

The Training Support Brigade's History, Mission, and Role

by Captain Joe Redmon

You are a sergeant first class (19K) stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado. You have been a successful company master gunner and are currently the battalion master gunner. The "old man" loves you, your wife and kids are happy, and you even like your quarters. Your branch manager calls you at your 30-month mark and reassigns you to an AC/RC slot at TSB Shelby with duty in some small town in Mississippi. You looked for the town on a road atlas and can't even find it. You think that your career and life are over.

You are a tank company commander at Fort Hood, Texas, and you have just completed 3 weeks of very successful gunnery training. You have been in command a year and you have just about figured it out. The telephone rings, its Armor branch and the assignments of officer suggests that you pack your bags because you're PCSing to TSB Knox or TSB Stewart in a few months. Which do you prefer? You innocently ask, "What's a TSB"?

Both of these outstanding soldiers are entering a new world — Training Support XXI and the training support brigade (TSB).

The Training Support Brigade

During 1961, reserve forces were mobilized in response to the Berlin crisis. As in earlier mobilizations, failure to attain peacetime training objectives and shortages of equipment proved to be major problems that generally prevented mobilized units from meeting post-mobilization readiness objectives.¹

The TSB's story begins with the U.S. Army and its leaders recovering from the Vietnam ordeal, dealing with an increasingly turbulent society, operating within severe fiscal constraints, and mapping a strategy to reinstate an all-volunteer force. This shift was part of a larger strategy and would have some clear implications. First, the Army needed to be closer to the nation it served. It would do this, in part, by decisively linking its Reserve Component (RC) and Active Component (AC) in a total army concept. National Command Au-



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thorities could not commit U.S. military forces to long-term operations without mobilizing reserve forces.² Second, doctrine needed to be inculcated across all branches and components.³ The concept of a total army was inspired by lessons learned from Vietnam experiences and was a conscious effort to "prepare for the next war, not the last."⁴ The Total Army would be incapable of conducting sustained combat operations without significant mobilization of the RC.

Readiness groups were eventually constituted to train reserve forces.⁵ However, to some extent, the Berlin crisis replicated itself in 1990 and 1991 during the Gulf War buildup. It became apparent to all that past attempts to train and prepare reserve forces for mobilization and ultimate mission accomplishment had fallen woefully short.⁶

Readiness groups continued to operate in place for most RC units; however, AC division commanders took a greater interest in training their round-out brigades.⁷ This greater interest became known as Operation Bold Shift and led to the establishment of resident training detachments (RTDs).

By 1995, Congress pushed for, and U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) instituted and manned, regional training brigades (RTBs). These RTBs

were assigned according to geographic location. Battalions east of the Mississippi River were assigned to First Army and battalions west of the Mississippi River were assigned to Fifth Army. The RTBs provided training support to the renamed enhanced readiness brigades and other high priority units. Training Support XXI (TS XXI) went into effect in October 1999, and changed the RTBs to training support brigades (TSBs) and expanded their mission requirements to include training support to enhanced separate brigades, while providing the same training support to all others units within a clearly defined geographical area.⁸ TS XXI absorbed the force structure of the readiness groups and used it to stand-up more TSBs to cover specific areas.⁹ TS XXI placed training support battalions under the command and control of the TSB commander.¹⁰

Today, the mission of the TSB can be divided into three distinct areas: training support; mobilization assistance and support; and military support to civilian authorities.

The Mission — Training Support

The TSB provides world-class training support to RC units through a mobile operations group. The TSB is deployable, unconstrained by terrain, and capable of providing higher control with both digital and voice communica-

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tion capabilities to brigade-level units and below. This enhances the combat fitness and combat readiness of RC units by providing comprehensive assistance with the planning, preparation, and scenario development of multi-echeloned lanes training at the platoon, company, battalion, and brigade levels, while simultaneously providing the supported training unit chain of command a complete external evaluation.

The TSB's mission is simple: observer controller/trainer (OC/T) teams coach, teach, train, mentor, and assess U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard (ARNG) combat, combat support, and combat service support units to enhance their combat readiness. The intent is continual improvement and the emphasis is on doctrinal training to standard, not simple evaluation.

This training support mission is largely accomplished through a mentoring relationship between the OC/T and his training counterpart, and is verified by aggressively using after action reviews (AARs) at all collective levels of training. During TSB AARs, the OC/T facilitates a focused, doctrinal discussion on collective training that may or may not have gone well and leads the training unit to discover why the training results were positive or negative and how to sustain or improve that training.

