
Deployment Plan For the Combat Maneuver Training Center

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In February 1997, the 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry (Air Assault), Michigan Army National Guard, began planning for a mid-August company-size deployment to the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) in Germany. During the rotation, the battalion's Company B would become Company F of the 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne Battalion Combat Team (ABCT) in Italy. I would like to describe some areas in which early planning helped this company during its five-week deployment.

Two coordination conferences were conducted, one at the unit in Michigan and the other in Italy. The initial conference discussed in detail overseas deployment for training dates, transportation, locations, tailoring the unit, the multiple integrated laser engagement system (MILES), ammunition, the mission essential task list (METL), and specific training tasks. The second meeting validated Army Physical Fitness Tests, five-mile run, previous CMTC lessons learned, and the development of a post-deployment training

schedule. This training would be executed before company level operations in the "box."

Predeployment Training

Adherence to the Army's tactical training doctrine had Company B's METL and training program on line with what would be required of it at the CMTC. Critical operations were *attack*, *defend*, and *movement to contact*. The platoon level supporting tasks had been trained to standard using ARTEP 7-10-MTP, *Mission Training Plan for the*

TRAINING NOTES

Infantry Rifle Company, and the company was clearly proficient in them. The brigade commander added other tasks that included *clear a trench line, conduct air assault operations using the UH-60, and complete a five-mile run.*

The company conducted both individual and collective training before the deployment:

We had been warned of the level of physical conditioning we would need to be successful. Conducting physical training only on drill weekends would not be enough. The unit developed a five-day-a-week physical conditioning program, with validation scheduled for July. Since physical fitness and mental toughness are interdependent and inseparable, we approached mental conditioning by using the battalion's heritage and reinforcing pride, patriotism, and service since 1855. (The examples of the unit's service in three major wars and its seven Medal of Honor recipients provided the example, spirit, and will to fight.)

Leader training was conducted at the same time as scheduled squad and platoon tasks. Readiness Group Selfridge in Michigan provided sustainment training in troop-leading procedures and air assault operations. The soldiers were assigned homework to do between drills on the factors of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops available, and time), call for fire, casualty evacuation, standard rehearsal methods, and familiarization with the 508th ABCT's standing operating procedures (SOPs).

Collective training had to be sustained and validated from squad to platoon level, and the importance of enforcing standards was emphasized during every field exercise. The unit obtained and reviewed copies of mission

checklists for priorities of work provided by the 508th ABCT, in the attack and defense. We practiced standard battle drills and followed up with re-training on those that needed work.

UH-60 air assault training and a mobilization for the deployment readiness exercise, which was scheduled and conducted in June, required support from the National Guard Bureau and Michigan National Guard Headquarters.

Post-Deployment Training Tasks

Once on the ground at the CMTC, the company scheduled training on the following events:

INDIVIDUAL:

- MILES zero, M16, M60.
- Land navigation.
- Physical training, road march.
- Rules of engagement.

COLLECTIVE:

- Company attack.
- Air assault.
- Company defense.
- Night operations.

In addition, we recommend that other units deploying to the CMTC consider the following points in the areas of training and equipment:

- Company mortars must be included in the deployment so the commander can have his own indirect fire assets.
- Global positioning systems must be used in navigation during periods of limited visibility.
- Night vision goggles are required for movement and defense.
- Each soldier must fire MILES Dragon and AT-4 weapons.
- Soldiers should re-zero their weapons daily.
- MILES antiarmor systems must put volley fire at the same time on the same target to register a kill.

- Enough antitank weapon effects signature simulators must be provided to support platoons in the defense.

- Water must be managed at squad level, and resupply must support the operational tempo.

- SOPs should address the basic load to be carried when rucksacks are staged.

- Platoon level training is required to defend against armor as part of a defense.

- Platoon level training must include the emplacement of mines and antiarmor obstacles when establishing a defense.

- The METT-T analysis must include leader terrain appreciation using OCOKA (observation, cover and concealment, obstacles, key terrain, and avenues of approach).

- All NCOs and officers should carry and use the *Combat Leaders Guide*, from the Army Research Institute, Infantry Forces Research Unit (1994).

Company B was challenged at the CMTC, and its successes were due to its well-trained soldiers and competent junior leaders at squad and platoon level. To integrate and fight with an Active Army force, a reserve component force must begin training early, and must focus its preparations and training at the lower levels.

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