

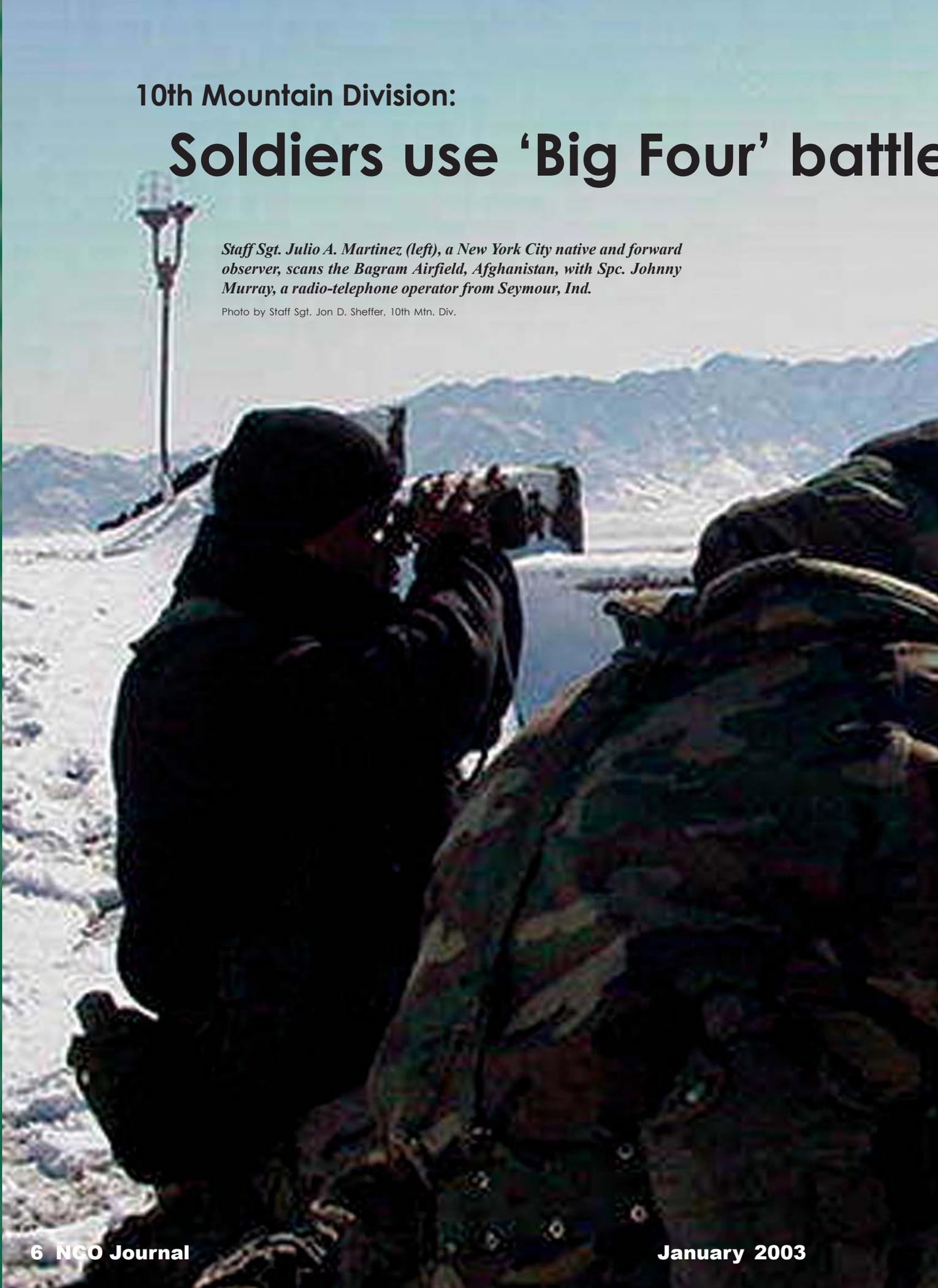
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10th Mountain Division:

# Soldiers use 'Big Four' battle

*Staff Sgt. Julio A. Martinez (left), a New York City native and forward observer, scans the Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, with Spc. Johnny Murray, a radio-telephone operator from Seymour, Ind.*

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon D. Sheffer, 10th Mtn. Div.



