD LOPEZ

The Defense Language Institute has developed a “Headstart” program to help deploying troops gain skills in Arabic, Pashto and Dari — languages spoken in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With conflicts ongoing in these two nations, there’s a need for at least some Soldiers to have knowledge of the languages spoken there. A recent study by the House Armed Services Committee highlighted the need for increased language capability in the armed forces.

“Only a small part of today’s military is proficient in a foreign language and until recently there has been no comprehensive, systematic approach to develop cultural expertise,” committee members wrote in their report.

The Defense Language Institute’s Headstart program is one path that can help Soldiers develop language skills. Headstart is a computer-based, self-directed language learning program aimed at military members getting ready to deploy. The program offers lessons in five languages: Dari, Pashto, Persian Farsi, Mandarin Chinese, and the dialect of Arabic used in Iraq.

The self-guided program takes between 80 to 100 hours to complete. After completing the course, Soldiers should be able to hit the ground in a new country with enough language skills to conduct business and have limited communication with civilians in the local language, according to the DLI commandant.

“You’d be able to take care of the survival-needs level of speaking requirements,” said COL Sue Ann Sandusky, commandant of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. “Even effectively conduct conversations and ask questions about a broad range of topics and understand a significant amount of the answers coming back. You’d certainly be able to communicate if you worked through the program.”

COL Sandusky said Headstart begins like every language program, in that all new language learners will need to learn numbers, colors, quantities, key verbs and key verb constructs. But the Headstart language program is designed primarily for military members on military missions so the program is designed from that perspective.

“It’s basic language learning in a military context,” she said. “Every beginning student learns to count, and the basic military language student needs to learn to count too — but we can contextualize that in a way that it is meaningful. What are you counting? Are you counting money, houses, people in a crowd?”

Each Headstart language program is made up of two sections: “sounds and script” and “military.” The sounds and script portion of the program involves 10 modules that help Soldiers learn the



*In this screenshot from the Headstart application, Soldiers can listen as each avatar speaks a phrase.*

four “modalities” of the language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the target language.

Module 1 of the Dari language program introduces students to the letters of the alphabet. Those characters are then broken down by letters that are similar to the English alphabet and letters that require students to learn a new sound. Subsequent modules introduce country names, telling time, weather, making appointments and topography. The lessons are broken into different interactive games involving word-matching using the

Dari language script.

The second portion of the Dari language software, which is military themed, involves speaking and listening. Soldiers using the program will learn key phrases that might be used in the situations they could encounter in Iraq. In one module, users learn phrases and questions related to landmarks. “What city is this?” “This is Kandahar.” “What is the name of this village?” “This village is Asad Khyl.”

When DLI developed the Headstart program, the faculty put special emphasis on the military application of language, said Pamela Combacau, dean of technology integration at DLI.

“The main reason we are developing this is that there is a need for this and there is nothing like this,” Combacau said. “There is a need to train on language in specific military situations, and since our Soldiers are warfighters, they don’t have time to go through general global knowledge. This is a program for a specific purpose, not to teach a general language, but for the specific purpose for predeployment.”

The lessons in the military portion show questions and phrases in English and in Dari script. The program also shows transliterated phrases, where the Dari words are spelled out in Latin letters, so students can better learn to pronounce the words.

The Headstart program also includes links to online “field support modules” (<http://fieldsupport.lingnet.org>) that cover an array of cultural topics on nearly 40 countries. The cultural information is produced by members of the DLI staff and is largely original material, said Combacau.

All five language versions of Headstart are available from the DLI’s Website at <http://fieldsupport.lingnet.org/products/headstart/> and are also available on CD-ROM. Nearly a million copies of the Iraqi Arabic and Dari language programs have been distributed so far.

*(C. Todd Lopez writes for the Army News Service.)*

# ARMY DEVELOPS RADIO FOR INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS

JASON BOCK

The ability to communicate through voice, digital message or simply by position, is arguably the most critical capability for Soldiers of today's Army.

From the highest level down, communications is an asset that no Soldier should be without.

