



THE RED LETTER



The Official Newsletter of 4th Battalion 27th Field Artillery

Soldiers from 6th section, 2nd platoon, Battery A, fire the M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzer during Artillery Table VI live-fire qualification at Doña Anna Base Camp, N.M., April 26 during Network Integration Evaluation 13.2.



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#25348



'Iron Thunder' Battalion to help TRADOC standardize Army

As the Army begins to open combat arms to males and females alike, Training and Doctrine Command paid a visit to 2nd Brigade Combat Team during their semi-annual Network Integration Evaluation to assess Soldiers' abilities to perform high physical-demand tasks related to their Military Occupational Specialty on Apr. 25.

Throughout seven MOSs, TRADOC's eight Centers of Excellence selected 31 high physical-demand tasks to be performed under various conditions while adhering to set standards.

"The test is important for the future of the army because... combat arms MOSs will be open to all genders and we want to ensure that we have a requirement for each of those combat MOSs," said Sgt. Maj. Jerry Taylor, TRADOC Operations Sergeant Major.

"As we select Soldiers [in] the future... we will know what the requirements are for those high physical-demand MOSs," added Taylor.

Soldiers from Battery A were tasked to load a full combat load of 90 M107 high-explosive projectile rounds into the M992 Field Artillery Ammunition Supply Vehicle in thirty minutes or less using only two-man teams.

Pfc. Trevor Coursey and Pfc. Nicholas Pettibone, both 1st platoon, accomplished the task in 22:26, exceeding the standard. "The time standard is 30 minutes and I... didn't think we were going to come anywhere close to it," said Pettibone, as neither he nor Coursey have ever combat loaded the M992 FAASV.

Fourteen two-man teams were observed and their results will be used by the United States Army



Pfc. Trevor Coursey loads the final round of his first combat load as part of a TRADOC evaluation at Fort Bliss, Tx. During NIE 13.2.

Research Institute of Environmental Medicine to establish requirements for selecting Soldiers for combat arms MOSs.

Dr. Edward Zambraski, Chief of the Military Performance Division, explained the role of USARIEM is "to come in and evaluate specific tasks in terms of what the requirements are to complete those tasks," and to ensure Soldiers joining combat arms MOSs are able to complete warrior tasks and drills safely.

"As we open up our combat MOSs to all Soldiers, we have to make sure that we maintain standards. Standards and discipline are part of our Army profession and what designates us as professionals," explained Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey, U.S. Army TRADOC Command Sergeant Major.

"We make it fair... for every Soldier that wants to be in each one of the MOSs that we are about to open and make sure that we maintain those standards so we continue to fight and win our nation's wars," added Dailey.



Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Schneider, Field Artillery Proponent Office, Fort Sill, Okla., briefs Soldiers of Battery A about the task, conditions, standards, and safety precautions of combat loading 90 rounds into the M992 FAASV.



Spc. Dominique Harris, Battery A, carries the final round, of the 90 needed for a full combat load, to the M992 FAASV. Harris and his partner, Pfc. Tyler Myszkowski, not shown, finished the 30-minute task in 22:00.





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Combat ready



PV2 Justin Dimmit, a combat medic from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, qualifies the M4 carbine at Range 22, Doña Anna Base Camp, N.M., on April 26 during the range week portion of NIE 13.2.

Network Integration Evaluation 13.2 kicked off on Monday April 22 as Soldiers from 4-27 FA headed out to Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range, N.M. training areas to support the 2nd BCT's five-week testing mission.

4-27 FA qualified howitzer, radar and Fire Direction Center sections and conducted on-the-move fire support for brigade- and battalion-level convoy operations while using several of NIE 13.2's Systems Under Test (SUTs) and Systems Under Evaluation (SUEs).

As the battalion set up systems in the Tactical Operations Center during the first week, Soldiers attended M4 carbine, M320 grenade launcher, and M240B machine gun ranges at Doña Anna Base Camp, N.M..

Eight M109A6 self-propelled howitzer sections from Battery A and six M777A2 towed howitzer sections from Battery B successfully completed Artillery Table VI section live-fire qualification by firing over 100 high-explosive rounds. 4-27 FA remains the first and only composite field artillery battalion in the entire Army which utilizes both light and heavy field artillery pieces simultaneously.

Battery A occupied firing box 10 near Doña Anna Base Camp, N.M. and fired a series of high- and low-angle adjust, fire-for-effect, and priority target fire missions to qualify, by accurately placing a minimum of seven rounds in an impact zone ranging over 8km away.

Staff Sgt. Mitchell Brittingham,

chief of 7th section, 2nd platoon, said the purpose of the qualification process is to ensure gun sections can perform their jobs safely and effectively.

