

Thunderbolt Blast

ARMOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2023



DOCTRINE

MCOE's Directorate of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) continues to prepare multiple products and publications for Army-wide implementation, or review, by the maneuver force during this past quarter.

Doctrine and Collective Training Division's (DCTD) ABCT Doctrine Branch has completed the development of ATP 3-90.1, *Armor and Mechanized Infantry Company Team* and preparing the manual for publication. Once published, the ABCT Branch will announce its availability for download on multiple media platforms. The Branch has completed the Initial Draft staffing of ATP 3-21.71, *Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad* and started the development of the Final Draft. Finally, analysis is being conducted for ATP 3-20.15, *Tank Platoon*, in preparation of updating and revising the current version of the *Tank Platoon*.

The Cavalry Doctrine Branch is in the process of staffing the final draft this Oct 2023 for ATP 3-20.97, with 395 comments from the initial draft. The Cavalry community has become familiar with the latest revisions in ATP 3-20.97 and how the force structure has influence some of the changes.

The Collective Training Branch has developed and received approval for the publication of Task, 07-PLT-D8015 *React to Aircraft While Dismounted – Platoon*. The Task is available on both the Army Training Network (ATN) and Central Army Registry (CAR).

DOTD remains dedicated to updating the force via the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) newsletter, the Thunderbolt Chapter of United States Cavalry, and Armor Association Facebook page and our Twitter page (@MCoE_DCTD). For questions or concerns, please contact the Doctrine and Collective Training Division at usarmy.moore.mcoe.mbx.doctrine@army.mil or through our MCoE Doctrine and Collective Training Division X page.

CHIEF OF ARMOR & USAARMS CSM COMMENTS

Greetings from the Armor School and Fort Moore! Over the summer, the Armor School's priority remained to continue building experts for the Armor force that can fight and win when called upon. In September, we participated in the Maneuver Warfighter Conference here at Fort Moore. For those unable to attend, the Fort Moore and MCoE Team delivered a first-rate event that enabled great discussion about the current status and future of the maneuver force. During the conference, then Acting Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN George, reinforced his focuses for the force – warfighting, deliver ready combat formations, continuous transformation, and strengthening the profession. At the Armor School, we are nested with his guidance and are diligently working to ensure we set conditions for our Armor and Cavalry forces to be ready today while we work to prepare the force for tomorrow. We will accomplish this through three lines of effort – maximize the “fight tonight” capability of Armor and Cavalry formations; enhance organizational lethality, sustainability, and self-protection capabilities; and enable continuous transformation of Armor and Cavalry formations.



To maximize the “fight tonight” capability of our Armor and Cavalry formations, the Armor School is working to ensure that at any given moment, our formations have the right Soldiers which are well led, trained, and equipped. That means that we have spent this summer working with TRADOC, FORSCOM, and HQDA G-1 partners to find solutions to our 19 series manning challenges. In coordination with DMPM, DA G-1, and USAREC, the Armor School confirmed that 19K hit recruiting station computer screens on 15 September 2023 as a critical

**IMPROVEMENTS TO ARMOR OSUT
(194TH ARMORED BRIGADE)**

194th Armored Brigade's mission is to produce qualified and disciplined Soldiers for Armor and Cavalry units for the operating force. As the Army refocuses to the demands of Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) amid the complexities of an ever-evolving battlefield, it is paramount the Army's premier Armor One Station Unit Training (OSUT) reorients training as well.

As we continue to update how to best transition civilians into proficient 19K and 19D Armor Crewmen we must change how we train and develop future leaders to be prepared for the new challenges on the battlefield. Armor and Cavalry OSUT is undergoing a massive overhaul by changing the way we approach 10-level training as we continue to learn from the war in Ukraine and the future characteristics of war with a near peer threat. In the Advanced Individual Training (AIT) portion of OSUT, we are going beyond testing Trainees on core Armor skills and are now incorporating Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) training into the field training exercises as well as mounted battle drills such as React to UAS, React to CBRN Attack, and React to Direct and Indirect Fire. Additionally, there is a renewed emphasis on vehicle camouflaging, vehicle identification, maintenance, and recovery operations.

Finally, as of 15 September 2023, the 194th Armored Brigade, will be offering 25x 19K OSUT starts in FY24, a 200% increase. These starts are only for the Basic Combat Training (BCT) portion of OSUT and therefore can be matched up with what recruiters would originally see as 19D pure. By working with Fort Moore G3, HRC, USAREC, and Armor Branch we will be able to provide more opportunities for future trainees that would not have otherwise had the option to become the Army's next generation of tankers.

