



21st Century Home Station Model SUPPORTING ARFORGEN AT THE MOUNTAIN POST

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The Army Challenge

"After one year, 68 deaths, and 498 Purple Hearts awarded with "several hundred more" pending, the 3,900 soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division have left Iraq. They were an experiment of sorts for the Army, deploying from bases along the Demilitarized Zone in South Korea, the first time units there meant to preserve a Cold War peace were sent directly to a shooting war. They will head to an entirely new home in Fort Carson, Colo., taking over the barracks of yet another unit deploying to Iraq."

— *Stars and Stripes*, Pacific edition,
July 31, 2005

The Army is simultaneously fighting a prolonged war while conducting a substantial transformation process which increasingly limits the pool of available units to deploy, and decreases the dwell time between deployments. The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, is a model example of our incredible flexibility. Our young Americans are "Our Greatest Generation." We owe them the best in equipment and training. This article will outline a way to meet the demands of freedom by supporting the readiness of her most important resource, our Soldiers.

Coupled with Transformation, the Army approved the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model as a synergistic approach to building combat power during compressed re-fit periods for all deploying units. This structured progression of increased unit readiness over time, results in recurring periods of availability of trained and cohesive units prepared for operational deployment.

Installations must transform themselves to provide a flexible base operations surge capability in order to support all units both assigned and mobilized with a live/virtual/constructive collective



Photos courtesy of Fort Carson's Directorate of Information Management

Exercises like Bayonet Strike allow Soldiers to train the way they fight. Developing an installation-wide exercise around a deploying brigade combat team makes sense from the point of leveraging all possible enablers to create the appropriate task organization and relevant theater environment.

training framework. These base operations become the hallmark of a flagship installation capable of supporting all units throughout their transformation and "go-to-war" readiness cycle.

The Integrated Training Strategy

Units preparing to deploy to Afghanistan or Iraq will rely more and more on home station training exercises. Recently, the Fort Carson, Colo., developed a major, installation-wide training exercise designed around the 2nd BCT, 2nd ID that incorporated and tested this integrated training strategy.

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Figure 1

DEVELOPING A HOME STATION TRAINING EXERCISE

- ⇒ Determine where each unit on the installation is in their glide path for deployment IAW the gates of ARFORGEN. Have the commanders of those units use their METL [mission essential task list] to determine what tasks they need to train.
- ⇒ Determine who you want to train and for what theater deployment mission.
- ⇒ Determine the training objectives. When the exercise is finished, what do you want to have accomplished?
- ⇒ Determine the level of proficiency of the unit you are training when performing the tasks you have selected.
- ⇒ Determine the level of complexity/difficulty of the exercise based on proficiency and what enablers are needed to enhance the task organization of these units or increase the realism for them on a dirty battlefield. Include joint enablers.
- ⇒ Determine what combination of live/virtual/constructive capabilities you want to use, then spiral these together in one contemporary operating environment against a realistic theater thread of events to build the enemy and friendly battlefield conditions.
 - + Individual / Section training
 - + FOB operations
 - + Logistical Support
 - + Force on Force
 - + Command Post Exercise (SIMEX)
 - + Live Fire Exercise
 - + Environmental Training (COE)
- ⇒ Determine what resources you will need to conduct the training and how you will rheostat to re-enforce success and failure of units actions and inactions throughout the exercise
- ⇒ Assign duties and responsibilities across the installation and to those volunteering enablers (RC/DLI/etc)
- ⇒ Issue a plan for the training of observer/controllers, opposing forces (insurgency), Iraqi role players and security forces.
- ⇒ Rehearse and validate the plan.

possible enablers to create the appropriate player task-organization to replicate the relevant theater environment.

This particular exercise, called Bayonet Strike, included units validating for deployment, preparing for a Combat Training Center (CTC) rotation, and sustaining training readiness. (See Figure 1.)

Every unit on the installation as well as Reserve component units from several states participated in the training. For example, the New Mexico National Guard flew 39 close air support sorties in support of live fires and force-on-force engagements throughout the Pinon Canyon and Fort Carson areas. Civil Affairs teams from the Arkansas National Guard supported the BCT in civil-military operations. Veteran units recently returning from combat operations in theater supported the opposing force (OPFOR) and observer/controller (O/C) tasks. After leveraging all available trainers and enablers, more than 5,200 Soldiers were involved in creating a realistic training venue for 18 separate units ranging from a military police working dog detachment to Special Operations teams.

The next challenge was identifying and completing the training environment by rounding out all the left and right coalition and U.S. forces in the constructive and virtual simulations environment. These “simulated digital player units” were role-played by the external control staff and spiraled into one common operational picture that replicated the current contemporary operating environment.

