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USABCTCoE Commanding General's Comments

By: BG Bradley May
Commander, USABCTCoE

Welcome to another edition of the IET Journal. Our efforts to communicate across installation boundaries are beginning to show fruit. Past editions of this Journal have focused on new experiments and training theory, most notably Outcome-Based Training and Education (OBTE). In this issue, we are focused on input from across TRADOC on how units are applying the OBTE concepts to their organizational training…making Soldiers better prepared for combat.

We have a story of how Fort Gordon is improving their tactical field training during AIT, how one company at Fort Jackson is completing BRM training within 2-weeks of BCT start, and how Fort Leonard Wood is keeping the Soldier story alive through military blogging straight from the Soldiers currently training. Each of these articles represent the will, creativity, and desire of units and unit leaders to prepare Soldiers better…to make the Army experience better…to be better.

We encourage leaders to share their knowledge, experience, and success through articles from the field to improve the flow of ideas and foster better communication across the force.

Energy Drinks: Do they Really Provide Energy?

By: LTC Sonya Cable
Director, Experimentation and Analysis Element

As we are well into the season for heat injury prevention, take a moment to observe the beverages that your cadre are consuming. You will notice some drinking water or a carbohydrate electrolyte beverage, but the most frequent beverage you will observe is an "energy drink."

This should not come as any big surprise. Since Red Bull first hit the market in 1997, the industry has grown to the point of earning over $5.4 billion per year (Doheny, 2008). This growth can be attributed to marketing efforts toward those who are under 30 years old. Energy drinks claim to provide more energy than a typical soda. Additional claims include relieving fatigue, increasing alertness, enhancing physical performance, and stimulating metabolism (IFIC, 2008). These claims are related to the product ingredients.

What is in an Energy Drink?

The most common ingredients include taurine, B vitamins, sugar, caffeine, and guarana. Taurine is an amino acid that is used in brain development. It also contributes to regulating water and mineral salts in the blood (Endreszi, 2008). Taurine is found primarily in protein sources like meat and fish. Some studies suggest that taurine may improve reaction time and athletic performance (Liberatore, 2009). A University of Wisconsin study reported that combining taurine with caffeine may lead to increased blood pressure and slower heart rates (Liberatore, 2009).

B-complex vitamins include the well known Vitamin B-6, Vitamin B-12, Thiamin, and Niacin. The logic behind adding them to energy drinks is that these vitamins are needed for the production of energy: exercise challenges the metabolic pathway that uses these water-soluble vitamins, increasing the body's demand for them (Manore, 2000). These vitamins are readily available in lean protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

This journal is comprised of material submitted by Army personnel and others connected to or having an interest in Initial Entry Training (IET). The views and opinions expressed in the IET Journal are those of each individual author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of view of the United States Army Basic Combat Training Center of Excellence, Fort Jackson, the United States Army Accessions Command, the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, the United States Army, or any other part of the United States Government.

Energy Drinks Cont…

Sugar is typically a major ingredient in energy drinks (Liberatore, 2009). The high sugar content creates a roller coaster effect within the body's energy system, creating an energy high followed by a crash. As with any high-sugar-concentration beverage, the body responds by diluting the blood's sugar content by pulling water from the cells. This may lead to dehydration.

The primary "energy" ingredient is caffeine. Consumed strategically, caffeine can help relieve fatigue and increase alertness. Too much, though, has been linked to dehydration, insomnia, upset stomach, and agitation. Severe dehydration is probable for those who consume energy drinks during exercise or shortly after as a result of fluid loss from sweating and the diuretic quality of caffeine (Brown, 2008). The Food Drug Administration (FDA) limits the caffeine content of cola-type sodas to 71 milligrams per 12 ounces (Doheny, 2008). An energy drink may contain 72-150 milligrams of caffeine for just one serving. Most cans contain two to three servings, resulting in up to 450 milligrams of caffeine (Liberatore, 2009). Guarana is another common energy drink ingredient. Guarana is a plant native to the Amazon. The plant's fruit contains a seed that provides five times the amount of caffeine as a coffee bean (Liberatore, 2009). The amount of caffeine that is provided in an energy drink from guarana is generally not listed on the product label. The American College of Sports Medicine, the American Dietetic Association, and the Dietitians of Canada, in a joint position statement, stated that the excessive use of energy drinks containing caffeine can be potentially dangerous (ACSM, 2009). The organizations also discourage the use of energy drinks in combination with other stimulants or alcohol.