"We're firing high-explosive rounds... [so] we need a certified and qualified section that is capable of [firing] safely and accurately... [to] destroy targets in combat," said Brittingham.

In preparation of qualifying, Battery A attended a Paladin simulator located at Fort Bliss prior to NIE departure. Individual gun sections also had to conduct notional fire mission crew drills, evaluated by Capt. John Turner, Battery Commander, in order to be Artillery Table V certified.

On Monday 29 April, the battalion employed a fully mobile tactical operations cell which moved approximately 50km while the firing platoons provided supporting fire. While on the move, the Battalion Fire Direction Center was able to send fire missions to the howitzer platoons using brigade and battalion SUEs, setting new records in the distance and time in which such missions can be performed effectively.

With so many systems being tested throughout the brigade, continuous communication with all fires elements played a pertinent role fulfilled by the battalion communication section during the movement. “Without communications the mission would not be possible,” stated Capt. Jean Jeudy, Battalion Communications Officer. “We are not only testing [equipment] for the Army, but we are also ensuring the [Battalion] Commander is able to complete the battalion’s fires missions.”

During the next six days, Battery B coordinated with Q36 and Q37 radar teams from 4-27 FA’s Headquarters and Headquarters Battery to commence two Artillery Table XII platoon live-fire qualification missions. During the two 72-hour missions, platoons covered more than 40km as they moved from Doña Anna Base Camp eastward toward Oro Grande Range Complex, N.M.

Soldiers endured the hardships of the mission as they occupied various firing boxes, conducted emergency fire missions while traveling, defended from oppositional forces and performed survivability moves to counter enemy fire.

“As this was my first NIE, I



Soldiers from 7th gun section, 2nd platoon, Battery A, fire the M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzer during Artillery Table VI live-fire qualification at Doña Anna Base Camp, N.M., April 26.



Soldiers from 1st platoon, Battery B, conduct a casualty evacuation simulation after reacting to OPFOR contact during 72-hour operations as part of Artillery Table XII platoon live-fire qualifications on May 1.

definitely underestimated how intense the 72-hour mission was going to be,” said Pfc. Patrick McLoughlin, assistant gunner for 5th section 2nd platoon, Battery B.

“Looking back, I feel more confident in my abilities as an artilleryman,” added Mcloughlin.

Battalion Fire Direction Officer 1st Lt. Brian Bailes evaluated both platoon qualifications which fired over 100 high-explosive rounds total.

“It is important to observe how the sections respond under high-intensity situations,” said Bailes, who spent the majority of the missions evaluating the FDC sections.

“I liked seeing how the teams came together and combined their strengths in order to achieve quick, efficient fire mission processing... during the 72 hours. It was a great experience to be a part of their training and see their development,” said Bailes.

These qualified howitzer sections and platoons will play an important role throughout the rest of NIE 13.2 by providing fires support to maneuver elements as 2nd BCT conducts missions throughout the Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range training areas, a 90 by 210km footprint.



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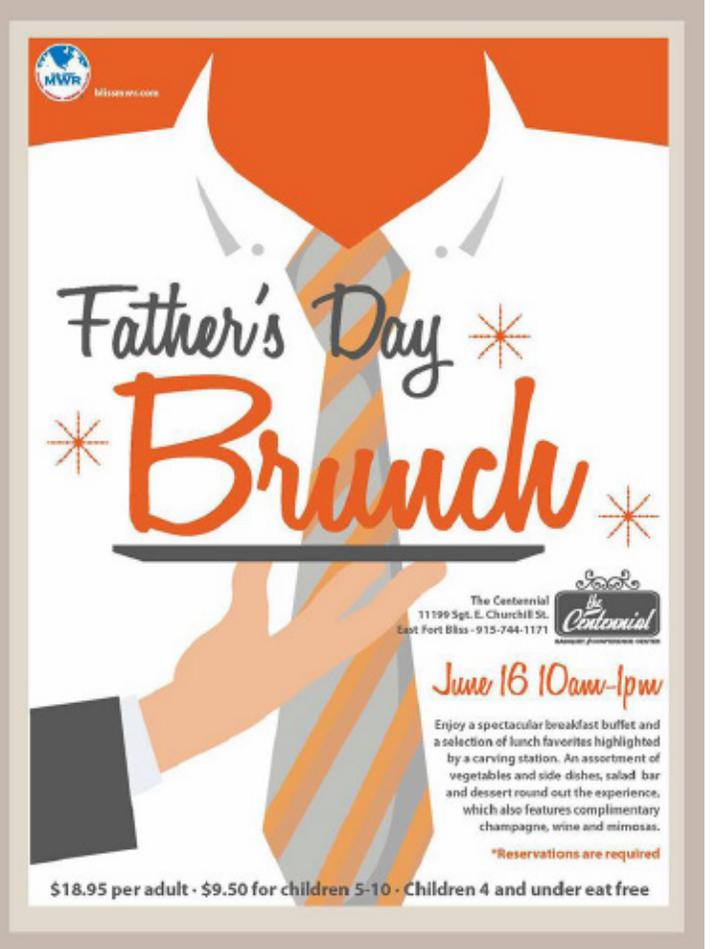
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4-27 trains combat maneuvers during NIE 13.2