# e drills to maintain combat edge

**By Staff Sgt. Dave Enders and  
Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Ret.) Phil Tegtmeier**

The soldiers offloaded the CH-47 helicopter taking their positions to block the escape of fleeing al Qaeda terrorists and Taliban troops. They had to rush almost immediately for the cover of a nearby ridgeline as fire erupted from an al Qaeda stronghold in the mountains above. That's what happened to 125 soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, when they landed shortly after 6 a.m. in Afghanistan's Shah-i-Khot Valley, March 2.

*Continued on next page*

“We knew there were al Qaeda in the area, but we didn’t know there were that many or that they were that well fortified,” said then 1-87 Inf. Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe. He and his unit have since returned to home station at Fort Drum, N.Y., where Grippe now serves as the 1st Infantry Brigade command sergeant major.

“We were expecting to move by land about 500 meters and set up blocking positions to prevent the escape of any al Qaeda or Taliban forces.”

But al Qaeda terrorists who were already positioned in the mountain caves opened fire within moments after Grippe’s battalion hit the ground. The firefight escalated quickly as the al Qaeda group avalanched everything they had onto the battalion from the snowcapped mountains.

### Fire from above

“Within the first few minutes of the fight, we started receiving mortar fire, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machinegun fire, light machinegun fire and small-arms fire, all from the hills above us,” said Grippe. The 1-87 soldiers had been in Afghanistan since November, but this was the first time they had engaged in a prolonged firefight.

When they first moved into the Shah-i-Khot Valley, the 1-87 Inf. soldiers expected to have time to take up their

fighting positions and wait for the enemy, but instead found themselves at the base of an al Qaeda stronghold.

“We hunkered down and manned our blocking positions. Nobody got through,” said Grippe. “We didn’t have enough troops to attack, so we maintained our blocking positions. Later that night, we asked for reinforcements to attack, but we were airlifted out at night and repositioned to attack from high ground.” That attack set a record for the Army.

### Record-setting altitude

“It was the highest elevation that the U.S. has ever fought at. We were operating in excess of 10,000 feet,” said Grippe. “It was the longest continuous battle since the Vietnam War.”

The fight was part of Operation Anaconda, a campaign to isolate and eliminate Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters in the Shah-i-Khot Valley. The battle involved not only the 10th Mountain Division soldiers in Grippe’s unit, but also Special Forces soldiers and the Rakkasans of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). The fight also included Afghan forces from the Northern Alliance.

The 1-87 soldiers deployed to Uzbekistan the first week of October 2001. Their first mission there was to secure the airbase at Karsi Kanabad, which would later serve as the

forward staging area for U.S. forces entering Afghanistan. The first 1-87 soldiers deployed into Bagram, Afghanistan, as the Quick Reaction Force for the 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group, to provide security to forward deployed U.S. military personnel. By Thanksgiving night, Co. B, 1-87 soldiers were in Bagram working side by side with Northern Alliance soldiers.

While in Afghanistan from November 2001 to April 2002, Grippe’s battalion also participated in operations at Mazar-i-Sharif to quell rioting Taliban prisoners. They also processed 3,000 enemy prisoners of war at Shebergan and worked side by side with U.S. Special Forces and Northern Alliance soldiers on patrols and numerous operations. The 1-87 were the first conventional Infantry soldiers to enter Afghanistan on a mission.

The 1-87 Inf. soldiers were ready for their missions because, like all U.S. warfighters, they train the way they expect to fight, said Grippe. In addition to being prepared for the wide variety of missions the battalion faced in Afghanistan through training like that, Grippe said. NCOs must be trained and led in a way that prepares them to be flexible in combat.

“You have to have complete confidence in your NCOs,” Grippe said. “You have to delegate responsibilities all the way down to junior NCOs during peacetime training. You should allow soldiers to train two levels up.”



Photo by Spc. Steven L. McGowan, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs

*The soldiers continue physical training during the deployment. For example, the 10th Mountain Division soldiers set up a gym in a tent at Karshi Kanabad, Uzbekistan.*

## Training pays off

Grippe credited the training at the 10th Mountain Division and his own commander for having prepared his battalion well enough to get through such an intense firefight with such success. The battalion suffered no deaths, but 22 out of the 86 soldiers at Grippe's position were wounded (including Grippe himself, who was hit with enemy shrapnel in the firefight). Grippe said he trains his troops according to what he calls the "Big Four": battle-drill training, shooting skills, combat lifesaver training and physical fitness for the warfighter.