The reality is that "stimulant drinks" would be a more accurate name for the popular beverage known as "energy drinks." It is, though, a popular method used by cadre to maintain their energy throughout long duty days. Their performance and energy levels would be improved by actually consuming energy in the way of food – lean protein and quality simple- and complex-carbohydrates. Some would argue that this is not a practical approach for cadre, especially as they often do not sit down to consume meals. The concept, though, has worked well for elite athletes using such items as granola bars, trail mix, or sports gels. These products and other similar ones are just as easy to consume on the move, but they actually do deliver energy safely.

LTC Sonya Cable serves as the Director, Experimentation and Analysis Element (EAE), a division of the Directorate of Basic Combat Training. She is a certified nutritionist and has participated in multiple studies concerning food and Soldier performance.

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Energy Drinks Cont…

Why is there a difference in labeling?

The difference in product labeling between sodas and energy drinks is a result of the FDA's product classification system. Sodas are considered a food requiring full disclosure in the product label. Energy drinks, though, are considered a dietary supplement. Dietary supplements are regulated differently. As such, the FDA does not approve or review products before they are made available to the consumer (Doheny, 2008). The FDA becomes involved after documented adverse effects from a product such as the case with Hydroxycut products. On 1 May 2009, the FDA published a consumer warning advising consumers to stop using Hydroxycut products. This was a result of the product being linked to at least 23 cases of serious liver injuries.

Note specific group marketing used in some products. Above is a product marketed and targeted specifically towards Soldiers.

The images on this page are provided for example only and do not constitute either an endorsement or discouragement concerning purchasing or using a particular product.

The Gold Nugget: Creating Red Phase Marksmen

Introduction and Summary by: Mr. Johnny Cobb
Article by: CPT Adam M. Miller

Introduction

The IET Journal proudly presents "The Gold Nugget," an article highlighting Best Practices used by commanders, drill sergeants, and units throughout the Initial Entry Training (IET) environment. If you have a "Gold Nugget" in your unit, and would like to share it with other units, please let us know.

I had the pleasure of sitting in on the 193rd Brigade Semi Annual Training Brief (SATB). Impressive would best describe the battalion commanders' present actions. Current statistics, ways ahead, and best practices were the focus, yet all commanders and their command sergeants major stated how OBTE is helping them meet and often, exceed their objectives. Eager to capture this unit's tacit knowledge, I attended yet another SATB, this time at the battalion level. I sat impressed by a young captain that was confidently briefing a Brigadier General on HIS unit's marksmanship program; a marksmanship program that proposed to achieve 100% of all Soldiers qualified on their assigned weapons by the end of the second week of training. My best recollection of the Brigadier General's (and everyone else not in this battalion) response was, "What are you doing?" Not only did that statistics show 100% qualified, they showed exceptional results as well. Here is that young captain's response:

Creating Red Phase Marksmen:

How Qualifying in the Second Week Works for One Company

Outcomes-Based Training and Education (OBTE) is a philosophical approach to training aimed at targeting a more effective comprehension of the Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills; it owes success to the doctrine of decentralized operations. Commanders at all levels are encouraged to use the available resources to achieve mission accomplishment. This of course implies that the spectrum of a unit's experience, the art and science, is maximized at every training event in order to effectively target the individual commander's desired tangible and intangible outcomes. At the heart of Outcome-Based Training is the commander's intent, key tasks, and desired end state, or outcome. Nowhere is commander's intent more critical than creating combat marksmen within a ten-week training window.

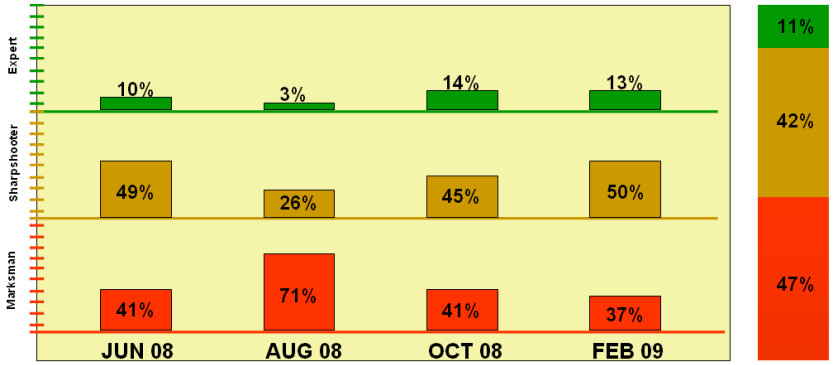
As I near the end of my command, it is impossible to ignore the Army's transformation in creating its newest combat marksmen. Marksmanship changes across the BCT landscape have been swift and reportedly effective. Soldiers are now required to train within a standard of "firsts," from adjusting their own weapons on the zero range to, in some instances, qualifying over three days or even without an IBA or ACH. Fort Leonard Wood has even adopted a new name for their marksmanship program: combat focused marksmanship. Beneath the buzzword, it's still a set of experimental or proven key tasks designed to arrive at clearly understood tangible and intangible outcomes. On Fort Jackson, it would be difficult to find adjacent battalions and in some cases companies that train exactly the same way. My company is no exception.