Building around a deploying BCT is an excellent way of “teaming” all available assets and cutting costs. The Mountain Post used the 2nd BCT, 2nd ID as the catalyst to bring an installation’s worth of units together and to meet deployment and sustainment training objectives.

The 2nd BCT, 2nd ID “Strike Force” provides an excellent example of the challenges installations have today in supporting a modular brigade combat team in its mission as a global expeditionary force. This brigade deployed to OIF from Korea in September 2004 and received a Department of the Army order while in theater directing in stride re-stationing to Fort Carson at the conclusion of a yearlong combat tour.

As the brigade wrapped up its yearlong tour in Ramadi, Colonel Gary Patton, the brigade’s commander, said “We’ve got a lot of blood, sweat and tears invested here. We will be following the progress of Ramadi. We want to see this thing finished.”

The Strike Force BCT uncased their colors at Fort Carson in September 2005, reorganizing into a modular combat formation. The unit is now combat ready following its recent home station training event and mission readiness exercise at the National Training Center. In only 10 short months, the Strike Force has transformed into a new modular force ready to deploy and fight. (See Figure 2.)

The Relevant Training Framework

Fort Carson, with its superb satellite training facility, the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS), offered some insights on how a flagship installation tackles the challenges of supporting the Army Force Generation model.

Transformation is all about changing the way the installation does business and supports modularity. Since the Army is

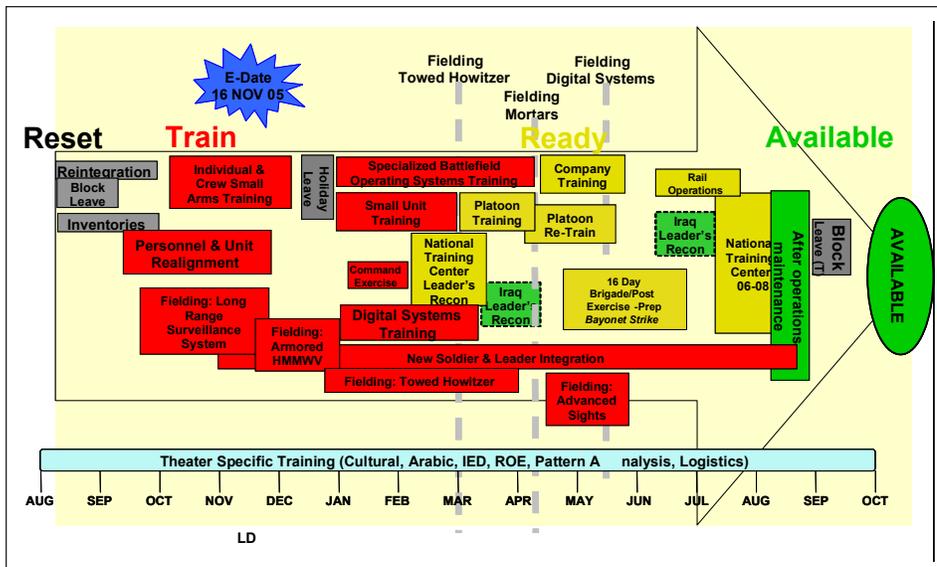


Figure 2 — 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division ARFORGEN Glide-Path to Combat Readiness

reconfiguring from a division-based structure to a more flexible and agile brigade combat team-based structure, the installation is changing its business model as well.

Fort Carson replicates a docking station that can accept and accommodate the training, sustainment, and life support needs of both active and reserve component BCTs that are not necessarily geographically assigned to the Mountain Post. Combine this with the remote full-spectrum, high-altitude Afghanistan-like training area of Pinon Canyon and the answer is realistic training in real time over real distances.

“Bayonet Strike” — Developing the Exercise

Preparing the Strike Force BCT for success at the National Training Center (NTC) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) serves as an example for home station training now and in the future. A critical part of that success was the contribution made by 3rd Armor Cavalry Regiment in organizing, preparing, and executing O/C support, but most importantly by sharing lessons learned from a very recent deployment to Iraq. The planning and investment of veterans who have recently returned from war into the next unit’s preparation for combat provides a source of continuity in home station training that cannot be replicated at the CTCs. Coupled

with training and organization, this will ensure our units are as prepared as they can be for combat. Every unit follows the same fundamental gate training strategy as outlined in Figure 3.

One hundred and fifty road miles away at Fort Carson, members of the EXCON (exercise control) are carefully choreographing Bayonet Strike, a mission rehearsal exercise for the 2nd BCT, 2nd ID just one of Fort Carson’s BCTs preparing for deployment to Iraq. Months before

Bayonet Strike began, thobes, affectionately referred to by those ordering the traditional Middle-Eastern apparel as “man dresses,” had been ordered. Street signs in Arabic were printed. Mock villages to include mosques and schools were erected, and many task orders were sent out to support this mammoth undertaking, which was designed to replicate the command and control and geographic conditions Soldiers face in theater.

