

Getting Back to the Basics

The 330th Transportation Battalion planned and executed a home-station field training exercise to prepare for expeditionary warfare.

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A noncommissioned officer mans the m249 machine gun to provide perimeter security Feb. 24, 2015, during the 30th Transportation Battalion's field training exercise. (Photo by Sgt. Anthony Palmer)

Lately, “getting back to the basics” is a common saying heard across our Army. The Army is returning to its pre-9/11 way of preparing units for future combat operations. In other words, training at home station and at combat training centers will be more routine than constructing deployment equipment lists through the Transportation Coordinator’s Automated Information for Movements System II (TC-AIMS II) and attending medical screening appointments at the Soldier readiness center.

Before 9/11, units rotated frequently through training centers, mainly the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. The focus of these centers is to improve the probability for success in the event of military operations, most of which will be conducted in austere environments on short notice. This type of operation is frequently known as expeditionary warfare.

Expeditionary Logistics

Expeditionary warfare has two significant characteristics: deploying on short notice and living and working in areas without electricity and climate control and where force protection levels mandate the prolonged use of body armor and chemical protection equipment.

In the Army’s array of forces, many types of units can provide potable water, electricity, chemical decontamination, and other requirements for sustaining combat operations in an austere environment. Basic Soldier skills center on providing first aid, chemical and defensive protection, communications, personal hygiene supplies, and preventive measures to reduce noncombat-related injuries and illnesses. The Army must remain current on these skills in order to fight in expeditionary operations.

To be successful, we must be able to feed ourselves, maintain our own

equipment, provide electricity, wash our own laundry, and dispose of our own waste in an efficient and tactical manner. In other words, we must be prepared to live without the use of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) and the amenities that contractors provide.

During the third iteration of the LOGCAP contract, KBR, which was the sole contractor, provided both supply and field services operations, including all nine classes of supply, laundry and bath, food services, billeting, and information management. It also provided other operations and services, such as power generation and distribution, engineering and construction, and physical security in the form of perimeter fencing and barrier maintenance.

Many of our Soldiers do not know what it is like to deploy to an area of operations without contractors and the amenities they provide to ensure comfort and survival. Soldier skills like burning manure or conducting bird baths are no longer highlighted during home-station training because units are used to having KBR on site. Many Soldiers assume that containerized housing units will be available upon arrival in theater.

As the Army transitions back to a force of preparation, Soldiers of all military occupational specialties must be reminded that future deployments will be more expeditionary in nature. We must focus on our basic Soldier skills to be prepared to meet the demands of expeditionary warfare. Home-station training must focus on the fundamentals of basic Soldier skills in order to prepare for austere environments. This is especially true for logisticians, who normally are the first ones in and the last ones out.

The 330th MCB

The 82nd Sustainment Brigade is no stranger to expeditionary logistics. It fulfills its role of providing logistics support for the Global Response Force (GRF). Being a member of the GRF requires units to be ready at all



times to deploy to some of the world's harshest environments. This requires constant training on the tasks and skills required in such environments.

The 330th Transportation Battalion, a movement control battalion (MCB) stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and assigned to the 82nd Sustainment Brigade, recently rehearsed deploying to and setting up operations within an austere and undeveloped operational environment.

Currently, the 330th MCB is composed of a headquarters and headquarters detachment (HHD), the 403rd Inland Cargo Transfer Company (ICTC), the 261st Movement Control Team (MCT), and the 329th MCT. Two additional MCTs,

the 609th and the 610th, are currently deployed in support of contingency operations.

Although each company provides a unique capability, the battalion's primary mission is to provide uninterrupted in-transit visibility (ITV) of personnel, cargo, and equipment and the discharge, loading, and transshipment of cargo at ports and nodes within a theater of operations.

Key to this mission is providing for reception, staging, onward movement, and integration through various transportation nodes. These include a central receiving and shipping point (CRSP), an arrival/departure airfield control group (A/DACG), and an entry control point (ECP).



The 330th Transportation Battalion set up this battalion headquarters command post Feb. 24, 2015, during its field training exercise focusing on mission command, defensive positions, and other war-fighting skills to prepare Soldiers for expeditionary warfare. (Photo by Sgt. Anthony Palmer)

In order to prepare for its missions and focus on basic Soldier skills, the battalion conducted a week-long field training exercise (FTX) at home station at Fort Bragg. This valuable training took place Feb. 23 to 27, 2015, during adverse weather conditions. Freezing rain, snow, and persistent ice added an element of realism to the training event.

The Training Plan

In preparation for the FTX, the commander of the 330th MCB provided a clear vision for the exercise. As early as October 2014, his stated intent was for the 330th to be prepared to operate in any environment. The battalion would accomplish this

by going back to the fundamentals of Army planning and soldiering—things that had not been done by this particular MCB for quite some time.

The plan included these stated training objectives:

- ❑ Complete the military decision-making process.
- ❑ Establish life support, to include field feeding.
- ❑ Establish a defensive perimeter, to include dismounted fighting positions, triple-strand concertina wire, sector sketches, and range cards.
- ❑ Establish an ECP that also provides a node for ITV.
- ❑ Establish a maintenance area.

