**Center for Army Lessons Learned Unveils New Program for Sharing Best Practices**

The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) recently launched an initiative to help improve the Army by increasing the volume of best practice submissions from units and Soldiers and then highlighting and sharing that information with the entire force. Starting Jan. 15, Soldiers can submit their individual or collective best practices at https://call2.army.mil (Common Access Card required), the CALL “Best Practice Initiative” website.

Army Regulation 11-33, *Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP)*, defines a best practice as “a change to how something is done that results in improved personal or unit performance or behavior but is not yet fully implemented across the force.” Responsibility for implementing the ALLP rests with CALL, which is part of the Army Training and Doctrine Command's Mission Command Center of Excellence (MC CoE).

CALL analysts will review best practices submitted via the website prior to publication and dissemination. This review may require some dialogue between the analyst and the author and/or the unit to ensure the best practice is sound and able to be replicated in similar units.

Director of CALL, COL Mike Pappal, sees the initiative as a natural progression of the work already being done in his organization. “We know Soldiers and units are agile and adaptive. They come up with great ideas to solve problems or come up with something to make their jobs easier, both in the field and in a deployed environment,” he said. “CALL collects lessons and best practices every day and we will continue to share that information as part of a formalized process. What we are trying to get at here is a more responsive mechanism to solicit input directly from Soldiers and rapidly share those ideas across the force.”

One of the most famous historical examples of a best practice comes from World War II. Following the invasion at Normandy, American forces encountered many challenges, but a particularly difficult one was the physical challenge of the French bocage (hedgerows). These hedgerows were overgrown with brush and trees and impossible to see through. The Nazis used these natural berms as bunkers and barricades. The hedgerows were impenetrable by the Army’s tanks without rendering them vulnerable, and they withstood the engineers’ best efforts to destroy them without drawing attention and subsequent enemy fire.

Forces were at a stalemate until a young noncommissioned officer from the 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron put forth his idea. According to the National Museum of the United States Army, Sgt. Curtis Cullin is most often attributed with the innovation of the “Rhino” tank – by using scrap steel, Cullin created prongs (similar to those on a fork) on the front of tanks. These prongs then easily cut through the brush in the hedgerows, allowing the tanks to move forward.

More recent examples of best practices in action include the development of the Rhino mount to defeat passive infrared-triggered improvised explosive devices; this device was designed by Soldiers in a forward support battalion during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldier input also led to modifications to the mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle, ultimately saving lives and improving mobility. CALL’s tracking of requests for information from Soldiers during Operation Enduring Freedom/OIF led to the development of a database that eventually determined spikes in topic requests, thereby informing leaders who could act on these observations.

BG James J. Mingus, Director, MC CoE, said, “We know that innovation and best practices typically come from the lowest levels. This program gives Soldiers an opportunity to share their ideas with others, whether it’s a tracking format, a new TTP, or a hedgerow cutter. Those ideas ultimately help the Army train and execute more effectively.”

To highlight individual Soldier/unit initiative and to foster the sharing of best practices across the Army, CALL will highlight notable submissions from the field each quarter and honor units and individuals with certificates of achievement. These certificates, signed by the CALL director, may be worth promotion points to eligible specialists and sergeants.

CALL drives change through the ALLP and identifies, collects, analyzes, disseminates, and archives lessons and best practices while maintaining global situational awareness in order to share knowledge and facilitate the Army's and unified action partners' adaptation to win wars. To learn more about CALL visit http://call.army.mil.