M	T	W	Th	F	S
Pick-up	Issue Weapons			Victory Tower	
	BRM Intro; 4x Fundamentals; PT				
Training Holiday Range Procedures	Zero RG 3	LOMAH 175m Zero RG 11	Timing & Rhythm ALT C RG 4	Field Zero & Traverse RG 10	Rhythm & Muscle Memory RG 9
Pre Qual RG 10	EST (<35) Pre Qual RG 18	Qual 1 RG 18	Qual 2 RG 20	Qual 3 RG 20	

In October 2007, after completion of my first full training cycle in command, I decided to build a marksmanship program that would successfully qualify 100% of my Soldiers in the second week of BCT. There were three main reasons why:

Creating Red Phase Marksmen cont…

- First and most important was my realization that the traditional BCT framework (the core training Red- White- Blue methodology) was not the most effective at pacing the Soldier's nine or ten week learning curve. Soldiers usually conduct BRM in weeks three and four, between two field-training exercises and among a host of other key warrior tasks: combat life saving, land navigation, and advanced rifle marksmanship to name a few. I felt this learning curve was impractical given the cycle's time constraints and expected measures of effectiveness. I wanted my Soldiers to take their first steps toward becoming combat marksmen before they bivouacked even one night in a simulated tactical environment.



- Second, my key outcomes for Red Phase are discipline and confidence, both of which are required to successfully qualify. Targeting BRM qualification as a strictly Red Phase enterprise is effective in its simplicity and outcome-based justification. The desired outcomes for the Red Phase marksmanship program enhances the only other two training events conducted the first two weeks: physical training and Victory Tower, both of which demand an introductory discipline and confidence akin to demonstrating the four fundamentals.

- Finally, effective weapons immersion hinges on a new Soldier's ability to have and demonstrate respect for the assigned weapon. If the adopted weapons immersion standard requires a Soldier to carry a basic load of blank 5.56mm and have accountability of the weapon 24/7 from day one, that's great, but the Soldier's respect for the weapon is attuned the second that weapon fires a live round. That weapon ceases to be a walking stick for those first two weeks and muzzle awareness is suddenly a practical discipline. Additionally, the art of weapons cleaning becomes a conditioned routine with tangible benefits a Soldier can see, smell, and feel.

My marksmanship program is not without challenges and having spent the last two years ensuring my training schedule facilitates a Red Phase qualification, I can say with absolute certainty that it is no easy task. Three constant challenges come to mind:

- Be prepared to accept risk. The present Fort Jackson core-scheduling procedures are far from practical to designing such a training schedule. In the past, the company has accepted limited prequalification days and on some instances, no LOMAH range or Engagement Skills Trainer (EST).

- Safety. Firing so soon in the cycle presents a higher training risk. Leaders must remain vigilant to mitigate the inherent risk of bringing a full company of brand new Soldiers onto a live fire range.

- Motivation. Drill Sergeants must believe that the marksmanship strategy will accomplish the commander's desired outcomes most effectively. This means the trainer must be "sold" on the fact that they will have a better product at the end of Red Phase: a Soldier that is less than a third of the way through the cycle who is already demonstrating marksmanship confidence and discipline, and is thus more than qualified to move forward to introductory tactical maneuver exercises.

I do not believe qualifying in the second week would be successful or even beneficial to just any company; if it weren't effective in my company I would have ceased the strategy in the fall of 2007 as any competent commander would. I have found four keys to success that are essential to create Red Phase Marksmen.

# of Soldiers	FTG	# Unqual.	Marksmanship Total Breakdown		
			# of MM	# of SS	# of EXP
852	92%	0	402(47%)	359(42%)	91(11%)

Average training results over 4 cycles.

