



Reorienting Training Support: GWOT and National Guard Post-mobilization Training

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SEAN M. CALLAHAN
CAPTAIN KARL F. LEDEBUHR

As a result of the Global War on Terrorism, the Army's Reserve Component (RC) has been tasked in ways unanticipated in the pre-9/11 environment. Prior to September 11, 2001, training support to RC units was determined by a predictable monthly and annual cycle of events encapsulated in the "Training Support XXI" (TS XXI) goal of meeting pre-mobilization readiness objectives. TS XXI programs are now secondary to post-mobilization requirements preparing RC units for imminent deployment to combat theaters. Both RC units and their active component partners in training support brigades and battalions have had to adjust to this new training environment.

This article describes the experience of one training support battalion (TSBn), the 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry Regiment (TS), in grappling with change and adapting systems to provide support to National Guard units headed to war. Specifically, we'll detail our experience in urban operations training. Our intent is for other TSBns and RC combat arms units to benefit from the thoughts expressed here, resulting in improved training and training support.

The 2-357 Infantry (TS) is assigned to the 4th Training Support Brigade, headquartered at Fort Lewis, Washington. The battalion's TDA (table of distribution and allowances) allows for 39 NCOs and seven officers commanded by an infantry lieutenant colonel with an 11-series sergeant major as battalion NCOIC. NCOs and officers are branch qualified at their current grade and designated as observer-controller/trainers (OC/T) in the rank of staff sergeant and above. Most are assigned to a training support battalion from MTOE (modified table of organization and equipment) leadership



Courtesy photos

A group of Soldiers complete a demonstration as part of urban operations training.

positions and expect to rotate back to a MTOE unit upon completion of their three-year tour. The "observer-controller" part of OC/T takes a back seat to the "trainer" designation — the vast majority of our time is committed to resourcing, planning, and driving training events for our RC counterparts.

As part of the adaptation to a post-mobilization (or pre-deployment) training focus, the 4th TSB commander tasked each of his battalions with training proponency in specific areas, including convoy operations, urban combat, detainee operations, and forward operating base (FOB) procedures.

He tapped the 2-357 for urban combat proponency in November 2003. This entailed the development and sustainment of the brigade's urban operations (UO) SOP, planning and execution of urban combat live fires, and conduct of team through company

UO collective task training.

While planning and conducting training support, we have had to be sensitive to the reality of RC mobilization: mobilized units will always have too much to do with too few resources and not enough time before deployment. We have accepted this as a condition. With a “One Team” attitude and a feeling of ownership, the TS unit can prove invaluable to the training unit as another supporting headquarters dedicated to mitigating the worst effects of the inevitable scheduling, resource, and equipment conflicts.

Each mobilization exhibits its own unique challenges, but our experience tells us the following list covers the most common competitors for time, resources, and personnel:

- Latest arrival dates (LAD),
- Latest ship dates (LSD),
- Equipment services and repairs,
- New equipment fielding and training,
- Varying levels of leader and unit proficiency on assigned tasks,
- Competition with active duty units for training resources,
- Competing demands on leaders, such as command post exercises (CPXs) and cultural awareness training, and
- Unresolved soldier readiness process (SRP) deficiencies during collective training periods.

Clear command priorities, daily battlefield update briefs, appropriate scheduling, tactical exercises without troops (TEWTs), and leadership professional development (LPD) are just a few ways to meet these training conflicts head-on and get the most of your limited time with the unit.

“What Right Looks Like”

As a TS unit, we know and teach doctrine. Only where doctrine is lacking do we rely on non-doctrinal tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and informal lessons learned distributed in such publications as Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) bulletins. Another critical resource are NCOs and officers who have just rotated out of combat theaters and been assigned to a TSBn. This periodic infusion of “new blood,” combined with doctrinal references and TTPs/lessons learned from in theater, form the solid doctrinal and experiential foundation on which we build our training modules.

Urban operations task standards are clearly stated in Army manuals. Our training plans derive from these standards, but we’ve also adopted a shorthand method for succinctly communicating daily objectives to OC/Ts and small unit leaders called “What Right Looks Like (WRLL).”

Our OC/Ts carry a “WRLL” card for each task trained that day. For example:

Task: Operate as a fire team in a four-man stack configuration. “What Right Looks Like”

- Team leaders controls movement and fires of team.
- Team members maintain fire control and muzzle awareness.
- Team members execute assigned role as 1,2,3 or 4 man in the stack.

