

# NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER



Sgt. R. James Piper

Staff Sgt. Jamie Carter, HQ. Plt., B Co. 1/30 Inf. platoon sergeant, scans for enemies during the first defensive operation Jan. 18 at the National Training Center.

## NTC sharpens Soldiers' skills

Sgt. R. James Piper

Staff Writer

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — Every unit has certain essential skills that they need to perform their job on the battlefield. The National Training Center helps to strengthen those skills.

“NTC is a terrific opportunity to exercise the individual, team, platoon and company skills needed to accomplish the mission,” said Lt. Col. Wes Gillman, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment commander. “There is no other place like this in the world. It’s an awesome opportunity to learn.”

Maj. Jim DesJardin, Task Force 1-30’s executive officer, said, “The National Training Center, with its ability to change with what’s

going on in the current environment worldwide, provides the stresses that makes this such a viable training center for the Army.”

The commander said he had a couple objectives — to focus on safety and for the team to get better.

“The overall mission is to deploy, conduct Reception, Staging, Onward Movement & Integration operations, and then conduct tactical operations against a contemporary operating opposing force. [The goal is] to learn and grow everyday as well as train safely and leave the National Training Center better trained at warfighting,” DesJardin said.

“I couldn’t be happier with (the

Soldier’s performance). I think everyday we’re learning something, which is a critical piece of this,” DesJardin added. “The experiences the Soldiers are having at the National Training Center can never be taken away but only learned upon to make us a better fighting force.”

Before transitioning to the live-fire portion of NTC, 1/30 Inf. conducted two defensive operations and three assault missions.

Also while in the training area the battalion had to react to attacks by the OPFOR.

“You never know what you’ll have to do so you have to learn both,” Gillman said.

Every battalion has a mission essential task list. An infantry battalion typically has eight or nine

areas. Both defense and offense are part of that list along with preparing for combat and preparing for deployment.

“It helps immensely to be able to work on all of the METL tasks,” Gillman said.

The company helped to spearhead the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) advance into Baghdad, but the tactics the battalion is using at NTC are different from Iraq.

DesJardin said one of the lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom are that the individual leadership from squad leader to company commander is imperative.

He continued, “I think that this task force has shown that. The discipline of the Soldiers and

leaders to take the fight to the enemy has been key to our success.”

Gillman said they’re not using the same tactics as in Iraq but are using the same basic fundamentals. The tactics are different because of the terrain, but the fundamentals for the Soldiers remain the same.

“The terrain here hasn’t changed in 20 years so it lends itself to certain tactics, but the leaders and NCOs are different,” Gillman said. “They all have different experiences, but the truth of the matter is that we don’t get to do this everyday.”

He added, “To really get good at something, you have to do it over and over again in different conditions.”

## 1/30 Inf. fights hard in first NTC battle

Sgt. R. James Piper

Staff Writer

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — In their first battle in the National Training Center’s training area, better known as the “Box”, B Company 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment fought hard through the night and into the next morning.

The unit was tasked to defend Bicycle Gap Jan. 17 and was the first defensive battle the unit fought.

“Our job was to build up our defensive positions and position dismounted troops and Bradley (fighting vehicles),” said Staff Sgt. Jamie Carter, Headquarters Platoon sergeant, B Co., 1/30 Inf.

Around 11:45 p.m., enemy vehicles were spotted approaching the company’s defensive line.

The first vehicles to breach 3rd platoon’s A team’s sector were two Bronevay Maschina Piekhota fighting vehicles followed by a T-80 tank. The opposing force uses visually modified American vehicles to simulate enemy vehicles.

“We tried to take them out at 300 meters but had an equipment malfunction,” said

Sgt. Michael Cugino, B Co.’s 3rd Platoon, A Team leader. “Once we restarted, the T-80 was right on top of us. It was a race to see who would fire first.”

Cugino and his team did fire first and went on to destroy two more BMPs.