- BRM Reinforcement or Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction. During Red Phase, the Soldiers do nothing but BRM—literally. This means that they live, sleep, and eat shooting. Besides PT, it's all they know! Beginning in the reception phase of training

Creating Red Phase Marksmen cont…

(even at the Reception Battalion), the Soldiers are introduced to the four fundamentals of marksmanship and begin to receive classes. In concert with an obvious in-processing schedule, this is all that they do. This BRM Reinforcement continues when they arrive to the company and are assigned a weapon. At that point, they spend three to four days in a round-robin setting practicing how to breathe, aim, squeeze the trigger, and shoot in the prone position. Only after my cadre have examined and coached ***every*** Soldier are we ready to go to a zero range.

- Drill Sergeant-to-Soldier ratio. As I've said, I demand that *every* Soldier be individually inspected and coached on the four fundamentals. To facilitate this on the first two range days, I shoot half of the company first day and the other half on the second. We take our time and ensure that the Soldiers understand their mechanical zeroes and their fundamentals.
- Targeting an end state. Each range has a specific purpose. When I talk to my cadre, I never just say "today we're going to familiarize the Soldiers…" or something to that extent. We approach each range with a goal in mind: zero, zero refinement, timing, target transition, or kneeling. Each of these skills is the target of their own range day.
- Inspired cadre. Drill Sergeant motivation is a must. The command team must constantly inspire the cadre and communicate the outcomes for specific days at the range.

The four points above keep me on track each and every cycle and have never let me down. I believe there are many ways to be successful in creating BCT combat marksmen, and if commanders make full use of the outcome-based methodology, many more strategies will come to the forefront in the years to come. With that in mind, I also believe that my strategy in creating Red Phase Marksmen deserves to be studied for possible implementation in the future.

CPT Adam Miller is the Commander for Company F, 3rd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment at Fort Jackson.

Summary

CPT Miller's Rifle program is one of many programs incorporating OBTE in Basic Combat Training marksmanship. The former Battalion Commander of the 3rd BN, 47th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning LTC John Lightner and his Command Sergeant Major, CSM Richard Weik, utilize a different program that incorporates their own Basic Combat Training Rifle Trainer's Guide. A copy of this guide is posted on Army Knowledge Online (AKO) at https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/17197698.

What's your unit's "Gold Nugget"? We're not only eager to highlight that best practice, we want to share it for others to use. For submission of your unit's Best Practice, contact:

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Coast Guard Basic Training

By: COL Craig Currey
Director, Directorate of Basic Combat Training

Since 1983, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) has conducted all of its Basic Combat Training (BCT) at Cape May, New Jersey. The 53-day Recruit Training Program has graduated an average of 4,060 recruits per year over the last three years. With a total force of 45, 000 active members and 8,000 Reserves, the USCG requires far fewer replacements than the Army trains a year in Initial Entry Training. As the USCG operates on a smaller scale then the US Army, observing their training and training philosophies can help us understand our training better.

Recruits arrive on Tuesday night and graduate on Fridays 7.5 weeks later. They ship through MEPS to the Philadelphia Airport USO and are driven to Cape May. The recruits arrive sequentially in the evening beginning around 2000 on buses staggered at planned intervals. The staggered bus arrival prevents overcrowded and results in more processing efficiency with less waiting in lines. The USCG fills a class or "company" each week averaging around 83 sailors with a range of 50 to 100. By Army standards this is the equivalent of essentially a platoon+ a week. There are between 800-1200 recruits at Cape May at any one time with all classes in session including those in a hold-over or hold-under status. These numbers yield around what an Army Initial Entry Training (IET) battalion does a year.

The USCG demographics vary from the Army some. FY08 averages included 89.9% active duty and 9.2% Reserve, 85.3% male and 14.7% female, 91% single and 9% married, 70.3% Caucasian and 6.1% African-American, 80.2% just high school graduates, 2.6% GED, 6.9% Bachelors degree, and 2.9% Associates degree. The USCG also varies from other service as 86.1% of its graduates from Recruit Training go directly to their first unit—only 13.9% of graduates go immediately to their A School, the equivalent of Army Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Hence, they need to progress recruits to the highest level of training before they graduate.

The reception effort is done in Sexton Hall by a small group of cadre. The process begins with 3 days of in-processing known as "Forming Week" before the training unit cadre assumes control on Friday afternoon and takes the recruits to their barracks, called halls. Their Central Initial Issue Point (CIIP) equivalent is a mainly contracted effort that operates much like the Army. The recruits receive their issue with one noticeable exception. The contract requires 24 dollars to size new recruits for their uniforms; to reduce this cost, the USCG uses a full-body scanner to size uniforms. Recruits enter a curtained-off booth where a series of white flashing lights yield all pertinent uniform sizes except shoes and hats . All clothing items are simply issues against the computer printout. The cost savings are significant.

