



A Company, 704th Brigade Support Battalion, Soldiers prepare sling-load equipment for an upcoming pickup and delivery of rations.

Preparing to Succeed at the National Training Center

This article outlines how the 704th Brigade Support Battalion planned and trained to make the most of its National Training Center rotation.

■ By Maj. John M. Ruths

Some of the Army's most important unit training takes place at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana. A combat training center (CTC) rotation is based on the rotational training unit (RTU) commander's training objectives and requires a

great deal of effort from the training center's staff and the RTU.

Rotations typically closely replicate the RTU's future deployed mission set. A single rotation can cost up to \$25 million, and NTC normally schedules 10 each year. However, the benefits of a rotation at NTC and the way the experience helps units prepare for deployment

make it worth the cost.

The 704th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division (4-4 IBCT), at Fort Carson, Colorado, trained for an upcoming Operation Enduring Freedom deployment by participating in an NTC rotation.

The 4-4 IBCT comprises six battalions and various advise and assist

teams. Each organization has a mission that contributes to the overall brigade mission. The BSB provides the IBCT with logistics support.

As the 704th BSB discovered during its rotation, a trip to NTC can be daunting. It is certainly a major, but not insurmountable, task. Lt. Col. Michael D. Egan, the 704th BSB's commander who had previous NTC experience said, "A unit should leave their NTC rotation competent in their duties, confident in their unit, and ready to deploy."

Planning

An NTC rotation requires significant planning. It is important for the BSB to keep pace with the brigade's planners, and sometimes that means working slightly ahead of them.

Some initial planning at the battalion level is necessary. It is vital for the BSB to begin planning for its upcoming rotation about 180 days out. Investing more time in planning provides better understanding and better results.

Scheduling sufficient time for the initial military decisionmaking process allows the BSB to develop an understanding of the rotation from a "problem set" perspective, ensure the battalion commander is in the know, and share information across the BSB staff. The military decision-making process prompts the creation of the mission statement.

CTCs offer training and logistics conferences to help RTUs prepare for rotations. The conferences can be at the RTU's home station or the CTC location, and they can even be conducted virtually by video teleconference. For the 14-02 NTC rotation, all conferences were conducted using video teleconferences, and these were adequate.

Reconnaissance Visit

The brigade conducted a logistics reconnaissance visit in June 2013, about three months before its rotation. Attendees included the assistant brigade S-4, an officer from the 704th BSB's support opera-

tions (SPO) section, and the 704th BSB executive officer (XO), who was attending in place of the SPO officer-in-charge (OIC). Using past CTC experiences, the three traveled as a group, visiting all NTC offices that were significant to logistics operations.

During a logistics reconnaissance visit, the key facility to visit is NTC's sustainment operations center (SOC). The SOC is subordinate to the 916th Sustainment Brigade and serves as the logistics hub for NTC rotations and Fort Irwin itself. Key items available to visitors include a specially designed logistics map and a point-of-contact list that covers everything of logistics significance to any rotation.

The 704th BSB's logistics reconnaissance group made many visits to the SOC and met with rotational managers to arrange other visits. Rotational managers at the SOC assist RTUs with all manner of logistics needs. They possess extensive knowledge and proved very helpful to both the 704th BSB and the 4-4 IBCT S-4 section.

The team also visited the contracting office, bulk fuel site, ammunition supply point, installation Department of Defense activity address code manager, troop issue subsistence activity, central issue facility, Northrop Grumman contractors (who control much of the equipment issued to the RTU), and the Yermo Annex of the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow (a rail-haul node). The group also took the opportunity to meet with the "Goldminer" logistics observer-coach/trainers (OC/Ts) who would later evaluate the 704th BSB during its rotation.

Leadership Training Program

Planning culminates in the execution of the rotational leadership training program (LTP). This event normally lasts five to six days, during which the brigade receives the operations order (OPORD) from its higher headquarters—the notional 52nd Infantry Division—then develops and issues its own OPORD.

Battalion staffs also attend the LTP, and parallel planning is expected. The week ends with the brigade issuing its OPORD to battalions. The LTP week features planning instruction from civilian coaches who are typically retired senior Soldiers who are planning experts.

