



Combatives School Revamps Curriculum

New Plan Builds More Effective Close-Quarters Fighters

VINCE LITTLE

The U.S. Army Combatives School at Fort Benning, Ga., has adopted a new teaching plan.

The Army is revamping the curriculum to take lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan and build more effective close-quarters fighters, said Matt Larsen, the school's director. The goal is to push advanced techniques down to the small-unit level, including basic training.

"We want Soldiers to be agile, adaptive and competent (so) they can adjust to the realities of the battlefield," Larsen said.

The modifications are based on feedback from across the Army and other factors, he said. More than 900 interviews were conducted with Soldiers who saw hand-to-hand combat in the villages, houses and streets of Iraq or Afghanistan.

Soldiers most often enter small houses and rooms during combat operations, so the Army wants to take the ground-grappling principles taught in combatives and emphasize them from a standing position, Larsen said.

"In the field, the fight is always over weapons and how to maintain control of them," he said. "That will be taught all the way down to basic training."

Knee strikes, clinch drills, fighting with weapons and combat equipment, and pushing terror suspects against the wall are among the upper-echelon combatives



Cheryl Rodewig

CPT Keenan Ellison places a rear-naked chokehold on CPT Chris Zagursky before beating him in one of the early bouts of a combatives tournament held on Fort Benning, Ga.

techniques Soldiers will now be exposed to at lower unit levels, Larsen said.

Larsen said the school will stick with the four pillars — instruction based on universal, foundational, motivational and tactical attributes — that allowed the program to thrive. But Soldiers often struggled to retain knowledge gained in unit combatives training, so adjustments were needed.

Levels 1 and 2 are being changed to the basic and tactical combatives courses, while the basic and tactical combatives instructor courses replace Levels 3 and 4. Under the new construct, the number of training hours at each tier remains the same — 40 in basic, 80 for tactical, and 160 each

within both instructor phases.

"Combatives is an integral part of what we do as Soldiers," Larsen said. "You can't effectively train in close-quarters combat without combatives. You're going to need it any place you can be hands-on with potential enemies."

He said more than 57,000 troops have graduated from the Army Combatives School since its inception in 2002 — including 50,374 (Level 1), 5,255 (Level 2), 1,408 (Level 3) and 564 (Level 4).

For more information, go to the school's Web site at <https://www.benning.army.mil/combatives> or call (706) 545-2811.

(Vince Little writes for Fort Benning's The Bayonet newspaper.)

To view current and past issues of the magazine, check out *Infantry Magazine's* Web site at <https://www.benning.army.mil/magazine> (will require AKO login).

HRC INFANTRY BRANCH TALKS TRANSFERS, EMERGING TRENDS

CPT JIMMY ROSS

This article includes updates on current topics at the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC) Infantry Branch. Managing officers continues to be our first priority. In addition to managing officers, informing the field on emerging trends and policies is part of our mission as well. In recent months, there have been numerous inquiries concerning force numbers and trends. We are also in the beginning phases of our move from Alexandria, Va., to Fort Knox, Ky. Changes in our Web site have been implemented to reduce less useful information. Each of these subjects will be further discussed in detail. If there are any questions concerning the information in this article, we will be glad to assist.

Branch Transfers

As of 2 November 2009, branch transfers — now known as the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP) — are now boarded by the retention office instead of processed by branch. Officers must be a promotable first lieutenant or major with no more than 14 years of active federal service to be eligible in accordance with the latest Military Personnel (MILPER) message (10-082). If an officer is approved for branch transfer, he has a 14-day window to accept or decline. Once an officer accepts the transfer, he will incur an additional three-year active duty service obligation (ADSO). That ADSO begins at the first day of training or upon PCS. A common question asked is: “Does the ADSO augment my existing ADSO?” The answer to that question is “no.” An officer’s new obligation is concurrent with the existing ADSO. Those who are or have participated in Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS), Expanded Graduate School Program (EGSP), or the menu of incentives programs are not eligible until their obligation is fully up. A MILPER message will be published each quarter before the board convenes. A table with each branch by year group will illustrate who is eligible to transfer into a certain branch, and another table will illustrate who’s eligible to transfer out. Officers participating in the branch detail program must go before the board to remain in their detail branch. Packages are to be submitted to OPMD Retention at opmdretention@conus.army.mil. Refer to the MILPER message Web site at <https://perscomnd04@army.mil/milpermsgs.nsf> for the latest updates. Information can also be found on the HRC Infantry Web site. Branch will continue to assist by answering questions, as well as provide options for career enhancement opportunities.

HRC Web site

You may have noticed the recent changes to the HRC Web site. Last fall, efforts began to alter HRC’s site to make it more user-friendly. The intent is to limit the number of pages before you get to the Infantry Branch portion of the site. It now takes two clicks to

enter the Infantry portion. At branch, we are aware of how important the Web site is for communicating to the field. Maintaining accurate information on the site has become a priority for us. Each assignment desk still has its own link to address hot topics, assignments, references, and frequently asked questions.