Reception includes medical screening, shots, and records checks and creation—all similar to Army efforts. To help with injury prevention initiatives, a class is provided on day 2 to train the proper technique of lifting heavy objects. As the unit cadre assumes control on Friday, they begin Indoctrination Weekend that consists of a "traditional" initial welcome of yelling, incentive training (physical training as corrective action), and some basic classes.

To prepare the cadre for their duties, the USCG conducts a 6-week (35 day) Company Commander Course at Cape May which is functionally equivalent to the US Army Drill Sergeant School.

Coast Guard Basic Training cont…

Their drill sergeant is called a company commander. The cadre course is TDY and then the NCOs return to their USCG units to PCS. They must pass a rigid, memory-oriented drill board in the 4th week of the course. The drill they use is from the Marine Corps drill manual, many portions of which they must memorize and recite. The 6th week has a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) board that the candidates must demonstrate their knowledge of Cape May procedures and classes. One unique tradition that they do is that they leave campaign hats at their Company Commander School after successful completion of the course, waiting for them to return from TDY to put them on and begin duties. This "on the trail" time is typically 3-4 years.

Task organization is centered around the company of around 80 recruits which has one E-7 Chief and two E-6 First Petty Officers. Actual leader to led ratios depend on the fill but they tend to average 1:25 or 1:30. There are few officers at Cape May as compared to an Army IET unit. A LTJG (O-2) is the battalion officer that supervises company commanders.

Physical training is conducted by a civilian PT committee cadre—not the company commanders. Although they may assist with some controlling of recruits, the PT instructors run the recruits through aerobic stationary bikes and sequential Cybex machines at 10-12 repetitions per machine. They have an excellent gym facility with some 129 LifeFitness stationary bikes and multiple Cybex circuits, so many recruits can exercise at once. The goal is to have no one standing around. An outdoor track is available for some running but the focus is to build recruits up on aerobic bike sessions to minimize running injuries. When running sessions are conducted they tend to be interval workouts on the track rather then distance or endurance events. The indoor facility also allows for consistent training in harsh weather.

The recruits must pass a test of one minute of push-ups, 1 minute of sit-ups, a 1 ½ mile run, and a sit and reach toe touch—all with male and female standards. The USCG does not have a physical test unless the person performs certain special duties. The test is, therefore, only for Basic Recruit Training. A recruit must also pass a swim test consisting of entry to the water, 100 meter swim, and 5 minute treading of water. Few are discharged for failing the swim test, but those who cannot swim are separated. They also have an excellent pool facility to train and test this standard.

Coast Guard Basic Training cont…

Typical training days are similar to other military services. Recruits are generally awakened at 0530 and have lights out at 2200. Their fireguard equivalent, called Quarterdeck Watch, involves securing their building entrances and active patrols of their areas of responsibility. The halls have male and female bays that are adjacent and connected to each other on the same floor. Cadre and recruit inappropriate relations and abuse are rare. Also similar to Drill Sergeants, the company commanders usually operate an early man-late man system in which the early man comes in from 0530 to 1430 with late man going until the completion of the day. Built into the training year are adequate cycle breaks for proper recovery resulting in cadre that are not exhausted or "burned-out" from their training duties.

Training needs are determined in Washington, D.C. based on what someone must do in the Coast Guard. Reviewed about every four years, the requirements are sent to Cape May where training developers and the chain of command turn them into classes and lessons. Recruits receive a mid-term and a final exercise known as Guardian Challenge. There is no field location on Cape May. They have a pistol range where they familiarize with pistols and qualify if they can. Recruits learn seamanship and knots on various ship mock-ups. They tend to have 80% pass written tests with most passing on make-ups.

he annual average attrition over the last three years was 9.7%. The leading reason for separation was psychological problems at 58% of those being separated. Some 10.9% of those discharged were separated for unsuitability as determined by the unit.

The USCG core values are honor, respect, and devotion to duty. These values are emphasized in training and posted throughout the facilities similar to Army Values posters in IET. If they have lived up to the values, they are authorized an off-post pass on the last training weekend from 0900 to 2100. The USCG also places great emphasis on their Guardian Ethos. Stated below, it encompasses much of what the Soldier's Creed does for the Army.

The USCG is proud of its traditions and has a highly-qualified applicant pool. As with the Navy at Great Lakes, selected recruits can be in a special band or drill team as an additional training event through the cycle. Their one consolidated training facility allows them to ensure uniformity in standards across the companies. In the 5th week of training, recruits find out where they will be assigned in their units. The vast majority will go to their unit first and be sent to A School later—their performance in their guardian mission is immediate and what they do not know is learned as apprentices. Like the Army, they will apply their Basic Training lessons as soon as they arrive at their units.

