

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH GENERAL MARK P. HERTLING  
SUBJECT: PUBLIC REVEAL OF THE NEW ARMY PHYSICAL READINESS TEST (APRT) AND  
THE ARMY COMBAT READINESS TEST (ACRT) TIME: 10:28 A.M. EST DATE: TUESDAY,  
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GEN. HERTLING: What I want to do first is introduce the team.  
Frank Palkoska is the -- (inaudible) -- Physical Fitness School down here  
at Fort Jackson, and that's why we're doing it here, because this is  
where most of the work has gone on.

Sonya Cable is the head of our Experimental Analysis Division,  
the folks that do the research for initial military training. And Joe  
Coleman is the head of our training support division within our IMT. And  
Brigadier General promotable Rich Longo is the G-3 of U.S. Army TRADOC.

So you all know Kelly, and I think that's about the folks we  
got. Frank will introduce some members of his team outside to you.

But first of all, we want to just say thanks for coming down.  
This is a big deal for the Army. And I think that you all have seen,  
anybody that reports on the Army sees that we've been challenged with  
developing some new programs for a new type of soldier, you know, the  
generation that we're dealing with, coming in from a society that is not  
as focused on physical fitness and health and nutrition.

And as you'll see in just a second, the PT test was part of our  
campaign plan, you know. We wanted -- Frank has been working on the new  
training circular for several years now and we published that last  
August. We've got a lot of -- (inaudible) -- going on for our new  
soldiers, which are evolving into the operational force. And really the  
big deal of establishing a new physical readiness test for our Army in a  
period of conflict, taking what we've learned from combat lessons and  
also taking a look at the soldiers that we're getting into the force, was  
a pretty important event for us.

So I'm very happy with what Frank and his team have done over  
the last year. We've been in close coordination with this. And I think  
it comes at a very good time.

The one other thing I'd say before I go through the charts, just as a method of allowing us to talk a little bit -- and I would ask you all to have questions as we go through this. Don't save it to the end. If you have a question as we're going through the charts, we will. And then we'll get outside and show it to you. And some of you, I understand, are going to take the test.

But what's important is the fact, if you look through the history of the United States Army in terms of the way we measure physical readiness or physical fitness for the battlefield, we've kind of done an ebb and flow over the last 60 to 70 years. Every time we're in a situation where it's prior to combat, our fitness regimen and our fitness testing is very different than what we see the Army doing after we've experienced combat.

That happened pre- and post-World War II, where you can see we had two different field manuals addressing the way we do physical training and physical testing for the way we train. It happened before and after Korea. It happened before Vietnam and slightly a little bit after, although after Vietnam, if you look at the history of FM 21-20, right after Vietnam, it was about the same time that some of the fitness mavens like Ken Cooper and a few others, the running guys and the aerobic fitness -- (inaudible) -- came into the fray.

So they really sold the military services on a lot of aerobic stuff that wasn't necessarily linked to the way we do things in combat. So, you know, Frank and I have been talking about this kind of stuff since our time together in the Department of Physical Education at West Point back in 1983 through '86. And we've always felt that we really needed to establish physical training and physical readiness testing the way we do fighting. And I think we had some serendipity. We had some opportunities as we came together in this job to address those issues. And we had lessons learned from combat in terms of forces doing the kinds of things that require muscular strength, muscular endurance, anaerobic and aerobic capacity and mobility. And you link that to the kinds of soldiers we're getting in. And it became even more important based on the situation we found ourselves in.

So that's background. With that, what I'm going to do if I can figure this thing out is go through -- yeah, this is -- just a few very quick charts to give you some background so it will prepare you for what you're about to see.

Some of you have seen these before. I think Kelly may have shot these out to a couple of you. But this is the reason why we're changing the Army physical fitness test. First of all, in the late '70s and '80s, and both Frank and I -- (inaudible) -- the people that did it and they gave us advice on this. The APFT that was established in the late '70s and incorporated in the early '80s was a test that was a snapshot of physical fitness. It was meant to be just a snapshot. It was not linked to what we were trying to do in preparing soldiers for combat.

Now, it's been a good test over the last 30 years. But it really has been a snapshot, and unfortunately, in some cases, commanders

and leaders have taken the approach of, it's an important test to make sure we're fit. But they have also, and I'll let Frank comment on this, it's also become almost a be-all, end-all. If you could train to the test and pass the test, gosh, you must be in great shape. But what we've seen, as you see in the second bullet up there, none of the things we do in the current APFT are linked to the kinds of stresses we put our bodies through in combat.