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OC/Ts develop training scenarios which are approved by higher-level unit commanders, and then used to facilitate the training unit's collective training. OC/Ts are also expected to doctrinally operate within the parameters of these training scenarios. OC/Ts with a solid working knowledge of doctrine will hone their doctrinal skills and quickly become doctrinal experts.

In a TSB, OC/Ts do not merely observe training execution, set the tactical and doctrinal conditions for collective training success, and facilitate an AAR, they also assist training units in the planning and preparation of their collec-



tive mission essential task list (METL)-based training. Ideally, the OC/T begins the mentoring process with his counterpart commander early in the planning process and coaches him toward a successful training event during annual training. The intended end result is a better unit, measured objectively against mission training plan standards, and verified through an AAR. For example, a tank battalion would have a minimum post-mobilization training goal to receive a "P"-rating on each of its collective METL tasks (platoon, company, and battalion) and qualify each of its tank platoons on Tank Table XII. Given today's training environment, this goal would be ambitious for most AC tank battalions. However, ARNG tank battalions are doing much of this as a matter of course as they prepare their units for CTC rotations.

Many have questioned the efficacy of assigning valuable training rotations at the CTCs for ARNG battalions. However, if the growing role and increasing responsibility of reserve forces for our nation's real-time defense is to be adequately addressed, assigning those valuable resources would seem very reasonable indeed.

The training support mission is not limited to annual training; it is a year-round process incorporating functional assistance visits during inactive duty training (IDT) weekends, OC/T involvement in IDT collective training events, and mobilization files review.

Mobilization Assistance

September 11 was a wake up call for the entire country, and the TSB was no exception. As the towers of the World Trade Center fell that tragic Tuesday morning, we anticipated new, challenging missions. We watched President

George W. Bush firmly dig the foundation for the Department of Homeland Security. We proactively visualized that homeland security could not be achieved without the RC.

TSBs immediately dispatched mobilization assistants to ARNG units throughout the country to assist commanders with the task of mobilizing and to serve as liaison officers for TSB commanders. Simultaneously, TSB S2s and intelligence officers at the MACOM level began to analyze and describe the threat facing ARNG commanders as they assumed their post-mobilization duties and prepared to mobilize. As directives began to arrive from FORSCOM, TSBs began to identify individual and collective tasks that needed to be trained. Mobilization plans called for TSB commanders to certify mobilized units as trained and prepared to accomplish the mobilization mission.

When units are mobilized within a TSB commander's area of responsibility (AOR), the mobilization mission takes priority over all other missions.¹¹ The TSBs, incorporating guidance from higher headquarters and analyzing the training units' post-mobilization mission, quietly developed a post-mobilization training plan to support ARNG commanders as they busily mobilized their units in response to the attacks. TSBs developed what are now known as homeland security individual readiness training (HSIRT) lanes, and security and stability operations (SASO) lanes to support the commander's post-mobilization training intent.

HSIRT lanes train soldiers and units in individual and team tasks such as checkpoint operations, vehicle search, personnel search, force protection, media awareness, clearing a weapon, and processing a detainee. Additionally, dur-

ing HSIRT, all soldiers receive a briefing on rules for using force (RUF) from the provost marshal's office.

TSB Knox, 4th Brigade, 85th Division (TS), developed a SASO training event to serve as the culmination of a unit's post-mobilization training for homeland defense mobilizations. We used the world-class, multimillion dollar mounted urban combat training facility at Fort Knox to give the commander a realistic training experience. The responsible training support battalion tailored the training scenario to closely replicate the mission that the ARNG commander would be executing after completing post-mobilization training. The training replicated as much of the security mission as the TSB could envision, from the tedium of standing guard post to handling the media and suspected threat operations.

The mobilization mission is a developing story. Units will soon be demobilizing and will be replaced by other units requiring HSIRT and SASO training and certification. Demobilizing units will process through their mobilization stations, providing lessons learned to TSB personnel, as well as lay the groundwork for future mission essential task list training.

Military Support to Civilian Authorities

In the event of a presidential-declared disaster, the TSB stands ready in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide disaster relief assets in support of local civil officials. Under provisions of the Stafford Act, the TSB — as the DOD action agency — coordinates and controls DOD assets at the request of FEMA to meet state and local needs.¹² This mission requires much planning and coordination and is directed by a special component of the TSB staff, the defense coordinating element (DCE). The DCE is highly flexible, continually exercised, and prepared for immediate deployment throughout the TSB AOR.