One recommendation for any BSB attending an NTC rotation is to be sure to take enough staff from the SPO section to the LTP. Initially, the 704th BSB was given the same number of personnel slots for the LTP as the other battalions. However, since a BSB has both a primary staff (S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, S-6) and a SPO staff, additional coordination was needed to ensure SPO staff attendance. This enabled SPO staff, other than the OIC and noncommissioned OIC, to attend. Having SPO staff attend the LTP enabled the development of a detailed initial concept of support. Members of the 704th SPO occupied the Army Knowledge Online lab at the LTP building at Fort Irwin, turning it into the de facto SPO shop. This worked well and facilitated the completion of a great deal of planning and products.

The takeaway for the BSB was to be sure to take enough leaders to develop the concept of support and brief it to the 916th Sustainment Brigade during the LTP week. Ensuring that the 916th Sustainment Brigade and the SOC know the concept of support was crucial. Since they normally see 10 rotations each year, they are keenly aware of what works and what does not.

Completing the LTP marked a significant turn in events and was a watershed event for the SPO section. The SPO OIC, Maj. Jeffrey Scott, remarked, "By day three of [the] LTP, I sensed the SPO shop coming together. I knew this was the team that would see us through the rotation."

Forecasting Draw Materiel

The NTC will make information available that enables the RTU to forecast both draw equipment and



The battalion movement rehearsal prior to the tactical road march out to Forward Operating Base Denver was large enough to enable vehicle crews to take part in the rehearsal and both hear and see the staff and convoy leaders conduct the briefing.

commodities. The RTU S-4s and S-3s should take this seriously and see forecasting as a line of effort. Probably the two most critical items to forecast are vehicles and ammunition.

Northrop Grumman publishes a comprehensive matrix (known as the draw grid) showing equipment that is available well before the rotation. Northrop Grumman maintains the fleet, but it is owned by Forces Command. If equipment is available on the draw grid, the RTUs are expected to use it. In other words, units should only rail-haul what they must. This ensures the use of the NTC fleet and saves money by preventing unnecessary transportation.

Although vehicles and ammunition are the most important, other

items must be forecast. These include weapons, multiple integrated laser engagement system gear, communications equipment, counter radio-controlled improvised explosive device electronic warfare (CREW) systems, and class IV (construction and barrier materials).

The RTUs are required to bring 30 days of supply for class II (clothing and individual equipment) and class IIIIP (packaged petroleum, oils, and lubricants). Units can obtain these at NTC but typically only on a “fill or kill” basis. Planning for equipment and commodities also should be conducted as early as possible.

Starting With Baby Steps

An NTC or JRTC rotation is as important as the follow-on deploy-

ment. Training does not necessarily have to be complex, but the more units train and practice, the better they will do during deployments.

A unit’s personnel stability will also be a factor. Units that are between deployments may not yet have all their leaders, but Soldiers with previous CTC experience will help mitigate this. The 704th BSB found itself in this situation after returning from Afghanistan in December 2012. When collective training began about 180 days after its return, the battalion was missing many of the leaders and Soldiers that had helped it succeed during deployment.

This situation compels units to start with baby steps. In other words, start smaller and less complex and build from there. With few of the

key personnel available from the last deployment, many tasks have to be retrained from the start. Well established standard operating procedures (SOPs) will help, but SOPs used on deployment often differ significantly from those used in other environments.

Primarily because of personnel turbulence, leaders in the 704th BSB saw the need for the unit to train on its own for its first collective training event. The battalion leaders perceived the need to work out kinks and establish procedures without the added pressure of training during a brigade-level field training exercise (FTX).

In July 2013, the 704th BSB conducted a homegrown battalion FTX. The main goal of this FTX was to establish mission command by validating both the battalion tactical operations center (TOC) and company command posts (CPs). Companies were given latitude to conduct any training they needed.

The FTX lasted only four days, but this was enough to ensure that the TOC and CPs were operational and determine how the battalion needed to improve. At the battalion level, needed improvements stood out more than successes.

Even though the week was painful in many ways, having the BSB train on its own proved a great choice. It also helped Soldiers revisit their basic fieldcraft. These skills were very different and more expeditionary compared to the BSB's last deployment to a forward operating base (FOB).

The next FTX saw a steady rise in overall proficiency. In late July 2013, the 704th BSB took part in a brigade-level command post exercise (CPX). The earlier lessons learned and emphasis put on the battalion TOC paid off and made the CPX seem easy.

In late August 2013, the 704th BSB trained and supported the 4-4 IBCT during the 10-day Mountain Strike FTX. Other critical training also took place, including tactical

convoy operations lanes, mass casualty (MASCAL) operations, vehicle recovery training, maintenance work orders, and vehicle services, all executed in a field environment.

