

The PRO-Train Concept Better Training for the Total Army

CAPTAIN RON KINSER

The mobilization mission of U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) training divisions is to train new soldiers for the infantry. Concerns about the readiness and capabilities of these divisions have led to an evolution in the strategy Active Army units use in preparing USAR cadre for this mission. The result of this improvement is the Provisional Roundout Training (PRO-Train) concept, which gives a USAR cadre a better training experience and results in a net gain in assets for the total Army.

USAR training divisions generally cannot execute their wartime training mission during drill weekends, because they are often too far from initial entry training (IET) sites. In the past, USAR training units alternated the training; one year's annual training (AT) period would be devoted to local unit training designed to address assessed unit weaknesses and the next year's AT would be at an IET site where the Reserve Component (RC) cadre displaced the Active Component (AC) cadre.

This displacement allowed the unit to execute IET in accordance with its mission essential task list (METL). If a unit could not conduct a full displacement, the available cadre might conduct satellite training, during which the RC cadre members would learn by observing their AC counterparts, who retained responsibility for the training.

These displacements were of three basic types:

- Horizontal unit displacements (HUDs), consisting of sequential rotations of an RC unit upon a like-sized ac-

tive unit throughout all or part of an IET cycle.

- Vertical unit displacements (VUDs), consisting of the simultaneous displacement of brigade headquarters and all of its subordinate units upon a like-sized unit.

- Mobilization Army Training Center (MATC) missions, consisting of the establishment or expansion of a training base at an RC unit's mobilization station by rotating units from an RC brigade.

Although this concept gave the USAR units some training opportunities, both the displacements and the

Leaders realized that the training opportunities given to USAR units during their displacements had to be drastically improved at a time when fiscal constraints limited the budgets of both components.

counterpart training suffered from several shortcomings that made the execution of the USAR METL upon mobilization an unrealistic expectation.

Generally, the USAR training divisions "shopped around" to select the opportunities at different posts that best fit their capabilities, schedules, or other criteria. As a result, the units conducted various types of displacement missions at various U.S. Army posts.

The tendency to conduct AT at dif-

ferent posts compounded problems with planning, coordination, and execution. Since the USAR units had no habitual relationships with the Active Army units, they had to plan and conduct a different type of displacement for each annual training period with a different unit at a different post, using different local policies and procedures.

This "shopping around" also tended to encourage the specialization of a unit cadre: Once a unit had conducted a displacement during a certain portion of a basic combat training (BCT) or one-station unit training (OSUT) cycle, the unit sought out similar missions the next year in the hope of performing well. Both cadres avoided displacements during the more challenging portions of an OSUT cycle, because the RC cadre wanted to perform well, and the Active Army leaders wanted the AC cadre to conduct the more difficult portions of IET. Thus, displacements during basic rifle marksmanship were common, while displacements during field training exercises were rare. This tendency produced USAR units that specialized in one part of the program of instruction while learning little about the rest.

To further complicate this problem, OSUT is conducted at only one IET site—Fort Benning, Georgia. The training divisions that conducted displacements anywhere else were therefore limited to BCT subjects, even if their METLs included conducting OSUT.

The desire to perform well on evaluations also created serious communica-

tions problems between the RC cadre and the displaced AC cadre, who almost always acted as evaluators for the displacement. For the USAR units, the evaluation of annual training was the most important measure of success during the training year. Junior RC leaders sometimes perceived that senior AC leaders were judging their unit's effectiveness, and thus the effectiveness of subordinate leaders, solely by their performance during the formal evaluation. Even when the senior leaders had not actually done this, the junior leaders perceived that they had and acted accordingly.

In some cases, the allegations of unfairness had some validity. Many AC cadres viewed the displacements as a training distraction and either did not allow the RC cadre full control of the training or severely criticized its execution of the training.

Regardless of the situation, the responsibility for evaluating the RC created an environment in which the RC cadre was unwilling to seek assistance or ask for advice from the AC cadre for fear the request would be interpreted as a weakness and reflected as such on an evaluation.

The perception of the USAR displacements as a training distraction also had some validity. AC leaders pointed out that there was no net gain from conducting these displacements. The RC could not point to a group of soldiers trained solely by RC cadre to help justify their existence (as they too faced a drawdown and the possible wholesale elimination of units). The USAR trainers just temporarily replaced AC cadre, who were then used as evaluators. The displacements, instead of reducing the work for the Active Army, created more work. The AC cadre acted as evaluators during the displacement and then had to deal with the disruptive influence after the RC cadre had left, possibly retraining soldiers in areas where they felt the training had been inferior. These problems were compounded when a new or inexperienced AC cadre was forced into the evaluator's role.

All of these shortcomings became

apparent with the initiation of Operation DESERT SHIELD and the likely mobilization of USAR training divisions to meet the projected demands of a possible full-scale war. Leaders realized that the training opportunities given to USAR units during their displacements had to be drastically improved at a time when fiscal constraints limited the budgets of both components. Therefore, the same leaders developed the PRO-Train concept specifically to address the perceived shortcomings in their training strategy: poor coordination and planning, unfamiliarity with local procedures, the specialization of RC cadre, poor communication, overemphasis on evaluators, and the perception of USAR displacements as training distractions.