The TSB's Future Role

The challenges of maintaining combat readiness with a maximum of 39 training days per year are enormous. To verify this statement, we should look no further than the AC battalion commanders as they rotate from commanding ARNG modified table of organization and equipment battalions. Their experiences and judgment would seem critical to the future role that TSBs can and will play in providing effective training support to the RC.

TSB support of RC units has been extremely expensive in terms of trained manpower taken from our force structure, as well as dollars spent in support. The dedication and application of these incredible, immeasurable resources have had indisputably positive effects. As our military continues to transform and evolve during our nation's war against terrorism, a top-down cost-benefit analysis would seem logical.

The mission of the RC is currently in flux. The homeland defense and homeland security missions could easily be viewed as an insatiable drain on the current force structure. Viewed within the context of an omnipresent war — sometimes hot, sometimes cold — current RC force structure would seem woefully inadequate. Its organization would also seem outdated.

Finally, in reference to the two young soldiers at the beginning of this article, they are entering a dynamic training environment not much different from the one they are leaving. The professional dedication they have brought to bear in their current positions will pay big dividends for themselves, our institution, and the TSB. They will coach, teach, train, and learn more about doctrine than they realize. As Lieutenant General Fisher points out, "they will return to the force better for the experience. They will gain an acute appreciation for the special challenges facing their counterparts in the RC and will undoubtedly provide the best training support possible."¹³

Notes

¹*American Military History*, Hermes, Chapter 27. Undoubtedly, this solidified DOD Secretary McNamara's well-documented bias against reserve forces, online at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/amb/AMH-27.htm>; and MG Bruce Jacobs, "Tensions Between the Army National Guard and the Regular Army," *Military Review*, October 1993, online at <https://calldbp.leavenworth.army.mil/calldb.html>.

²On a strategic level, nations fight wars, armies are the instruments used by nations. This commitment of America's reserves would represent far more political and strategic value than the sum total of the forces' capabilities; it would signal the nation's commitment to fight and win, forcing the National Command Authorities to formulate and communicate clear goals for winning and ending future conflicts.

³Major Paul Herbert, "Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DuPuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, *Operations*," Leavenworth Paper #16, "...authoritative fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions," online at <https://calldbp.leavenworth.army.mil/calldb.html>."). I would add that doctrine gives us a common language and a common frame of refer-

ence to communicate how we fight to disparate and far-flung components within our institution.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Readiness groups were not the only tool available to commanders to increase the combat readiness of reserve forces; however, readiness groups were a direct precursor of regional training brigades and, finally, training support brigades. Even today, FORSCOM Regulation 220-3 retains provisions written with the readiness groups' lack of resources in mind: the training assessment model evaluator requirement to observe and evaluate training for a battalion or squadron is three personnel.

⁶Lieutenant Colonel Richard Stouder, "Round-Out Brigades — Ready or Not?" *Military Review*, June 1993, online at <https://calldbp.leavenworth.army.mil/calldb.html>; Major Craig Chapman, "The RC and the Gulf War: Non-Deployed Round-Outs," *Military Review*, September 1992, online at <https://calldbp.leavenworth.army.mil/calldb.html>. The perception crystallized by RC readiness failures at Fort Polk and the National Training Center predominates here.

⁷Round-out brigades can be traced directly to the Vietnam experience. Theoretically, placing one-third of a division's combat power in the RC would achieve the intent of forcing that brigade's mobilization in case of general war. It didn't work.

⁸Lieutenant General George Fisher, "Training Support XXI," *Military Review*, May-June 2000, online at <https://calldbp.leavenworth.army.mil/calldb.html>.

⁹For example, in 1996 and 1997, RTB Knox covered the 53d SIB (FLARNG) and the 155th IN (M) (MSARNG). When TS XXI came into effect, TSB Shelby assumed responsibility for training support for the 155th and TSB Patrick took responsibility for the 53d.

¹⁰The RTDs were formally assigned to the AC division associated with the enhanced readiness brigade and personnel were taken from the division's MTOE. TS XXI focused all training support through TSBs.

¹¹Commanding General, First Army, Yearly Training Guidance, 2002. This is a longstanding situation.

¹²The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (PL 93-288), as amended, authorizes the U.S. President, Executive Order 12673, to provide financial and other forms of assistance to state and local governments, certain private nonprofit organizations and individuals to support response, recovery, and mitigation efforts following presidential-declared major disasters and emergencies, online at <http://www.fema.gov/r-n-r/pa/papd/105.htm>.

¹³Fisher, "Training Support XXI."

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