

The New Platoon Gunnery Trainer

The "good old days" are gone, never to return. Never to return in the foreseeable future, that is. What were these "good old days" that we refer to here? The days of seemingly unlimited fuel, spare parts, bullets and beans, land, of tanks maneuvering through the countryside, and tankers doing what they like to do best: tank. So, tankers bid good-bye to that magic time when the norm was three to four gunneries, a couple of ARTEPS, and numerous side trips to the field per year. Content yourselves now with being swallowed by the "White Box." Simulations are here. They save us time, fuel, and money. We understand, you can't ever fully simulate the actual tank. OK, point well taken, but maybe things are not as bad as one might think.

In March of 1994, a little-known device was installed at Fort Knox, Kentucky, the second-generation platoon gunnery trainer PT-2000 (PGT), and it gives the commander a new freedom.

Granted, this trainer is still a "White Box," (actually four white boxes linked together), but beyond that, all similarity ends. The tank platoon can shoot, move, and communicate in a way never before possible in a simulator. That is important in these lean times. For less than the cost of one main gun round, a full tank platoon (less drivers and loaders) can train the critical tasks that bind a platoon into a cohesive fighting unit.

The PGT is a unique simulator in many ways. With a terrain database of 4x8 kilometers and the new PT-2000 graphics, the PGT makes significant inroads in the simulation field. The PGT has a pre-programmed set of 40 scenarios, from deliberate attack to hasty defense, and most missions in-between. The PGT presents a formidable challenge to any tank platoon. The built-in exercises, coupled with the Armor Exercise Generation System (AEGS), present the commander and platoon leader with a virtually unlimited training capability. The AEGS system can create any platoon exercise the commander desires. The commander has only to make his needs known to the system manager, with a little lead time. With this capability, the unit can work on specific weaknesses instead of firing generic exercises.

The PGT was designed around the needs of the tank platoon. It can function as a platoon gunnery trainer, a section gunnery trainer, and a crew gunnery trainer. It also includes a CAT '91 database, a graphic representation of Range 301 at Grafenwohr, Germany. The PGT database can simulate either desert or European environments. Environmental conditions may be varied from snow, rain, fog, day/night and various battlefield conditions, in any combination. Realistic scenarios and a realistic target array make for a

rapid tempo battlefield and a high stress environment.

The ultimate goal of any company/troop commander and platoon leader is to master command and control, fire distribution, and maneuver of his unit. This is the key to success in any battlefield situation. The PGT provides the opportunity for key leaders to train these extremely critical tasks. Improved spot reports, contact reports, terrain indexing, direct and indirect fire planning, sector responsibility, movement discipline, radio procedures, and logistical planning are just some of the benefits.

Real-time AAR feedback is possible via videotape, with a hard copy of the platoon's performance. The PGT AAR is made possible by videotaping the topographical map (a bird's eye view) of the database. This topo map displays the platoon's tanks as different-colored icons. Also, the topo map, along with the icons, allows the instructor/operator to track and maneuver the platoon through the database as directed by the platoon leader/commander. Limited formations and variable tank speeds, from 0 to 45 mph, are possible.

The tank commander, through the addition of two more vision blocks (the U-COFT has only one) at the commander's weapon station (CWS) now has a 180-degree field of view. These vision blocks, along with the head tracker, allows viewing of wing tanks and a vastly increased range of vision all around.

The face-to-face feedback from the platoons that have used the PGT indicates that it is a really practical trainer that gives outstanding results. Commander, the next time you and your unit train at Fort Knox, Kentucky, or Vilseck, Germany, schedule some time on the PGT. For more information concerning the PGT, contact Mr. Cook or SFC Osborne, A Trp, 5/16 Cav, DSN 464-1571/1572. For scheduling contact Mr. Travis Bell, S3, 5/16 Cav, DSN 464-5013.

