

49th ARMORED DIVISION

Overseas Deployments, Modernization, And a Mobilization Study...All Part of The Texas Guard's Training This Year

FY97 Overview: FY97 was an exciting year for the 49th Armored Division. With shrinking training budgets, division training had to be innovative and cost-effective. The division commander, MG Federico Lopez III, tasked his commanders and staff to "Do Less Better," instead of doing more with less. To this end, the decision was made to leverage armor and infantry training at platoon and company team level with simulation whenever possible at the crawl or walk stages of training. Several units conducted either weekend training or annual training at Ft. Knox to take advantage of the excellent simulations available there. The division also took advantage of opportunity training whenever possible to help decrease OPTEMPO requirements, saving these dollars for gunnery and mission training.

MOB Study: The division staff was very busy in early FY97 with a staff study sponsored by the Institute for Defense Analysis. The study was to determine how long it would take to mobilize

and train the division using a set of assumptions established by the Institute. Using all current Army doctrinal manuals and an MS Project program to determine the critical path for accomplishing all training down to platoon level, the study determined that the division could be prepared for deployment within 134 days. This study was presented to the Undersecretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and submitted for consideration in the Quadrennial Defense Review. A validation of the study results is being considered for FY98.

Modernization: New equipment fielding and MTOE changes were numerous in FY97. The Bradley Fighting Vehicle NET Team completed fielding of the M2 BFV to 1-141 IN, making the 36th Brigade completely modernized with the M1 Abrams and the M2 BFV. The division cav squadron began its M3 fielding in July and is scheduled to complete the NET in May 98. The remaining two infantry battalions will complete M2 fielding by August 98. NET for the M1A1 is

currently scheduled for February 98. In FY97, the division gained an engineer brigade and an MI battalion. It also fielded the upgraded version of the Integrated Fire Support Automation System (IFSAS).

Overseas Deployments: The division was very active overseas in FY98, including two deployments to Bosnia, several overseas deployment training (ODT) missions to Germany and an LRS deployment to Australia. In November 1996, sections of Btry E, 133 FA (TAB) deployed to Bosnia, followed in July 1997 by an FSE (Fire Support Element). In March 1997, members of the LRS Detachment, 143d IN deployed to Australia and conducted an airborne insertion into country while participating in Operation Tandem Trust, a joint exercise with ARNG, USMC, and Australian troops. One company from 3-112 AR, two companies from 3-144 IN, and two CSS companies deployed to Germany throughout FY97 to support various

ODT missions at Hohenfels and Grafenwohr.

CONUS Deployments: The engineer brigade was busy in FY97, sending elements of the 111th and 386th EN Battalions to California for annual training to work with JTF6 on Operation Southwest Border, building a fence to stop drug trafficking. The 111th EN Battalion also sent one company to the NTC to support the 11th ACR.

Gunnery Training: During FY97, the division conducted crew gunnery qualification in the M1 Abrams, AH64 Apache, and AH1F Cobra. Three units were scheduled to qualify TTVIII in the M1. They were 1-124 Cav, 1-112 AR, and 5-112 AR. In addition to M1 gunnery, the 1-124 Cav deployed its air cav troops to Ft. Bliss to fire AH1F gunnery. The two tank battalions followed an aggressive training plan to fire TTVII, VIII and XI (TWGSS), all during annual training. Both battalions were very successful in TTXI, and the TWGSS system proved to be an outstanding training simulation. In addition to testing the TWGSS, all of the TTXI scenarios and evaluation packets were developed using the Training Exer-

cise Development System (TREDS). The units conducting TTXI moved directly into SIMNET when they finished TTVIII to conduct a TTXI in simulation prior to doing it on the range. This combination was very effective at providing recovery time for the crews, as well as time for equipment maintenance. The 1-149 AV fired AH64 Apache gunnery at Ft. Hood with 1-4 AV from 4th ID. This relationship proved to be mutually beneficial to both units, and we expect a continued AC/RC partnership between these units.

Lanes Training: The 36th Bde conducted platoon lanes training at Ft. Hood in June with 3-141 IN and 4-112 AR. This training utilized the PRIME system in the lanes as the run stage of the training, with SIMNET as the walk stage. This combination of virtual and live training saved OPTEMPO costs while still providing quality training for the units. 3-112 AR conducted its entire annual training in SIMNET at Ft. Knox in April 97. Once again, the OPTEMPO saved by simulation went toward successful completion of other lanes training and gunnery.

ARNG Unit Support: The 49th Armored Division has the mission to provide OPFOR support to the 256th Bde, LAARNG. In FY97, the 2d Bde provided two balanced co/tms, one from 2-112 AR and one from 1-142 IN, to conduct this mission at Ft. Polk, La. In December 1996, the division headquarters sent a division response cell to Ft. Polk to support the 256th Bde BCBST.

Mil to Mil/State Partnership for Peace: Texas has the distinction of having the highest population of Czech descendants of any state. Because of this, the Texas Army National Guard was selected as the partner state for the Czech Republic in the State Partnership for Peace and the Mil to Mil exchange program. In FY97, the 49th Armored Division conducted 12 exchange visits with the Czech Army and Civil Defense organization. These exchanges primarily focused on staff procedures, chemical training, and field artillery. This partnership has helped the Czech Military understand our staff and training procedures in preparation for their eventual admittance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.