So what -- what we've attempted to do over the last several months in publishing the new TC320-220 and now testing this test is put something on the street that you don't have to train toward, but in fact it allows you to test the kind of shape you're in to perform the skills you need to do. What we want to do is kind of change the mind-set of no longer training for a test, but instead having the test be an indicator of the shape you're in.

Also, you know, the bullet up there about some of the things we've seen over the last several years, the high-speed repetitions and the excessively long runs, have caused injuries, frankly, in our force. And the researchers of the community have determined that and they've seen it over the years, and now we think it's time to do something about that.

So one of the pieces of guidance that I asked Frank to incorporate as they analyzed a new test and prepared to present a new test was take into account a testing protocol that does not cause injuries. And they've done that.

The other thing I'll just say on here is a year ago, when we first started talking about, the concern we had, as we discussed it, was, how will this be accepted in the force? You know, whenever you change the way an army does business, you always run into a bow wave of either criticism or we don't want to change, or, you know, why are we transforming, it's good enough, it's been good enough for 30 years. And we thought we would really run into a whole lot of criticism when we developed a new test. In fact, just the opposite is happening. Indicators are that there's a lot of folks out there telling us -- I know they've told me this, and maybe I'm a small -- it's a small (N ?) for me -- but I've had quite a few people come up to me and say, thank God you're changing it, it's time for a new test.

The force as a whole likes -- you know, soldiers like to be challenged. And so I think that this test will definitely challenge them, both the physical readiness test, the one in PT clothes. And when unit commanders -- and as we develop the ACRT, the Army Combat Readiness Test, as unit commanders see how competitive that could be and how it might be a test of combat readiness in a pre-deployment cycle or in somewhat of an adventure training mode, they've already sort of jumped all over this, saying this is going to be great, and we appreciate you all fighting for the changes of this.

Okay. So that's the background. Again, I said early on this is part of a campaign plan. Frank and his team published the doctrine, a very scientifically-oriented and very research-oriented doctrine, which

implemented not only the ways to train new soldiers as they come into the force, but the way you take operational units and better prepare them for the demands of -- in functional training.

There have been all kinds of rumors about what this is and what it isn't. You know, people have said it's yoga-like, it's like Pilates, it's like, you know, Cross-Fit. And frankly, it is all those things. It's functional fitness. It's preparing the body to take challenges on in different ways.

And what's interesting is I have repeated -- and I know Frank does, too, and we can talk about this -- but we have had repeated queries about, is this good or is it bad? My unit's not accepting it. I'm not getting it, you know, as a company commander. I'm not seeing it advertised by my chain of command. I had an e-mail or a Facebook posting last night from a friend of mine who was a former drill sergeant who's now in an operational unit at one of our posts, and she's saying, hey, I'm trying to incorporate the new PRTs, but my chain of command won't let me do it. Okay, I mean, we're still early. It's going to happen. And there are some commanders who are picking this up. And what I would suggest to all commanders is, read the doctrinal manual and try the program before you start bad-mouthing it, because when you try it, as many sergeants, majors and commanders do, they say, holy smokes, this is a smoker of a workout and it's pretty good, and it's addressing deficiencies that we see in readiness training.

So the first piece was publishing the doctrine. The second piece is incorporating it into the training base, which we have in basic training and AIG (ph) as of last July.

And now it's getting it into the operational domain, the operational units. And then the third phase of this campaign plan is the testing phase, and that's what we're here to talk about today.

An explanation of the phase three actions at the bottom. These were the things that Frank and I agreed on before he started pulling some subject matter experts in to design the test. This was the guidance I gave him. It was look both inside and outside the Army for subject matter experts to come together and develop a good test. It was, hey, if you -- you know, actually, the second bullet on there, determine needs to keep, modify, supplement, et cetera, you know, I told Frank, hey, if the current test is fine and we just need to make a little twist, that's okay, too. But using your subject matter experts, develop a good test which really trains and tests functional fitness and prepares the force to do that.

One of the big things we have to do when you talk about an Army of 500,000-plus is it's not only got to be gender-neutral, but it also has to be somewhat age-specific, because you're going to be testing 17-year-olds in basic training, but you're also going to be taking -- testing old guys like me, 57-year-olds, as they do their thing in the operational force.