With this concept in mind, the Joint Program Executive Office Joint Tactical Radio Systems (JTRS) has developed the Rifleman Radio as part of an effort to bring secure, networking capabilities to a level that previously had no means of intra-squad communication.

During a series of exercises last November at Fort Bliss, Texas, representatives from JTRS and the 1st Armored Division incorporated the Rifleman Radio's capabilities into training situations to evaluate the effectiveness of the system within its target Soldier audience.

"The Rifleman Radio will be the first time that we bring a networking radio into the force and right down to the individual rifleman," said COL Daniel P. Hughes, the program manager for JTRS Ground Domain. "It provides a capability for us to bring a secure radio to the individual rifleman, so that he can now speak to his leadership and send his location into the network."

The radio represents an enormous increase in capability, technology, and security for the Soldiers in forward operations, who are currently not issued radios and instead use hand signals to pass information.

"Right now, the individual Soldiers and their squad leaders are the biggest have-nots within the communications arena," said MAJ Tracy Mann of the TRADOC Capability Manager for Tactical Radios. "This capability will allow squad leaders and team leaders to talk directly to their subordinates, and their subordinate leaders to be able to command and control their individual squad and platoon battle troops."

MAJ Mann, the TCM-TR lead for Handheld, Manpack, Small Form Fit radios

(HMS), was a firsthand observer of the training exercises at Fort Bliss.

"We're revalidating those lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom," Mann said. "We just need to continue to improve and refine this radio so we can get the best possible capability to the individual Soldier."

By employing a National Security Agency (NSA) Type 2 certification, the Rifleman Radio offers controlled but unclassified communications a Soldier can employ without requiring security clearances. The NSA Type 2 encryption bars classified information from being passed during transmissions and makes secure information more difficult for enemies to intercept.

In addition to voice communication, the radio also supplies a commander with a GPS picture of his squad members through a Position Location Information (PLI) display. At Fort Bliss, the 1st Armored Division used the GPS features of the Rifleman Radio in a shoot-house situation. Squad leaders positioned outside of a darkened room were able to locate and identify the positions of each member of their team through the PLI.

"The best thing about the whole system and the PLI is you actually zoom in on the battlefield and see your guys' exact locations," Hughes said, "which is definitely a plus for command and control. I can be somewhere else and see my assault element."

The Rifleman Radio is being developed as a stand alone system but will integrate into the Ground Soldier System Ensemble platform, providing mission planning, execution, and situational awareness capabilities to squad team leaders and above. The Rifleman Radio will also be interoperable with the other suite of JTRS products being developed including the Ground Mobile Radio and HMS Manpack radio, to provide the needed connectivity to higher echelon command elements.

Because the Rifleman Radio is a



Jason Bock

*The Rifleman Radio will be interoperable with other Joint Tactical Radio System products.*

networking radio, it can provide a greater range and increased effectiveness for secure one-on-one communication by Soldiers, while conserving power and maintaining signal strength. As long as a user can touch someone in the network, it's not necessary to send a radio signal two or three kilometers to establish communication.

This "chain-like" assistance when it comes to communicating across great distances can contribute greatly to the conservation of battery life.

Hughes is also confident that the program's target Soldier audience will have little-to-no difficulty adjusting to the addition of a radio to their suite of equipment. The Rifleman Radio is interoperable, software programmable and upgradable and employs the Soldier Radio Waveform. It is ruggedized and light, includes a convenient push-to-talk, and a hands-free headset.

By bringing individual communication capabilities to the Soldier in a user-friendly package, on a secure network, the Rifleman Radio should play a key role in reducing fratricide, enhancing the ability of the Soldier to conduct operations, and providing a capability that does not exist in theater today.

JPEO JTRS is trusting in the concept that bringing the Soldier at every level into the communications network will allow the Soldier in theater to get more information to the right place at the right time; and thus help enable commanders to make effective decisions.