While all soldiers must be trained to Army standards, Grippe has always been able to train his soldiers beyond the standard. "The commanders that I've worked with and I have thought a lot alike," said Grippe. "We all worked together."

Grippe said the 1-87 Inf. battle-drill training was basic Army doctrine taken from a variety of sources. Grippe integrated a great deal of additional training into the battalion's scheduled training events. One driving force is the changing nature of combat. Grippe said the U.S. Army in Afghanistan continued to adapt to a new mindset, based on operational experiences there.

"The Army's too small to have a mentality that there's a separation between special operations soldiers and other light infantry forces," he said. "We need to build continuity between conventional and special operations forces." He cited the fact that throughout his battalion's rotation in Afghanistan, they worked almost exclusively alongside Special Forces and allied forces.

While collective training is important, Grippe's Big Four focuses on basic individual skills as well.

Marksmanship skills go well beyond shooting on the range, said Grippe. Some of the training that takes soldiers beyond marksmanship on the range includes taking the soldiers out to the known-distance range to shoot beyond 300 meters and shooting at night with lasers.

"The end state is that every squad needs to be able to live-fire at night with night observation devices," Grippe said. But it takes well-rounded training to keep soldiers alive, including learning how to help wounded buddies in combat.

Combat lifesaver training is standard for everyone in his unit, said Grippe. "We stress EMT (emergency medical technician) training, not just to the medics but to personnel in the rifle platoons because they're going to supplement the medics." This stress on medical training may have been key to keeping the wounded soldiers alive, he said.



Photo by Spec. Steven L. McGowan, 10th Mountain Div., Public Affairs

*A 10th Mountain Division soldier carries fuel to generators.*

"We had soldiers who were seriously wounded within the first 10 minutes of the firefight, but because of the intensity of the battle, we couldn't get them out of there until 14 hours later. Those with minor injuries went out with the main body 18 hours later," Grippe said.

Throughout the firefight, the 1-87 Inf. soldiers treated each other's wounds; they relied on their own lifesaving skills, said Grippe. "Everyone has to continually retrain on their medical skills to keep them fresh," said Grippe. "At a minimum you should have at least one EMT-qualified person per squad." The battalion sent soldiers through an EMT course at a local university to ensure that there would be enough medical personnel on hand in any given situation.

While Grippe ensured his troops were trained to treat wounds, he also ensured that they were physically fit enough to endure the combat conditions they faced in the mountainous terrain. In the Shah-i-Khot Valley, his soldiers slept in the snow in 15-degree temperatures and got next-to-nothing for sleep for eight days straight. The soldiers

gained their endurance in part from being smart about preventive medicine, and in part from tough physical conditioning at home station and in the theater.

### Physical fitness pays off

Physical fitness training must go well beyond training for the Army Physical Fitness Test, said Grippe. “We use a full-body workout. We don’t train for the APFT; we train for combat.”

Grippe equated the unit’s ability to succeed with the amount of training and confidence its senior leaders place in its younger soldiers. “No matter how elite our officer corps is, no matter how elite our senior NCO corps is, if the junior NCOs and junior enlisted fail in their missions, the country fails,” he said. “Can you imagine if we were not successful in all of our operations in Afghanistan?”

“Everyone has to be ready for immediate deployment to a combat zone,” said Grippe. “The U.S. Army is a very small force. No matter where you are in the U.S. Army, you have to be ready to go to war in a moment’s notice.”



10th Mountain Div. Public Affairs

*CH-47 Chinooks carry the brunt of the troop-movement work in Afghanistan.*



10th Mountain Div. Public Affairs

*A 110th Military Police Battalion soldier guards the military camp at Bagram, Afghanistan.*



*Throughout their careers, NCOs train soldiers on a variety of topics. Here, two top trainers offer their views on effective training.*

**Army's best trainers on training:**

# Preparation is key

**By Spc. Jimmy Norris**

So you just got “hey-you’ed” to give a class. You know this stuff; you do it every day. So why do you have sweaty palms and a lump in your throat? Because in that instant, you’re visualizing the blank stares of a classroom full of soldiers as you begin to pontificate on the rewards and gratification of the Oil Exchange Program.