United States Coast Guard Guardian Ethos

I am America's Maritime Guardian.
I serve the citizens of the United States.
I will protect them.
I will defend them.
I will save them.
I am their Shield.
For them I am Semper Paratus.
I live the Coast Guard Core Values.
I am a Guardian.
We are the United States Coast Guard.

COL Currey is the Director, Directorate of Basic Combat Training at the United States Army Basic Combat Training Center of Excellence.

Mil-Blogging—IET Style

By: CPT Nashanta Davis and CPT Chris Rogers

PVT Olson enthusiastically states in her blog entry, "Today our company did Convoy Live Fire. It was really fun and has been my most exciting shooting experience in the military so far.... shooting live rounds on the move!" What makes this posting unique is that PVT Olson is an Initial Entry Training (IET) Soldier conducting gender-integrated Basic Combat Training (BCT) at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. You might be asking yourself "how in the world is a trainee blogging?" The answer is simple: senior Army leaders have told us to tell the Army story and get blogging!

Military blogging, or milblogging got off to a bumpy start. In April 2007 due to concerns over Operational Security (OPSEC) Soldiers at large and particularly those located in combat zones were directed to stop posting blogs or sending personal e-mail messages without first clearing the content with their supervisor. The official position was modified when computer use agreements and training was initiated across the force. Given proper OPSEC training, Soldiers could blog about their service without compromising security. These actions and the insight of senior Army leadership began a paradigm shift regarding military blogs. The intent was solidified on 20 Sept. 2008 when Secretary of the Army Pete Geren and Chief of Public Affairs MG Kevin Bergner addressed the 2008 MILBLOG convention. They consented that, although the Army had some cultural and generational challenges about transforming its practices in new media and on-line communications, the Army had to evolve with the times and capitalize off of blogging and its ability to influence and educate people the world over, particularly the Army's prime recruiting target, 17-25 year-olds—"the heart and soul of our Army."

In an effort to capitalize on this medium we asked ourselves a fundamental question: *Who can tell the story of a civilian in transition to a Soldier better than the individual in training*? This was the catalyst to starting a dialogue among the battalion leadership and ultimately the launch of our BCT blog, "Boot Truth."

Our unit and the Soldiers in training have embraced mil-blogging with the launch of the first *official* BCT blog on 8 March 2009. There are many personal blogs out on the Web that have chronicled the BCT experience after the fact (see Sidebar on next page); however, we recognized the need to participate in on-line media in order to provide current and relevant information on training and attempt to dispel BCT myths like the Drill Sergeant portrayed by R. Lee Ermey in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*. We created the Boot Truth blog so that anyone interested in the Army in general, and BCT in particular, could read firsthand accounts from Soldiers in training. Having Soldiers blog after training events provides insight and transparency while giving a firsthand perspective to BCT life. Working closely with our local U.S. Army Recruiting Company, the blog has also provided potential recruits, who are understandably anxious about BCT, the ability to read first-hand accounts from their peers.

PVT Roland, a Soldier conducting Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, writes a blog-entry about his experiences during training.

Blogging topics have included what basic training is like, what they would have done differently to prepare for the experience, and perhaps most importantly why they joined the Army in the first place. As we continue to technically develop the blog, potential recruits can communicate and receive feedback from the individuals undergoing training.

The blog is public-facing so anyone interested in the BCT experience can gain access. Our overarching thought was to provide a resource tool for recruiters, potential recruits, parents and anyone interested in the Soldier transformation process. Each trainee comes with different life experiences, challenges and aspirations which provide for very unique blog entries.

Our procedures thus far for implementing

Mil-Blogging—IET Style cont …

the blog have been very simple. Staff Duty NCO's are provided instructions on how to proctor bloggers. Content is screened by battalion staff for OPSEC violations prior to posting to the web-site. A picture of the blogger is taken and accompanies the posting. At Fort Leonard Wood, we fill classes by company versus battalion so each company is in a different stage of a nine week cycle. One day's blog posting may have entries from Soldiers who just arrived at the battalion or a Soldiers preparing to graduate BCT. We attempt to spotlight various training events like rappelling, combat focused marksmanship, combatives, and general barracks life from a diverse cross-section of the battalion's Soldiers in training.

