

Engineers train with Spiders

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Combat engineers now have a new “creepy” class added to their schedule.

Before they graduate from Advanced Individual Training on Fort Leonard Wood, they will all know how to use Spiders — the Model 7 Spider Munitions System.

The Spider is a remote controlled alternative to standard landmines.

Training on the Spider officially began last month for AIT Soldiers in the Military Occupational Specialty of 12B Combat Engineer. The training has been added to the Explosive Hazards period of AIT.

“The Spider munitions system is currently being used in the operational environment, and with the capabilities of this system, it is more convenient to send these troops prepared to use them instead of showing up and having to be trained on them later,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Shepp, Explosive Hazards Annex chief.

Combat engineers are now receiving five hours of training on the Spider munitions system.

Turi Gonzales, Explosive Hazards Annex master instructor, has been working with the Spider system since 2010. He now teaches it to the new Soldiers.

“The instruction that we provide is the theory of operations, system components and inspection procedures, and the installation steps for putting the Spider into operation,” Gonzales said.

Gonzales said the Soldiers get a Powerpoint presentation on the theory of operations. Next, they get hands-on training to inspect a munitions control unit trainer.



Pvt. Jordan Danford, Company D, 31st Engineer Battalion, 1st Engineer Brigade, practices setting up a munitions control unit during Spider training Feb. 19 at Range 33.

Finally, the Soldiers install the Spider on the ground, conduct a self-test of the unit, attach their own miniature grenade training

simulator and a 10-meter hardwire tripline.

Pvt. Jordan Danford, Company D, 31st Engineer Battalion, 1st Engineer Brigade, said he is grateful this new training was added to his AIT schedule.

“It’s interesting to think I will be ahead of some of the Soldiers that just graduated before me,” Danford said.

“Once I get to my unit I will be able to help other Soldiers learn the system.”

The M7 Spider gets its name from its appearance when fully deployed: the main body in the center with six munitions ports spread around it.

Pvt. Rickie Reyes, Co. D, 31st Eng. Bn., 1st Eng. Bde., said the shape of the device is one of the best things about the munitions system.

“It’s interesting that it’s round, so it can be used in multiple directions at once. That way we don’t have to waste time on singular directions and manpower,” Reyes said. “I also like that it can be used in a non-lethal or lethal configuration.”

The Spider was designed primarily to replace landmines. The battery powered Spider is considered superior to landmines for many reasons — most importantly because it is remote controlled.

This is Danford’s favorite aspect of the Spider.

“I can pick and choose if I want to set it off or not,” Danford said.

The first AIT classes with the new Spider training are set to graduate in March.

The Spider can be used for forward operating base or command outpost defense, as well as hasty protection or ambush while on patrol.

All the components of the Spider system are recoverable and reusable, including any munitions that were not detonated.

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