So it's got to be something that everybody can do, and also that we can do easily, not only at places that have equipment -- if we needed it -- but places removed that didn't have equipment. Because one of the things we discussed was we couldn't incur a bill to buy the things in order to administer the test, and you'll see how that came about, too.

And then the ease of administration. There was a little bit of a stutter step by someone yesterday -- I won't go into it -- but thinking that we had had bought a piece of equipment that we didn't in order to test one of the events of the test. Everything you'll see in the Army Physical Readiness Test is pure; I mean, you don't need anything other than a running track and a couple of graders for maintaining the scores.

And then we also had to figure out a way to incorporate it into both the operating and the generating, because whenever you do something like this it would be very easy to say, hey, we just -- we've got the new test, let's start executing it. Well, we don't have test standards yet. So over the next couple of months, we've got to do some pilot testings to get a norming device to see, hey, what's really good on this test, what's not so good, and what's about the average? And Frank can talk a little bit about that, too.

This was the advisory board. These are the people we ask to come together over a couple of days or a couple of weeks and determine what we should do. And what's interesting about that is there are some really -- maybe not to the media, but to those of us who deal in physiology and physical fitness, there are some real key names up there. I mean, Dr. Chip East, as an example, is considered a subject matter expert in the field of exercise and training, both in the military and outside the military. Some of the other guys in there -- Neal Baumgartner, as an example, from the Air Force, and -- where's my Marine -- Tim Bockelman from the Marine Corps helped develop their physical standards in the other services. So we wanted to draw on them on what they found, good and bad, within their -- within their organizations. We brought folks from the military performance division of Natick, as well as professors who are both physiologists, kinesiologists, biomechanists, and just exercise dudes from various organizations throughout the country to help us with this as well.

I'll comment, too, we also we wanted to bring in and Major Delia Woods (sp) from FORSCOM, was our FORSCOM rep. She was not only a FORSCOM rep, but she's a member of the Reserve component as well. So we wanted to incorporate how it would affect the Reserves and the National Guard when we did this.

Okay, the next slide. This the APRT, what we would propose or what we're going to recommend based on our testing, our pilot over the next couple of months, to be the replacement for the Army Physical Fitness Test. Key difference is between readiness and fitness. And if you talk to anyone in the exercise community, there is a nuanced meaning behind both of those words. It's one thing to be fit and have anaerobic and muscular fitness.

It's a quite another thing to be ready for the things you're being asked to do. And in our case, it's being asked (of a tactical ?) athlete or a soldier. So physical readiness for us makes a big difference as opposed to physical fitness.

And you'll see -- I mean, we can ask questions about this, but I'll go through this very quickly. This is -- these are pros and cons of what we think. And I'll mention the con, because you'll probably jump on that.

The upper body strength assessment tool, which is the one minute of push-ups, is not the best measurement for upper body strength assessment. Literally, the best we think is the pull-up. But that goes away from what we think we can do in most post camps and stations because you got to have pull-up bars to do it, number one; and secondly, it isn't gender-neutral. It is a different test from women than it is for men on a pull-up. The Marines have incorporated the pull-up as one of their test items, but they do for women a flexed arm hang as opposed to a pull-up. And we didn't think we wanted to do that. So we stuck with the one minute of push-ups, and I think that's a pretty good test of what we're trying to do.

The next page is the combat readiness test, the ACRT. And you'll see this demonstrated outside after the APRT, but this allows us to do a little bit more challenging test for all units. It's combat-related. It's linked to the warrior task and battle drills, which we refined earlier in the year. And it does test every aspect of the body -- anaerobic, aerobic, muscular strength and endurance, mobility, agility. Everything that you would want to test is tested in this -- in this particular test.

For anybody that is familiar with the West Point indoor obstacle course, which is considered by many physiologists as the best test of physical fitness, this comes very close to that without some of the climbing and mountaineering and agility skills that you have to have on that particular test.

This is -- you'll see this outside. But this is -- for those who were not here or on the blog -- the blog sites, this is a diagram of what it's going to look like for the ACRT. And I'd only ask because the great article that The Army Times put together yesterday I think was very explanatory of what we're trying to do with the two tests. But I would only say that the ACRT, the combat readiness test, is very different than the APRT, our two different test mechanisms. And you'll see that outside. And then, finally, what Frank is going to do in terms of the standards, development -- I'm sorry for not flipping the slides -- within the next six months or so, he will test anywhere between 7,000 and 10,000 soldiers in all three components and at various locations and in different age groups and gender categories in order to norm our scores. We are proposing in this test that instead of having multiple breakdowns of age group and scores associated, we're going to widen those and go with the American College of Sports Medicine aging categories, and you'll see those on the chart. And it's basically in 10-year increments.