“OPFOR is excellent out here. This is my fifth rotation and you always come back with something new,” Carter said. “It’s definitely a good learning experience.”

Intelligence before the battle indicated that if the lead element of the OPFOR was destroyed, they would move toward 3rd Brigade’s main defensive line.

B Co. met the objective taking out the lead element, but the OPFOR kept coming. Outnumbered three to one, the company fought through the night but was eventually overrun.

“For our guys, it shows what a real deliberate defense is like,” Cugino said. “There were no 12-hour battles in Iraq so it gets these guys to see how a real enemy operates.”

Carter said the battle was constant all the way through.

That fight Carter said, “gives first-hand experience that a battle can start at night



Sgt. R. James Piper

An opposing force anti-tank team prepares to fire at B Co. 1/30 Inf.’s command post Jan. 18 during the company’s first defensive battle at NTC.

and go on until the wee hours of the morning.”

For many of the newer Soldiers in B Co., this is their first NTC rotation but they went to Iraq during Operation Iraqi

Freedom.

“My team did great. A lot of them haven’t done this before,” Cugino said. “Other than the war, this is the first one-month training exercise they have been on.”

## Medical Company helps Soldiers stay in game

Spc. Jonathan M. Stack

Associate Editor

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — C Company, 703rd Main Support Battalion came to the National Training Center for one reason to take care of the Soldiers in 3rd Brigade.

“Our mission is to provide real world medical coverage and also notional medical coverage,” said 2nd Lt. Curtis D. Strong, officer in charge of the Dust Bowl aid station. “Establishing an aid station, sick call and treating serious injuries is apart of real world medical coverage.”

He added if someone comes here with a serious injury they check him out and then evacuate him to the hospital.

The majority of the soldiers of C Co., 703rd MSB, stayed in the dust bowl, but nine Soldiers pushed forward with 3rd Bde. to the “Box,” the main training area, Strong said. The nine Soldiers provided help with mental health, preventive medicine and evacuations. The

**“The overall mission was successful.”**

2nd Lt. Curtis D. Strong  
Aid station OIC

Soldiers evacuated injured troops in an ambulance back to the dust bowl.

For the most part they treated Soldiers for cold weather injuries and twisted ankles, he said.

“The overall mission was successful,” he said. “There weren’t any serious injuries as we anticipated.”

C Co. didn’t come to NTC unprepared, they participated in a one-week field exercise, at Fort Stewart, Ga., to get ready,

Strong stated. During the exercise, they practiced establishing an aid station and went through a series of classes. Some of the classes were on sick call operations, mass casualty operations, evacuation procedures and the physician’s assistant took refresher courses on stitching victims.

He added, they also participated in some internal company classes such as preventive maintenance checks and services on their vehicles.

“I had a good time and learned a lot,” Strong said. “I feel better and more prepared for any deployment that I see.”

# 3rd Brigade completes successful NTC rotation

**Spc. Robert Adams**

Staff Writer

Soldiers with 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) conducted four weeks of training exercises and missions at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Jan. 10 through Saturday.

Soldiers got the chance to work together and become familiar with their equipment. Also with the help of observer controllers, 3rd BCT was able to conduct this training safely and received productive feedback.

After arriving at NTC, Soldiers first had to set up shelter-halves at the "Dust Bowl."

During the first week of training, Soldiers inspected and drew vehicles, which they used to train during the exercise training.

"The goal is to get better every day and much better by the end of the rotation," said Sgt. Maj. Gregory A. Proft, senior noncommissioned officer trainer at NTC.

Soldiers also zeroed their weapons with the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, which simulates whether a Soldier has been shot and what injuries have occurred.

During the second week Soldiers executed training missions based on pre-set scenarios against opposing forces. OCs monitored these battles for safety and provided feedback. After each battle, OCs would perform after-action reviews with commanders and senior noncommissioned officers to figure out what worked well and what needed

improvement.

"What you do here in this training arena is what you will do in a real-world mission," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey R. Sanderson, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment commander.