- ❑ Establish a CRSP yard.

The 329th MCT would execute its direct-support mission as a part of the GRF in support of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. An element of B Company, 407th Brigade Support Battalion, would be included in the FTX to exercise its joint mission of managing an expeditionary A/DACG in support of the brigade during a forced-entry exercise.

The Exercise

After five months of planning, on Feb. 23, 2015, the 330th MCB began the FTX with an early morning alert, which tested the unit's system

of recalling assigned personnel. The alert was conducted as planned; however, not all personnel were properly notified through the recall procedure. The unit discovered that it is beneficial to safeguard the time of the alert; this information should be closely held among the battalion command team.

Another recommendation for the

troleum, oils, and lubricants) and to act as the opposing force (OPFOR) during the FTX.

An additional challenge for the battalion was the lack of tents needed for life support and the mission command center. Again, to overcome this challenge the battalion relied on a sister unit for support. To mitigate future shortfalls, the MCB used end-

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alert process is to conduct monthly alerts to become more proficient in meeting the two-hour assembly standard. Alert rosters should be validated weekly at the battalion and company levels. The battalion and company staff duty officers should be responsible for verifying contact numbers.

Following the alert, the companies prepared their units for convoy operations in preplanned serials, starting with the 261st MCT and the HHD, which led the quartering party. Convoy briefs were rehearsed during the rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill and conducted prior to movement. During the ROC drill, the battalion drew on the experience of noncommissioned officers (NCOs) in order to cover the relevant elements of the convoy brief.

One challenge the unit experienced during the FTX was balancing garrison requirements and taskings with the number of convoys required to provide realistic training. To overcome this shortfall, the MCB relied heavily on its sister unit within the brigade, the 189th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, to augment the serials. The MCB also relied on the 189th to provide classes I (subsistence) and III (pe-

of-year funds to buy tents. Do not let equipment shortfalls affect opportunities to train. If possible, build relationships with sister units to fulfill requirements.

Sister units need to partner more for training. Units normally deploy locally to an FTX with only members of their units. But training multiple units at the same time at home station has value.

On the battlefield, units rely on each other. During the process, they build valuable relationships. Relationships are an important tenet of team building. Ultimately, by combining efforts, training becomes more realistic.

Training Opportunities

Units reacted to the OPFOR for the duration of the exercise, starting with a chemical attack once the quartering party arrived on the ground. The battalion chemical NCO led the effort to test the units' reaction to the chemical threat. Once the threat was cleared, all units got to work.

The 261st MCT immediately set up the main ECP and tracked unit movements. The HHD began setting up its fighting positions, the mobile kitchen trailer, and the tactical operations center. And the 403rd ICTC

began setting up its fighting positions, maintenance tent, and CRSP yard. All three companies also set up a defensive perimeter secured with concertina wire and range cards with sector sketches—a lost skill for many sustainment units.

Taking advantage of another training opportunity, the 329th MCT processed through the Fort Bragg A/DACG operated by the 403rd ICTC before moving to Area of Operations Duke to exercise the outload process for the battalion. New Soldiers saw firsthand what it takes to deploy using aerial assets. They conducted pre-inspections, corrected deficiencies, and measured the center weight and balance of the equipment.

The Air Force provided a team to do a joint inspection, solidifying an understanding of the amount of time and effort it actually takes for units to flow through an A/DACG and fly out on an actual mission. The Soldiers also pinged the unit's radio frequency identification tags using the national radio frequency ITV server as the equipment went through different nodes within the A/DACG.

The lessons that the 329th MCT learned during the outload process were shared with the battalion's subordinate units in order to update standard operating procedures. All units stationed on a power projection platform base, such as Fort Bragg, should incorporate this process into their training plans to identify real-world deployment challenges and shortfalls.

Functional Operations

Once the training area was fully established, the companies began their functional operations. The battalion staff conducted a complete sequence of the formal military decisionmaking process over the course of the week, with special emphasis on mission analysis and intelligence preparation of the battlefield.

The 403rd ICTC pushed logistics packages focused on maintenance. It also set up its CRSP yard and



During their field training exercise Feb. 24, 2015, 330th Transportation Battalion Soldiers take up a defensive posture as the opposing force tries to infiltrate the perimeter. (Photo by Sgt. Anthony Palmer)

conducted some flatrack exchanges, tracking both inbound and outbound shipping procedures. The 261st MCT managed the ECP and practiced movement control functions by regulating movement into and out of the ECP.

The 329th MCT was poised to deploy farther to a notional forward landing strip with B Company, 407th Brigade Support Battalion; however, the roads were closed because of bad weather, which halted the joint training portion of the FTX.

The 329th MCT quickly transitioned to focusing solely on using TC-AIMS II to write and read radio frequency identification tags for 403rd ICTC vehicles convoying as part of a logistics package. Although the full training value of practicing with the supported unit was hampered because of the weather, the Soldiers were able to practice critical transportation management skills in the field.