The WRLL technique succinctly defines that point at which we can safely and effectively pass through the next training gate. Given allotted training time, the mobilizing unit will not achieve a trained status in every task or subtask. The official answer is “train to standard” then move on. But it’s just as critical for units to gain exposure to a wide variety of tasks prior to deployment. “WRLL” assists us in achieving a reasonable balance between the depth of proficiency on a given task and breadth of exposure on the many critical tasks each unit requires before deployment.

The intent is not to replace doctrine or subvert the “train to standard” mentality, but rather to focus leaders in a field environment on the critical tasks his or her element must master that day before moving to the next step. It answers the small unit leader’s questions, “What am I accomplishing today and how do I know we’re done?”

Sample Urban Combat Training Module

Each post-mobilization training period has required adjustments to the base plan, but in general, we can define the common urban operations tasks as follows:

- ☞ Conduct short-range marksmanship training,
- ☞ Conduct individual urban operations skills training,
- ☞ Conduct team through platoon battle drill training,
- ☞ Conduct company attack and cordon and search operations,
- ☞ Conduct fire team and squad urban operations live-fire exercises.

Typically, a battalion-size unit can dedicate from five to 10 days to an urban combat module during pre-deployment operations. We chose an eight-day model as an example of how to organize and implement such a plan. We focus on team through platoon collective training using daily drills, situational training exercises (STX), and live-fire exercises (LFX). The chart below provides a brief summary of a typical program of instruction (POI).

We teach both the strong wall and opposing corners room clearing techniques (both in common use in combat theaters) at the beginning of the module so units understand these two essential methods. For the remainder of the module, the unit employs the strong wall technique only. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages, but time available and safety considerations dictated standardization and proficiency focused on one of the two methods.

Figure 1 — Typical POI for Urban Combat Training

Day of TRN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Level	Individual/Team	Individual/Team	Team	Team/Squad	Squad	Squad	Squad/Platoon	Platoon
Training	SRM, 4-man stack, PAX/Room Search, Marking	SRM	Hallways, stairs, Red-zone coverage, movement	Tm/Sqd force on force enter and clear a room/bldg	CQC LFX	CQC LFX	SQD/PLT force on force enter and clear a room/bldg	PLT STX

TRAINING NOTES

DAY 1:

What Right Looks Like:

**Proper body and weapon position during short range marksmanship drills,*

**Proper safety and trigger manipulation on assigned weapon,*

**Properly executed four-man stack for room clearing (strong wall technique).*

Day 1 sets conditions for success for the entire module. A demonstration team (we call it an OMEGA team) shows the unit what right looks like for all techniques and tactics prior to the unit's execution. The first point of emphasis is establishing the proper body position and weapons handling skills for short-range marksmanship typical of urban combat. The OMEGA team demonstrates how to clear a room with a center-fed door and a corner-fed door. We describe the duties and responsibilities of each man (1-4) in the stack. We also teach points of domination, sectors of fire, verbal commands, and weapon malfunction drills. After demonstrating all techniques, we break the company down into its platoons and conduct glass house drills focusing on the four-man stack (center-fed door and corner-fed door rooms). Once the platoons have become comfortable with these techniques, we conduct another OMEGA team demonstration.

After this demonstration and the unit is comfortable with the four-man stack, the OMEGA team demonstrates clearing hallways, corners, and stairs at team level.

TASK	Rds	Distance	Method	Time
FAM Table 1				
10 Meter stationary fires 3 times	2	10	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
7 Meter stationary fires 3 times	2	7	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
4 Meter stationary fires 3 times	2	4	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
FAM Table 2				
Same as Qualification fires 3 times			Controlled Pair	
Qualification (Modified)				
Straight ahead walking	2	15-10	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Straight ahead stationary	2	10	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Face Left Right Turn	2	10	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Straight ahead walking	2	10-7	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Face Right Left Turn	2	7	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Straight ahead stationary	2	7	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Straight ahead walking	2	7-4	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Straight ahead stationary	2	4	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Face Right Left Turn	2	4	Controlled Pair	3 Sec
Face Left Right Turn	2	4	Controlled Pair	3 Sec

Figure 2 — Sample SRM Tasks

Day 2:

What Right Looks Like:

**Proper short range marksmanship body and weapon position,*

**Proper safety and trigger manipulation on assigned weapon, and*

**Properly executed four-man stack for room clearing (strong wall technique).*

Day 2 builds on Day 1 techniques under live-fire conditions at a short-range marksmanship (SRM) range. Soldiers execute extensive dry and blank fire drills prior to the first live rounds down range.