Soldiers switched to live ammunition halfway through the third week. Soldiers trained with a variety of weapons systems, firing at stationary and moving targets.

During the live fire, 3rd Brigade Soldiers were given various battle scenarios that they may encounter in a high intensity conflict, said Sgt. First Class William B. Halbrook, 1st Battalion 15th Infantry Regiment scout trainer.

The individual shooter goes through all the firing procedures they would actually go through in a battle, which is training that they wouldn't normally get at a home station range scenario, Halbrook said.

Soldiers finished up by returning to the Dust Bowl and cleaned their equipment in preparation to heading back to Fort Benning, Ga.

This included getting their home station vehicles ready to transport back to Benning by rail, said Sgt. Sederick S. Hill, B Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment.

Halbrook said, "We know a unit is good when they come here, but we want to do as much as possible to help them become better before they leave."

Finally, Soldiers returned to Fort Benning between Feb. 4 and Tuesday.

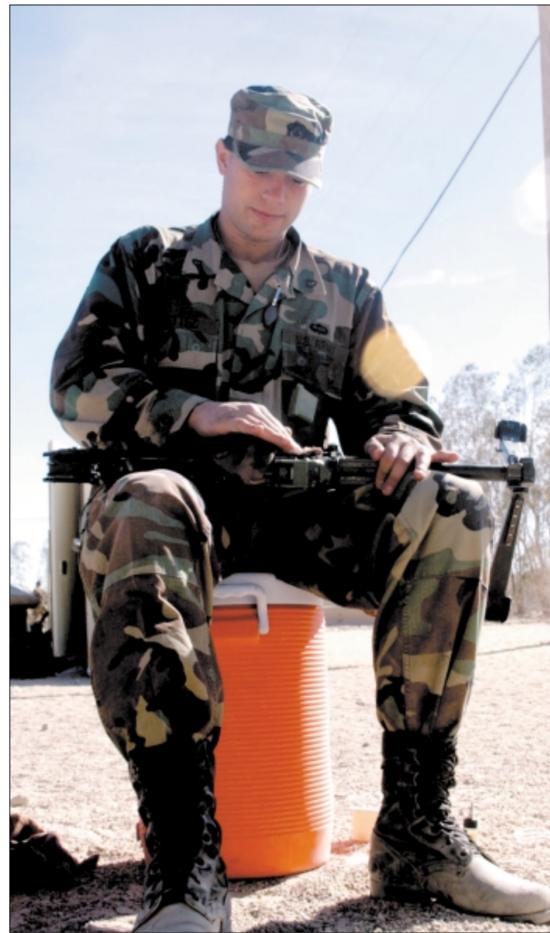
**"We know a unit is good when they come here, but we want to do as much as possible to help them become better before they leave."**

Sgt. 1st Class William B. Halbrook  
1/15 Inf. scout trainer



Sgt. R. James Piper

Bradleys of 1/15 Inf. set up a perimeter in defense of the 2/69 Armor tactical operations center in the early hours of Jan. 20. A company from 1/15 Inf. was attached to 2/69 Armor due to the joint task force used during the rotation. The task force underwent high-intensity live fire missions during their third week at NTC.



Spc. Jonathan M. Stack

Pfc. Michael D. Bettez, HHC, 1/30 Inf., cleans his M240B medium machine gun at NTC Feb. 1.



Spc. Jonathan M. Stack

Pfc. Jeremy K. Posey, B Co., 1/15 Inf., looks through the scope of his squad automatic weapon at NTC. He had just finished setting up his multiple integrated laser engagement system on his weapon in preparation for training.



Pfc. Emily J. Darnal

A 1/30 Inf. Soldier detains a resident of the simulated town of Langford Wells Jan. 21. The Soldiers went into the village to capture a resident that was on the most wanted list.