Infantry Stats

We conducted queries to see exactly how Infantry officers by rank and year group are assigned across the Army. There are more than 6,500 active duty Infantry officers currently serving in the Army. We examine our strength, distribution, promotions percentages, and schools. The total authorized 11A numbers were compared to total number assigned. Total numbers assigned included 11A coded authorizations and immaterials 01A, 02A, and 03A requirements. These numbers were provided by TOPMIS (Total Officer Personnel Management Information System). Immaterial jobs 02A and 03A are Infantry and Armor jobs, such as an Infantry officer serving in a Cavalry Squadron, and vice versus for Armor. Those serving in 01A jobs are positions filled by any officer. At first glance, it appeared that Infantry Branch was overstrength on authorization; that we were over 100% strength for Infantrymen jobs. When these distributions are taken into account, our percentages are significantly lower for those working in 11A coded positions. Additional impacts on this lower percentage reflects officers that are branched detailed, or in schools (Army or civilian). From observing the data we are able to clearly see how Infantry officers are distributed across the Army to ensure accurate assignment placing. Promotions percentages were based on the total number of eligible officers for each available promotion zone (primary zone [PZ], below the zone [BZ], and above the zone [AZ]) from the latest results. There were a total of 121 LTCs eligible for promotion to COL for FY 09. A total of 41 were promoted, of those 9 BZ (7.7%), 31 PZ (26.8%), and 1 AZ (0%). There were 144 total eligible for promotion LTC for FY 09, with 131 promoted. Of those promoted 12 were BZ (9%), 115 PZ (86.7%), and 4 AZ (3.3%). Lastly, total number of MAJs eligible were 154 for FY 10. A total of 134 promoted, 47 BZ (25.9%), 82 PZ (70.9%), and 5 AZ (3%). Based off these promotion statistics, promotion up to LTC looks promising if officers successfully follow the career path outlined in accordance with AR 600-3, *The Army Personnel Development System*.

In October 2009, the CFD board for year group 2002 convened. Here are some numbers for individuals selected. Up to this point I have been under the impression that whoever was selected for a CFD was forced out. Though there are a few that are, those that appeal after the results are published fall into the low teens. A total of 201 officers in year group 2002 went before the board. A total of 69 officers were selected for a functional area, of the ones that got

selected, 24 got their first choice, 27 got their second choice, and six got their third choice. There were 12 of 23 that got selected that didn't put a preference, the rest stayed Infantry. Those numbers selected for CFD represents only CFD choices, not Infantry. To clarify, if an officer got CFDeD and received his 2nd choice or 3rd choice, he didn't have Infantry in his previous choices. In summary, 132 officers remained in the Infantry, 69 were CFDeD, and of the ones selected, one could assume that around 12 officers didn't get what they wanted. Officers that want to appeal now must submit their request to retention IAW MILPER Message 10-082.

Movement to Fort Knox

HRC has started the process of transitioning from Alexandria, which had been its home for 37 years, to Fort Knox. HRC at Fort Knox will consist of Alexandria, St. Louis, and Indianapolis personnel offices combined. Those officers who have been active duty Infantry during the past 15 years may know or have heard of Juanita Walker, the 2LT assignment specialist. She has worked at HRC for 37 years, spending a majority of her time in Air Defense Artillery and Infantry. She has been a part of Infantry Branch since 1994 and unfortunately has decided not to move to Fort Knox. Others who have greatly served our branch and will be missed are Phyllis Harley, who contributed 20 years of service to HRC, and Lee Gray, who has eight years of service. These ladies will be truly missed not only for their knowledge but their dedication and commitment to our branch. Walter Ezar will assume responsibility for 2LTs. Marlena Williams will assume responsibility as LTC HR specialist. MAJ Jake Jacobs and CPT Mike Eliassen are the current assignment officers moving to Fort Knox. They will be augmented with the rest of the assignment officers and civilians in Kentucky. Transition will be between the months of April to August 2010, with the main body moving between June and July 2010. Efforts at HRC and Infantry Branch have been implemented to continue continuity to sustain momentum for taking care of Soldiers and families.

For more information or to contact a member of the HRC Infantry Branch staff, go to <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/branches/officer/mfe/infantry/index.htm>.

(CPT Jimmy Ross currently serves as the Infantry Branch Future Readiness Officer.)



Courtesy photo

The Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall, a three-quarter-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, will be at the National Infantry Museum from 28 May until 13 June.

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL VISITS NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM

Of the more than 58,000 Soldiers who died in the Vietnam War, more than 20,000 were Infantrymen. It is fitting that a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall should be at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, Ga., for Memorial Day.

The original memorial, located in Constitution Gardens adjacent to the National Mall in Washington D.C., was inspired by a member of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. Jan Scruggs started the project, which was completed in 1982. It was designed by U.S. landscape architect Maya Lin and receives around three million visitors each year.

Since a pilgrimage to the original isn't always possible, replicas have been crafted to tour the country. One, the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall, is a three-quarter-scale replica. Eight-feet high and 240-feet long, its black, faux granite reflective surface is inscribed with the names of more than 58,000 servicemen and women who died or are missing in Vietnam.

The traveling monument was created by Dignity Memorial as a service to those who might never have the chance to travel to the nation's capital. Since the monument began its travels in 1990, it has been displayed in more than 200 cities across the country, allowing millions of visitors to experience the healing power of the memorial.

"We are so proud to be able to present this sacred display," National Infantry Foundation MG (Ret) Jerry White said. "I know seeing it, touching it, will be a moving experience for me, and thousands of other Vietnam veterans and their families, too."

Following its arrival at the National Infantry Museum on 28 May, the wall will remain through 13 June. The replica will be located just east of the museum, along Heritage Walk.