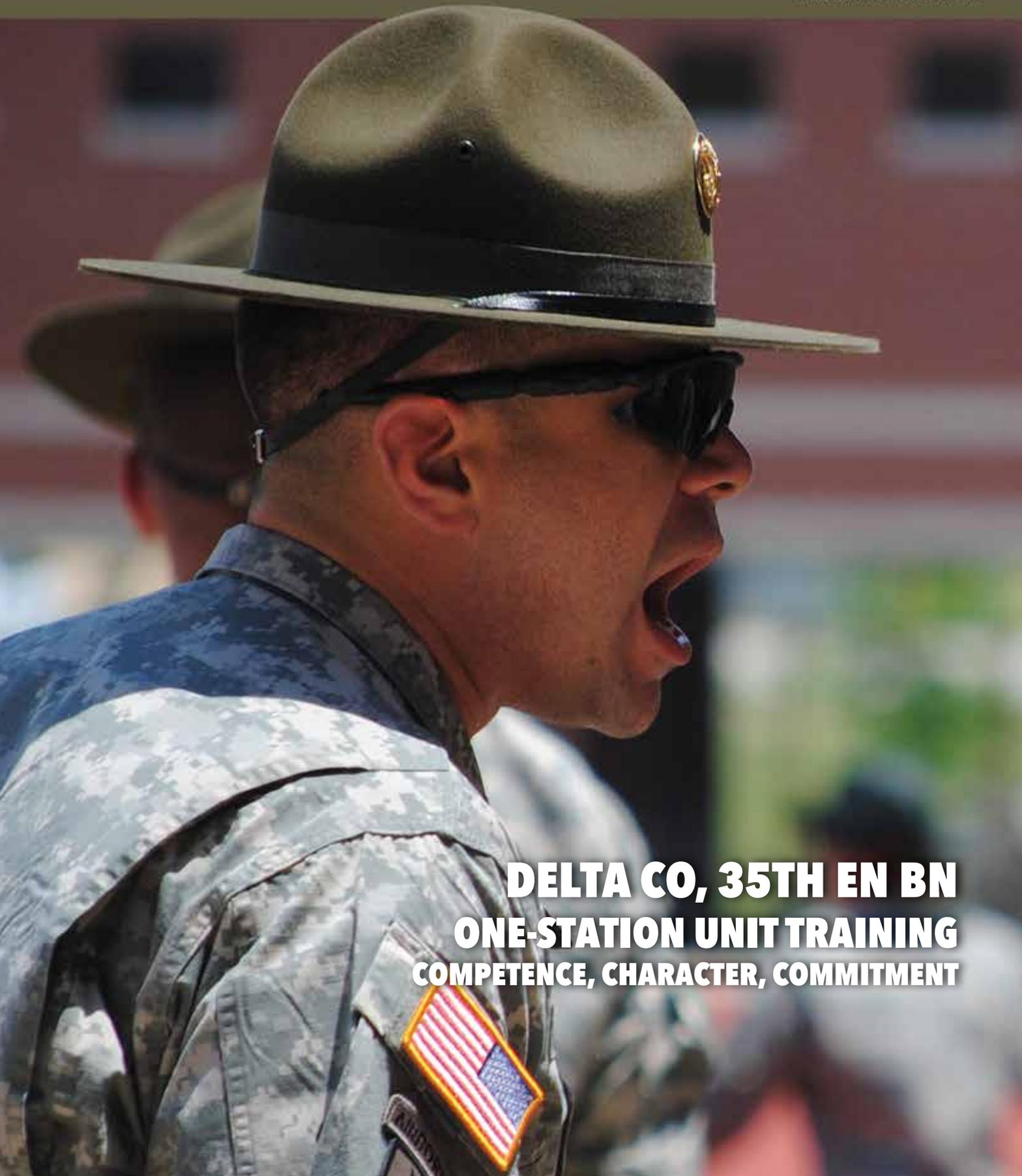




ARMY ENGINEER

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DELTA CO, 35TH EN BN
ONE-STATION UNIT TRAINING
COMPETENCE, CHARACTER, COMMITMENT



by
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JOINING THE LONG GREEN ONE STATION UNIT TRAINING LINE

WELCOME TO THE ARMY PROFESSION

STORMING OFF THE BUSES WITH THEIR BAGS IN HAND, NEW TRAINEES ARRIVE AT DELTA CO, 35TH EN BN. For many of these soldiers, their heads are filled with more questions than answers, and their primary question is, "What have I gotten myself into?" They have seen the movies and the recruiting videos, but for most they simply don't know what to expect. What is this soldier thing really all about?

Like all the companies in the 35th and 31st EN BNs on Fort Leonard Wood, Delta Co is a One Station Unit Training (OSUT) company committed to training the Army's future 12B/12C combat engineers and bridge crewmembers. While at OSUT, trainees conduct both the nine weeks of Basic Combat Training (BCT) and their Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in the same unit.

But simply training these fine men and women is not enough. In June 2015, the Army published *ADRP 1: The Army Profession*. To better align with this guidance, the battalion spearheaded an initiative to build the fundamentals of COMPETENCE, CHARACTER, and COMMITMENT in every soldier from Day One.