On 7 April 2009 the Army launched "Army Live", the official Army blog site, with a very clear and enduring commitment to embrace and participate in this media. Additionally, in a particularly bold policy change, senior Army leadership has provided the means to access social media Web sites like Flickr, Twitter, and Facebook within the army.mil domain. Our blog initiative thus far has been an exciting new medium to chronicle the Soldierization process and tell the unique story of why patriots of the world, and American citizens' young and old chose to serve. The decision to serve is influenced by many factors, especially news and information that is readily available. Establishing an active presence in this new information and communications medium facilitates transparency about our Army from a Soldier's perspective. We look forward to leveraging these new mediums in our quest to provide the "Boot Truth" of the Basic Combat Training experience.

CPT Nanshanta Davis and CPT Chris Rogers are the respective Commanders of Company C and Company D, 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry at Fort Leonard Wood.

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Official Army Blog: http://armylive.dodlive.mil/

A private example of Soldier Blogging using a commercial tool called Blogger: http://www.mybasiccombattraining.com/

A compilation site of Military Blogs: http://www.milblogging.com/

A private example of Soldier Blogging about their experiences after completing training: http://lonelycoyote.blogspot.com/2007/06/recollections-of-basic-combat-training_05.html

A by-day catalog of Soldier BCT experiences: http://www.basictrainingblog.com/week1.html

Cobra Challenge

By: LTC Sean McKenney
Commander, 73rd Ordnance Battalion, Fort Gordon

Soldiers at Advanced Individual Training (AIT) locations not only receiving MOS technical qualification but also receive tactical training in the form of Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills (WT&BD). This was a change to training doctrine that occurred in 2004 based upon recommendations from the field to enhance tactical training to include weapons immersion to prepare today's Soldiers better for contemporary operational requirements across the Army. Most of the WT&BDs that each AIT training installation provides to Soldiers in training are mandated through TRADOC annual training guidance along with more basic requirements outlined in TRADOC Regulation 350-6 dated 8 May, 2007, and input from basic branch commandants.

In addition to specifying certain WT&BD's to train, TR 350-6 mandates that AIT locations provide a capstone Warrior Training Exercise (WTX) consisting of at least 120 hours of continual training in a field environment. The 73rd Ordnance Battalion, which is assigned to the 59th Ordnance Brigade at Redstone Alabama and attached to the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade at Fort Gordon, Georgia, conducts the mandated WTX once monthly according to Soldier training requirements. This WTX is coined the "Cobra Challenge Exercise" (C2X). The mission of conducting the monthly C2X is the responsibility of the Battalion S3 Officer and a subordinate section consisting or five personnel within the S3 shop called the tactical academy which is resourced from within and is not TDA authorized.

Preparation for the monthly exercise begins one week ahead of the deployment date with weapons immersion training for attending MOS-I Soldiers. MOS-I Soldiers are those initial entry training Soldiers that have not previously held an MOS or been considered to be on permanent party status. A second group of Soldiers and NCO's referred to as "MOS-T" Soldiers also participate in the exercise; these Soldiers have been afforded permanent party status while in training based upon their past military history. MOS-T Soldiers still have a requirement to complete much of the C2X training requirements because it is associated with each MOS program of instruction (POI). Following weapons immersion and preparatory train-ups and rehearsals, all attending Soldiers depart Fort Gordon Garrison and depart for FOB Cobra which is a permanent FOB located within the Fort Gordon Range Management Area (RMA).

The Cobra Challenge Exercise inculcates cultural immersion into the WT&BD training process in an effort to instill the Warrior ethos in Soldiers as well as to prepare Soldiers with familiarization of current enemy TTP's that they are likely to encounter while assigned to their first unit of assignment. This five day event systematically incorporates different levels of weapons training as building blocks that culminates with a force-on-force exercise using paintball equipment. This process serves to build confidence in Soldiers as they learn everything from familiarization to reflexive-fire techniques which serves as a refresher from the skills learned in Basic Combat Training (BCT).

Cobra Challenge begins with "zero week" which includes weapons immersion, WT&BD train up, cadre certification and EST-2000 familiarization. Prior to roll out on the third Sunday afternoon of each month, a complete MDMP process is conducted by the command and staff elements culminating in a commander's brief back prior to execution of the training plan.

Day Zero- This Sunday is called "roll out day." Roll-out occurs beginning at 1500 which allows for all personnel involved to attend church services

Cobra Challenge cont…

and conduct personal business prior to moving out. This day is used to establish the FOB and provide safety briefings, Rules of Engagement (ROE), orient Soldiers to the FOB and surrounding environment, and conduct Fire Safety drills. A class on cultural immersion and IED awareness are provided on Zero-Day to ensure that Soldiers better understand the AOR. Additional individual weapon PMI is provided in order to ensure that all Soldiers have reinforced training on their personal weapon and expectations at the M-16 range on Day 1.