For the uninitiated, you might say, holy smokes, you're putting the 29-year-olds in the same category as the 17-year-olds? Yes, we are. And there's physiologically -- physiological reasons for that, frankly. You reach your peak of performance at about the age of 26 or 27. So, in fact, the higher age group in that 30 and under would probably -- or the higher age in that 30-or-under-year group would probably perform better on the best than an 18-year-old in many cases, if they've trained for it.

And you'll see the pilot test sites on there. (Laughs.) I would only add -- and we've coordinated with all these organizations to begin these pilot tests soon, and we'll be issuing an execute order later on this week after this demonstration today. But there's -- I would only add there's probably going to be one more site added to that -- (laughter) -- and I won't go into that right now. But it will probably be -- I think there could be a chance to incorporate U.S. Army Europe as one of the test sites on there, too. (Laughter.) So that's all I'll say about that.

So that's the presentation. And now I'd kind of it open it up, first to the folks on the phone and then anybody in the room, to ask any questions.

MODERATOR: Thank you, General Hertling. I believe we had a couple folks call in a little later for the Bloggers Roundtable. Do you mind introducing yourself?

Q: Yes. This is Christian Lowe with Military.com.

GEN. HERTLING: Hi, Christian. Good hearing from you again.

Q: Yeah. Thanks a lot. I actually have a question, if we're launching into that. Or would you prefer to do introductions of those on the phone?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. Let's do the introductions first, so I know who's listening, okay? Who else is on that came on later?

MODERATOR: Yes. Hello?

Q: This is Troy Stewart from Bouhammer.com.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay. Good seeing you, Troy.

Q: Hello. This is Mary Moses from Army Public Affairs.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay. Hi, Mary.

Okay.

MODERATOR: Okay. I think that may be it, in addition to Mr. Chuck Crumbo from South Carolina Military News.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay.

Q: And this is Charles Reynolds with Thinking Out Loud and Examiner.com.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay, Charles. Thank you.

Okay, and we did have a question from --

Q: Yeah. This is Christian Lowe with Military.com.

So for those of us who don't have the benefit of being down there, first, could you -- and you may have done this earlier because I came in a little bit late -- but first question, could you describe what some of these exercises are for the physical readiness test, the one-minute rower? What is that? What is the 60-yard shuttle run? Just so we have a way of describing it in the story.

GEN. HERTLING: Sure. I'm going to turn it over to Frank and he can describe it.

FRANK PALKOSKA (director, U.S. Army Fitness School): The first event -- this is Frank Palkoska, director of the Army Fitness School. The first event --

Q: Okay. Could you spell your last name?

MR. PALKOSKA: It's P-A-L-K-O-S-K-A. First name is Frank.

Q: Thanks, Frank.

MR. PALKOSKA: You're welcome.

The first event of the APRT is the 60-yard progressive shuttle run.

Q: Yeah.

MR. PALKOSKA: All right? This particular event measures anaerobic power, speed, and agility and coordination. And it looks like this, since you don't have a diagram. It begins with a position on the starting line. You'll run up five yards, pick up a wooden block that's two-by-four-by-six inches. Run back to the starting line. Place the block behind the line on the ground. Change directions. Run up 10 yards. Return back -- pick up the block, return back to the starting line. Place the block on the ground. Move up to the 15-yard mark. Pick up the block. Move back all the way through the starting line, and you're done with that particular event.

Q: Okay.

MR. PALKOSKA: The one-minute rower exercise is an exercise that we do in our preparation drill, so that -- all soldiers conduct that exercise on a daily basis. And it is a total body flexion and extension exercise. It's hard to explain, but the individual is laying on their back with their arms overhead. And as they raise their arms up over

their head, they draw their knees towards their chest and their heels are flat on the ground towards their buttock.

GEN. HERTLING: It looks to a degree like a sit-up, but with your arms starting overhead as opposed to behind your head, and then pulling you legs up to your stomach. So it's a combination of an overhead -- overhead sit-up with a -- with a crunch --

Q: Okay. GEN. HERTLING: -- is the best -- I think the best way to describe it.