Now as you begin the class — reading the task, conditions and standards from your portable dry-erase board — you notice the glazed looks in the eyes of your soldiers. They’re already glancing at their watches. They’re expecting yet another dull class. Signs of life have already begun to drain from their faces, and in another five minutes they will have tuned you out completely. What they don’t know is that you’ve taken some tips from top Army instructors on how to give a class guaranteed to keep them awake while teaching them the required material.

Two NCOs — Staff Sgt. Randy Cheadle, the Army Drill Sergeant of the Year, and Master Sgt. Kevin Keefe, the TRADOC Army Reserve and National Guard Instructor of the Year — share some of their secrets to the elusive art of dynamic instruction.

## The Army’s top drill

Cheadle spent 18 months at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where he trained more than 1,000 of the Army’s military police during their combined basic and advanced individual training. He currently conducts assessments of Initial Entry Training instructors and advises the TRADOC commander and command sergeant major on all drill sergeant and IET matters.

Keefe has taught engineering military occupational specialties for seven years to more than 2,400 soldiers as the regimental training instructor for 1st Engineer Battalion, 164th Regiment, North Dakota National Guard.

“We all remember what it’s like to be on the other side of the podium in a boring class,” said Keefe. “As instructors

it’s our job to make sure that doesn’t happen. You can do that by knowing your material and being prepared. If you’re not prepared, you’ll lose your audience.”

## Keeping classes interesting

According to Cheadle and Keefe there are a number of ways to keep classes interesting, but they agree the first step is preparation.

“We have to take it upon ourselves as NCOs to properly plan and execute training,” Keefe said. “Make sure your class and training aids are prepared. When you’ve got that all locked and cocked you’ll be more confident and better able to focus on the actual training of the soldiers.”

Preparation includes putting together a lesson plan, establishing the task, conditions and standards and conducting a risk assessment. But before any of that can be done, there’s an important first step instructors often overlook, said Cheadle.

“Getting the right person to teach the class is crucial,” he said. “For example, I’m an MP. Military police have a number of different specialties such as [working with canines] and [military police investigators]. Since I don’t have a background with canines, I would be the wrong person to teach that class.”

Granted, Cheadle said, an NCO will sometimes receive a task to teach a class on a subject that he has no experience in. But the situation is far from hopeless.

## Knowing the material

“The instructor must know the material,” Cheadle said. Preferably he should have experience with the task, but if he doesn’t have experience, he can gain it through field manuals and training manuals, Cheadle added.

After learning the material the instructor should put together the lesson plan. Keefe said while there are a number of steps that should be included in creating a lesson plan, such as identifying the task, obtaining the references

and resources and studying the material. There is no one proper way to do it.

“It’s all up to the trainer. Whatever works for him, as long as it meets the standard, is okay,” he said. “What might work for me may not work for the next guy.

Another factor in good training is obtaining the proper training aids.

### Having the right ‘toys’

“We call it ‘having a toy for every boy,’” said Keefe. “If you’re giving a class on land mines and you have 30 students, then you need to have 30 land mines. That way the soldiers can learn by doing.”

Having realistic training aids prepares soldiers for the conditions they’ll face in the field, and makes training more interesting, said Keefe.

There are, of course, times when training aids are simply unavailable. That doesn’t mean training stops. “If you don’t have the materials and the training aids, you have to relate your experiences on the battlefield to the soldiers,” said Cheadle.

But lesson plans and training aids are only part of the preparation needed to conduct a successful class. Cheadle said one of the most common mistakes trainers make is failing to rehearse the class.

“Rehearsal is very important when giving a class,” he said. “You can do it with the section chiefs and other NCOs in your unit. It gives you a chance to find out if there are any gaps in the lesson plan, such as missing information. It also allows him to prepare for any questions that may come

up. The middle of a class is the wrong time to find out you missed something.”

After planning and rehearsing comes the actual delivery of the class. According to Field Manual 25-101, Battle Focused Training, there are three methods of delivery — lecture, conference and demonstration. Each of these can be used alone or in any combination.

