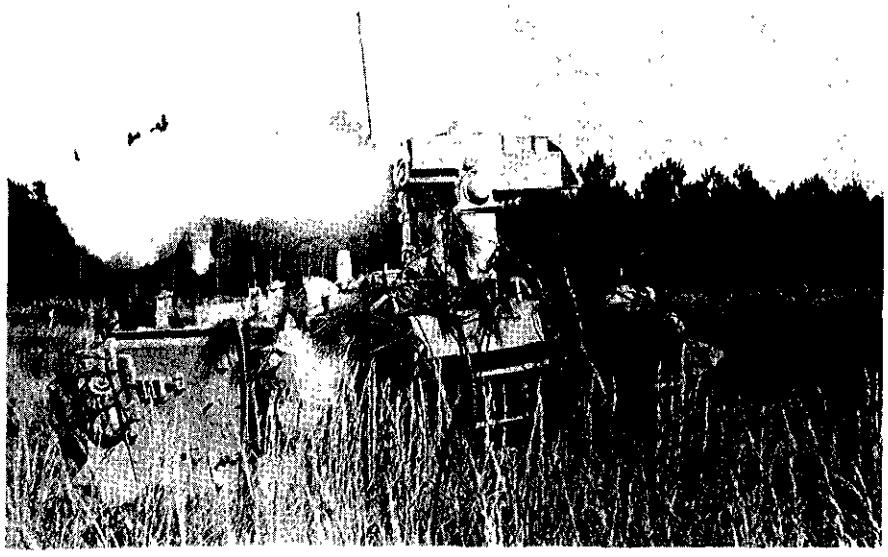


ITV with MILES equipment fires at target down range.

MILES-equipped ATTS were used as targets. Artificial illumination was required during night engagements because of the inability to collimate the MILES day sight tracker with the thermal night sight. (It is interesting to note that several gunners acquired targets by viewing blackout markers through the day sight and then scored kills with illumination.) The thermal night sight also contributed to intelligence gathering by presenting targets that could not be engaged in a particular section's sector. (The decision to report this activity rather than engage was also a good measure of a squad's preparation and its use of range cards.) The sections were also encouraged to use the night sight during daylight to scan heavily wooded areas before bounding within their sectors.

An after action review was held after the platoon had completed the course. The discussion group included a cross section of all crew members plus section leaders, the platoon sergeant, and the platoon leader. Although their assessment was that the training was good, they suggested some improvements such as adding more evaluated crew drills, "dirtying the battlefield," and increasing the number of ATTSs used to simulate more movement of threat formations.

This first attempt at establishing a section combat qualification course is a start toward filling the need for specific training guidelines for the TOW system. It uses existing training simulation devices (with some modification for the MILES-equipped ATTS), and it overcomes some of the deficiencies associated with gunner qualification based on the M70 trainer. The program is flexible and cost effective. It can be adapted to the level of training of the participating unit and modified to accommodate available training areas.

The results of the ITV combat qualification course at Fort Stewart have been gratifying. The course has enabled the ITV sections to achieve increased combat readiness. More important, it has helped the unit identify shortcomings in all areas that would not have been found with the standard gunnery exercises. By identifying these shortcomings, the unit has been able to tailor its training program to further improve its readiness.

Captain James W Tompkins, Jr, a 1977 graduate of the Citadel, recently completed an assignment as commander of the Combat Support Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Infantry at Fort Stewart He has served as a weapons platoon leader and an executive officer, and has commanded a training company and a brigade headquarters company He is now attending the Foreign Area Officer Course

Lieutenant Harry E. Mornston, a 1980 graduate of the United States Military Academy, is a company commander in the 2d Battalion, 34th Infantry. He is a graduate of the ITV Trainer Course and the Airborne, Air Assault, and Ranger courses He also served for 14 months as an antitank platoon leader

Extended FTX for RC Units

CAPTAIN TONY N. WINGO

All Reserve Component (RC) units today perform their full-time training duty during a 15-day annual training period. RC combat units normally use the first week of this annual training to conduct a 4-day field training exercise (FTX) in which they concentrate on mission essential training. Following a weekend break, the units return to the field for a 3-day FTX and their Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP).