MR. PALKOSKA: Yes. And it -- and it -- and it encompasses mobility for total body coordination, both flexion and extension. And it's total body muscular endurance. And this event is conducted for one minute in length.

Then we have the standing long jump, which is basically the same standing long jump that you probably were administered in elementary school.

GEN. HERTLING: Three iterations, with the best score of the three.

Q: Okay. And then -- and then for the -- for the rower, what am I trying to accomplish with the rower? Is that just my ability to keep doing it for one minute?

MR. PALKOSKA: Yeah, exactly, because it's a total muscular endurance event. It's not just trunk endurance.

Q: Okay.

GEN. HERTLING: And it's a continual -- both the rower and the push-up are continual actions. There are no rests during that event. As soon as you rest or stop the event, that's when -- (inaudible) -- stop and that --

MR. PALKOSKA: -- terminates the event.

GEN. HERTLING: That terminates the event.

MR. PALKOSKA: So it is a true -- (inaudible).

The next event, the fourth event, is the typical Army push-up with no rest -- (inaudible) -- and it is conducted for one minute -- (inaudible). As many repetitions as can be -- (inaudible) -- during the one-minute -- (inaudible).

And the fifth event, last event -- (inaudible) -- five-mile run.

It measures lower-body -- (inaudible) -- and aerobic capacity, and we look specifically at -- (inaudible) -- and we're looking at -- (inaudible). It is the gold standard for assessment of aerobic capacity and health.

Q: Okay.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay, any other questions from the bloggers?

Q: Yes. General, this is Chuck Crumbo. You talked about the current test being kind of a(n) end all, be all. You test to the standard.

I was just wondering, does this new regimen address the issue of some of the deaths that have occurred, particularly at Fort Jackson, of people in basic combat training? Does this help prevent those deaths?

GEN. HERTLING: Did you say deaths?

Q: Yes. There have been some soldiers who have died after a PT test.

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah, there were --

Q: There were some cardiac death events.

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah, there were some cardio deaths event.

Now, I think those were things outside the realm of the physical fitness test. Those were either heart conditions -- I mean, there has -- there's only been one death here at Fort Jackson in the two years since I've been here related to a PT test, and that was due to an unchecked heart position -- or condition. But no, this is not an attempt to -- you know, it's not us saying, oh my gosh, we've had deaths in physical readiness training and those kind of things. In fact, I think one of the things we're trying to do with this is help folks understand that there is a fitness requirement within the military. And this shouldn't just be -- and by the way, this is another reason for doing these two new tests -- is, as we talked about, the old test was something you could train for. And I'll be perfectly honest with you: in my soon to be 36 years in the Army, I can tell you that there's been quite a few instances of me overhearing people say, oh, heck, the PT test is coming up next month, I've got to really start training for it. And they start cranking out push-ups and sit-ups and going on two-mile runs.

Well, these new tests will hopefully ensure that our soldiers know that physical readiness and physical resilience is a 24/7/365 requirement. Because you can't train for these tests, there's going to be a more of a emphasis on maintaining your condition and continuing to try to improve your condition at all times.

Go ahead, Frank.

MR. PALKOSKA: I'd like to follow on with this. I think we need to place this in the appropriate context and have an understanding that this is a combination of training and testing. Training, in actuality, will lessen or lower your chance for any incidence of sudden cardiac death that you may be predisposed to by not training appropriately. So

you have to understand that there is a linkage to training and testing with this program. I hope that that answers your question.

Q: Yes.

Does this also require a change in the -- as far as basic training and more emphasis on the -- since you're doing so many different kinds of exercises, is this going to take more time out of -- during the 10 weeks of training?

GEN. HERTLING: No, not at all.

MR. PALKOSKA: Absolutely not.

GEN. HERTLING: In fact, we've already done that. We've already incorporated this new training methodology, which will lead to this kind of testing, as of last July. I mean we started the very draconian physical training requirements in basic training and one station unit training almost a year ago now. And part of -- part of what we're seeing that's going to contribute to this test is we've also seen some huge improvements in what we're seeing in physical conditioning, less failures of the old test, less injuries by doing some of these more scientifically-based exercises, and more emphasis on training smarter as opposed to training more.

So this is already incorporated in the initial military training realm. It's just the test will now be geared more toward the readiness as opposed to fitness snapshots.