Lecture is generally used in a classroom environment. During the lecture, the instructor presents information with little or no discussion. “I talk; you listen,” explained Keefe. While sometimes it may be the only available method, Cheadle said the lecture is the least desirable of the three methods. “It makes the [people] being taught feel uninvolved, and it’s hard to keep their interest,” Cheadle said.

When an instructor does have to give a lecture, Cheadle suggests using training aids to help hold the students’ interest.

### Using the conference format

Another method of delivery is the conference format, which involves a discussion between the instructor and the students.

“I talk; then I try to get you to talk back,” said Keefe. It can be an effective form of instruction when soldiers already know something about the subject or when there is more than one correct way to do things. Military occupational specialty and NCO professional development training are two examples of training using the conference method.

“It’s useful because you can get feedback from the students and find out how far along they are,” Keefe said.



Master Sgt. Kevin Keefe (left) goes over the workings of an electrical panel with a student.

The third, and most preferred, method of instruction is demonstration, according to Cheadle.

“I’m done talking, now I’m going to show you,” said Keefe. “I can explain all I want about how to assemble an M-14 multi-purpose firing device, but you’ll never understand until I show you.”

“Demonstration is the most effective of the three because you’re leading by example. By showing your proficiency in a task you can motivate a soldier toward success.”

To Cheadle, leading by example is one of the most important factors in being a good trainer. “I mentor my soldiers most by leading by example. When soldiers see their drill sergeant put on [Mission Oriented Protective Posture] gear and run around checking soldiers, they know we’re not above the standard — and it motivates them.”

Even after the instructor has given the class, demonstrates the task and delivers the lesson plan — one important step remains.

### Checking up afterward

“You can lecture and demonstrate all you want, but you’ll never know if a soldier understands unless you do a check on training,” Cheadle said. A check on training is a means of getting feedback from students. An instructor can get feedback by asking the students questions about the subject or by administering written or hands-on tests. Feedback provides the instructor with the information he needs to decide if the students need more training, and on which tasks.

Both Cheadle and Keefe said they are passionate about training soldiers, and they love doing it. But it’s not without its challenges.

Personality differences, a lack of training aids and environmental difficulties are just a few of the creative challenges instructors may face when giving a class.

“Most of the challenges we have training soldiers involve tasks soldiers don’t want to learn,” said Cheadle. “For example, putting a soldier in all of his MOPP gear for four continuous hours has an effect on both the mind and the body. My job as an instructor is to help soldiers understand how it will keep them alive on the battlefield. Having the soldiers understand why



*Staff Sgt. Randy Cheadle, the 2002 Drill Sergeant of the Year, coaches a soldier on firing the AT-4 anti-tank weapon.*

we’re training will help them want to achieve the standard.”

The students themselves present many of the challenges instructors face. The solution to most of these problems seems to be flexibility.

“Different soldiers react to different leadership styles, and you have to change your leadership style to accommodate each soldier,” said Cheadle. “What I do today to motivate one soldier may not work tomorrow with another soldier. Sometimes you have soldiers who are capable but unwilling. Other times you have soldiers who are willing but incapable. Yelling may be effective with one soldier and discouraging to others. I’ve got to constantly evaluate the soldier I’m dealing with and adopt a leadership style to suit the situation. Leadership is not a theory or a concept. It’s a way of life, and how well you react to changes defines your character.”

While many of the challenges in training soldiers come from the soldiers themselves, neither instructor believes there are any untrainable soldiers.

“In the drill sergeant world, we have the concept that there are no untrainable soldiers. We utilize the investment strategy — we will give every soldier the time and opportunity to excel through counseling, teaching, mentoring and coaching,” said Cheadle.

Keefe put it even more simply.

“You can make them want to learn if you’re dedicated enough,” he said. “You have to be willing to spend time with the soldiers, even if it means doing it during your off-duty hours and help them learn the material. As an instructor and as an NCO, if you don’t want to take the time to help soldiers learn, you’re wrong.”

# New challenges await those headed for PLDC

By Spc. Jimmy Norris

A pilot program currently underway at Forts Bliss and Hood, Texas, and Grafenwoehr, Germany, may soon validate an entirely new version of the Primary Leadership Development Course for the entire Army. The program is scheduled to be implemented Army-wide Oct. 1. Schools participating in the program will teach the new course through three cycles and provide feedback to the NCO Education System Proponent at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

“We’re teaching it in a different way, which should result in a more hands-on course with less hours. We’re also stressing more of the warfighting skills,” said Sgt. Maj. Victor LeGloahec. He heads the USASMA office that oversees PLDC training worldwide. LeGloahec also headed the team responsible for the development of the pilot program.