Staff integration also enhanced training. A staff-initiated indirect-fire drill drove a battalionwide duty status-whereabouts unknown (DUSTWUN) drill and ended in a MASCAL exercise executed by C Company. This exercise also featured increasing levels of proficiency, and at the end, it was clear that the 704th BSB was ready to support and train at the NTC.

The Rotation—One Part at a Time

Most CTC rotations are executed in these phases:

- Early rotation setup and coordination are executed by the torch and advanced echelon (ADVON) elements, just as in actual deployments.
- Reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSO&I) at the NTC builds the combat power needed to move from the RTU bivouac area (RUBA) to the training area, known as the “box.”
- Execution of 14 training days in the maneuver box represents the actual mission on deployment and is typically broken down into two parts: situational training exercise (STX) lanes that include live fires and a force-on-force exercise.
- Regeneration represents redeployment and the final days leading up to it. At a CTC rotation, this is the clearing of the installation and involves the turn-in of all equipment and commodities drawn.

All phases are compressed; there are only a few days available to accomplish a great deal. This provides an obvious training effect and is yet another area where sound planning will reap great benefits.

A CTC rotation, from the departure of the torch party to the arrival of the trail party back at home

station, can take approximately six weeks. For most Soldiers, it will be about a four-week rotation. No matter how long Soldiers are there, it often feels like more time has gone by. Rotations also can cross over one another. An outgoing unit conducting regeneration will see the arrival of the torch, ADVON, and even some main body elements of the incoming rotation. This crossover is a great chance to observe and get advice from the outbound unit.

Early Rotation Elements and Actions

Selecting early arriving personnel for the torch and ADVON elements and understanding the tasks for each makes for a smooth start. The main task and purpose for the torch element is to open all accounts, but since many other things must be done, the BSB will likely send more Soldiers on the torch party than any other battalion will. The 704th BSB erred on the side of caution and brought a very large element. The general idea was, “Go early and go big.”

Who is really needed? Rotational managers at the SOC will readily provide advice on who to bring. Figure 1 shows the personnel that a BSB can take as their torch element. The matrix closely matches whom the 704th BSB actually took.

To gain access to everything needed, the 704th BSB took all necessary Department of the Army Form 1687 signature cards and assumption of command orders. Preparing these at home station a few weeks before the rotation paid off. These items were taken to the SOC, where rotational managers coordinated a meeting of all the NTC offices and personnel who needed the documentation.

The ADVON element has two main tasks. One is to conduct rail download operations at Yermo Annex then convoy that equipment to Fort Irwin. The size of a BCT's ADVON element may correlate with the number of vehicle crews needed. The battalion tasked to run railhead operations at Yermo Annex will also need to bring the Soldiers and lead-

ers to make it all work.

The other main task is to prepare for the arrival of main body elements. Important tasks include the beginning of food service operations in the RUBA, a logistics information systems gunnery, initial motor pool setup, initial maintenance operations, barracks preparation, and early vehicle draw. Each task requires specific Soldiers.

Early vehicle draw enables the

RTU to draw vehicles, but only those truly needed. This includes ambulances, forklifts, water trailers, fuel tankers, and cargo trucks that will be necessary to support activities such as rail download operations, early equipment draws, and the main vehicle draw. Early draw is important, and since it is essentially a miniature version of the main vehicle draw, units should treat it as the rehearsal for the main draw.

RSO&I

If the early arriving elements have performed their missions well, the arrival of main body will be smooth. Main body arrivals signal that the RSO&I is about to begin along with its three main lines of effort to build combat power.

Equipment and commodities. This is the main vehicle draw and also the draw of everything else from contractors needed to roll out to the