Q: Is this -- I know one of the top injuries, or the highest category injuries, are stress fractures. Does this lessening that?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. We've already -- and, in fact, I just did a presentation to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Health Affairs. And what we were seeing was an increasing spike in several types of stress fractures, and I used the example of the femoral neck hip stress fracture that over the last 10 years has gradually increased until 2009. And with the incorporation of the new physical training regimen and the way we're doing physical training and basic training, we've radically reduced the number of hip stress fractures.

And I'll give you an indication of that. In 2008, there were 135 instances of those injuries here at Fort Jackson. In 2009 and '10, with the incorporation of the new physical training program and emphasis on doing it more scientifically, it was reduced to 87. And so far this year, after six months, we've had a total of two of those femoral neck hip stress fractures. So, yeah, this new physical readiness training program is certainly reducing injuries and improving our physical capacity.

MR. PALKOSKA: There's two parts to that that I want to add onto that.

One issue with stress fractures involves strength training. We have to engage our soldiers and make them stronger, and that's total body muscular strength.

The other aspect is the modifications in the training program that we did specifically with the way the Army runs. The issue of sustained running has been modified, especially in initial entry training. And we rationally progress a young soldier from week one of basic combat training all the way through week 10. And we've included speed running, which works the anaerobic component more. And we have found that -- great success in that particular area and reduced the total weekly mileage, which has seemed to help reduce the overall number of stress fractures.

GEN. HERTLING: And load. And load.

MR. PALKOSKA: And load.

GEN. HERTLING: And load, too. I'll just add something on that, on load, because as -- one of the lessons we learned from 10 years of combat is there are a lot of commanders in the field who say, hey, they're going to come to Iraq or Afghanistan and start putting on, you know, 40 or 50 pounds of kit. So we need to do that in the basic training environment and have them wear that stuff all the time. Frankly, the young trainees that we get in the training environment aren't prepared to do that when they enter basic training. And what we were seeing is we were causing some of the injuries by overloading our soldiers too early before they were ready for it.

So the scientific approach to not only physical conditioning, but also the soldiers' load has been somewhat critical in consideration as we've developed this program as well.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit of how you kind of increase that load over the 10 weeks?

GEN. HERTLING: I'm sorry, how we've increased -- how do we increase the load?

Q: Do you start them out with less of a load and just kind of build up, or?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah, exactly right. Less of a load, build up, also less mileage in our road marches buildup. And also one of the things that the researchers have shown us is, hey, when you're wearing this stuff, if there's any time at all you can get off your feet, that's the best thing going. You know, so it's the combination of rest as well.

There's also -- being a physiologist myself, I'm kind of interested in some of the current research going on. And there's -- within the last couple of weeks, there's been multiple issues of research concerning the amount of sleep as a contributor to physical readiness and fitness. Anybody that's in the physiology world knows that sleep is as important as working out or rest is as important as working out.

So we're trying to incorporate more down time when soldiers aren't walking or carrying heavy loads. They got to get off their feet, you know, do the rest stops on the side of the road, get their legs up and those kind of things. So all that's part of what seems to be common sense, but sometimes it ain't so common.

MODERATOR: Thank you for your question, Mr. Crumbo.

Q: This is Christian Lowe again from Military.com.

MODERATOR: Mr. Charles Reynolds of Examiner.com, do you have any questions?

Q: No. Believe it or not, all the questions that I had written down have already been answered by the general and Frank.

GEN. HERTLING: Super.

MODERATOR: Okay, great. And how about Mr. Troy Stewart? I'd like to give you an opportunity to ask a question as well.

Q: Yeah, I have a couple real quick.

The first one, sir, for anyone up there that can answer, is, you mentioned in the one slide that the cycle and the swim, the alternate events, are being -- are being eliminated. Are there alternative events being identified for the APRT right now?

MR. PALKOSKA: Yes. Specifically, after we develop the standards for the five events, we will look at a one-mile walk with standards. Currently, the Army has alternate aerobic events that are pass/fail and do not have a numerical standard associated with them for a point value.

Q: So is the -- will the -- will the alternate -- the one-mile walk also be a pass/fail, or will it -- you said it -- (inaudible)?

MR. PALKOSKA: No, we will put standards to that -- to that particular event.

Q: Okay.

Also, it was mentioned -- the general mentioned early on that, you know, we -- the Army as we all know has had a process of training up for the PT tests and that's really all they focus to. And I can tell you, 22 years, I can agree with that. That's all we ever really focused on.

MR. PALKOSKA: Right.

