

# Training Smart With Resources Available

by Sergeant First Class Edward W. Seaman

The Army's principle of "Soldiers are our credentials" again rang true in the success of the 2-172 Armor Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard Annual Training (AT) FY97. Between 13-27 September 1997, a very important event with long-reaching effects was unfolding at Fort Knox, Ky. The battalion leadership had a well thought-out and tested plan for the train-up and execution of TT XII.

In FY96, the sister battalion, 1-172 Armor Battalion, had four platoons execute TT XII with all four qualifying. Utilizing that knowledge and lessons learned, 2-172 Armor Battalion began their own Inactive Duty Training (IDT) gunnery program. The units established a sound, executable M-COFT schedule/rotation (Sep-May) for IDT. Crews then received a detailed AAR on their performance.

The battalion crews that had already qualified TT VIII utilized the following M-COFT strategy for sustainment. Each crew executed Normal Matrix Groups 2, 3, and Special Purpose exercise "Killer Tank" for one hour.

In April, the unit integrated the Virtual Training Program into their IDT training. This provided the unit with structured, task-based training which allowed each platoon the ability to execute platoon fire and maneuver during IDT. The Observer/Controller (O/C) teams provided structured AARs for each platoon. The platoons also utilized during IDT the Platoon Gunnery Trainer (PGT) and U-COFTs at Fort Knox. This allowed the platoon leader to practice his platoon fire commands and distribute platoon fires. The platoon sergeant was also able to send the required reports forward.

TT VIII qualification was conducted at Fort Drum, N.Y., during IDT. This was conducted on 20-22 June for C/2-172 and A/2-172 with 11 crews qualifying and 27-29 Jun for D/2-172 and B/2-172 with 14 crews qualifying. The "Roll on/Roll off" range concept was supported by elements of battalion and brigade staff.

The battalion advance party for AT arrived at Fort Knox on 10 Sep 97. The unit provided several of its own wheeled vehicles. The remainder were drawn from the KYARNG Mobilization and Training Equipment Site (MATES) on Fort Knox and/or from local KYARNG units. On 13 Sep 97, the main body ar-

rived at Godman Army Airfield aboard C-130 Air National Guard aircraft from the states of Illinois, Missouri, and West Virginia. Twenty M1 tanks were drawn and moved to Boydston range by the 233rd Heavy Truck Company (HET) from Fort Knox. On 15 Sep 97, O/C teams from the 3rd Regional Training Brigade at Fort Knox aligned with the platoons that they would be evaluating on TT XII and occupied assembly areas in TA-2 and 3. While a platoon was conducting its TT XI on Yano Range, the other platoon was conducting assembly area exercises, waiting to move to Yano Range. The remaining two platoons utilized the PGT in Hill Hall. On the following day, the platoons rotated. Yano Range TT XII target presentation and sequence was confirmed by the 3rd RTB Armor Battalion master gunner. Each platoon was allowed two TT XI runs (day and night).

On the morning of 20 Sep 97, four platoons of 2-172 Armor Battalion executed TT XII and completed in the early morning hours of 22 Sep 97. The 3rd RTB evaluated and provided detailed AAR after each TT XI run. The 3rd RTB confirmed computer hits by counting holes in targets. The results are as follows.

| Unit | Gunnery Score | Tactical Score | Total  |
|------|---------------|----------------|--------|
| 1/A  | 79.6          | 96.4           | 88 (Q) |
| 1/B  | 68.3 (U)      | 76.0           | 72 (U) |
| 1/C  | 81.7          | 89.2           | 85 (Q) |
| 1/D  | 71.6          | 89.2           | 80 (Q) |

As an ARNG divisional unit, the 2-172 Armor Battalion maximized the available opportunities of live, virtual, and constructive simulation training. This resulted in a higher operational readiness and clearly proved Fort Knox is "The East Coast Hub For Simulation Training."

---

*SFC Edward W. Seaman has served as the readiness NCO/master gunner and battalion master gunner in both the 42nd ID and the 49th AD. He is a graduate of PLDC, BNCOC, M60A3 Master Gunner Course, ANCOC, and the M1/M1A1 Master Gunner Transition Course, TWGSS/PGS Course, and the A-FIST S I/O Course. He is currently assigned to the Office of the Special Assistant to the Commanding General-ARNG as the master gunner.*