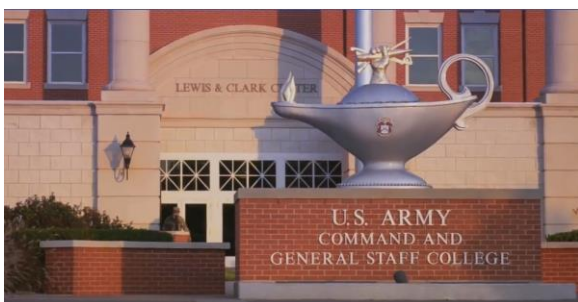
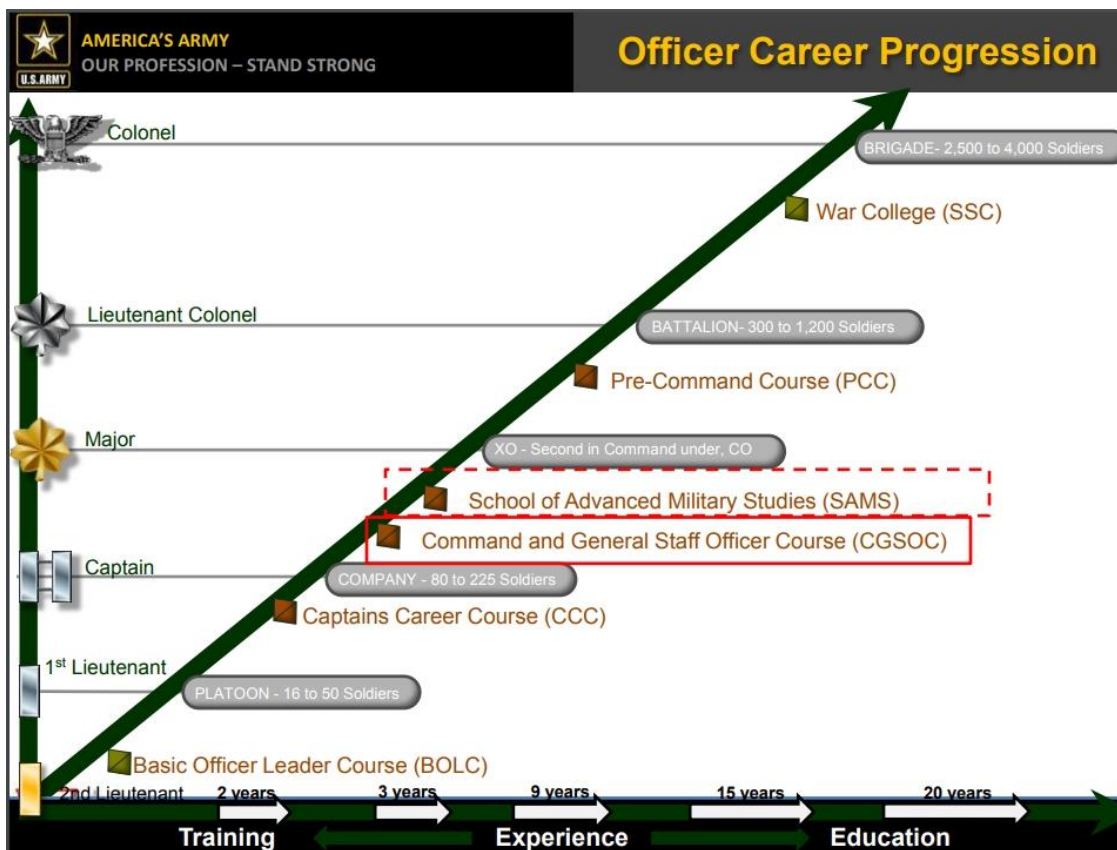


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Career Progression – Moving Up

March 23, 2016 - North Carolina - It was good to be home. Major Neil Edgar, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team S2, Intelligence Officer in Charge, would continue in that role through 2017 while looking for an opportunity for growth and promotion. Given the pace and breath of activities over the past 16 years, the first-year home from Kosovo would feel somewhat “mundane”. But time takes care of that. Neil’s replacement as Intelligence Officer in Charge arrived in May of 2017 and worked with his replacement as Major Neil Edgar pursued an open O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel) slot.



CGSC – Command and General Staff Officer’s Course – July-October 2017

The full 44-week CGSS course is offered once a year at Fort Leavenworth, KS, with broad choices among more than 170 elective courses and focused programs in Special, Joint, or Space Operations. Courses start in July each year. The first 16 weeks of



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the course are offered three times a year at each of the satellite campuses at Fort Belvoir, VA, Fort Lee, VA, Fort Gordon, GA and the Redstone Arsenal, AL. Masters Degrees may be earned at the main campus at Fort Leavenworth, but may not be earned at the satellite campuses.