The initial PRO-Train program com-

The principle of Echo Company PRO-Train ties one existing OSUT company from an AC training battalion to one USAR training division for all displacements.

bined the features of a MATC with a regular unit displacement. USAR units rotated through an entire provisional Active Army battalion created solely for this temporary mission and manned by a core of AC cadre for continuity. Although this original program failed to address the problems inherent in the previous types of displacements, it did serve as the foundation for the Echo Company PRO-Train concept (so named because, initially, the Echo Companies from selected battalions were to be designated PRO-Train units).

The principle of Echo Company PRO-Train ties one existing OSUT company from an AC training battalion to one USAR training division for all displacements. USAR companies from that division rotate every two weeks to complete a 13-week training cycle in the same company. That one AC company is the permanent PRO-Train company for that USAR division, thus allowing

for habitual relationships between units as well as consistent long-range planning and effective coordination. This allows the USAR cadre to become more familiar with local policies and procedures as well as the ranges and other facilities and agencies available at that training center.

For the AC PRO-Train unit, USAR displacement training no longer disrupts the AC unit's mission, because assisting, coaching, and mentoring the USAR cadre in the execution of OSUT *is* the unit's mission. The new mission also allows the Active Army leaders to reorganize the personnel structure of the AC PRO-Train unit and improve displacement experiences by hand-selecting a smaller number of AC cadre members who are experienced in the planning and execution of OSUT and capable of their difficult coaching, mentoring, and assistance missions. Thus, the best AC cadre can directly affect the quality of USAR displacement training. Other AC companies—removed from the responsibilities and disruptions of any displacements in their companies—can then focus on their missions. At the same time, USAR training divisions participating in Echo Company PRO-Train displacements can point to a product trained almost entirely by their own cadre—the soldiers who complete the training.

To reduce the problems caused by a heavy emphasis on evaluations, the AC PRO-Train unit does not complete an evaluation of the RC unit. The responsibility for the evaluation rests with the RC unit itself, in accordance with Field Manual 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*.

Instead of a formal external evaluation, the entire cadre, both AC and RC, participates in daily AARs that focus on identifying training strengths and weaknesses, and on developing strategies to correct deficiencies. At the end of each displacement, the RC cadre completes a take-home packet that summarizes the daily AARs and outlines the unit's overall performance in critical areas.

This evaluation plan has resulted in evaluations that are much more mean-

ingful to the USAR leaders, because those evaluations are their own, as opposed to external evaluations. More important, the plan allows the AC cadre to coach without the communication problems that resulted from their previous role as evaluators.

In addition to bringing about the simplification of coordination and planning, the PRO-Train concept also limits the specialization of RC units by forcing them to conduct displacements throughout the OSUT cycle. The AC PRO-Train cadre cannot conduct OSUT alone. The USAR training divisions are committed to back-to-back displacements for the entire cycle without any gaps, and there are too many different rotations and too few units to allow the same specialization that existed when USAR units shopped around for displacements. Since the USAR training division is aligned with one company and committed to training entire OSUT cycles, all of their displacement opportunities are at Fort Benning's Infantry Training Brigade.

The significant improvement in the quality of planning and execution for displacement missions has resulted in better training opportunities for RC cadres. Most of the shortcomings identified with the various types of displacements have been either eliminated or significantly reduced.

The PRO-Train concept has also

The significant improvement in the quality of planning and execution for displacement missions has resulted in better training opportunities for RC cadres.

resulted in a marked improvement in the planning and conduct of both the displacements and the training conducted by the RC cadre. With subsequent USAR displacement missions to the same PRO-Train company, the real advantages of the concept should become even more apparent. The AC

PRO-Train cadre should also develop as better coaches and mentors as the unit adapts its policies and procedures to better meet the mission requirements.

In the environment of a shrinking Active Army force, the readiness of USAR training units to mobilize and produce trained infantrymen is critically important. The Echo Company PRO-Train concept marks a significant change in the way AC and RC units work to ensure that the total Army is prepared. This concept improves training and readiness and does so with an economy of personnel and resources. Hopefully, the Army will study this program and apply it to the training of other USAR training units to the benefit of the total force.

Captain Ron Kinsler commanded an OSUT company and a PRO-Train company in the 2d Battalion, 58th Infantry, U.S. Army Infantry Training Brigade. He previously served as a senior platoon trainer for the Infantry Officer Basic Course. He is a 1986 ROTC graduate of Kansas State University and is now pursuing a master's degree at Indiana University.

Deception Objectives

Scarecrows, Puppets, and Mannequins

CAPTAIN ROBERT A. ALBINO

Imagine a group of soldiers faithfully executing their duties, standing firm under heavy fire without flinching. These soldiers are dummies, a ruse or trick of war called a *display*, intended to divert the enemy's attention and action away from the real soldiers.

The action, in this case, is the enemy's fire and maneuver. With the enemy maneuver based on intelligence

gathered from the dummy displays, you can be well on your way to a tactical victory. In this case, the dummy troops help create a believable deception story for the enemy that leads him to an incorrect estimate of the situation. This faulty estimate, in turn, leads him to make a bad decision and implement a course of action that you want him to try. This is the *deception objective*. A

simple example would be to place dummy troops where you are weak to trick the enemy into attacking where you are actually strong.

Another deception objective might be to cause the enemy to waste scarce resources reacting to your deception story, which could allow you to win a logistical victory. For example, you could occupy a remote position with