Steel rain filled the sky as howitzer batteries from 4-27th FA pummeled the earth with live high-explosive rounds while providing fires support to maneuver elements here at Fort Bliss training areas during the third week of 2nd BCT's NIE 13.2.

The action started May 9 as six M777A2 towed howitzer sections from Battery B supported maneuvers from 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, as they advanced north-east, while M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers from 1st platoon, Battery A, pushed north-west with 1st Battalion, 1st Cavalry Squadron, and four more Paladins from 2nd platoon, Battery A followed 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment westward.

1-35 AR conducted 72-hour stability operations inside Malakand Village to eliminate enemy support hubs and secure the village. "Stability



Soldiers from 3rd section, 1st platoon, Battery B, load live M107 high-explosive rounds from M777A2 towed howitzers here at Fort Bliss training areas May 10. Fire Missions were sent in support of 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 2nd BCT, 1AD's 72-hour stability operations mission.

operations are meant to stabilize a community within a unit's operational environment in order to find specific threats in that area and motivate that community into not supporting our enemy," said Staff Sgt. Brian Phillips, a Fire Direction NCOIC from 1-35 AR.

Fire Support Team B, 1-35 AR, digitally called in 59 live M107 high-explosive rounds from Battery B, 4-27 FA on Thursday evening and 34 more rounds the following morning. 2nd BCT utilized a central method of control, sending multiple-round, fire-for-effect missions from the

1-35 AR maneuvers Battalion to the 4-27 FA fires Battalion, which then sent the fire missions to be processed by Battery B's Fire Direction Center.

After the 93 rounds had been fired, Soldiers reflected how NIE 13.2 had given them the opportunity to demonstrate their war-fighter strength and combat readiness. "[Field artillery] is not an easy job... there are a lot of steps to it. It's exhausting, but coming out here gets you fit and ready for deployment," said Pfc. Cameron Bradley, a cannon crewmember from 3rd section, 1st platoon, Battery B, 4-27 FA

and first-time participant in 2nd BCT's semi-annual NIE missions.

“When you occupy [the firing box] the first couple of times, you think ‘I don’t know if I can do it,’ but after doing it [consistently] you just get used to it,” said Bradley.

Battery B's 1st platoon Fire Direction Officer 2nd Lt. Travis Willis, also a first-time NIE participant, explained that the NIE allows Soldiers to cross-train on all of the FDC systems and jobs in order to process fire missions accurately and safely.

“There is good training value out

here. My Soldiers have never had the opportunity to work together [processing fire missions]... but since we have been here, we've managed to get our times down... and have turned into a pretty good team,” said Willis.

Simultaneously, 1-1 Cav. advanced north-west to Al Jarba Village while 1-6 INF moved west to just outside Doña Anna Range Complex, both supported by Battery A, 4-27 FA, to establish positive ground control over 2nd BCT's operational environment.

On 11 May, 2nd platoon, Battery

A fired 4 live high-explosive rounds during a coordinated combined arms live-fire exercise (CALFEX)

The CALFEX utilized 1-1 Cav's light and heavy infantry elements, tactical vehicles (including M1 Abrams and M3A2 Bradley tanks,) and 4-27 FA's M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers.

“It is a very synchronized mission and has taken us over three months' training to execute this mission effectively,” said 1st Lt. Matthew Baity, Battle Captain for 4-27 FA.

Soldiers from 2nd section, 1st platoon, Battery B, live-fire during 1-35 AR maneuvers on May 10.





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Air assault raid advances future combat operations

Two M777A2 howitzer gun sections from 1st platoon, Battery B, 4-27 FA provided supportive fires during a Joint Task Force field artillery air assault raid and airborne insertion training scenario May 13 here to destroy enemy forces and secure 2nd brigade's operational environment.

4-27 FA conducted eight simulation fire missions to suppress the air defenses of the Attican Liberation Army in order to secure air space for an airborne insertion to assault Space Harbor Airfield. The Attican Liberation Army is 2nd BCT's respective oppositional force during NIE 13.2.