*(Jason Bock is a staff writer for the PEO C3T [Command, Control, and Communications Tactical] Chief Knowledge Office.)*

# Soldier's Suicide Leaves Unanswered Questions

SPC BEN HUTTO

The suicide of SPC Jamie Dalton, an infantryman in B Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, in 2006 shocked everyone who knew him. Many of the warning signs weren't evident in Dalton's behavior or the things he said to friends.

"I couldn't believe that he had killed himself," said Ronie Dalton, his mother. "It was the last thing I would have ever thought about. I never worried about him ever taking his life."

Soldiers he served with said Dalton was a well-liked, competent Soldier, who was cool under fire and could be depended on.

"If you were in the worst place on earth, he was the guy you wanted beside you," said SSG Robert Butler, one of Dalton's best friends. "As a Soldier, he knew what he was doing. He knew tactics and weapons, he could drive anything, and he was an expert marksman. There was nothing he couldn't do."

In high school, he was an accomplished student, a national merit scholar and a good athlete, earning a starting position on his high school football team. After high school, Dalton surprised his family by deciding to join the Army.

"He was such an individual we were surprised when he joined the military," his mother said. "He was such a strong-willed person."

"We found that he loved the Army, though. He loved the adventure."

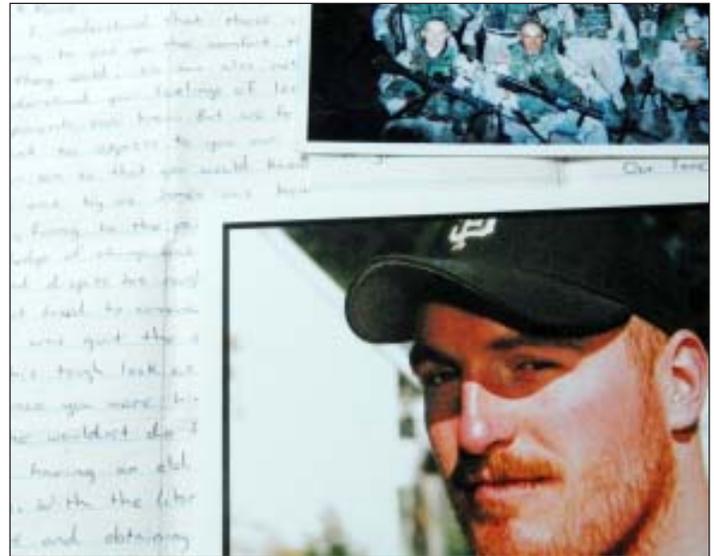
However, Ronie said she saw subtle changes in her son when he returned from his second deployment from Iraq and confronted him about it.

She said her son talked about some intense and gruesome things he had seen during his combat tours in very matter-of-fact tones.

"Looking back, I can't believe we thought that what he was saying was normal, but that is how Soldiers cope with things," she said. "They see things that would horrify many of us, but they adjust to it in order to survive. I think it is tough for some people to reintegrate into what most people consider normal."

"I asked him about PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) because it was a hot topic at the time, but he said he didn't have anything like that," she said. "He thought he might have a little combat stress, however. He said that when he drank he could become really angry or emotional and that he would have to pay attention to it."

Before his second deployment, Dalton was demoted from sergeant to specialist after failing a drug test and transferred



SPC Ben Hutto

*Ronie Dalton, the mother of suicide victim SPC Jamie Dalton, lays out mementos of her lost son.*

from A Company to B Company.

"Being away from Hardrock (A Company) was tough on him," Butler said. "During the next deployment, I know it tore him apart when he learned that some of his brothers had been killed and he wasn't there to protect them."

Aside from a few conversations and off-hand remarks about his wartime experiences, Dalton seemed to be adjusting well when he returned from his second deployment. He went out with his friends and attempted to stay connected with his family. Butler said that Dalton was looking forward to getting his rank restored and returning to A Company.

Which makes the events that happened on April 14, 2006, all the more puzzling and disturbing.

Ronie said Dalton was out with friends that night, and by all accounts, drank too much. Turning down several rides back to Kelley Hill, Dalton took a cab back to his barracks.