Spc. Robert Adams  
**(Left) M2A2 Bradley fighting vehicles from 1/15 Inf. line up outside the draw yard at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., before moving out.**



Spc. Jonathan M. Stack

Soldiers of 317th Eng. Bn. relax between their shelter halves in the Dust Bowl at NTC.

## NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER



Spc. Robert Adams

Soldiers of 2/69 Armor set up their tactical operations center during the early morning hours of Jan. 20. The TOC provides information to the units during battles.

# TOC is 2/69's information hub at NTC

**Spc. Jonathan M. Stack**

Staff Writer

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — During a battle 2nd Battalion 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, relies on their tactical operations center for the information needed to win. “The TOC is the main command center,” said Sgt. Maj. Peter J. Boutin, 2/69 Armor operations sergeant major.

“It is the TOC’s job to be proactive rather than reactive,” said Capt. Colin Donlin, 2/69 Armor battle captain.

The battle captain during the fight is the information controller. He makes sure the right people find out the information they

need to carry out their mission.

After all the information is gathered the TOC staff briefs the battalion commander, Donlin said.

The TOC is made up of four M-577 command and control vehicles.

The first 577 is the S-3 track, Donlin said. It is in charge of operations and planning.

The next 577 is the S-2 track. They are in charge of intelligence, Boutin said.

“They make an analysis of the enemy’s actions and determine what the enemy is trying to do,” he explained.

The third track is the fire support element which is provided by 1st Battalion,

10th Field Artillery Regiment, he said. They give the unit indirect fire using mortars and the multiple-rocket launching system.

“Fire support provides immediate fires on the enemy,” Boutin said. “Before firing, they make sure no friendlies are around the target.”

The last vehicle is 317th Engineer Battalion’s track. “They are in charge of counter mobility and mobility,” Donlin said.

Engineers put up defensive obstacles such as tank ditches and mine fields, Boutin added. They also provide the colonel a terrain overview letting him

know where 2/69 Armor can and can’t go.

Another important aspect of the TOC is their position during a battle.

“The position of the TOC depends on what the mission is,” Donlin said. “We look for a position that is survivable and provides good communication.”

“The TOC is made up of mostly new people and they are learning how we operate,” Boutin said. “NTC so far has been pretty good.”

“Since the training started, it has been an upward slope,” Donlin said. “Observer controllers are good coaches and teaching us techniques. There is wisdom in what they are telling us.”

# 317th medic treats Soldiers on, off battlefield

**Pfc. Emily J. Danial**

Staff Writer

When Spc. Jenny Corvin doesn’t have to do her job, chances are it’s been a good day for 317th Engineer Battalion.

Corvin, the battalion’s senior medic, is a trauma specialist whose primary role is to treat battlefield injuries.

“When I have to actually do my job for real, that means someone got hurt, like either vehicles rolled over, or someone not paying attention to what they’re doing and they really get injured,” she said.

Since the unit has been at the National Training Center, she hasn’t had much to do, Corvin said.

“The only thing I’ve really seen out here that hasn’t been training is just a broken toe, cuts, scrapes, bumped heads, that’s about it so far, thank goodness,” she said.

During the battalion’s involvement in the staged war that makes up the first of two weeks in NTC’s maneuver training area, commonly known as the Box, Corvin’s job also included treating simulated injuries inflicted on Soldiers in battle.

“We set up right with the AXP, the Ambulant Exchange Point, so what we see is a lot of ... people that are (killed in action) or injured,” she said. “They get brought back to us, we help them as much as we can there while we have time, and then we ship them back farther. My job is to decide who goes where when, who leaves first and who gets to stay back and

go back to work.”

Corvin said although she hasn’t seen much in the way of serious injuries since she’s been at NTC, she is fully confident in her abilities to handle any that come her way.

“I’m fully capable of (treating) any kind of injury, any kind of trauma, like people being hit by cars, stuff like that,” Corvin said.

She said she could get them stabilized enough to get them back to the rear, so they have a higher chance of survival.