Our RC units could derive many more training benefits from these FTXs, however, if they would combine them into one 10-day exercise. This extended time in the field would allow them to create a far more realis-

tic training environment, and this in turn would result in a higher degree of combat readiness for the units. It would also allow RC commanders to fully implement the Battalion Training Management System (BTMS) for the first time.

The number of actual training hours for each unit would increase dramatically. Training managers could then set more realistic training goals, and they would not be limited — as they now are — to one level of training such as squad or platoon. Battalion and brigade commanders could conduct high-level collective training such as movements to contact and attack or defend operations. In fact, a 10-day exercise could end with a full-blown battalion or brigade exercise written and later evaluated by an external unit. Since RC units are historically more productive during the second week of their annual training periods, intensive tactical training during that week would be more effective.

In this extended FTX, RC units would come closer to training as they would fight, because the combat environment it created would provide many training benefits for individual RC soldiers. These soldiers would become more accustomed to the physical and mental demands of extended field operations, and they would gain a far better appreciation for the importance of personal hygiene. They would have to learn, too, to get enough sleep during lulls if they expected to continue in action as effective members of their teams. At the same time, they would become more proficient in their individual MOSs. All in all, this kind of intensive training would definitely improve the soldiers' chances of surviving on a modern battlefield.

Not only would these continuous operations improve the tactical side of combat readiness, they would also improve the logistical support side. The combat service support would be greatly improved overall, because the 10-day field training exercise would force soldiers to perform their logistical and maintenance functions as they would have to in combat. In today's annual training periods, when vehicles and equipment become inoperative, all too often they are simply replaced with equipment that is not being used. In an extended exercise such as this, it is more likely that all the equipment would be in use.

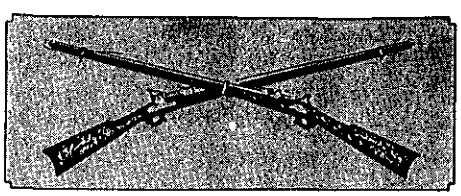
It has become evident that the terms *rearm, refuel,* and *repair forward* are not properly understood within the Reserve Components. An extended field training exercise would demand proper staff planning and coordination for support, and it would require all support personnel to become intimately familiar with the tactical scheme of maneuver and the support requirements of the fighting units. This would further improve a unit's combat readiness and its future survivability on the battlefield.

Extended time in the field *would allow units to create a* far more realistic training environment and thus to attain a higher degree of combat readiness.

If a 10-day field training exercise were adopted for RC combat units it would undoubtedly bring with it some problems. For example, some of the non-combat units training at the same annual training sites would not participate in any kind of field training exercise. Some soldiers in the combat units, therefore, would ask to be assigned to a non-combat unit, hoping thereby to spend the entire annual training period in the cantonment area.

This exercise would also eliminate the weekend break, which has traditionally been a time for such recreational events as softball, golf, and tennis tournaments. Losing this personal time and having to undergo unpleasant field training conditions, too, might lead some soldiers to get out of their combat units. And enlisting in RC combat units might not appear as attractive to some soldiers as it has in the past. (Let's face facts — many members of the Reserve Components have to take vacation time from their civilian jobs to attend annual training, and a number of them seem to feel that the annual training period should be at least partly vacation time.)

Still, despite the possible problems, an extended field exercise would be far more productive in terms of training than any exercises RC combat units now conduct. This concept would test the ability of RC combat units to sustain themselves in the field under extended combat conditions, and it would encourage those units to train as they would fight, both tactically and logistically.

The RC units might suffer some initial losses in personnel or some decline in recruiting incentives, but the kind of soldiers the Reserve Components need are those who really want to be well trained and are willing to put in the necessary time. The individual soldiers, as well as their units, would benefit; this, in turn, would improve everyone's chances of surviving on a future battlefield.

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