OC/Ts run concurrent training stations in glass houses where fire teams continue to practice room and hallway clearance techniques from the four-man stack. SRM skills taught include stance, low carry/high carry, controlled pairs vs. double tap, trigger manipulation, SPORTS, walking and shooting, and ready-up drills.

Day 3:

What Right Looks Like:

** Proper body position,*

** Safety and trigger manipulation,*

** Four-man stack executed in accordance with SOP.*



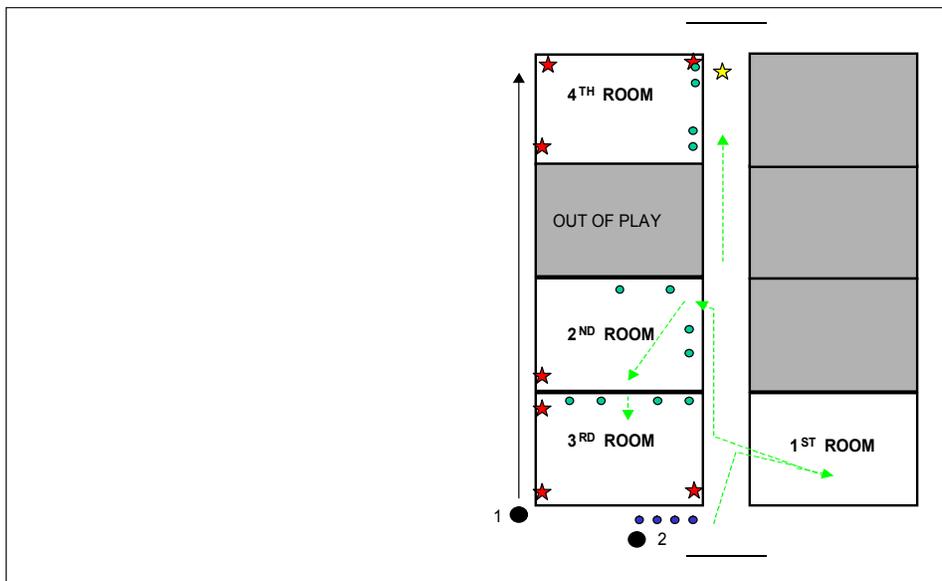


Figure 3 — A and B Team Live-Fire Exercises

* Team leader maintains command and control,

* Clear room using strong wall technique,

* Fire control and weapons safety enforced,

* TMs proficient in clearing multi-room buildings, and

* Tactical movement between buildings.

Day 3 continues to train fire team fundamentals with the goal of achieving proficiency on tasks listed above. We start the day with a review of the proper SRM techniques, the four-man stack, and room clearing using the strong wall technique. We then teach how to move and maneuver in an urban environment, as well as training how to search a room and personnel. Teams conduct glass house drills and then move into buildings to develop skills with a variety of different room and hallway configurations.

Squad leaders are expected to begin controlling team actions and movement in buildings on Day 3.

Day 4:

What Right Looks Like:

* Proper body position,

* Safety and trigger manipulation,

* Four-man stack executed IAW SOP,

* Squad leader maintains command and control,

* Clear room using strong wall technique,

* Fire control and weapons safety

enforced,

* Squads proficient in clearing multi-room buildings, and

* Tactical movement between buildings.

Day 4 incorporates force-on-force training in the MOUT site at team and squad levels. The training objective is team and squad proficiency in clearing multi-room buildings under dry and blank fire conditions equipped with MILES 2000.

Day 5:

What Right Looks Like:

* Proper body position,

* Safety and trigger manipulation,

* Four-man stack executed IAW SOP,

* Team leader maintains command and control,

* Clear room using strong wall technique,

* Fire control and weapons safety enforced, and

* Teams proficient in clearing multi-room buildings under live fire conditions.

Day 5 consists of a team shoot house LFX with teams clearing multiple rooms. Teams conduct this training first in a glass house and then conduct dry, blank, and live runs through a shoot house. The team LFX serves as a rehearsal for the squad LFX conducted on Day 6. During the LFX the teams will be required to enter and clear multiple rooms and hallways.