FTX Lessons Learned

Many lessons were learned from

the FTX. For example, during one of the chemical attacks, Soldiers appeared to be unfamiliar with how to react to the scenario. One recommendation is to rehearse all battle drills down to the Soldier level. The MCB practiced reacting to a chemical attack during its leader-level ROC drill; it evidently did not make it to the Soldier level. Leader's time training is a good forum to practice such battle drills.

Another lesson learned focused on blank ammunition. Blank ammunition dunnage was compro-

mised during the FTX because of numerous master scenario events list injects. Thus, units should consider conducting a police call for brass on the spot after each individual inject.

To ensure realism, units should use the multiple integrated laser engagement system to identify casualties. This procedure was commonplace before 9/11.

The MCB also discovered that it was better prepared for a real-world deployment after conducting a joint inspection with the Air Force during the FTX. The 329th MCT identified shortfalls that would have prevented it from deploying in a real-world situation. These shortfalls could be a hazardous materials declaration

that is improperly filled out or insufficiently cleaned vehicles.

All GRF or prepare-to-deploy-order units should conduct a bi-monthly inspection to ensure vehicles remain up to standard for deployment. Unit movement officers should make and maintain joint inspection binders for every vehicle and all secondary cargo in their units; this will save valuable time during emergency deployment readiness exercises and deployments.

Additionally, unit movement officers must refresh their skills on systems such as TC-AIMS II in order to properly create the deployment equipment list and other pertinent requirements for deploy-

ment. Refresher courses for shipping hazardous materials would also be beneficial. Lastly, using observer-controllers from an external unit to provide unbiased feedback would have been beneficial for the unit assessment.

On a positive note, the battalion met its start-point times because it staged all vehicles and equipment in the motor pool before the weekend. The success was attributed to conducting precombat checks and inspections prior to the weekend and having another inspection right before the start point. The checks and inspections also reduced the need to go back to retrieve essential items for survival in the field.



330th Transportation Battalion Soldiers are confronted Feb. 24, 2015, with a simulated angry mob, played by opposing force Soldiers from the 189th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. (Photo by Sgt. Anthony Palmer)

The ROC Drill

The most valuable lesson learned was the criticality of conducting a ROC drill before the FTX. The ROC drill focused on fundamentals and operating with an expeditionary mindset.

It allowed leaders and subordinates to develop a mental picture of responsibilities and events that had to occur while setting up and operating in an austere environment—skills that have been hindered by the prolonged use of LOGCAP.

The ROC drill enabled social learning. Social learning theory centers on the belief that people learn by interacting with each other. Many people learn best through social interaction.

People are less likely to admit not knowing how to do things in front of peers or subordinates, but the ROC drill facilitates the possibility of learning through demonstration. Thus, if Soldiers did not know beforehand, they would know after the ROC drill without having to acknowledge their shortfalls. In this case, everyone benefits.

A ROC drill assists an organization with synchronizing the training with times, places, and other resources. A simple walk through or tabletop exercise can help leaders visualize how training is supposed to unfold, what might go wrong, and how the training could be changed or adjusted for intended and unintended events.

The purpose of the MCB's ROC drill centered on the fundamental tasks of the FTX. This rehearsal used an extremely detailed and comprehensive terrain model that set the standard for all future ROC drills. The model was built over the course of five weeks by the Soldiers and NCOs of the battalion. The terrain model spanned more than 2,000 square feet and took over 1,900 man-hours to construct.

The terrain model, located at the 261st MCT unit area, featured detailed models of the five operational nodes. The nodes included the 330th MCB motor pool, Intermediate Staging Base Dragon, the A/DACG,

the battalion headquarters, and the forward landing strip.

Connecting all operational nodes on the model was a detailed and comprehensive road network that perfectly

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ly mirrored the roads in and around Fort Bragg. The Soldiers used aerial imagery and detailed maps of the Fort Bragg area to ensure the model was precise and built to scale.

Checkpoints and phase lines were represented in the terrain model. Other key elements included a North seeking arrow, grid lines and coordinates, large zoomed-in views of the training areas, and detailed models of trees and vegetation.

The terrain model also included a sectioned off area called the “bullpen,” which served as the designated area for squad-level personnel to depict their actions on the objective. For example, as the convoy commander discussed his unit's reaction procedures for a chemical attack, his Soldiers would demonstrate to the group by donning their protective gear and using their equipment to test the quality of the air to ensure it was safe.

After the battalion ROC drill, the companies within the unit used the terrain model to rehearse their portions of the mission. Convoy commanders used the model to brief their movements, ensuring all members of the unit had a clear understanding of all primary and alternate routes.

One recommendation for improvement is to allow more time between the battalion ROC drill and the execution of the FTX in order to give subordinate units more time to rehearse.

After many hours of planning and

construction and a thorough ROC drill, the 330th MCB went into the FTX confident in its plan and ready for all contingencies. Units working together and Soldiers executing with

little-to-no guidance were both direct results of the all-inclusive rehearsal that the unit executed. Having all personnel operating in sync was critical to the overall success of the exercise.

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