After arriving at his room, Dalton went into another Soldier's room to get something to eat. Soldiers who served with him said Dalton frequently did this. He would grab a few things and leave some money on the counter and apologize the next day. Most of them considered it funny and harmless.

"He always knew he could come into my room and take whatever he wanted," said Butler. "What was mine was his. It wasn't a big deal."

That night Dalton entered the room of a Soldier, who had just arrived from basic training and wasn't aware of Dalton's late night habits. He called the military police.

The MPs detained Dalton. Dalton wanted to change clothes before they took him away. The MPs allowed a runner to escort him up to his room.

He changed and grabbed a revolver and returned to the battalion day room with the runner. Dalton showed the weapon and told people to leave. Those who stayed in the room were told to sit on the couch. As they watched, Dalton took his own life.

The event shocked everyone in the brigade.

"When I found out the next morning, I couldn't believe it," Butler said. "I was shocked and hurt. I couldn't explain why it happened."

"He wasn't someone who was bitter or lashing out," Ronie said. "That night something shifted inside him. He wasn't planning on it."

Both recognize that alcohol was one of the factors that caused this tragedy.

"I know if he had been sober that he wouldn't have done it," Butler said.

"Obviously, there was some trauma in my son," Ronie said. "Maybe there were some things that were bothering him that weren't evident, even to him. That night, the alcohol was like lighting a match to that straw that was hidden inside him. I also wonder if a part of my son was worn down; if he had just had it."

Butler said he has quit trying to understand why his friend ended his life.

"There is really nothing to figure out," he said. "Who really cares why? It doesn't

change anything. There isn't a reason that anyone can give me that will make me understand. I quit searching for reasons why a long time ago."

There isn't a day that goes by that Dalton's family and friends don't wish he was here with them. Ronie left California to be closer to the side of her son's life he rarely spoke about.

"I moved to Columbus to incorporate who he was into my life," she said. "I wanted his loss to be life affirming. Just because he is gone doesn't mean he still isn't a big part of my life."

Butler said that every suicide brief reminds him of his lost brother.

"It seems like I have a suicide brief once a month and it reopens the wound every time," he said. "I question myself every time. How did I not see it coming if he was so close to me? This guy was so close to me. Did I miss the signs? It's horrible."

These questions will never be answered because the person who can answer them

is gone. The chaplain of the 3rd HBCT, MAJ David Lile, said that Dalton's suicide was preventable.

"The main part of the tragedy that played out was brought on by alcohol," he said. "Alcohol can numb your sense of reality and make people unable to grasp the fullness of life. Alcohol, like any depressant, doesn't give you an accurate sense of how things really are around you."

Lile said he believes Dalton allowed his problems to overwhelm his decision making that night. He hopes other Soldiers will use the suicide to see that life's problems should not limit their view of its value.

"Life is complex," he said. "It's not easy. If we reduce it down to situations, we can lose sight of that. The tragedy of that situation was that SPC Dalton didn't allow his life to be lived out in its fullness."

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**SPC Ben Hutto** is a public affairs specialist assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Ga.

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**NEVER  
ACCEPT  
DEFEAT**

USACHPPM

**Getting Help is a Sign of Strength**

**Suicide Can be Prevented. Get Help.**

Talk to your Chaplain or a Behavioral Health Professional or Call Military OneSource 1-800-342-9647  
www.militaryonesource.com

TA-061-0107

**If your buddy or someone you know is thinking about suicide or showing warning signs, take it seriously.**

Remember **ACE!**

Ask your buddy:

- \* Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm.
- \* Ask the question directly, such as, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Care for your buddy:

- \* Remove any means that could be used for self-injury.
- \* Calmly control the situation; do not use force.
- \* Actively listen to produce relief.

Escort your buddy:

- \* Never leave your buddy alone.
- \* Escort to the chain of command, a chaplain, a behavioral health professional or a primary care provider.

For more suicide prevention resources, go online to:

- \* <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/>
- \* <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/readiness/suicide.aspx>