

M.E.F.

Mission Essential Fitness



Doug Briggs, Ph.D., CSCS,*D, RSCC,*D
Director of Human Performance

22 July 2011



THE MEF CONCEPT

The MEF concept is to train Soldiers safely and effectively in strength, speed, power, and agility. This type of training is required for a Soldier to carry out their mission in today's modern combat environment. The Soldier is a ***"Tactical Athlete."***

MEF was implemented at Fort Bliss in July 2008 and was designed by Dr. Briggs based on NCAA Division I training programs for athletes. It is safe and effective and backed by four studies showing its ability to improve PT scores by as much as 50 points in six months with no injuries. During one study in Europe there was an observed reduction in sick call visits of Soldiers by 50%. Since its inception the program has trained thousands of Soldiers and has grown to include four other installations. The MEF program at Fort Bliss has its own building known as Ironworks Gym where as many as 800 Soldiers per day train.

MEF training is mission-side training for Soldiers only. It is not open to civilians, retirees, or family members. The training is hard, progressive, and effective. Other training methods including "CrossFit" pale in comparison to MEF training.




FEEDBACK

Dr. Briggs-

The MEF training or functional training as it was called before we deployed was fantastic. At first glimpse, it would seem easy until one tries it. It can be a humbling experience at times. As a 1SG, I would have regular circuit sessions for my company. At first, Soldiers hated it, but eventually learned to respect it. During our last deployment to Iraq, my BDE had an AAB mission, but only after 2 months of full spectrum OPS. The usual gamut of expected injuries was minute or non-existent. My 224 Soldier Company did not have any NBI's due to carrying heavy loads, dismounting/mounting vehicles, or even running PT on 1" gravel. I can't speak for the rest of the BN, but my medics running the aid station for the BN had a lot of free time to train and focus on trauma. They were not inundated by preventable injuries or overuse problems. The only difference in our physical training for this past deployment was the MEF. Kudos to you and your trainers. Also, the TRX system is fantastic to sustain a good level of fitness.

N. Shaw
MSG, USA
Operations SGT
4-6 IN "Regulars!"

FEEDBACK



2. The Battalion has overall gained great physical fitness stamina and as a result Soldiers have improved on their pushups, sit ups and two mile run for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). The records show that the Battalion average went from 245 in October 2010 up to 252 as of June 2011. The major factor that created this increase is the training at Ironworks Gym. The Battalion goal is for each Soldier to reach 240 points and because of Ironworks intense circuit training we now have 20 out of 39 Soldiers that easily surpass that goal, compared to 12 back in October. The remaining Soldiers are not too far behind the Battalion goal and are continuing to strive for achievement with the assistance of Ironworks Staff. To this day we are 100% on Soldiers passing the APFT.

1) MEF is a tremendous combat multiplier that each Soldier appreciates and enjoys. I have received positive feedback from almost all members of the team regarding physical training.

2) Equipment/Facility is top-notch. You cannot find a better place to train in Ft Bliss.

3) To caveat off of #2, we need more places like the MEF Clamshell to accommodate physical training. I would like to have a facility like that for my BDE so that we can teach the Olympic lifts/etc.



FEEDBACK

I had the opportunity of working out with a 100 or so Soldiers for an hour today at the Ironworks Gym at Fort Bliss. It was by far the best workout for the Soldiers I have seen done in the US Army. They used 26 stations with 5 Soldiers a station in a non-stop rotation of 1 minute per station for 3 rotations. From tire flipping, sledge hammering, heavy ropes, sleds, weights, jumping, plyometrics, dumbbells, and TRX, to footwork drills, they hit it all. It was all about change of direction for different muscle groups, endurance, toughness and being a part of a team. Very well done. The gym set up looks like a NCAA Division 1 football program. The pace, the motivation, the training was a testament to not only get the Soldiers in better shape but brought them together to compete and fight to become better than they are. From 20 years in the game, I would highly recommend this program to your FOBs and bases here in the US. It's making the Soldiers Army Strong to compete against the world and win.

-Riki Ellison, Military Lobbyist, former NCAA and Superbowl Champion



FEEDBACK

I have been doing the MEF two times a week for six months and have to say it is an experience. Day one I hated it why because it hurt and wore me out, six months later it still the same but I know it has helped me increase my APFT score by 26 points. You only get out of it what you put into it, there are no shortcuts and no pacing yourself it is all out. One of the great aspects of the MEF is that even those on profile can do it, the instructors will coach and modify it to the particular profile.

SFC James O'Neill

2-356th LS, 402nd FA BDE, DIV West, First Army

SSG Joshua Reyes, section leader "I believe that the routines used will help soldiers in building endurance and strength that is crucial when in combat"

SPC Gary Merrill, saw gunner "I really enjoyed using the mission essential fitness routines because it was different than the normal PT that we do every day. My heart rate was elevated for the entire hour of the work out." Our platoon only used the program once, but we are looking to incorporate it into our PT plan when we are in Garrison and not in the field.

ABLE COMPANY 1-77 AR, 4 BCT, 1 AD

A close-up photograph of an embroidered American flag patch on a dark fabric. The patch features a blue canton with white stars and red and white stripes, all outlined with a yellow border. The embroidery is detailed and textured.

Thank You!

Contact Information:

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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
2ND BATTALION, 356TH REGIMENT,
402ND FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE
DIVISION WEST, FIRST ARMY
1733 PLEASANTON ROAD
FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79916

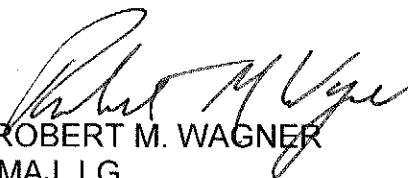
AFKA-DWA-NCD

27 June 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR Director, Ironworks Gym, Biggs Army Air Field, Ft. Bliss, TX
79916

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

1. The 2nd Battalion, 356th Regiment would like to extend our appreciation to the hard working Staff of Ironworks Gym for their outstanding physical fitness training support. We certainly appreciate the dedication the Staff has fully applied in order for Soldiers to be well fit and gain muscle mass as well as cardiovascular endurance.
2. The Battalion has overall gained great physical fitness stamina and as a result Soldiers have improved on their pushups, sit ups and two mile run for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). The records show that the Battalion average went from 245 in October 2010 up to 252 as of June 2011. The major factor that created this increase is the training at Ironworks Gym. The Battalion goal is for each Soldier to reach 240 points and because of Ironworks intense circuit training we now have 20 out of 39 Soldiers that easily surpass that goal, compared to 12 back in October. The remaining Soldiers are not too far behind the Battalion goal and are continuing to strive for achievement with the assistance of Ironworks Staff. To this day we are 100% on Soldiers passing the APFT.
3. The Battalion has also been able to build a good team work attitude and push each other while training at Ironworks Gym. Due to the high intensity and great motivation from the Staff and each other, Soldiers push to their utmost limit and get the most out of the work out. This physical fitness training provides for a great team building opportunity and promotes Espirit de Corp amongst the Soldiers.
4. Once again, thank you to the hard working Staff of Ironworks Gym for providing 2-356th LS Bn, 402nd FA BDE the utmost challenging and intense workouts. The undersigned may be reached at (915) 238-0568 or at robert.m.wagner34.mil@mail.mil.


ROBERT M. WAGNER
MAJ, LG
Commanding