Q: But how is this going to be -- I mean, I'm assuming with a scored system, this is going to also have a point system. It's going to count for promotion points. It's going to count for schools and all that

kind of stuff. I mean, isn't it -- do you not see it falling in the same trap of just training for it? And how quick can you throw that wood block back behind the line or whatever it's going to be?

MR. PALKOSKA: I think -- I think we have to clarify here is that training drives testing. Testing doesn't drive training. When you look at the regulation that governs training in the Army, AR 350-1, it specifies that commanders will develop their Physical Readiness Training program around mission and mettle.

Currently, it also specifies that the APFT that we currently conduct is of secondary importance. It is a(n) assessment tool to tell the commander at that point in time; it's a snapshot in time of the physical readiness of the soldiers within that particular unit.

The same holds true for this new test. But what the unique piece is, is that the training piece is more functional in nature than the old training in 21-21 -- 21-20 was. Therefore, it develops and is based around and supports what soldiers have to do when they perform combat operations.

So it's focused on warrior tasks and battle drills. And basically if you're conducting the training to standard, the assessment will be the easiest training day you have. GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. One of the things -- General Rich Longo just whispered in my ear -- and he's got a great point, and it's also a good sound bite. When you're training for combat, you're training for the test. You know, there is no more physically demanding thing than the stressors produced in combat, not only for the muscular and the aerobic system but also for their hormonal system. I mean, the same kinds of things that contribute to fatigue in a competitive event are the same hormones that contribute to fear in combat.

So, you know, these are some of the things that we're trying to train and get focused to -- people to -- our soldiers to focus on as opposed to just doing more push-ups and sit-ups and a two mile -- faster two-mile run.

So, really, what were -- the emphasis is, train for combat. Get ready for the physical demands of combat and you'll be fine on this test.

Q: So --

MR. PALKOSKA: You know, if you're truly training for the things that you might be asked to do in combat, then you're going to probably be pretty doggone good in this test.

Q: So, sir, is the thought that the APRT is going to be in, like, year one through four of the ARFORGEN cycle and ACRT -- (inaudible) -- in the ready-deploy status?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah, that -- you know, that's a great question. And that's one of the things -- actually, you're thinking the same way

General Casey thinks because that's the same thing -- he -- it's the same question he asked me when we briefed him.

When we first started playing with this a little bit, we thought that we would have the APRT one part of the year and the ACRT at the other part of the year. But the more we look at it and as we develop the pilot and as we talk to units, you know, we could have the APRT twice a year and the ACRT, the combat readiness test, right before the deployment. We don't know.

That -- those -- that's one of things we're going to determine in the -- in the pilot test. And, you know, you could have the APRT twice a year or once a year. And the unit commander could say, hey, six months from now, we're going to do -- we're going to put it on the master training calendar and we're going to do the Army combat readiness test. So let's start getting ready for it.

And then suddenly the day of the test, all the devices appear on the field. And people who have been lifting weights or running sprints or doing squats and all the other things that are associated with the kinds of things we test in the ACRT, we'll go out on the field and do it. We don't know yet. GEN. HERTLING: I think the unique thing behind these two specific tests are -- is whatever weakness that you see with inside the APRT, when I reference a component such as strength, that may not be measured as well. You'll find that it is a significant factor when a soldier has to execute the Army combat readiness test, especially when you have to look at one of the events which is 180-pound Skedco drag to simulate casualty evacuation.

And the soldiers that have performed in the pilot so far come back and say that is a significant event --

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah.

MR. PALKOSKA: -- of lower body muscular strength and power.

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. And if I can, let me use that as an example, too. That's an interesting example Frank just used because what we were seeing as we were starting to incorporate the new TC322- 20, the new manual into basic training, we would see -- as we started training folks on strength and conditioning, we would see new soldiers being able to conduct those Skedco drags and move those things on, you know, the equivalent of a simulated casualty evacuation. And we would see some of our drill sergeants coming back to go to drill sergeant schools who could not do that, even though they had just come out of deployment cycle.

So this is something that we've got to take a look at the entire physical readiness of our force, not just the new initial military trainee, but also the NCOs and officers who have been around for a while.

MR. PALKOSKA: I think another key point that both the training and both assessments get at is -- it's really a tribute to train as you fight. And that's what we're trying to be focused on. We're trying to synchronize and link what is done in physical-readiness training in the

morning with the other training that soldiers have to perform within their MOS and within their units during the duty day and also in theater of operations.

