

4-3 ADA Combat Lifesaver Course

By: CPT Amber Hansen



The 4-3 Air Defense Artillery Patriot site was eerily quiet when the sudden sounds of gunfire and explosions tore through the silence. Bellows of pain could be heard blaring over the speakers that were echoing sounds of the battlefield. As the Combat Lifesavers re-grouped and assessed the scenario, an attentive medic watched on as the Soldiers placed tourniquets and dragged their battle buddies to safety. This wasn't a combat situation in the streets of Afghanistan, but the setting for the hands-on test portion of the 4-3 ADA Combat Lifesaver Course being conducted while deployed.

Ninety percent of all combat related deaths occur before the casualty reaches definitive medical care; if the Soldier survives long enough to reach definitive care his or her chances of survival are greatly increased. The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have identified preventable causes of death on the battlefield which have been integrated. Medical personnel may not be able to reach and apply emergency medicine to all wounded on the battlefield so implementing these changes in our common Soldier medical skills training have improved the survival rate of battlefield deaths. Combat Lifesavers are not intended to take the place of medical personnel, but to slow deterioration of a wounded Soldier's condition until medical personnel arrive or the casualty is taken to the next echelon of care.

This is why the role of the Combat Lifesaver has become crucial and the reason the medics of 4-3 ADA made it their goal to alter the primary focus of the course. "Our focus for teaching CLS this year was

geared towards making the training as life like and pragmatic as possible” said Spc. Meaghan Keenan, “We tried to ensure that all of our students had practical training with all of the equipment and supplies we would expect them to use in a real world situation.”

On test day Soldiers were required to wear their full body armor to better simulate a combat environment. In addition to the full “battle rattle” casualties wore old uniforms which allowed the CLS students to cut the uniforms in order to expose the casualties. Soldiers are required to take the course annually so keeping the course interesting can be a challenge. Spc. Alaine Shepard, a medic for 4-3 ADA said, “One of the ways we kept the course interesting is by applying moulage to the casualties. We also ran drills during the classroom portion in order to keep the class awake, motivated, and involved.”

The students took notice of the new direction the CLS class took. When asked about his favorite part of the course, Spc. Mingledorff of Bravo Battery 4-3 ADA said, “The hands-on portion was hands down the best and not just because I’m not a classroom person. The medics actually took the time to make sure our casualties had realistic injuries like we would actually see on the battlefield.” Sgt. Brinson, a Soldier in B Battery 4-3 ADA agreed saying, “The hands on portion was extremely mission oriented giving me the confidence to remain calm when put into emergency situations.

This was the best and most realistic CLS course I have ever been through.” “Our efforts and focus have been to ensure all Soldiers in our unit have the knowledge and skills to prevent unnecessary death, both at home and on the battlefield.” said Spc. Keenan.