**WHO IS YOUR MASTER GUNNER AND WHAT DOES HE DO
FOR YOU?
(316TH CAVALRY BRIGADE)**

In September 2019, III Corps conducted and published a lethality study that highlighted the decline of lethality within the heavy force. At the time of publication, the Combat Training Centers (CTC) observed a 30% decrease in targets hits over the past 20 years and crew qualification rates below 60% (III Armored Corps, 2019). In March 2023, the National Training Center (NTC) live fire team NCOIC stated, "organizations simply do not train as well as they believe they do prior to arriving to NTC." Dragon 40 went on to identify the majority of organizations have continually produced low lethality averages in both offensive and defensive engagements.

Commanders, if there is one person standing in your formation that you explicitly trust with assisting you in decisions concerning lethality, maintenance, and training, who is it? If that Soldier is not wearing a Master Gunner Badge on his or her chest, why not?

Here is what you should know, "Your Master Gunner is your advisor for all things gunnery and the combat employment of your fleet." Your Master Gunner serves as your advisor for crew management, gunnery training and certification records. Your Master Gunner advises you on the combat employment and capabilities of all organic weapon systems, ammunition, identification of enemy vehicles, and their combat capabilities

shortage and priority fill MOS for the Army. Additionally, the team is working to increase the number of ATRRS 19K start dates from nine to 25 to allow recruiters to more often incentivize quick ship and enlistment bonuses for the 19K MOS. All of this translates into longer term solutions to 19K MOS strength challenges than our initial short term constructive credit opportunities created.

To enhance the organizational lethality of our Armor and Cavalry formations, we continue to develop the Readiness Level Progression (RL) initiative and completed a Rifle Company CAB FDU pilot with the EXFOR here at Fort Moore. We are in the process of developing a common database for integration into this coming year's iterations of the RL progression pilot so we can build a base of comparison between RL Progression and current gunnery execution. The completion of the Rifle Company CAB FDU experimentation at Fort Moore, will lead to two pilots in FORSCOM units to determine the best structure for effective C2. We expect both efforts to continue to iterate, but to lay a framework for transformation for how Armor and Cavalry formations deliver lethal teams.

Finally, to enable continuous transformation of Armor and Cavalry formations the branch must formulate a single, cohesive Armor 2030 strategy as the force modernization proponent across DOTMLPF-P that supports today's fighting formations, anticipates future ARTSTRUC decisions, and informs future senior leader decisions as we progress towards the Army of 2030. During the Maneuver Warfighting Conference, we had the opportunity to engage all attending Armor Senior Leaders regarding the comprehensive strategy for the branch. As we integrate their feedback, will be able to finalize Armor 2030 in its final form early in FY24.

At the Armor School, we will continue to do all we can to enable the operational force's warfighting readiness while preparing Armor and Cavalry formations for tomorrow's conflicts. By balancing these objectives, the result is a sustained warfighting capability over time for the U.S. Army. As we look across Armor and Cavalry formations throughout the Army, our great Soldiers and Leaders continue to make a difference every day. If there's anything that we can do for any one of you, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Forge the Thunderbolt!
BG Michael J. Simmering, U.S. Army
54th Chief of Armor

Thanks to all who attended the Maneuver Warfighter Conference here at Fort Moore. It was a great opportunity to hear from Senior Leaders and to gain insight on how the Army will transform over the next couple of decades. With a focus on long-range precision fires, air defense, electronic warfare, and cyber defense, combined arms maneuver may not be the main effort for a large part of a future conflict. The character of war may change over the years with

and vulnerabilities. Your Master Gunner serves as your primary trainer for direct fire employment, operation of organic weapon systems (both platform and dismounted), conduct of fire, degraded operations, and a myriad of other tasks associated with the employment and operation of the platforms and weapon systems in your formation.

For mechanized forces, lethality begins at the crew level; a graduate of Master Gunner School is well equipped to assist Commanders at all echelons with developing training plans that focus on refining or in many cases, rebuilding lethality. For all Master Gunner courses (Abrams, Bradley, Stryker, and Common Core), the unit training plan is the tie that binds. Every graduate is evaluated on their ability to process the information provided during the course and back brief a panel of instructors on how they plan to implement the concepts trained during the course once they return to their unit.

TC 3-20.31 (2015) defines the duties of the Company Master Gunner as:

- Develop and implement live fire gunnery standard operating procedures.
- Track weapons system maintenance tasks and advise the commander on maintenance status.
- Maintain weapon system firing data.
- Assist in the integration of newly assigned Soldiers.
- Establish and conduct initial skills training for new vehicle commanders and gunners.
- Assist in training new crew members.
- Train and certify vehicle crew evaluators.
- Recommend placement of new arrivals to the commander and command sergeant major or first sergeant.
- Recommend crew assignments for all platforms within the unit.
- Assist all elements in the unit concerning direct fire training and employment.
- Forecast and manage ammunition through the Training Ammunition Management Information System (TAMIS). Manages ammunition accounts for all subordinate units.
- Resource and request training areas and ranges through the Range Facility Management Support System (RFMSS).
- Manage direct fire training documents, gunnery skills test records, simulations training records, and crew rosters.
- Establish and oversee gunnery skills test training and evaluating the results.
- Coordinate the pickup, training, use, installation, troubleshooting, and turn-in of all Training Aids, Devices, and Simulations Systems (TADSS) required for conducting effective training.
- Certify and recertify other instructor/operators (I/Os), if senior instructor/operator (SI/O) qualifies, to conduct crew direct fire training simulations training.
- Develop, validate, and manage games for training scenarios supporting the unit training program and the gaming Gate to Live Fire (GTLF) exercises.
- Plan and manage crew direct fire training simulations training.
- Train crews on TADSS device-based direct fire training systems (installation, boresighting, and troubleshooting procedures, point of aim, and maintenance).
- Oversee all direct fire training and execution.
- Maintain live fire training standards on all ranges.