Corvin said although she didn’t deploy with the 317th in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, most of the Soldiers in the battalion did, and coming to NTC so soon after redeploying was harder on some than others.

“Being that they all just came back from war, this is really rough on some of them because it looks so much like Iraq and Kuwait, they’re freaking out,” she said. “I can see how it could be rough. I wasn’t in the war, I can’t really say that I know what it feels like, but when they come back and tell me all the stories, it was pretty horrific, especially for some of my medics.

“They’ve seen so much more than they should have had to see, and treated more things than I could possibly imagine, and then coming back to this and being in the same type of environment, even though it’s just a game, it still brings back the memories.

“You’ve got to keep your head on and remember where you’re at,” Corvin said.

She said she’s happy with the way things went with the battalion’s time in training.

“Everybody’s got their heads on straight,” Corvin said. “I haven’t had to do anything so it means we’re doing pretty good.”

When she’s not bandaging wounds on the front lines, Corvin said she finds other ways to make her time in the field productive, treating her role of caregiver as just that.

“I just walk around and make sure the Soldiers are okay, like if they’re out on the line, with concertina wire on the perimeter,” she said. “I make sure they’re changing their socks and make sure to take care of the little cuts and scrapes.

“Basically I just walk around and be a friend, you know, if someone needs someone to talk to, I’m there ... I just walk around and make sure they’re okay, make sure they don’t need anything — water, food, anything, I get it for them if they need it.”

In a field environment, Corvin said she values the opportunities she has to get to know her fellow Soldiers.

“You get so close to them, you know, people in your unit,” she said. “Back in the rear, you go to work, you come home, that’s it, you don’t really socialize with them, but when you’re out here.

“You have no choice as to whether you really get to know them, and become really good friends with them. They help you out, you help them out; it kind of works both ways.”



Pfc. Emily J. Danial

Spc. Jenny Corvin, 317th Eng. Bn. senior medic, checks a traction splint to ensure its functionality Jan. 18 at NTC.

# Transportation Unit keeps Soldiers supplied

**Pfc. Emily J. Danial**

Staff Writer

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — “We supply Soldiers with everything they need. Without that, they can’t roll,” said Staff Sgt. Colin Peters, B Company, 703rd Maintenance Support Battalion’s supply sergeant.

B Co., a transportation company, took on the weighty task of providing every unit in the National Training Center’s “Box” with any and all necessary supplies.

The company’s mission is essential to the functioning of all the other units training in the Box, according to Peters.

“I think (the Soldiers) did a hell of a job,” Peters said. “They were driving all day and all night, then they’d come back and have to do details and roll right back out at three the next morning.”

Peters said his Soldiers drove a total of 25,000 miles during the two weeks of training and even though they didn’t always have time to get sufficient rest after their missions, “we pulled it off.”

“This company was overtasked,” he said. “These Soldiers are overworked, but they still performed excellently.”

Spc. Marcus Lee Norfleet, a B Co. truck driver, said he thought the company’s performance throughout the exercise was “outstanding.”

“703rd doesn’t believe in turning down a mission,” he said.

Spc. Jason Bishop, another truck driver, concurred with Norfleet.

“There hasn’t been one mission yet that we haven’t completed, no matter what,” he said.

Peters said the company was slightly hindered by the

strict regulations placed on them in the training environment, as opposed to the way it operated during wartime.

“When we were in Iraq, as long as your load was secure, you were fine,” he said. “Here, they want you to use a certain number of straps and ties, even if there’s no need for them.”

Norfleet also said he thought the training was less realistic than it should have been.

“In Iraq, there’s too much to worry about, like being shot, without the little things, like whether or not a person has a cover on his Kevlar,” he said.

“Half of what we went through overseas, we didn’t go through here,” Bishop added. “And as far as sleep ... to sleep here, you have to sneak away.”

Sleep or no sleep, Peters said he learned a lot in the Box, and was proud of his Soldiers’ work.

“I take my hat off to them,” he said.