"The objective of my platoon's air assault raid was to emplace M777A2s within range of the Space Harbor Airfield two hours prior to an airborne drop in order to provide suppression of enemy air defenses on the [drop zone]," said 1st Lt. David Galusha, Platoon Leader of 1st platoon, Battery B. Galusha, who graduated from Sabalauski Air Assault School, Fort Campbell, Ky. in 2008, has conducted one previous live air assault mission with 4-27 FA.

Galusha confirmed that the mission would not have been possible without the utilization of the communications equipment his platoon had been using as part of 2-1 AD's NIE testing. Battery B's dismounted Fire Direction Center was able to communicate with the Battalion Tactical Operations Center without vehicles or line-of-sight radio systems, a breakthrough in combat technology.

The training for the mission required a lot of prior preparation, including several days of Soldiers rigging the howitzers for the air assault and a live static load the day prior. Soldiers also trained before the NIE, using the cranes on their ammunition vehicles to train hook-up teams.

PV2 Ryan Kinsey, a member of the hook-up team from 2nd platoon, Battery B, a first-term Soldier and first-time participant of 2-1 AD's NIE missions, explained how beneficial the training had been. "It was very motivating... it opened my eyes to new possibilities that I want to do in the Army like going to air assault school and conducting real air assault missions," said Kinsey.

2-1 AD has not only been helping test equipment during NIE 13.2 for the future modernization of the Army, but has also been training as a fully capable Brigade Combat Team to support the nation in future

times of conflict. As a battalion capable of field artillery air assault raids, 4-27 FA provides 2-1 AD with the fires support needed to be one of the most tactically efficient and combat ready Brigade Combat Teams of our Army.

"[Air assault] allows us to move larger firepower further into the battlefield and provide maximum firepower down range," said Capt. Stephen Warde, commander, Battery B, 4-27 FA. "In Afghanistan... they're picking up M777's, air-lifting them, moving them to where they need to be to range the targets... and destroying the enemy," he said.



(Above) Soldiers from 1st platoon, Battery B, board a UH-60M Blackhawk during a live field artillery air assault raid at Fort Bliss May 13, 2013.

(Below) PV2 Ryan Kinsey, a cannon crewmember from 2nd platoon, Battery B, attaches an M777A2 howitzer to a CH-47 Chinook.





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Mass casualty exercise

Soldiers train medical evacuation procedures

White Sands Missile Range, N.M. - Soldiers from 4-27 FA trained combat life saver skills during a training scenario in which a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device notionally destroyed a medical station at Space Harbor Airfield on May 19 during a combat training scenario as part of NIE 13.2.

As dusk approached, terrorist forces used the cover of a blinding dust storm to penetrate the defensive perimeter with the VBIED and destroy the medical station and continued the assault with small-arms fire around the perimeter.

Although no local terrorist cells are claiming responsibility for the attack, Staff Sgt. George Mead, a mission intelligence spokesperson for 4-27 FA headquarters, stated the Attican Liberation Army may be responsible. "They've been known for this type of attack before, although, this [attack] was more advanced than we've seen them do [in the past]," said Mead.

The Attican Liberation Army is responsible for the majority of guerilla-style terrorist attacks and overall resistance against 2nd BCT's maneuvers throughout the Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range operational environment that started four weeks ago.

The VBIED exploded approx. ten feet from the medical station instantly killing eight Soldiers and leaving two wounded. One died shortly after the attack due to arterial bleeding of the right leg while the remaining survivor, who suffered a similar injury, was air-evacuated to a nearby hospital.

Sgt. 1st Class Isidro Soriano, a Medical Platoon Sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4-27 FA, relived the trauma of the attack, "they called over the radio saying the enemy was in the area... we weren't expecting the enemy to penetrate the perimeter."

Pvt. Davis Karran, a combat medic also from HHB, was helping Soldiers with walk-in sick call when the explosion happened. "Mass casualty situations that involve medics and medical personnel are important [to train for] because you can never assume that you will have a full crew when treating casualties," Karran said.

An official statement has yet to be released from 4-27 FA as to whether or not they hold the Attican Liberation Army responsible for the attack.



(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Hirschi, Distribution Platoon Sergeant, Forward Support Company G, orders Soldiers to guard fuel vehicles during a terrorist attack training scenario where a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device notionally destroyed a medical station at Space Harbor Airfield.

(Below) Soldiers guard the perimeter of their operational environment during the attack while Soldiers notionally killed from the attack are littered to a collection point after the VBIED attack.

