

A Year of Training and New Equipment Transition

As the Armor component in the Georgia National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade (M), the 1-108th Armor Battalion successfully completed another year of challenging training focused on our vision of what the unit should look like on Mobilization Day. Our goal was to train the battalion so that it could effectively make a seamless transition to active duty, if called, with soldiers as equally skilled as their active Army counterparts.

Highlights were a successful gunnery cycle, effective integration and training on new equipment like the 120mm mortar, and the scout platoon's transition from Bradleys to HMMWVs armed with the 40mm grenade launcher.

The battalion's mission is to prepare for mobilization and deployment to a contingency area of operations as part of the 48th Infantry Brigade, GA NG.

Our vision focused on a unit manned at 100% or better with soldiers who are deployable, competent, and confident in their bedrock skills of fighting their M1A1 Abrams tanks at the crew, section, and platoon level. The battalion commander stressed training the objective, measurable skills necessary for success, a goal we reached with the help of heavy use of the UCOFT, nearly double the UCOFT time logged last year. The M-COFT and the unit A-FIST simulations were also invaluable in meeting our training goals. Each of our armories had M1A1s available to our soldiers, which gave depth and flexibility to our hands-on training.

The training also reflected lessons learned in our 1996 NTC rotation and efforts to remedy shortfalls that were revealed in that exercise. We reformatted our tactical SOP and trained hard in employing it. We needed to improve planning and preparation for decontamination operations, developing detailed



Georgia Guard M1A1s roll through the pines on maneuver training.

plans and fully integrating the chemical officer/NCO into staff planning. MOPP discipline also needed to improve. Similar fixes were stressed to upgrade our air defense preparation and fire support planning.

Although our maintenance platoon personnel put in a strong performance, maintenance at the crew level needed improvement. We cross-attached with maintenance personnel from our infantry battalion, which was not equipped with BFV parts, and by cross-attaching early, we were able to work through this issue and establish effective PLLs.

As many units discover in the intensive training at Fort Irwin, battalion staff plan-

ning moved too slowly, with the staff taking too much time to produce a product. We established upfront, habitual relationships with special staff officers (FSO, ADA, Engineers) as a way to help them develop as a more effective combined arms team.

We introduced a new logistics SOP which expedited logistics planning, but in practice, logistics execution still took too long. We needed to better incorporate CSS battle tracking into Janus exercises at home station.

The payoff came at Fort Stewart, Ga., where we successfully completed maneuver lanes training and Tank Table VIII qualification gunnery.

The mortar platoon, making its transition to the 120mm weapon, is now fully mission capable on this armament.

Although a seamless transition to active duty is a "road that never ends," unit leaders felt that the battalion's soldiers have developed into dedicated, motivated soldiers fully capable of employing the tools of their profession. Our mission continues.

Strike Swiftly!



The 1-108th Armor Battalion's scout platoon transitioned this year to the HMMWV with 40mm grenade launcher.