Day 6:

What Right Looks Like:

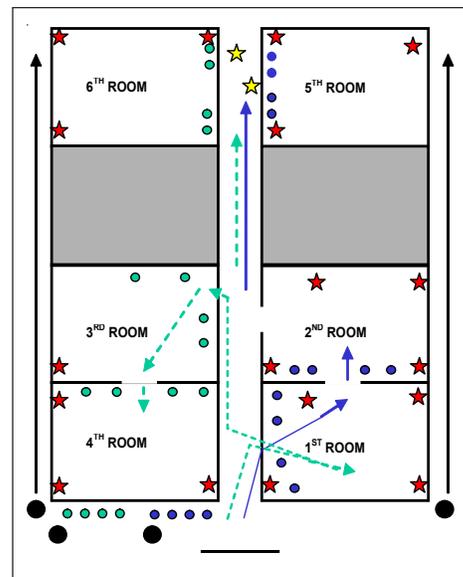


Figure 4 — Platoon Live-Fire Exercise

* Proper body position,

* Proper safety and trigger manipulation,

* Four-man stack executed IAW SOP,

* SL maintains command and control,

* Clear room using strong wall technique,

* Fire control and weapons safety enforced, and

* Squads proficient in clearing multi-room buildings under live-fire conditions.

Day 6 capitalizes on the skills acquired on days 1-5 through a challenging squad scheme of maneuver that requires the squad leader to maintain control of two maneuver teams clearing six rooms separated by a long hallway. Squads conduct this training first in a glass house and then they conduct dry, blank and live runs through a shoot house.

Day 7 and 8:

What Right Looks Like:

* Team and platoon leaders maintain command and control,

* Fire control and weapons safety enforced,

* Tactical movement between buildings,

* Squad practiced enter and clear a room,

* Platoon practiced at platoon assault a building, and

* Company command post (CP) practiced at planning and controlling CASEVAC (casualty evacuation) and detainee operations.

Days 7 and 8 focus on squad and platoon

maneuver tactics and techniques in the urban environment. We establish squad and platoon-size training lanes in the MOUT site. In order to incorporate training on TLPs, these missions are driven from an OPORD the platoon leader receives from his commander on Day 5. This then allows the platoon a full 48 hours to conduct their TLPs. Although we are prepared to provide the unit a “CTC-like” experience on each lane with civilians on the battlefield (COB), an interpreter, OPFOR play, CASEVAC and detainee operations, we scale the level of intensity and complexity to the training status of the unit.



During an exercise, a Soldier attempts to communicate with the local sheik and imam using an interpreter.

Company Commander Leader

Tasks:

What Right Looks Like:

* Company commander and his CP practiced at planning and controlling a deliberate attack in the urban environment,

* Company commander practiced at risk assessments and evaluating strengths and weaknesses of the unit and its leadership,

* Company CP practiced planning and executing detainee and CASEVAC operations, and

* Company commander understands the use and integration of interpreters.

Because of the time constraints and the proficiency level of the units, we have found that an achievable proficiency level by Day 8 is platoon-level operations. However, to better prepare the units for future operations we have found it beneficial to conduct at a

minimum a TEWT on possible company operations, specifically cordon and search operations.

The focus of the TEWT is to provide the leaders with an understanding of the complexity of the operation and insights on how to control and plan the operation.

Summary

At the conclusion of this sample eight-day POI, the unit from individual through platoon level is thoroughly versed on the most critical urban operations combat skills and tasks.

Company level leadership understands the complexity and planning considerations involved in offensive operations in the urban environment and has conducted troop-leading

procedures for a company attack. Clearly, there are many valid variations to this POI. Unit training objectives, time, and resources available are all determining factors in deciding what your training module looks like. For example, we haven't trained units on ballistic breaching techniques during our urban ops modules, but this is also a critical skill and worthy of inclusion if training objectives and resources allow.

We have portrayed one example of an effective approach to urban operations during post-mobilization National Guard training, including key considerations during planning and implementation. The units we have supported are hungry for training and laser-focused on meeting their upcoming challenges in combat. The TSBn serves as a key facilitator, helping the unit understand “What Right Looks Like” and how to get there during both pre-deployment and in-theater training time.

References:

* RTC 350-1-2

*FM 3-06.11

CALL Handbook No 03-4, Small Unit Leaders Guide to Urban Operations

CALL Handbook No 04-16, Cordon and Search



As part of the urban operations training, Soldiers respond to casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) situations.

Lieutenant Colonel Sean M. Callahan was commissioned through the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1984. He currently serves as the battalion commander for 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry (Training Support) at Fort Lewis, Washington. His previous assignments have included troop leading and staff positions in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, and 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Captain Karl F. Ledebuhr was commissioned through the Citadel in 1995. He currently serves as the battalion operations officer for 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry (Training Support) at Fort Lewis. His previous assignments include troop leading and staff positions in 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry at Fort Hood, Texas, and 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry at Fort Lewis.