

RSLC CUTS ADMIN TIME, MAINTAINS COMPETITIVE EDGE

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The Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course (RSLC) offered by Fort Benning's 4th Ranger Training Battalion provides training to reconnaissance and surveillance leaders in all branches of the military.

But with current operational tempos high for many units, the RTB needed to find a way to train troops limited by time because of their unit's reset and redeployment processes, said CPT Brian Canny, executive officer for D Company, RTB.

Previously 33 days long, the course introduced a shorter, streamlined course giving troops more hands-on time and a shorter stay at the post by reducing administrative time and eliminating nonessential training.

The move to a 26-day course is in line with achieving a greater competitive edge alongside shorter courses, such as the Army Reconnaissance Course, said SSG Alexander Marotta, an RSLC instructor with D Co., which conducts the course.

Formerly known as the Long Range Surveillance Leaders Course, RSLC was developed in 1986 to teach mission-essential tasks drawn from lessons learned in previous long-range reconnaissance operations conducted in Southeast Asia. In 2002, the course was renamed RSLC and tailored to further develop the combat arms related skills of troops eligible for assignments to units whose primary mission is to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance, target acquisition, and combat assessment operations. The course expanded from 36 slots available per course to 82 slots, and is open to eligible personnel from all branches of the military.

Today, the course brings in a variety of personnel, including Reconnaissance troops, cavalry scouts, Pathfinders, battlefield surveillance brigade troops, Navy Special Warfare candidates, Marine reconnaissance officers, Special Forces teams and Rangers.

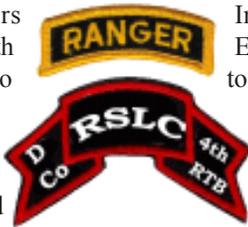
Modifications made to RSLC, which provides expert-level instruction in areas including reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, data transmission and foreign vehicle identification, will not affect training standards, CPT Canny said.

Among the changes, RSLC has cut back retraining time for first-time failures on land navigation as well as condensing classroom time on written land navigation skills.

For potential students, this means they must come prepared, said SFC Brian Baumgartner, primary instructor for land navigation and reconnaissance physical exercises.

Classroom and field instruction was also reduced in the areas of vehicle mobility and close target reconnaissance. The course eliminated survival, evasion, and recovery and digital navigation, which had previously been trimmed back, Baumgartner said.

Additionally, nontactical airborne operations and Special Patrol



Insertion and Extraction and Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction systems courses were combined into one day to reduce administrative time. The course culminates in a five-day field training exercise, which was reduced by one day.

The result of the changes is an increase in practical exercises, which leads to an increase in retention of knowledge, said SSG Marotta, primary instructor for intelligence collection and vehicle identification.

The course will continue to offer specialized training in areas such as vehicle identification, photography, observation techniques, communication, data transmission, battle drills and camouflage.

LTC Daniel Waters, who graduated RSLC June 12, said he signed up for the course to increase his understanding of the capabilities of the recon squadron he would soon command. Waters is the incoming commander for 1st Squadron, 221st Armored Cavalry Regiment of the Nevada National Guard.

"As you move up through the ranks, you turn from direct leadership aspects to indirect. I liked getting back to the troop level, being at the tip of the spear," LTC Waters said.

Waters said the course improved his knowledge of in-depth planning for team-level missions.

"When you send out a six-man team, you must make up for the lack of force protection and firepower. You must plan for contingencies. If there are any shortcomings in a person's planning, I can see that and improve the plan to make it valuable," he said.

By shaving a week off the course, RSLC has increased its attractiveness to units needing a quicker training cycle. However, other options are also available, CPT Canny said.

The executive officer said RSLC offers resident unit training, mobile training teams and the observer-controller/EXEVAL package. For specialized training, Canny recommends units contact D Company six to seven months in advance.

According to information posted at the school's Web site, students must possess a Ranger school physical completed within the last 18 months and be an E-5 or above (waiverable by the first O-5 in the chain of command). Personnel assigned to, have the potential to be assigned to or work alongside Infantry and Field Artillery units or involved in reconnaissance and surveillance operations are eligible to attend the course. RSLC graduates are authorized the 6B additional skill identifier.

For more information about the course, visit the RSLC Web site at https://www.infantry.army.mil/rtb/new_lrsc/default.htm or call RSLC at (706) 544-6039.

Kristin Molinaro writes for Fort Benning's post newspaper, *The Bayonet*.