| Unit | Who | Purpose | PAX # (s) |
|---------------|---|---|-----------|
| HHC | Battalion executive officer (XO) | Lead/supervise torch and advanced echelon (ADVON) efforts. | 1 |
| HHC | S-1, preferably a noncommissioned officer (NCO) | Start the personnel status process early, receive personnel manifests from home station, receive follow on personnel. | 1 |
| HHC | S-3, assistant S-3 or S-3 NCO-in-charge (NCOIC) | Ensure major tasks are completed, liaise with brigade S-3 reps, learn training locations for reception, staging, onward movement and integration. | 1 |
| HHC | S-4 officer-in-charge (OIC) | Oversee the opening of all internal brigade support battalion (BSB) accounts, work with supply sergeants and company XOs and oversee all draws. | 1 |
| HHC | Unit movement officer | Receive line-haul items (primarily containers) and coordinate the movement of rail-haul equipment. | 1 |
| HHC | S-6 | Send representatives who are knowledgeable on computers and connectivity to receive line-haul communications equipment and prepare for the upcoming communications exercise. | 3 to 5 |
| HHC | Support operations (SPO) OIC | Begin work with the sustainment operations center's (SOC's) rotational manager. | 1 |
| HHC | SPO maintenance technician (tech) | Start working with Northrop Grumman concerning vehicle draws. | 1 |
| HHC | Transportation SPO | Coordinate with SOC leaders on how the BSB's transportation will be augmented by 916th Sustainment Brigade (or rotation-assigned combat sustainment support battalion). | 1 |
| HHC | SPO general supply officer | Oversee all commodities, oversee the inventory and draw of the authorized stockage list (ASL) by supply support activity (SSA) Soldiers and ensure rotational Department of Defense activity address codes are opened. | 1 |
| HHC | SPO class IIIB NCOIC | Coordinate for class IIIB, especially how to properly forecast to avoid having excess bulk fuel at the end of the rotation. | 1 |
| HHC | SPO Sustainment Automation Support Management Office | Prepare for the critical logistics information systems "gunnery" that begins before the main body arrives. | 4 to 5 |
| Brigade HHC * | Food service technician | Start class I and food service efforts, and supervise the signing for an opening of mess pads in the rotational unit bivouac area (RUBA). * In 4-4 IBCT, the food service section works as part of the SPO section in the BSB. | 1 |
| A Company | Ammunition tech and 89B Soldier | Coordinate class V with both the Fort Irwin ammunition supply point and the brigade S-3. | 2 |
| A Company | SSA tech and six-to-seven 92A Soldiers | Account for and sign for the ASL used for the exercise. | 7 to 8 |
| A Company | 92F Soldier | Monitor bulk fuel issued from the Fort Irwin bulk fuel point for the entire rotation. | 1 |
| B Company | Maintenance control section Soldier, preferably the NCOIC | Design the setup of the BSB motor pool in the RUBA. | 1 |
| C Company | Brigade Medical Supply Office representative, preferably an NCO | Open class VIII account with the class VIII representative at Weed Army Community Hospital on Fort Irwin. | 1 |
| All Companies | Supply sergeants and/or company XOs | Open a large number of various accounts—the 704th took only supply sergeants and no company XOs, and this worked well. | 4 to 8 |

Figure 1. The brigade support battalion needs to take specific individuals as part of their training center rotation torch party.

maneuver box. Some items, such as multiple integrated laser engagement systems, radios, and CREW devices, will be installed and checked before rolling out to the box.

The BSB will already have some commodities on hand, such as class IIIB (bulk petroleum, oils, and lubricants), class IV, class V (ammunition), and the authorized stockage list that it will issue down to the battalion level. This includes equipment for a brigade S-6-led communications exercise that will consume the BSB S-6 section's time and efforts.

Training. The S-3 section will coordinate the training for the BSB, including when and where it takes place. The NTC has a rich menu of classes to familiarize Soldiers with equipment and reinforce skills. An effective S-3 section knows and can track locations, times, and who should attend.

Preparing for movement. RTUs must prepare for movement by designing convoy elements, identifying convoy commanders, writing a movement order, creating a large terrain model, conducting convoy drills, and ensuring CREW systems work and are loaded with the appropriate threat load.

Executing RSO&I

The 704th BSB took the time to learn from its early equipment draw, making the main draw smoother. Soldiers arrived already knowing their NTC vehicle bumper numbers and showed up prepared to conduct preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS). Maintenance leaders from B Company were the on-site lead mechanics who validated PMCS. Unit leaders from each company and the battalion were present.

The battalion was not the first unit to get trucks signed for and out of the motor pool, which was okay; often the first unit out of the blocks executes a mediocre PMCS process. Thoroughness at this stage paid off later during regeneration with an easier turn-in process.



Medics from C Company, 704th Brigade Support Battalion, position a simulated wounded Soldier during a mass casualty drill at the National Training Center.

Training during RSO&I started with a couple of hiccups with some Soldiers missing their appointed locations on day one. Rather than pointing fingers, the battalion's S-3 section reacted immediately by forming up groups of Soldiers approximately 60 minutes before classes would begin. This consolidated efforts across the battalion and meant no more missed opportunities.

