

418th Transportation Company Validates Fuel Distribution and Convoy Capabilities during VALEX

FORT HOOD, Texas – Soldiers assigned to the 418th Transportation Company, 61st Quartermaster Battalion, 13th Armored Corps Sustainment Command, completed a rigorous validation exercise (VALEX), February 2–5, at Fort Hood, to validate key deployment tasks, such as fuel transportation, distribution operations, and convoy execution.

The four-day exercise served as a gateway for the unit as they prepare for any upcoming mission. The training focused on the complexities of bulk petroleum logistics, ensuring that fuel assets could reach units in a simulated tactical environment while maintaining strict accountability and communication across the company.

The VALEX provided an opportunity to ensure Soldiers and leaders could effectively execute their assigned missions under realistic training conditions. “I’m walking around the battlefield making sure everything’s going well, but my biggest thing is empowering my subordinate leader so they can execute the mission that we receive at the company level” said Capt. Gray Sasser, commander of the 418th Transportation Company. This ensures they remain prepared for future rotations and deployments.

To reach validation, the company executed several critical pre-deployment tasks, including mission command, maintenance readiness, and convoy operations.

Soldiers received mission orders, conducted pre-combat checks and inspections, and tactical movements under mission scenarios. They were evaluated by key staff members from the 13th ACSC Headquarters.

Behind the scenes, the unit’s senior truck master, Sgt. 1st Class Tauruss Lansdowne, oversaw the logistical synchronization required to move a company-sized element.

“We are operating off of the commander’s intent,” Lansdowne said. “We’re making sure that all vehicles are [moving] on time, dispatches are correct, including licensing for personnel. we’re overseeing, you know, all equipment on ground, tagging in with the maintenance team for any deficiencies.”

As a dedicated Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants (POL) unit, the 418th’s ability to move fuel is a vital enabler for the 61st Quartermaster Battalion. The hands-on nature of the VALEX allowed

Soldiers to practice and refine load plans and equipment setup in a realistic environment, demonstrating the unit's operational readiness for mission requirements.

Beyond immediate mission validation, the VALEX helps build long-term organizational knowledge within the battalion. Sasser noted that consistent training ensures essential procedures are maintained despite the natural ebb and flow of military personnel.

“These exercises develop kind of organizational knowledge, so as a company, there's knowledge on how to go to the field, how to prep your equipment, how to load your trucks, and what you do in a tactical environment. It's so important to continuously do that, so that no matter if you have leadership changeover or soldier changeover, when there's a continuous influx of new soldiers and new leaders come into the unit, that organizational knowledge of what to do in a tactical environment doesn't leave.” said Sasser.

Leaders emphasized that this continuity, paired with technical proficiency, is what drives mission success.

“Teamwork and communication give platoon leadership the ability to train their Soldiers and then come together as a company to accomplish the mission,” Lansdowne added.

The VALEX concludes as a successful validation of the 418th Transportation Company's operational standards, ensuring the unit remains prepared to provide critical fuel support for future battalion operations and global mission requirements.