C2X highlights :

Day one- This training day centers around the conduct of an M-16 zero and familiarization/qualification range. MOS-T Soldiers and Soldiers involved in MOS training of 22 weeks or more are required to qualify with their M-16 rifle as a graduation requirement. Concurrent training is afforded Soldiers requiring additional weapon training support. Following the completion of this range, additional weapon and PMI training is issued to Soldiers participating in the crew-served training on Day two.

Day two- This training day centers around the conduct of an M249 and M240B crew-served weapons training range. This training is more realistic when conducted from vehicle ring mounts and every effort is made to support this training plan using ring mount equipped cargo vehicles on the TDA. Additional training includes weapons PMI on the MK-19 and the M2 as concurrent training.

Day three- Focus for training on Day three includes the reflexive-fire range that uses nine individual weapons firing stations to reinforce correct weapons handling and reflexive fire procedures. This range shows Soldiers how to fire their individual weapons using both stationary, pop-up, and rail targets, and reinforces target discrimination and ambidextrous weapons handling procedures.

Day four- This is the force-on-force training day which incorporates paintball equipment into a dismounted training lane. The paintball guns are operated with full safety equipment and allows Soldiers to receive immediate feedback after they engage enemy combatants. During this lane, Soldiers encounter civilians on the battlefield, react to a sniper (paintball), and react to an IED and UXO. It is considered the culminating event of the C2X and provides Soldiers with an opportunity to apply all that they have previously learned in the C2X. The use of the paintball equipment is an unqualified "sustain" from Soldiers as it allows them to "let loose" in a controlled environment.

Day five- This day is used for personnel and weapons/equipment accountability, FOB collapse, movement to the rear, and weapons cleaning. This day culminates with a formal AAR involving all associated staff and cadre which is comprehensive as it discusses "sustains and improves" from zero week all the way through the C2X endex, which occurs officially at the end of the formal AAR. The installation Range Control Manager sends a representative to this AAR to ensure that training TTP's continue to conform with current and anticipated range operations. The Battalion Safety Officer is present as well to underscore safe practices and provide valued input for future training iterations.

Overall, the 120 hour C2X reinforcement on WT&BD's and technical training results in a more tactically and technically proficient Warrior who is prepared to have an immediate and positive impact on his/her next unit of assignment.

Can-Do Cobras!

LTC Sean McKenney commands the 73rd Ordnance Battalion located at Fort Gordon, Georgia which trains electronic maintenance related MOSs.

To submit a story, please send to the editor:
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We are looking for articles of interest to share with the IET community. If you have a lesson learned, interesting story, or training idea that you would like to share, please submit your article to the DBCT at the e-mail address above. Include related graphics. Please submit images as separate attachments in the same e-mail. The DBCT reserves to the right to perform editing for format and clarity without notification of the author.

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DBCT MISSION: The DBCT will develop, refine, and support Basic Combat Training (BCT) across USAAC through doctrine, education, knowledge management, research, and training support. Serve as the proponent for BCT, Drill Sergeant Program, IET Reception, IET Leader Education and Training (Victory University) Courses, Army Physical Readiness, and Warrior Transition Course (WTC) to ensure training is current and relevant. Achieve outcomes from strategic and critical thinking that determine the right tasks, drills, and support to transform individuals and institutions effectively, while at the same time providing the highest quality of life and care for Soldiers, Civilians, and Families. On order, perform duties as directed by the Commanding General of the BCT Center of Excellence.

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In Brief: Notes and Notifications...

Lesson Plans and Training Support Packages are being continuously updated. You can always get the most recent copy of the Basic Combat Training Program of Instruction and its associated lessons and support documents at our AKO Site:
https://www.us.army.mil/suite/kc/6544544

The revision to FM 21-20, FM 3-22.20, has been re-designated as a Training Circular (TC) in accordance with the TRADOC Commanders doctrine reduction guidance. Staffing and release of this document is still projected for the end of the fiscal year.

The DBCT will be participating in the IET Commanders' Conference currently scheduled for 31 Aug through 3 September and will have several representatives there to discuss any issues with Basic Training, IET Cadre Leader Development, and best practices. We look forward to seeing all the leaders there.

The annual IET Research Workshop has been scheduled at Fort Jackson 15-16 September 2009. Please contact LTC Sonya Cable (sonya.cable@us.army.mil) if you wish to participate.