Command and General Staff Officers' Course consists of two components, the Command and General Staff Officers' Course (CGSOC) Common Core Course, a requirement for promotion consideration to Lieutenant Colonel, and the Advanced Operations Officer Course which is the credentialing course for field grade officers in the operational Army, a requirement for further promotion consideration to Colonel. Students complete these courses in an experiential learning environment which yields adaptive, self-aware, field-grade leaders of character and competence who are capable of shaping the joint operational environment.



The Common Core Course – Reservists have the opportunity to complete the Common Core Course virtually as did Major Neil Edgar in the summer of 2017.

The Core Course curriculum includes seven blocks of instruction:

Foundations
Strategic Studies
Operational Studies
Army Operations

Managing Army Change
Rise of the Western Way of War
Leadership: Forging Success in Uncertain Times

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The Foundations block establishes a foundation and sets the conditions for all subsequent learning within the Command and General Staff Officers' Course Common Core, the Advanced Operations Course (AOC), and elective courses. The Strategic Studies block introduces students to the joint, interagency and multinational environment and the doctrinal and theoretical concepts required to perceive, understand, and analyze strategic-level military problems and challenges.

The Operational Studies block helps students to understand the strategic and operational level joint force capabilities and limitations, operational level joint force capabilities, national, and legal considerations. It includes an examination of the roles, functions, capabilities, and limitations of the US Air Force, US Navy, US Coast Guard, US Marine Corps, US Army, US Special Operations Forces (SOF), US Space Forces, interagency capabilities and issues, multinational considerations, and operational legal issues.

The Army Operations block integrates US Army doctrinal concepts and principles as they apply to tactical units executing full-spectrum operations through participation in classroom discussions and practical exercises. These lessons require students to recognize that one's understanding of an operation, situation, or problem involves a mental process or model, and helps them analyze complex problems, determine requirements, capabilities and shortfalls, and to then develop feasible plans for developing and executing solutions.

The Managing Army Change block serves to familiarize students with the higher-level (strategic) agencies and the complex/interdependent force management processes used to change the Army to meet DoD transformation and the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review goals of the contemporary operational environment.

The Rise of the Western Way of War block covers the history of the evolution of warfare and its applicability to current military planning. It explores the relationship between war and society from 1300

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to the present, and assesses how the social, political, and economic changes in the larger society force changes within military organizations.

The Leadership block introduces students to the challenges of organizational leadership in a changing and uncertain environment. It also focuses on the concept of leadership styles and their underlying theories or strategies. Specifically, students discuss the relationship between leadership style, climate, and performance, and then conclude with a discussion to develop an understanding of the complexities of leading a change management process.

Throughout the entire Core Course, the student is taught "How to Think" instead of "What to Think" while using the Military Decision-Making Process, thereby enabling him/her to develop focused solutions to entirely new problems that evolve in today's uncertain and volatile world. This is done with a balanced focus on Current Operations, Future Operations, and Planning functions, along with an attempt to teach students how to synchronize actions to attain the effects desired.



Advanced Operations Officer Course

The purpose of the Advanced Operations Course (AOC) is to develop operational field-grade officers with a warfighting focus for battalion and brigade command who are capable of conducting full spectrum operations in joint, multinational, and interagency environments. This develops officers who have the requisite competencies to serve successfully as staff officers in division through echelons-above-corps assignments. It covers "how our Army fights" and includes the following:

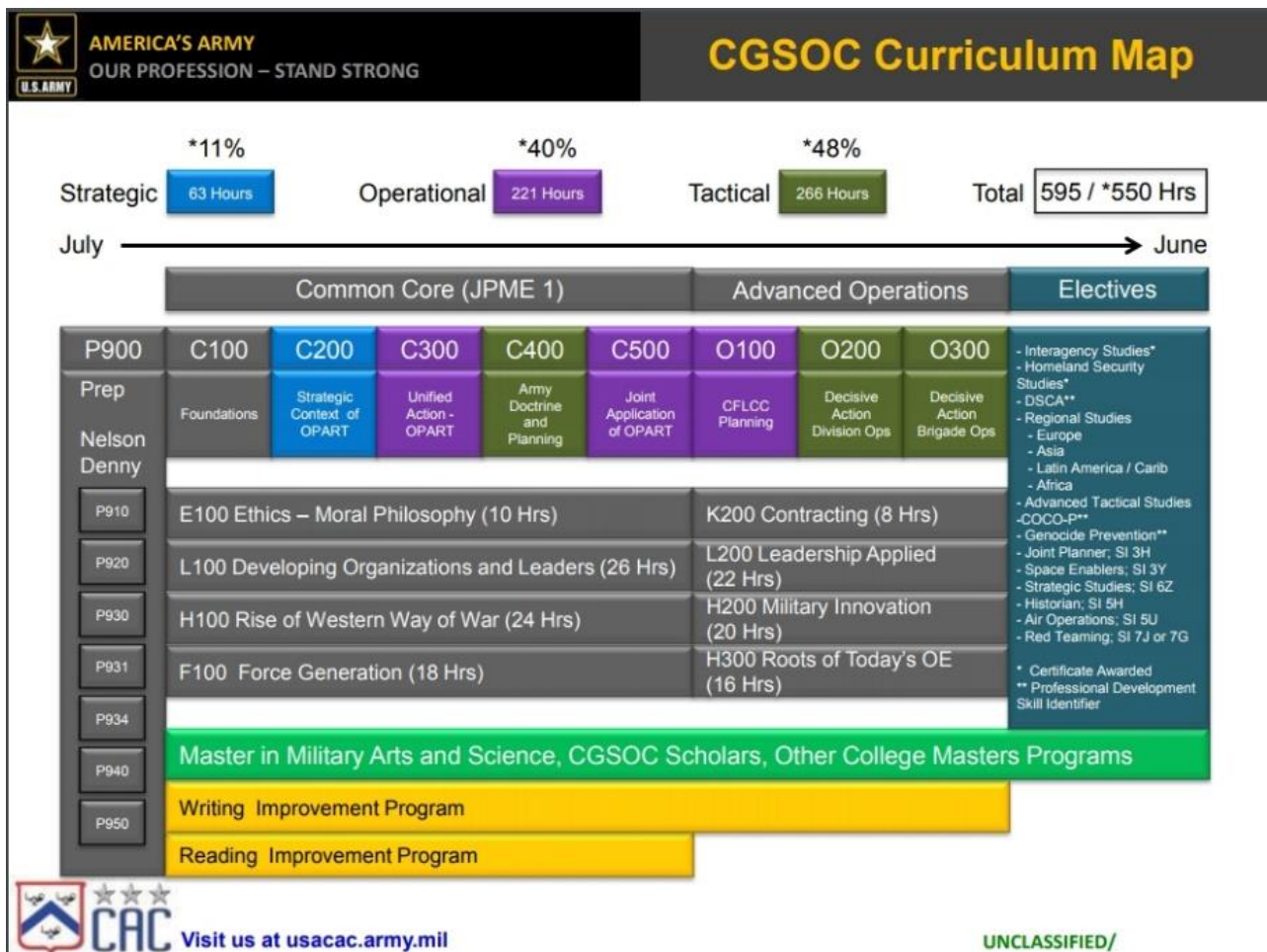
Today's Operational Environment	Counter-terrorism
Full Spectrum Operations	Peacekeeping/NEO
Theory of War and Doctrine	Nation Assistance
History	Counterinsurgency
Critical Thinking	Counter-drug
Decision Making	Joint Multinational Operations
Conduct of War	Interagency Operations
Build/develop the force	Deploy/Redeploy the force
Train the force	Commandership
Employ/fight the force	Digitized Skills
Sustain the force	Combat TTP
Large scale Combat Operations	Information Operations TTP
Peace Enforcement	Elective Courses

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For Reservists, the Information Operations Officer Qualification Course is the equivalent of the Advanced Operations Officer Course for Active-Duty Army personnel.

Following completion of the Core Course and AOC, students are allowed to select 192 hours of elective studies that round out their Command and General Staff Officers' Course education. The menu of elective courses includes courses in the following areas:

- Graduate Studies for a Masters Degree
- Army Tactics
- Digital Systems
- Logistics & Resource Operations
- Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations
- Military History
- Command and Leadership
- Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Studies
- Miscellaneous and Specialty Topics



July - August 2017 - North Carolina National Guard's Warfighter Exercise



FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. - Inside a large, tan tent in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, National Guard Soldiers are hard at work; calling out information as it comes across computer screens, holding meetings, checking communication equipment, conducting rehearsals and finalizing orders.

The Soldiers of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) are preparing for war, and for the next several days they will be tested, observed and evaluated on their ability to lead.

Major Edgar said it was wild! "We spent two weeks in tents fighting a simulated wartime scenario. The purpose was for the Brigade to exercise its staff and the key leadership of its subordinate Battalions."

The war they are fighting comes in the form of training scenarios that they must react to as part of their Warfighter Training Exercise meant to test and prepare them for the larger event they will participate in next year.

This is the first of several training exercises, each one growing larger and involving more Soldiers, ensuring the 30th brigade is ready should they need to answer the nation's call.

Army Master Sgt. Brent Mast, Battle Noncommissioned Officer for the 30th ABCT, is one of the many Soldiers making last-minute preparations before the official start of the exercise. He manages all the operations inside the tactical command post,



North Carolina National Guard Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, prepare a terrain model at an armory in Fayetteville, N.C., on July 27, 2017, prior to a rehearsal for the briefing they will give their command the following day.