BCTs and their subordinate battalions spend time and energy during the RSO&I tracking progress and reporting to the notional 52nd Infantry Division. RSO&I is a multifaceted and sometimes frustrating week. Any RTU will find results come only from effort, leader emphasis, and synchronization. Do not be surprised if the brigade staff requires multiple daily updates. RTUs also see an increased OC/T presence during RSO&I as they get to know the unit and vice versa.

The BSB also briefs its concept of support to the Goldminers. The good news for units who prepare well is that if things go well from the arrival of the torch element through the conclusion of RSO&I, they will continue to benefit from this point through to the end of regeneration.

Execution in the Box

OC/Ts escort all tactical movements beginning with the initial movement from the staging area to the box. Well-prepared and organized units may enjoy an uncontested movement. A unit that does not have CREW systems filled and switched on may find major issues even departing the main post. That is only one of the issues that a convoy element may encounter.

During the STX part of the rotation, A, B, and C Companies trained on their mission sets. This training included tactical convoy operations (including a live fire), aircraft integration, sling-load operations, vehicle recovery, and medical training with MASCAL operations. Although this was the focus of the STX portion, other operations, including bulk fuel, bulk water, the supply support activity, maintenance operations, security operations at a nearby entry control point, sick-call treatment, and medical resupply, also commenced and provided training.

The headquarters and headquarters company emphasis was on the TOC, where the staff worked daily to support the brigade, provide mission control to the companies, track

| Inputs (Location) | Outputs/Benefits |
|---|--|
| Initial Planning (Home station) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get information about the rotation out to everyone on the primary staff and in the support operations (SPO) shop to enable equal emphasis within all sections. • Normal military decisionmaking process (MDMP) outputs that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Understanding the problem/mission (facts/assumptions, limitations/constraints, unit/staff tasks, issues, and requests for information). –Ensuring the staff and the battalion commander have a common picture. –Working the mission statement. • Highlight the importance of the rotation—the more time you put into this the more important it becomes and takes on a life of its own. |
| Planning Conferences (On site at the National Training Center, at home station, or virtual) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain overall requirements, namely what you need to do to succeed, from various offices at the NTC. • Gain valuable input on anything your unit wants to do and how feasible it is from the NTC's perspective. • Meet the folks your unit will work with during your rotation and obtain their contact information. |
| Logistics Reconnaissance (On site) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make face-to-face contact with logistics leaders and key personnel at the NTC, and trade contact information. • Link up with your observer-coach/trainers (OC/Ts), exchange contact information, and meet the folks who will evaluate the brigade support battalion. • Learn about the NTC and how it operates to support each rotation. • Learn the requirements for obtaining and clearing the equipment and commodities you will need. |
| Leadership Training Program (LTP) (On site) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTP coaches provide superb training on MDMP. • Attendees receive valuable planning products and examples. • Develop the concept of support and complete your unit's plan for the rotation. • 916th Sustainment Brigade coordination includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –SPO staff linking up with the staff and rotational manager at the sustainment operations center. –Briefing the concept of support to the 916th Sustainment Brigade. • The ability to get out to the maneuver box for route and forward operating base reconnaissance. • Formally meet with the Goldminer OC/Ts. |
| Draw Grids and Commodity Forecasting (Home Station) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates planning and encourages units to plan out what they will need. • Helps units learn the NTC since each type of equipment and commodity has its own point of contact. • Provides a certain sense of logistics confidence. Units that properly forecast can deploy with the assurance that they will receive the equipment and commodities needed to be successful. |

Figure 2. The benefits and outputs of planning for a National Training Center rotation.

missions, and refine systems and practices. Goldminer OC/Ts were there, carefully noting what worked what did not.

The Goldminers proved to be observant and patient training multipliers. As the STX days progressed, they programmed scenarios to intensify operations across the staff. OC/Ts were also in constant communication, and it was clear that their scenarios were carefully and impressively synchronized. Probably the greatest asset that the Goldminers delivered to the 704th BSB was their constant attention that helped the unit see itself more clearly.

The Goldminers led two mid-

rotation after-action reviews (AARs). One midrotation AAR covered overall sustainment with the addition of non-BSB attendees, including the brigade XO and the other battalions' XOs, S-4s, and maintenance technicians. The other midrotation AAR, specifically for the BSB, identified areas in which the BSB needed to improve for the rest of the rotation.