1 Soldiers of Delta Co, 35th EN BN, conduct an 8k tactical road march.



2 Drill Sergeant Hernandez provides purpose, direction, and motivation for new trainees during their reception and integration into the company.

BUILDING COMPETENT SOLDIERS

Training skilled and competent soldiers has been the bedrock of what we do for many years. All training in OSUT is specifically outlined in the Program of Instruction (POI) and is the framework for how all BCT training is conducted. However, recently there has been a fundamental shift in our approach.

Previously, some organizations upheld the mindset that we were in some way the gatekeepers of the Army; keeping out all who were unworthy to wear the uniform. While we still maintain the same high standards of discipline and proficiency, it is now our aim to raise individuals to meet that standard and not simply keep people out. This difference may seem small, but it is an important distinction and a new paradigm for how we operate.

For example, during previous Field Training Exercises (FTX) it was common to see drill sergeants acting in the observer/controller role typically known at locations like the National Training Center (NTC). But now drill sergeants are breaking that fourth wall and actually leading their trainees just as a squad leader would lead his or her soldiers.

Obviously, the same standards of discipline and respect still apply, but this new approach has had an astonishing effect on the trust built between the trainee and trainer. And this is just one example. Throughout almost every event, the drill sergeants are now actually leading their trainees through the training. Gone are the days of "Do as I say, not as I do," but rather "I am your drill sergeant; follow me."

The difference is remarkable and unmistakable. By setting the example and connecting with these new soldiers through engaged leadership, the drill sergeants have forged an unprecedented bond allowing them not only to motivate, but to INSPIRE!

3 Soldiers conduct the physical endurance course, which is designed to teach trainees to work as a team as they are pushed to their physical limits.





LEADERS OF CHARACTER

Without a doubt, trainees learn a multitude of vital skills during their time at OSUT. But the MOST important thing that these soldiers learn while they are here can't be found on any training schedule. It isn't the shooting, or the ruck marches, or even the explosive training (though blowing things up is admittedly pretty awesome!). No, the MOST important thing they learn during their time with us is what it means to be a soldier of character.

Unfortunately, with our Army at war for more than a decade, many have developed a misconception that our worth as a soldier is solely predicated on our ability to accomplish tasks; when in reality who we ARE is as every bit as important as what we can DO.

Let's face it. Training skills is fairly simple. We are familiar with it. But how do we train character? The cadre of Delta Co, following the examples of our higher headquarters, think that we have taken a step in the right direction.

The first thing was to engage with our cadre. Synchronizing our efforts with the battalion's leader development plan, we developed a program that focused on character and the Army Ethic. Permanent party conducted several small-group discussions navigating through different real-world ethical dilemmas and consistently reinforcing these principles throughout our cycles.

Drill sergeants then began a program targeted at trainees. Following almost every training event, drill sergeants began implementing ethical discussions into their After-Action Reviews (AAR). During these AARs, soldiers identify different aspects of the Army Values and how they pertain to the training they had conducted. If anything, these discussions help to emphasize and reinforce the idea that character matters.

The command also bolsters this concept by rewarding those who chose the harder right over the easy wrong. For example, during a recent class, a trainee brought forth that he had erroneously been awarded a sharpshooter badge when he had in fact only earned a marksman. For his personal courage and exemplary integrity, this soldier was awarded the Commander's Coin in front of the company.

In the end, we have found that the success of this program really depends on the earnest and continued support of leaders. Character cannot be just another mandatory training. Rather, it must be at the very fiber of how we do business. In every training event and every discussion, we must exemplify character and recognize those who manifest it.

4 Drill Sergeant Black instructs a soldier on the use of the M240B machine gun during U.S. weapons familiarization.



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5,6 Soldiers conduct the values tag ceremony at the culmination of BCT. Each trainee reaffirms his or her commitment to the Army Values during this sacred event.

7 CPT Phillips leads the company in a character discussion. These oak-tree discussions provide soldiers with an opportunity to voice their opinions and learn from each other as they grow in the Army profession.



COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION

There is a saying that the difference between being involved and being committed is like the bacon-and-egg breakfast. The chicken was involved ... but that pig was COMMITTED.

The Army is not a job; it is a way of life. To be a professional soldier, we must be completely invested in everything we stand for; both on and off duty. It has to MEAN something.

We have found that many of these young men and women feel as though they have never truly earned anything and therefore have never been a part of anything of worth. Providing them with a structured program of development is paramount to their investment into the Army Team.

As such, we have very strict guidelines as to how soldiers receive privileges. Those meeting the standard of each phase have the opportunity to earn privileges outlined in *TRADOC 350-6*, but this is not guaranteed for all. While it is our aim to raise everyone to the standard, those not meeting the requirements are counseled, develop an improvement plan, and must perform before they are awarded privileges. This sense of personal accountability helps to reinforce the value of their accomplishments and builds pride.

