



BATTLE DRILL.. Spc. James Preston and Pvt. Benjamin Bierce, 3rd Platoon, A Battery, 1st Squadron 134th, 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Marion, Ohio, stack up as they cover the main element of their squad during a dismounted battle drill in the Al Jaffa MOUT site, Training Area 6, located at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on Aug. 21. Also pictured are members of the 1487th Transportation Company, Piqua, Ohio who provided OPFOR for the battle drills.



FINDING TIME TO PRAY.. Even as Range 48, located at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, remains “hot” less than 50m away, soldiers of Delta Company 1st Squadron, 148th Infantry headquartered in Sandusky, Ohio, pause for a brief Sunday prayer service as they wait for their next opportunity to zero their weapons on Aug. 21. Pictured are Chaplain Candidate 2nd Lt. John Silvey and Chaplain Assistant Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Smithisler of the 371st Sustainment Brigade headquartered in Newark, Ohio and Spc. Tromp, Pfc. Oplinger of the 148th Inf.

Hammer Company renews affection for big guns

By **STAFF SGT. THOMAS GREENE**
278th Public Affairs

Company H, 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, recently completed their two week annual training exercise at Camp Shelby, Miss.

The Tenn. Army National Guard unit from Rockwood, Tenn. trained the final two weeks of July performing tank gunnery qualification for the first time since before being deployed to Iraq in February, 2010.

Cpt. Kenneth Rivard of Knoxville, Tenn. is the commander of this tank company and said, “The purpose of this AT was to get our soldiers back into their combat mission training and into their military occupational specialty.”

“We’ve been away from the tank since 2008 and had a lot of personnel changes within the unit, but this gave us a chance to work together and identify strengths and weakness and I am pleased with the job the tank company did here.”

278th ACR Command Sgt. Maj. Dan Jennings of Clarksville, Tenn. said this particular qualification was the first step of many levels the tank company will fire in the next couple of years.

“This AT was a reset year after deployment and the soldiers are training for whatever future combat missions we could be called on”,

said Jennings. While deployed these soldiers were operating other types of equipment than their main battle tank.”

Staff Sgt. Michael Smith, 3rd platoon tank commander from Maryville, Tenn. said he had a new gunner this AT and was pleased with the way his crew came together during the firing exercise.

“Whether training or in combat your crew (TC, gunner, ammunition loader and vehicle driver) has to operate as a team. Any weakness or delay can cost time or create confusion and in combat this could be fatal.”

“The TC’s job is to command the crew and vehicle as well as identify and prioritize the order multiple targets are fired upon by giving (fire) commands,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Keith, headquarters platoon of Soddy Daisy, Tenn.

“The gunner’s job is to scan and identify threats and targets and relay this information to the TC” said gunner Sgt. Bobby Johnson, headquarters platoon, of Chattanooga.

“The TC will give the fire command including the target, type of ammunition and/or weapon and I pull the trigger.”

Pfc. Brian Wilson, a 1st platoon loader from Kingston, Tenn. said he listens to the TC’s fire command, chooses the identified type of ammunition, loads it into the



BIG GUNS... Flame shoots from the M-1A2 Abrams tank of Sgt.1st Class Chris Keith and crew, Company H, (Rockwood, Tenn.) 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tenn. Army National Guard during tank firing exercise at Camp Shelby, Miss in July 2011. Below right, members of Company H, 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment receive regimental coins from 278th Command Sgt. Major Dan Jennings (right) for shooting high score in the regiment at Camp Shelby, Miss. in July 2011. (from L-R), Sgt. 1st Class Chris Keith, Sgt. Bobby Johnson, Spc. Josh Evans, Spc. Charles Teffeteller.

120MM gun breach, shouts up!, and gets out of the way of the guns recoil.

Pvt. Jonathan Stinson, 1st platoon driver from Jamestown, Tenn. is the youngest member of Company H. He said he graduated from basic training at Fort Knox, Ky. in April of 2011.

Stinson said the drivers job is to move the 62ton (empty) tank in a safe but expedient manner and to position it in a covered and concealed position exposing as little of the tank as possible to the enemy, but enough in order for the TC and gunner to be able to identify threats and targets.

Keith’s tank crew won regimental honors during the AT firing exercise. His crew consisted of Johnson as gunner, Spc. Josh Evans of Speedwell, Tenn. as loader and Spc. Charles Teffeteller of Maryville, Tenn. as driver.



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