Because the 2nd BCT, 2nd ID would operate under the command of the 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq, Fort Carson built the training scenario to replicate a 1st Cavalry Division higher headquarters. Completing the scenario, the planners included Special Operations forces, U.S. Air Force elements, coalition units and Iraqi Army and police units. The 2nd BCT, 2nd ID occupied a forward operating base downrange while units rotated through demanding live-fire exercises.

The battalions then rotated to PCMS, traveling the 150 miles between the two facilities in a tactical configuration replicating the kinds of distances and lines of communication found in Iraq. At PCMS, they were immersed in a MILES and O/C-supported training environment closely modeled on current operational missions in Iraq. Fort Carson provided the location for the sustainment operating base and a

Figure 3



host of live-fire training while the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site provided the force-on-force venue at a realistic distance from the BCT. This separation replicated the time and distance factors in theater as well as added the fog and friction of war through the extensive use of a broad range of role players.

Partnerships at PCMS with the local media, academia, resident subject matter experts, joint and special forces units provided a demanding and highly realistic operational, cultural, linguistic, digital and political environment set within a climatic and geographic training area that mimics theater very well. Constructive simulation was artfully integrated to support live training at both Fort Carson and PCMS. Interfaced with the newly received digital command and control systems of the 2nd BCT, 2nd ID constructive simulations and higher command headquarters replicate not only coalition forces (including 1st Cavalry Division as the controlling headquarters) but various Iraqi security elements as well.

The unique synergy obtained by using both Fort Carson and PCMS, the live and constructive integration, the sophisticated use of OPFOR, role players, subject matter experts, joint enablers and the injection of real world events (such as the elimination of the terrorist leader al-Zarquawi) all combined to provide a tremendous mission rehearsal for the Soldiers and leaders of the brigade.

This capability is a particularly useful tool that permits commanders to tackle the home station training/CTC proficiency “delta” that has always existed but now has become more of a challenge due to the variances in readiness, equipment, and manning generated by the different force pools in the ARFORGEN model.

The Fort Carson and Pinon Canyon complex offers a mitigation tool in support of the CTC throughput shortfalls that exist in CONUS. Pinon Canyon’s demonstrated ability to support a major mission readiness exercise (MRE) at very reasonable costs, combined with the emergent concept of an exportable training capability offer some exciting options to the Army for training more BCTs than can currently be supported between our combined arms training centers.

Home station training in support of the ARFORGEN model requires a far broader and sophisticated approach than has been the case in the past. ARFORGEN provides a trained and ready brigade combat team prepared for continuous operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Rather than trying to have all the units ready for the “Big One” all the time, the Army can repetitively generate BCTs focused on actual or contingency missions in a more predictable process, while still maintaining the ability to surge for major combat operations. Based on this methodology, Fort Carson realized the new mission of receiving, equipping, training, deploying, supporting and recovering brigade combat teams required a steady-state training and logistical process far



The 150 miles separating the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site from Fort Carson, Colo., is ideal for training Soldiers in convoy ambush tactics and provides a training scenario in not only real time but also real distance.

more sophisticated than any previous systems. This combination of training and logistical support for ARFORGEN has generated a surge requirement in base operations that is unprecedented.

Military Police Security Patrol

The four-vehicle convoy of up-armored high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) labored up the slope ahead and began negotiating the unpaved road’s bends and curves. The young military police lieutenant in the lead vehicle was grateful the dust coating her face wasn’t as thick today as it had been. While contemplating the dust, she also thought about how fortunate her small patrol had been making it through the last village without incident and was now on the way through open country.

Out of the corner of her eye she saw muzzle flashes in the scrub brush about 40 meters off the road. “Contact right,” she shouted into the radio. “Everyone put suppressive fire down now.” Without releasing the mike button, she called her platoon sergeant, “One-Four watch our left. I’m going after the threat on our right.” Without waiting for a response, she ordered her driver to turn off the road and stop.

She instructed Johnson to, “Keep fire on this area” and quickly fired her rifle at the spot she’d seen the muzzle flashes originate. Using the vehicle for cover, she jumped out and ran around to the following HMMWV, gesturing for the MPs inside to dismount and form a skirmish line. The rest of the patrol was now staggered along the road, some firing at the ambush site to the right, some nervously scanning to the left, looking for more insurgents.