future technology and equipment, but movement and maneuver must remain laser-focused on lethality to achieve tactical mastery.

As I'm writing this, I will be leaving later in the day to Detroit Arsenal to hear Soldier feedback on the XM-30, which will be the fighting vehicle within mechanized infantry companies starting in 2029. Last week, I visited Aberdeen Proving Grounds to learn more on the next generation tank, the M1E3. The capabilities these two combat vehicles will possess will be impressive to say the least and to ensure Program Managers make the best decisions on some new tech, the Soldier touch points will be crucial. For the Leaders out there, please send your best and brightest for these touch points and if you have time, attend as well. Bottom line, we want to get it right for the future generations that are going to operate these vehicles.




I mentioned taking a look at the Program of Instruction (POI) for our 19-series Advanced Leader Course (ALC) in the last article but wanted to highlight that we will execute a pilot with the next 19K ALC class in October, where the POI will implement more gunnery tasks that are taught in the Tank Commander's Course. The tasks will include boresight, armament accuracy checks (AACs), weapon Gunnery Skills Test (GST), and Advanced Gunnery Training System (AGTS) time. Previously, only 6% of ALC consisted of platform-centric tasks. This will change in the next class, where 17% of the POI will be focused on lethality. Over time, and with feedback from this pilot, we will continue to assess ALC, specifically the effectiveness of combining functional courses into NCOES.

Shifting gears to manning, we are all familiar with the challenges in accessions and the impacts on the force. Where we cannot assume risk is with our combat MOSs because we are not an Army if we do not have Soldiers trained to close with and destroy the enemy. Working with the Directorate of Military Personnel Management (DMPM), DA G-1, and USAREC, 19K was recently added as a critical MOS for accessions. Within 15 hours of 19K hitting the system, we filled nine training seats. We will continue to monitor over the next few months, but the hope is we see an increase over the next couple of FY's. We continue to have vacancies within ABCTs for both 19K and 19D, specifically with Skill Level I & II, but you can expect a targeted goal for retention and voluntary reclassification in the near future.


To all the Armor NCOs and Officers out there, I just want to say thank you. We understand that we live in some challenging times, but I'm optimistic that we are heading in the right direction. Continue to stay mission-focused and the Armor School is always here if you need us.

CSM Waylon D. Petty
Armor School CSM


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194th AR BDE

	COL Gregory McLean CSM Jon Derek Noyes		
	30th AG (REC)	LTC Kyle Fails	CSM Kenyon Simmons
	1-81 AR	LTC Ryan Gainey	CSM Karlton Wade
	2-15 CAV	LTC Martin Anders	CSM Russel Zacherl
	5-15 CAV	LTC Mitchell Payne	CSM Jaime Rubio

316th CAV BDE

	COL Ryan Kranc CSM Jacob Stockdill		
	1-16 CAV	LTC Courtney Dean	CSM Henry Pantoja
	1-29 IN	LTC Erich Roberts	CSM Robert Garvey
	3-16 CAV	LTC Hayden Scardina	CSM Greg Brobst
	MATA	LTC Douglas Locke III	1SG Joshua Florio

199th IN BDE

	COL Neil Myers CSM Jacob Gilmer		
	2-16 CAV	LTC James Trask	CSM Jacob Wilson

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- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ARMOR-magazine/122557661278366?ref=hl>

- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ARMORMagazine>

- Blog: <http://www.earmorcontent.com/blog>

Armor Branch (HRC) Websites:

- Officer: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Officer%20Personnel%20Management%20Directorate>
- Enlisted: [https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Enlisted%20Personnel%20Management%20Directorate%20\(EPMD\)](https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Enlisted%20Personnel%20Management%20Directorate%20(EPMD))

MGCC Sabot: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-350788>

BMG Sabot: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-486004>

Weapons and Gunnery (MAIN PAGE): <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/weapons-and-gunnery>

Charlie Niner Two: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/charlie-niner-two>

Vehicle Crew Evaluators: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/vehicle-crew-evaluator>

Gunnery SOPS: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/weapons-and-gunnery-standard-operating-procedures-sop>

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