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monitoring communications from units underneath the 30th's leadership and the sections that make up the headquarters.

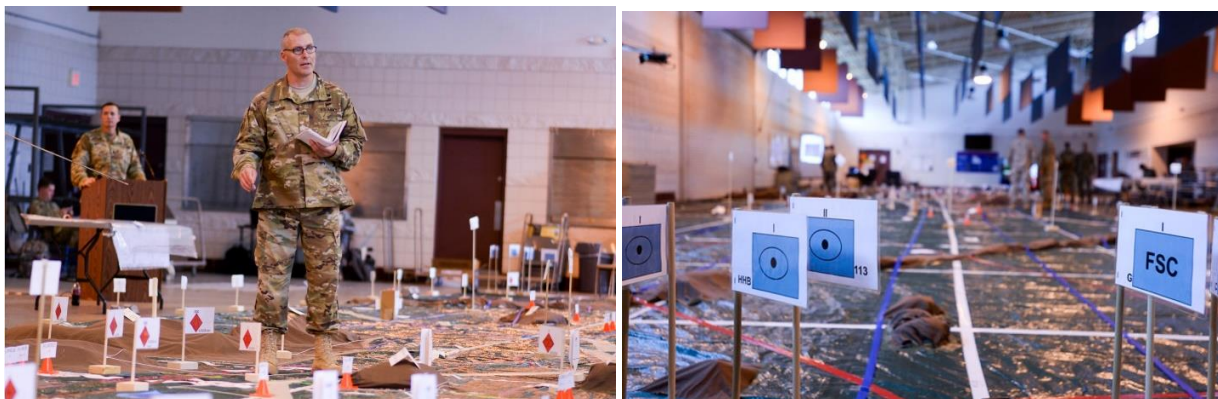
"It is really a partnership between subordinate combatant leaders and the brigade command to ensure that everybody has the knowledge and equipment and manning that they need before they LD and are in contact with the enemy," Mast said.



The LD is the Line of Departure and Mast compares it to the beginning of a boxing match.

"You start a boxing match and the two boxers go up, they touch gloves and then they dance around, they try to get a read on each other," Mast said. "Once that boxer moves forward and he actually reaches out and punches that other person, when you get within the range that the other boxer can hit you, that's the LD. That's when you can be decisively engaged."

That line of departure is what the 30th is training for and it is different than the training these Soldiers have experienced in the past.



For Army Staff Sgt. Lindsey Salazar, a human resources noncommissioned officer with HHC, 30th ABCT, the whole experience is new as this is her first Warfighter Exercise.

"It is very beneficial because it's a lot of people's first time doing something of this magnitude," Salazar said. "It is going to set our expectations for what needs to be executed when we go to the National Training

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Center. It's just like everything you do in life, you need to practice doing it to become proficient in it and it is what's required if we do get deployed."

For many years Soldiers have been focusing on Counter Insurgency (COIN) training and although that is still relevant, it is no longer the main focus.

"The COIN fight of the past 10-15 years is not something we're completely focused on," said Army Lt. Col Edward Wallace, the executive officer for the 30th ABCT. "As the threats have evolved, we have changed our training to support the additional response capability that we need to have. Given the global threats out there, we've developed the decisive action training environment to help us shape how our training events happen, so we can better prepare for those contingencies."

Mast, who has over 20 years of service, including two combat deployments with the National Guard, is hopeful that the change in training will make an impact on the Soldiers in his unit.

"One of the things I've seen was the focus being on satisfying outside entities that we had checked this block on this brief or that brief," Mast said. "It became about rosters, not about rehearsals. We're refining that now and I have faith that with enough training, and with the current leadership guiding our efforts, that the check the block mentality will give way to those rehearsals."

Rehearsing is exactly what this current training event is all about, building the unit's readiness and ensuring that they work together like a well-oiled machine.

"I've seen the brigade over the past six months really grow as a team to gel at both the staff level and at the units to help them build their proficiency, enhance their staff processes and develop operations," Wallace said. "I think the training has been very beneficial for the unit and it will definitely pay dividends down the road."

"This is the baseline," Mast said. "The true refinement and improvement will occur after the AAR at the conclusion of this and it will be on those battalion commanders to ensure that they are sustaining what we know worked here and continuing to improve the things that they have identified as weakness."



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The training concludes with an after-action review (AAR) where leaders within the 30th ABCT sit down with the active-duty Soldiers observing the training and controlling the scenarios.

Major Edgar felt his team did extremely well and he personally received some of the best feedback of his career from a retired Major General (2 stars). The General pulled him aside after one of Major Edgar's Mission Analysis briefings and told him it was one of the best he had ever seen. This 2-Star General had been in the service over 30 years! It was nice to know the train you're on is going in the right direction.
