

Training for War, and Battling the Weather, Fighting Drugs and Helping Neighbors, It Was a High-Tempo Year for the 42nd ID

by Captain Richard L. Goldenberg, PAO, 42nd ID (M)

From World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and right through the Gulf War, the 42nd Infantry Division supported its federal mission in training and in combat. More recently however, the Rainbow Division received the opportunity to support the citizens of local communities in the form of disaster relief and emergency assistance. In fact, the Rainbow Division headquarters and soldiers have been called upon more than eight times in just the last three years to respond to threats to local communities.

The Rainbow Division's nickname was coined by the division's first chief of staff, General Douglas MacArthur, to capture the spirit of one division comprised of 26 different state National Guard regiments deploying to the trenches of Europe in World War I. In the years since the first National Guard soldiers saw combat with the American Expeditionary Force, the 42nd Division has returned to its roots — citizen-soldiers representing the very best of individual states. The 1997-1998 training year reflects the training and operations of a division training for a combat role while never losing sight of its ties to local communities and local citizens.

Training

Rainbow Division's 1998 training covered a broad spectrum. The division's 3rd Brigade, from Buffalo, N.Y., participated in the first-ever Synthetic Theater of War Exercise (STOWEX) as part of a Force XXI training experiment at Ft. Knox, Ky. Soldiers from the brigade's infantry and armor battalions engaged in cyber combat using a National Training Center scenario. Similarly, one of the division artillery battalions, the 1-258 Field Artillery based in New York City, also conducted Force XXI testing with the Global Positioning System (GPS) and the Initial Fire Support Automated System (IFSAS) to bring advanced combined operations to the division's combat capability.

Gunnery annual training for 1998 included crew qualifications and artillery

live-fires for all Rainbow units. Brigade tank crews from western and upstate New York, New York City, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Jersey gathered on Fort Drum gunnery ranges and with their combined arms brothers participated in crew qualifications, artillery live fire, and mechanized infantry training. Crew gunnery resulted in an unprecedented number of first-time (Q1) qualifications and top gun crews in every battalion.

Other division highlights include support of Joint Task Force Six, the Defense Department counter-drug operation on the U.S./Mexican border. Soldiers from the Buffalo-based 152nd Engineer Battalion deployed to southern California to assist Border Patrol efforts battling cross-border drug traffic. The battalion constructed more than two miles of fence along the U.S./Mexican border in just two 15-day deployments.

"We're protecting citizens from a different kind of invasion. What we're doing is trying to keep drug dealers from reaching Southern California." — Captain James Wasnechak, Battalion S1, 152nd Engineers

Maintaining

Soldiers of the Rainbow Division continue to support and maintain their fleet of armored vehicles, including the M1 Abrams tank. In fact, Rainbow soldiers reached out to provide vehicle maintenance and inspection to the PM Abrams research and development (R&D) team in Picatinny, N.J. Soldiers from the 101st Cavalry, based in Staten Island and Albany, New York, traveled to the operational R&D site at Picatinny's Benet Laboratories to perform semi-annual checks and services on the test center's M1A1 and M1A2 Abrams tanks. Rainbow maintainers replaced various fuel and hydraulic filters, serviced air cleaners, and removed the tank's turbine engines for checks and services. In return, the TACOM engineers in New Jersey provide crew familiarization with fire

control systems and other upgrades in the M1A1 and M1A2 versions yet to be fielded in the 42nd Division. The soldiers from the 101st Cavalry are excited to be assisting the Abrams R&D team and appreciated the opportunity to train with the newer Abrams for crew familiarity and proficiency.

Leading

Leadership of a division spread across more than six regional states offers unique challenges. With individual maneuver brigades and separate battalions headquartered in Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey, coordinating unit training and support becomes an obstacle in itself. With individual state emergencies adding even more unique demands on units, the division capitalized on these command and control (C2) opportunities for the headquarters and staff to prepare for the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) Warfighter exercise.

Last conducting a BCTP exercise in 1994, the division started staff planning and leader development more than 18 months prior to the 1998 rotation to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Linking with the active component's 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) at Ft. Drum, New York, the Rainbow headquarters and staff adapted lessons learned and prepared plans and orders for the divisional command post exercise. Integrating automation equipment and revising unit reporting procedures provided real advances in situational awareness and gave Rainbow soldiers new experiences with tactical internets, web sites, E-mail reporting, and communications.

The call-up for state emergencies during the training for Warfighter gave the division staff real experience in coordinating large-scale troop deployments, civil/military operations, and logistics. Operation "Rainbow Ice" — relief for the devastating Northern New York and New England power outage in January — and

“Rainbow Twister” — assistance for tornadoes in upstate New York — saw thousands of 42nd Division soldiers activated to help local communities overcome natural disasters. The coordination required with civilian authorities sharpened commanders’ skills and exercised staff planning under short timelines and in harsh conditions.

The successful command post exercise was a validation of the division’s ability to command and control large-scale operations. The scale of the divisional mission for Warfighter exceeded that of any state emergency relief mission in the division’s history. From operations to intelligence to logistics, Rainbow commanders and staff at all levels displayed an ability to coordinate and communicate.

Caring

Another important contribution the Rainbow Division made to local communities is found in New York’s implementation of the **guardHELP** Program. The initiative, developed to unite Guard soldiers with the communities throughout the state, invites local leaders and non-profit organizations to work jointly with the Rainbow Division to address threats in New York’s hometowns. Getting the division involved locally incorporates all

the elements of **guardHELP** — **H**earing local needs and identifying threats, **E**ducating communities about divisional capabilities, **L**inking assets to needs to provide training opportunities, and **P**artnering by local National Guard armories with local communities.

The program encourages a central aspect of the National Guard role: citizen soldiers lending assistance to other citizens. In the few months since introduction, Rainbow soldiers have assisted local communities with education, engineer construction, beach and park cleanup, counter-drug youth programs, and resources and training for law enforcement. The success of **guardHELP** in New York State has led to the Rainbow Division adopting community partnership objectives for units throughout the division.

“We are redefining national defense at the local level (and) the National Guard is uniquely configured because it is community-based, and this is where citizens at large perceive the greatest threat.” — Brigadier General Bill Martin, New York Deputy Adjutant General

On a large scale, the assistance to New York’s North Country during the devastating ice storm of January, and the tor-

nado response to the upstate New York town of Stillwater in June, provided Rainbow soldiers a true perspective on National Guard partnerships with local relief and government agencies. The adoption of the New York State **guardHELP** initiative by the 42nd Division empowers local commanders and soldiers in every Rainbow State to make the same linkages without the drama of a federal disaster. The impact of the Rainbow Division on the daily lives of thousands of residents of Rainbow states grows with every new training opportunity and every new partnership in Rainbow communities throughout the division.

“The response from the Guard members is hard to describe. There are plenty of tears as a result of their generosity. My children, who have always been a little intimidated by the green uniforms, now see National Guard members as everyday people who really care about the community.” — Patti Hemendinger, tornado storm victim, Stillwater, New York

Editor’s Note: LTC Pete Kutschera, LTC Paul Fanning, CPT Stephen Mueller, HQNYARNG, and SFC Jim Fillio, HQ 42nd ID (M) contributed to this story.