

Gunner's Seat: Thoughts on This Year's Sullivan Cup

It has been an exciting first 90 days as the Armor School command sergeant major, and it is my pleasure to extend a heartfelt congratulations to all the competitors of the Sullivan Cup Best Tank Crew Competition. Also my gratitude to 316th Cavalry Brigade for their efforts in putting the competition together, and to 194th Armor Brigade for the outstanding Armor Ball that closed out an amazing week.

The crew from 3-67 Armor, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, fought hard and won the title of best tank crew! The competition was nested with doctrine and the Integrated Weapon Training Strategy, which fed into the overall observation that although crews demonstrated proficiency in crew drills, there were some shortcomings in some individual tasks of our Abrams tankers.

As a branch and as an Army, we must ensure that Soldiers at all levels get the reps and sets of their individual tasks to achieve proficiency. This is needed to be successful at our collective tasks and our wartime mission. Based on observations from both the Sullivan Cup and combat-training-center rotations, we are currently pushing forward with the following initiatives at the Armor School. First, we are conducting the staff analysis on extending 19-series one-station unit training an additional 30 days for 19D and 42 days for 19K. These additional days will focus on developing Soldiers who are more disciplined, physically fit and proficient in Skill Level 10 tasks. Second, we are reviewing the program of instruction for Career Management Field 19 Advanced Leader's Course to ensure we incorporate the tasks that will build the foundation of solid leaders that are ready to be tank commanders and scout-squad sergeants.

However, the process of building tankers and cavalry scouts begins at Fort Benning and must be continued in the operational force. Noncommissioned officers, you play the most critical role in this process by maximizing available time and resources to ensure Soldier and subordinate leaders get more reps and sets of their respective skill-level tasks. Identify those ready for the next level, challenge them, empower them and get them boarded and professional-military-education trained. That way you can look your platoon leaders and company/troop commanders in the eye and tell them that *your* Soldiers are prepared for collective training.

We at the Armor School are here to help, and please don't hesitate to reach back to us with requests for information or suggestions to help us support you better. Together we will proudly do our part of the maneuver force and add to our branch's legacy. Always remember to be proud that you are an Armor Soldier and that **PRIDE IS CONTAGIOUS!**

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