Along these same lines, we have implemented several programs to reinforce this idea of earned progression. After every phase of training, we conduct a formal phasing ceremony outlining all that the unit has accomplished. At the end of both BCT and AIT, we promote up to 10% of our formation, highlighting those trainees who exemplify the qualities of an Army professional. We also conduct a values tag and regimental cresting ceremonies at the end of BCT and AIT to mark the soldiers' completion of training.

And while these programs have been instrumental in a trainee's progression into the Profession of Arms, the real key to developing a soldier's commitment lies with our drill sergeant team. Just as a parent disciplines his or her child out of love, so too must our drill sergeants provide discipline to our soldiers. Once a trainee understands that a drill sergeant truly cares about their development as a soldier, you can see the change in their eyes. They are sold and would follow you to the ends of the earth.

8 Drill Sergeant Suding and Drill Sergeant Knisley phase their platoon from red to white. This signifies that soldiers have met all requirements and have earned the right to move onto their next phase of training.



9 1SG Conner and CPT Phillips promote several outstanding soldiers at the end of BCT. These promotions serve to reward those who have exemplified the qualities of a professional soldier while motivating others to excel.



10 Drill Sergeant Nguyen pins the regimental crest on his soldier during the cresting ceremony at Sapper Grove. This marks the soldier's induction into the Engineer regiment.





11 More than 80 families completed all three levels of the AFTB Challenge. After completing each level, families are rewarded with a picture of their soldier posted on the company Facebook site.

THE ARMY FAMILY

An important issue that is often overlooked during Initial Entry Training (IET) is the integration of the trainees' families. We believe that families are what provide our soldiers with the foundation of support that will last them throughout their career in the Army.

During this time of transition and uncertainty, we find that the biggest issue our families face is a lack of education and understanding of the Army way of life. As such, we have developed the Army Family Team Bound (AFTB) Challenge.

Working with Army Community Services, we identified the AFTB as a free, established, online training program that is provided through ArmyOneSource.com. This training takes families through three separate levels, educating them on a variety of topics ranging from The Chain of Command, Military Terms and Acronyms, and Family Readiness Groups.

As their soldier completes the three phases of BCT, families are encouraged to work through the three phases of the AFTB. Once the family member completes each level, they may submit their certificate to the company. In return, we post a photo of their soldier on the company Facebook page.

We have found this program to be overwhelmingly successful. Not only are families receiving useful information and getting to see a picture of their loved one, they too feel as though they are actively becoming a part of the Army Family. During our most recent cycle, more than 80% of the families participated with 49% completing all three levels. That is nearly 150 families who have taken the time to invest in their soldier's future in the military.

THE LONG GREEN LINE

Finally, we wanted to provide our soldiers with an understanding of our Army heritage; a knowledge that they were joining a profession rich with history and importance. Thus, we coined the term "The Long Green Line" to symbolize the idea that their service is connected to all soldiers past and present.

To develop this shared identity, we began integrating historical vignettes into several key training events. One such event is the Night Infiltration Course (NIC). A regular favorite for soldiers, NIC marks the completion of BCT and requires a 100-meter crawl under direct fire. Amidst the gun fire and artillery blasts, the atmosphere alone is enough to motivate any hard-charging soldier. But we wanted to take it a step further.

Prior to this event we told the story of CPL Schoonover, an Engineer Medal of Honor recipient for his actions during the Battle of Pork Chop Hill. With a bit of theatrics, we framed the training event as though they too were charging alongside CPL Schoonover on his valiant assault. The difference in pride and motivation was astonishing.

We also developed a program to bring trainees together with veterans. Recently, we were able to have Vietnam veterans from the 572nd and 577th EN BNs join us on our tour of the Engineer Museum on Fort Leonard Wood. In a small group setting, young and old alike were able to learn from each other, sharing the commonalities of a soldier and extending the Long Green Line. This event really drove home the message that it doesn't matter how long you spend in the military; be it 3 years or 30, you are a soldier for life.

12, 13 Vietnam veterans of the 572nd and 577th EN BNs meet with trainees of Delta Co. Everyone enjoys telling stories, learning from each other, and sharing in the camaraderie of their fellow engineers.



JUST THE BEGINNING

We recognize that our trainees' time with us is a mere fraction of their overall career in the military. However, we feel that this transition from civilian to soldier is a crucial point in their development. The ideals learned here will lay the foundation for how they will mature as a professional soldier. Our aim is to provide our great Army with the most competent and committed soldiers of character as we extend the Long Green Line.

14 Following the example of CPL Schoonover, soldiers charge up Pork Chop Hill during the Night Infiltration Course.

CPT LOGAN PHILLIPS, hailing from St. Charles, MO, graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2009.



He then PCSed to Fort Bragg, NC, where he served as a platoon leader for a horizontal equipment platoon, battalion construction officer, and executive officer for a Sapper company conducting

route clearance in RC East with the 307th EN BN. Following his redeployment, he PCSed to Fort Leonard Wood, MO, serving as the battalion operations officer for the 169th and 35th EN BNs. Currently, he is the commander of Delta Co, 35th EN BN. He and his wife, CPT Anita Phillips, have two sons and will depart for teaching positions at the United States Military Academy this summer.

