

New battalion arrives

By Jessie Williams
Panorama staff writer

The new kids on the block are at the top of the hill. Infantry Hill, that is.

The new COHORT battalion from 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, arrived on post about two weeks ago and is already getting a taste of the Light Fighter way of life.

The COHORTs have been inprocessing into the battalion and the post for the last two weeks and should begin their actual training next week, said Capt. Bradley Clemmer, commander of Co. B, 1st Bn., 9th Inf.

"Most of the soldiers are a mix of infantry and mortarmen," said Clemmer.

"So far, they look like a group of super soldiers. We got a chance to see them during their Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Ga., while some of the soldiers now in charge were going through the Light Leaders Course at Benning," said Clemmer.

The first training the COHORTs will participate in is zeroing their weapons during range week. After range week, they will begin the Rites of Passage, which will include, according to Clemmer, an infiltration course, a rappelling course, bayonet assault training, day and night land navigation, and a 25-mile road march.

After the soldiers complete the Rites of Passage, they will be able to wear the Manchu belt buckle, which, according to Clemmer, only the 9th Infantry Regiment is authorized to wear.

"The Rites of Passage will help to instill confidence and unity in the new Manchus," said Clemmer.

Preparation time

Preparing for the new group of COHORTs to arrive took more than just waiting. Some of the soldiers who came to Fort Ord with the last COHORT unit re-enlisted and stayed on, and are now acting as squad leaders, platoon leaders and team leaders.

"Before the COHORTs arrived, some of us went to the Light Leaders Course in Fort Benning," said Sgt. Robert Porras, Co. C, 1st Bn., 9th Inf.

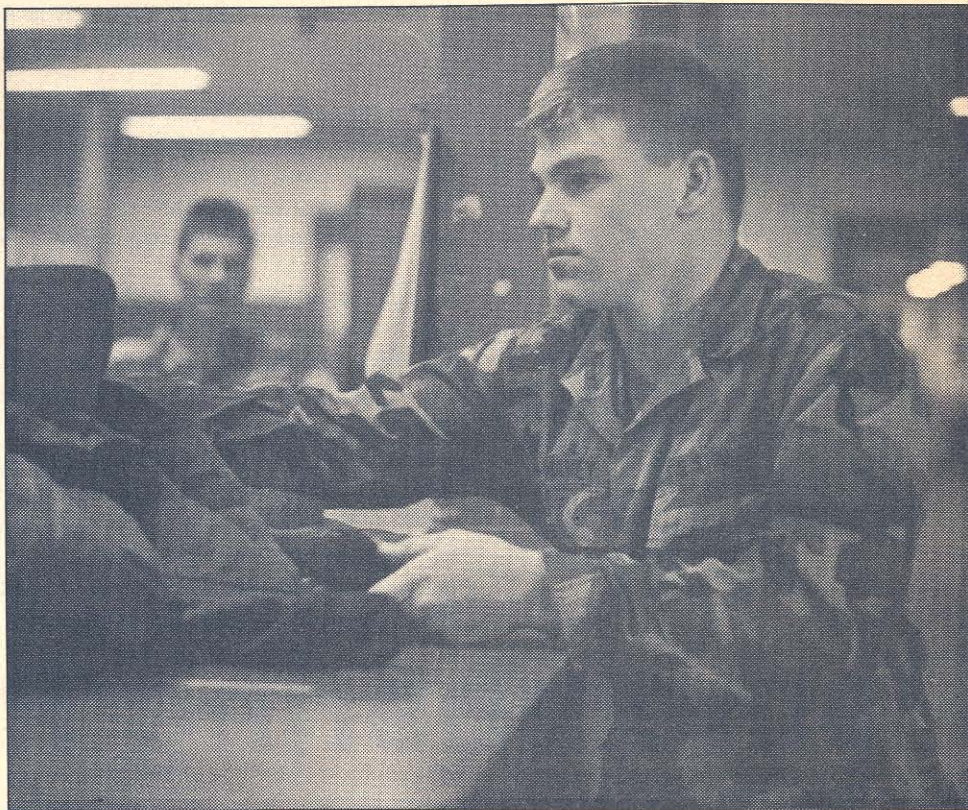


Photo by Jessie Williams

PVT. 1 THEODORE CHANEY is issued his Kevlar helmet and his flak jacket.

"We also helped renovate the barracks and get them ready for the new guys: replacing wall lockers, beds and making other little repairs to the building to make them more appealing."

So far, so good

"During the Light Leaders Course, we were taught how to prepare and give classes on various common tasks," said Spec. Gary Stenger, Co. B, 1-9 Inf.

Stenger said the soldiers left over from the old unit would basically act as the COHORT's first line of guidance as to what to do and what not to do. "We make sure they get to places on time, make the right formations and things like that, until they really have a good idea of what's going on," Stenger said.

"These guys seem to act like they're really squared away. They're in good shape, and almost all of them have pretty high GT scores. It shouldn't take them too long to get adjusted."

"I've always wanted to come to

California. So far, I really like it here," said Pvt. 1 Douglas Greenlee, Co. B, 1-9 Inf. "It's a lot better than basic (training). The weather out here is pretty nice, too."

"I don't really know quite what to expect as for the training. I've heard that it's pretty hard-core, but that's okay — I'm ready," said Pvt. 1 Kevin Guatney, Co. C, 1-9 Inf.

"Actually being here in California ain't nothing like MTV," said Pvt. 1 Farris Alamat from Co. B, 1-9 Inf. "The scenery is just awesome. It's almost just like a postcard. I haven't had a chance to get out and explore the area too much yet; we've only been here a couple of weeks, but I'm looking forward to it."

"The Manchus are on top the hill so everybody else can look up to us," said Clemmer. "There is a lot of pride in being a Manchu and a lot of history to it. The new COHORTs are learning that now, and before long, they'll be just as good, if not better than the rest."

Don't troops to compete