As the force-on-force exercise began, scenarios intensified. Mission support continued, but everyone was available since the STX had concluded. The 704th BSB also benefited from what it encountered during training days one through eight, making days nine

through 14 more beneficial. Lessons learned during the STX were applied, and the staff and companies noticed these improvements:

- Reacting to indirect fire—along with establishing personnel accountability—became routine.
- The entry control point steadily improved, and Soldiers became better at security procedures.
- The exact number of battalion personnel on the FOB was always known and anyone off the FOB was identified.
- Various medical providers and other medical specialties (such as the preventive medicine section) used aviation to make opportunity visits to other FOBs

across the brigade's area of support.

- Communications went down less frequently and for less time.
- Medical supplies were moved seemingly effortlessly in rotary wing flights to other FOBs.
- CP operations improved in each company.
- Daily logistics synchronization meetings became effective and efficient.
- The methods the SPO section devised to capture the logistics status of each unit provided what was current and required the SPO to forecast 24 hours out.

As force-on-force operations progressed, the efficiencies gained across the battalion were evident. Fourteen days is a short time to train, so each day must count. Fieldcraft skills peaked because of the earlier training on them that began during the battalion FTX. By the time training day 13 arrived, the Soldiers of the 704th BSB felt like they had accomplished something special.

XO Meetings

During training days in the box, XO meetings were conducted daily as part of the battalion's battle rhythm. These meetings were chaired by the battalion XO, and attendees included company XOs, the battalion S-4, the unit movement officer, and leaders from the B Company maintenance control section.

Centralized regeneration planning through XO meetings enabled decentralized execution through company XOs once regeneration began. Discussing regeneration provided an early familiarization and helped establish priorities.

The greatest benefit was the development of an internal regeneration tool. This ended up as an easy-to-produce two-slide presentation that served as the battalion's instructions to crews for regener-

ation and concentrated on vehicle turn-in. These instructions started from the final convoy movement from the FOB and ended with the final steps of vehicle turn-in.

Regeneration

Regeneration, much like RSO&I, is very busy. All units feel challenged with a great deal to do and to turn in before being cleared to return to home station. The 704th BSB attended its Goldminer-hosted end of rotation AARs soon after arriving back in the RUBA and another the next day. These final two AARs provided the last chance to receive OC/T input.

For equipment, regeneration is in many ways the reverse of RSO&I and the early rotation days leading up to it. The main effort, just like in RSO&I, involves the NTC vehicle fleet. Additionally, other NTC equipment is cleaned, hand receipts are cleared, and home station equipment is moved back to the Yermo Annex and loaded onto railcars.

Although the emphasis is not on training as it is in RSO&I, there are more tasks. A large brigade-level detail goes out daily and polices all areas used during training days. Clearing all of the hand receipts used to sign for equipment just two or three weeks earlier resembles clearing a theater-provided equipment hand receipt at the end of a deployment. If you do not have the equipment, or if it was damaged, you must be prepared to conduct a short financial liability investigation for property loss.

Smart units listen carefully before and during the various equipment draws. What the 704th BSB experienced is that most contractors were very straightforward about turn-in standards. This is another area in which planning will pay off well for the prepared unit.

The most complicated equipment to turn in was the vehicle fleet. There is an exact procedure

for this, and large poster versions of each step are located in multiple locations in the RTU field maintenance area.

An emphasis on maintenance and dispatch during RSO&I and training days paid off handsomely during turn-in. Just as during equipment issue, mechanics performed PMCS. They also conducted various repairs and even supervised vehicle cleanliness. If a vehicle was not clean enough, it was not allowed to be inspected by Northrop Grumman contractors.

The SPO maintenance technician led turn-in efforts across the brigade; this was the most critical logistics effort during regeneration. Making maintenance a priority benefited the 704th BSB during regeneration because they stayed ahead of the process until the end.

Through substantial effort and planning, the 704th BSB enjoyed a successful NTC rotation. It came as the result of hard work across the battalion's units and staff during the collective training leading up to the rotation.

It is important to identify any deficiencies and to work on them, even after the rotation. For the TOC, this meant follow-on training at the Mission Training Complex at Fort Carson, Colorado, to refine things that still needed improvement. These included TOC battle drills and the unit's overall convoy process. This training enabled those few areas still in need of sharpening to be addressed before deployment.

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