He said the increased emphasis on warfighting skills was an improvement for a number of reasons.

“The world is evolving and the Army has to evolve with it,” he said. “The Army is a lot smaller than it used to be. Before, an artillery unit, for example, could set up in the field

and then have an infantry unit come guard them. We can’t do that now. Another reason for the emphasis on warfighting skills is [that] only 10 percent of the Army is combat arms; the other 90 percent [of the soldiers] may not get to experience that. It’s good training for the units to expand on.”

“PLDC needed updating with a focus on new tasks. We’re using a crawl-walk-run approach to training as it applies to the adult learning process,” explained Billy Williams, a retired sergeant major and training specialist at the USASMA NCOES proponent. “We’ve developed these lessons to be progressive and sequential.”

Williams said tasks which were tested in a field training exercise (FTX), but never addressed in the classroom before – combat orders, troop-leading procedures, tactical movements, occupying an assembly area, combat operations, map reading and night land navigation – the students will learn during a 25-hour block of instruction and hands-on practical exercises. Students will then practice the tasks during a 48-hour situational training exercise (STX). The 48-hour STX will replace the course’s 91-hour FTX.

According to Master Sgt. Jimmie Nelson, chief of PLDC at the Fort Bliss NCO Academy – one of the three



Photos by Spc. Jimmy Norris

*Spc. Javier Gonzalez, Battery E, 1st Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, plots his course on the map on Fort Bliss' MacGregor Range.*

schools implementing the pilot – the change from the FTX to the STX was one of the most noticeable changes to the program.

“The STX is a lot more realistic and it provides a lot more lane training than the FTX,” he said. The former FTX included two days of land navigation, a subject addressed separately under the pilot program. During the FTX, the students then participated in two days of force-on-force missions, which Nelson said didn’t provide as much room for evaluating the students as the pilot program does.

“The new STX really helps us test the soldiers’ ability to lead in combat,” Nelson said.

According to LeGloahec, the entrance requirements for PLDC will remain the same. Graduation requirements will also remain unchanged but some of the tasks will be streamlined.

The new course incorporates 106 tasks and clusters them into 31 lessons. These lessons are further consolidated into three areas: leadership, training and warfighting skills. The current PLDC program is composed of six areas: leadership, communication, warfighting skills, training and maintaining, professional skills and military skills.

The regimen should lead to more effective junior NCOs, said Larry Evans, a training specialist at USASMA’s NCOES proponent and one of the pilot program’s creators.

“The training is going to put them at a different maturity level,” said Evans. “This gets them away from the Playstation™ weekend mentality and into a mature role. They’re transitioning from followers to leaders.”

The program has had good feedback.

“We love the pilot, and we want to do more of it. It’s more hands-on, and it focuses on NCO skills instead of soldier skills,” said Nelson. “It also gives us a chance to see if the soldiers learned anything, because we get to see them do it.”

Nelson said under the current PLDC curriculum, once a soldier passed land navigation, they had met most the requirements for graduation, but the pilot program’s 48-hour STX gives instructors a chance to assess soldiers’ leadership abilities in the field.

According to Frank Berta, a training specialist on the pilot program team, the new training allows the NCO academies more flexibility than before in how they assess their students.

The pilot program team surveyed soldiers of all ranks throughout the Army. They also solicited input from NCOES academy commandants, according to Berta.

“Your main mission could be a [simulated] river crossing,” he explained. “But the instructors could add NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical) attack, an ambush or



*Spc. Christopher Taylor, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery double checks his azimuth reading.*

anything they want. The main thing is to test the soldiers’ ability to lead troops.”

“We gave the academies a specific list of missions to conduct during the STX,” Berta said. “However, academies have the flexibility to substitute or add based on contemporary operating environmental constraints.

According to Nelson, this kind of latitude is a major part of what makes the pilot program such an improvement.

“This is better because we have more of an opportunity to assess a soldier’s leadership abilities with hands-on testing,” he said. “We used to just talk about these things. Now we do them.”