



**60 SECOND REVIEW**

# Valuable information for soldiers is only a CALL away

By Sgt. Chad T. Jones

It's almost a sure thing that anything you've done in the Army has been done at least 100 times before. In a perfect world, the repetitive process will improve with every lesson learned so that your buddy doesn't make the same mistake.

In an attempt to make that goal a reality, the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) staff collects and analyzes data from a variety of current and historical sources, evaluates what happened and then produces lessons military leaders can use to make sure they don't make the same mistake. They then post all of these lessons on their Web site — <http://call.army.mil>. As a matter of fact, the first things you see when entering the site are links to information about current contingencies such as Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

CALL, like most military organizations, knows the best way to prepare for the future is to learn from the past. That's why the Web site has information on nearly every campaign in our great military's history. For example, I wanted to know if there was more to learn from Brig. Gen. George Armstrong Custer's disaster at Little Big Horn other than, "Don't get ambushed by the natives." So I went to the *Request Information* link. After filling out an initial security check, I was able to ask the question. I soon realized the CALL staff was as efficient as a "hot knife through butter." Within minutes of sending my query, I received an e-mail confirming CALL had received my request and was already working on the answer.

Anyone needing answers from the Web site can receive their info by e-mail, compact disc or even a fax.

For those of you who enjoy independent study, CALL has two search engines (Military Domain Search Engine and SemioMap Visual Search Engine). They also have many other resources like the *CALL Thesaurus*. The thesaurus gives users quick useful information about different topics. For example, did you know the Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division from New York is nicknamed the "Rainbows?"

Anyone who wants information on the Stryker Brigade Combat Teams or Army Transformation can enter the *Threaded Discussion Area*. CALL has *Specialty Links* that give information on subjects such as fratricide prevention and military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUT). CALL has links to joint operations lessons learned sites, as well as many Army links. NCOs can download the latest *Leaders Reference Guide* that was just updated in July.

Users can access the site from any computer, but they must meet certain requirements to receive some information. Also, users can only access certain information by providing their Social Security Number and date of birth.

The simple design and color scheme of the site won't win any awards, but it doesn't look bad for government work. Plus the ease in which you can navigate the site more than makes up for the lack of design creativity. The main topics of discussion are clearly marked with bold red letters. The *Items of Interest* section has a scrolling screen which provides concise briefs on the latest lessons learned.

If you have any suggestions on how to make the site better, there is the *Tell Us What Works* link located in the center of the page.

The information on <http://call.army.mil> may make life easier for soldiers. It will also help them do what counts: accomplish the mission and come home safely.

**How we rate it**

**Ease of use:**  
★★★★★

**Value to user:**  
★★★★★

**Design quality:**  
★★★

**Overall rating:**  
★★★★★  
(Scale of 1-5 stars)