Taking stock of the situation, the young MP lieutenant wiped the perspiration from her eyes, took a deep breath, and told the driver of the second HMMWV to call in a contact report just beyond checkpoint four. “Tell ‘em I’m developing the situation,” she said. While looking at the corporal and two MPs next to her, she pointed toward the scrub, “Let’s go in and get those guys.”

Together they began moving forward at a low crouch. Standing behind a pinion pine about 25 meters away, the 3rd ACR O/C approvingly made some quick notes on his map. This was the second ambush today along this mock main supply route and, although surprised, the patrol had reacted pretty well. Looking over his shoulder, he could see another team of MPs from the rear vehicle quickly moving to flank the insurgent position.

The cavalryman nodded to himself thinking, "If they move fast and don't walk into their own crossfire, they just might get the insurgents before they can break contact." In a few minutes another Bayonet Strike after action report led by veteran mounted riflemen of the 3rd ACR would take place, and the MPs would have a chance to learn some valuable lessons.

Integrating our Combat Veterans

The 3rd ACR returned in February-March 2006 from successful counterinsurgency operations in both Tal Afar and southern Baghdad. The regiment, still inside of its 90-day redeployment window, was preparing both personnel and property to re-station to Fort Hood as part of the Army's Base Realignment and Closure Program (BRAC) and transformation campaign. The regiment understood the challenges of supporting this rigorous exercise while re-stationing but was committed to sharing the regiment's lessons learned in combat.

Two of three ground cavalry squadrons

had already initiated movement to Fort Hood and most of the regimental staff had begun to clear post. Therefore, the regimental commander, Colonel McMaster, directed his 3rd Squadron (Thunder) to organize, equip, and deploy a regimental O/C package from units across the regiment and provide the regiment's hard earned lessons learned to the Strike Brigade. The regimental headquarters in turn focused on training the 2nd BCT, 2nd ID staff during a simulation exercise at Fort Carson while 3/3 ACR deployed O/Cs to PCMS to train and assist 2BCT, 2ID battalions rotating through MILES based force-on-force company lanes.

The 3rd ACR O/C team also provided daily feedback to unit commanders at the battalion, company, and platoon levels. At battalion level, sustain and improves from every company were consolidated daily to provide overall battalion sustains and improves to the battalion commanders. These observations were used to provide daily status to the senior trainer and post commander, Major General Robert W. Nixon, Jr. After providing daily observations to the battalion commanders, the O/Cs requested the battalion commander's O/C priorities for the next day's training. The O/Cs acted as "directed telescopes" to provide feedback the commander needed to better understand where his unit was in preparation. Upon completion of each battalion's four-day training exercise, the 3rd ACR O/Cs consolidated the unit's battalion and

company training observations and provided it to the unit as part of the take home package.

In Conclusion

To fully realize the potential of the ARFORGEN model requires that a new array of installation functions be provided to BCTs that may not be assigned in the traditional fashion to either the senior mission commander or the supporting installation. In reality, the installation must act as a docking station that allows all modular units of different type to literally plug into the infrastructure and have immediate access to collaborative command and control systems both in CONUS and the operational theater. The methods of training must be far more adaptive to the rapidly changing demands of combat than our traditional mission training plans and mission essential training list methodology. They must quickly incorporate the latest tactics, techniques and procedures fresh from the battlefield in a well-knit live, virtual, and constructive package.

Understanding the implications of the ARFORGEN process, planners at Fort Carson built a new home station training model and validated it during Bayonet Strike. This model had to simultaneously train multiple units and staffs at differing proficiency levels within a single integrated scenario. Ultimately, the installation must enable all units to bring together all their Soldiers, equipment, and tactics, techniques, and procedures through theater-like immersion site training culminating in a mission readiness exercise comparable to a CTC-hosted exercise. We must not just focus on brigade formations, but give every Soldier no matter how small the unit every advantage of being trained and ready. While this daunting task is being accomplished, the installation must also continue to support and sustain resident families and deployed Soldiers while continuing to project and recover combat power.

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The 3/3 ACR O/Cs also provided each battalion with useful tools employed in Iraq which included:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Effects Working Group Template | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive Site Exploitation Example |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squadron Daily INTSUM Example | <input type="checkbox"/> PCC/PCI Checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squadron OIF 04-06 Battle Rhythm | <input type="checkbox"/> Example 15-6 Investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines on Individual Detention | <input type="checkbox"/> Battalion Targeting Meeting Agenda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detainee Packet Checklist | <input type="checkbox"/> 3/3 ACR Squadron TOC Layout |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skull Session Examples | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactical Risk Management Example |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squadron SOP on Clearance Ops | <input type="checkbox"/> Squadron Rehearsal Checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking Points for Patrols | <input type="checkbox"/> Linguist User Handbook |
| | 3/3 ACR Squadron AMB |