Q: That's a great explanation from you guys. That was a lot more than I anticipated. (Laughter.) I appreciate that.

MR. PALKOSKA: Sorry. We talk too much.

Q: No, no, that's good. I think everyone probably appreciated that. One last quick question. I guess my concern is -- how do we -- how are you going to try to ensure that we don't get into the rut of -- I mean, I know that it's -- the APFT is supposed to be a commander's assessment tool and it's, you know, secondary to the mission and metal. But how do we keep soldiers who are more worried about trying to get those promotion points, trying to get those career enhancing and other cool schools and everything else from just focusing on getting past this, just like they do in the range, you know, when we had the typical 40 rounds, get expert, get the max point kind of thing?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. I think -- I'll answer that in a couple of ways, first of all, it will require a culture change. This isn't just, hey, we're going to change the test; therefore, people are going to think differently about it.

We've got a lot of folks who believe that if you score 290 or above on the APFT, you are in great shape and prepared for any combat mission. And we're here to tell you that's not the case. I mean for every person that scores 300, I can show you an individual that can't do the job in combat because they can't carry a load or they can't (hump ?) at high altitudes.

And at the same time, you know, there are some guys who only score 220 who were exactly the ones you want on the current test, who are exactly the ones you want to hump the loads and go up the side of the mountain because they might not be fast on that two mile run, but man, they'll go all day long like a mountain goat.

So, I mean, those are the deviations that we have to change as we take a look at the culture. But the things that I add to that is the fact that we have also suggested to both General Casey and General Dempsey when we briefed them on this, that we put not only an emphasis on ensuring people pass these tests, but also adjectival ratings on them as well.

What we're going to recommend at the end of the day is there will no longer be a 290 out of 300 points, but, in fact, it'll fall into the category of excellence, good or poor, and maybe a couple of others that we haven't determined yet based on the roundup of the scores. And, by the way, instead of just saying on an officer efficiency report like all of us have had for at least the last 10 years in the 69 or the -- can't remember the form.

MR. PALKOSKA: 68-9.

GEN. HERTLING: 68-9, yeah, the officer-efficiency report or the NCO efficiency report. All it currently says right now is height, weight, pass or fail. So, you know, you can't tell the difference between someone who has the physical resilience of being excellent in the kind of thing that you need in combat versus a guy who just barely passes it by one point with the current test.

We have asked General Dempsey -- as he takes a look at refining, potentially changing the new OER and NCOER -- is could we put scales on the actual report form that says not only your height and weight but also how you did based on the adjectival rating. Now, I might be getting out a little bit too far out front here, but that's one of the things that we're looking at as well. MR. PALKOSKA: I'd like to comment on the question referenced, focus specifically on the test for promotion points and that --

GEN. HERTLING: I think -- hold on a second, Frank. Did we lose everybody?

MR. : No.

MR. : No. We're here.

MODERATOR: Oh, no.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay. All right. Because we're supposed to hang up at 11:15, so we're --

MR. PALKOSKA: We're close. I'll make it quick.

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah.

MR. PALKOSKA: I would -- I would tell a soldier or a leader who asked me that question to -- number one, I would say, trust your leadership.

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah.

MR. PALKOSKA: And then, rely on the training to get where you need to go, because the focus needs to be on training and not on testing. Testing is just a snapshot in time; the training will prepare you. It's battle-focused. It's significantly different than training that was in the last version of 2120.

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. And I'll just give an example, and then we'll probably close it down. I know that there are -- you know, the football fan out there would say the key to any running back or tight end would be how fast they ran the 40. The difference is when you put a -- when you put a football player on the sideline and say, go, and then they run the 40 in 4.4 or 4.3, you say, ooh, that's an indicator. But then you start putting the pads on him and start asking him to catch a ball or carry a ball, and at the same time block, tackle and, you know, get away

from people who are trying to tackle him. That's a whole different skill set.

We're trying to get to the tactical athlete as opposed to just the individual who can pass a test. Does that make sense? Q: Yeah, it sure does.

GEN. HERTLING: Okay. All right, well, hey, we're going to -- I think we're going to have to hang up on all you folks, but thanks so much for joining us. And we appreciate your interest in this particular subject. And I think it's a -- we all think it's a pretty big deal for the Army that we're doing this. And we just appreciate your publicizing it and getting it out to our soldiers as well. Okay. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you so much.

END.