



Training Base Expansion: An Active-Reserve Partnership

By Lieutenant Colonel Allen C. Estes and Second Lieutenant Kenneth Caubble

Training units at Fort Leonard Wood experience a surge of trainees each summer that stretches and sometimes exceeds the resources available in the authorized training base. The solution has been a training base expansion (TBE) mission where U.S. Army Reserve soldiers from the 98th Division (Institutional Training) stationed throughout New York state provide the additional capacity. The relationship between Fort Leonard Wood and the 98th Division is one of the best active-reserve partnerships in the Army. Both sides win. The Active Component is augmented during the summer surge, and the Reserve Component receives a top-notch, two-week annual training experience. Their combined efforts result in the Army's newest soldiers.

Organization

Rather than augment existing companies with more drill sergeants, the training battalion activates an additional company for the TBE period. The 98th Division provides enough cadre for a complete training company, which includes a commander, an executive officer, a first sergeant, 12 drill sergeants, a supply sergeant, an operations sergeant, and

an armorer. The entire cadre rotates every two weeks. To provide continuity and stability, the activated TBE company has a mix of active and reserve cadre members.

Figure 1 shows the typical TBE company organization, where the 98th Division provides the commander, the first sergeant, and half of the drill sergeants. The Active Component provides the executive officer and the other half of the drill sergeants, including the senior drill sergeant, who coordinates most of the training. The company staff (operations, supply, and armorer) are a mix of Active and Reserve Component personnel. Meanwhile, the rest of the reserve cadre backfills existing companies. For example, if the active executive officer for the TBE company is from Charlie Company, then the reserve executive officer backfills the vacant spot. Each company in the battalion has Reserve Component personnel assigned during the TBE mission.

Fort Leonard Wood's 169th Engineer Battalion (One-Station Unit Training [OSUT]), for example, recently formed an Echo Company, which was led by company commanders from the 1/390 and 2/390th Battalions from the 2nd Brigade, 98th Division. Echo Company was activated on 27 April 1998, executed a complete 13-week cycle of OSUT for 12B

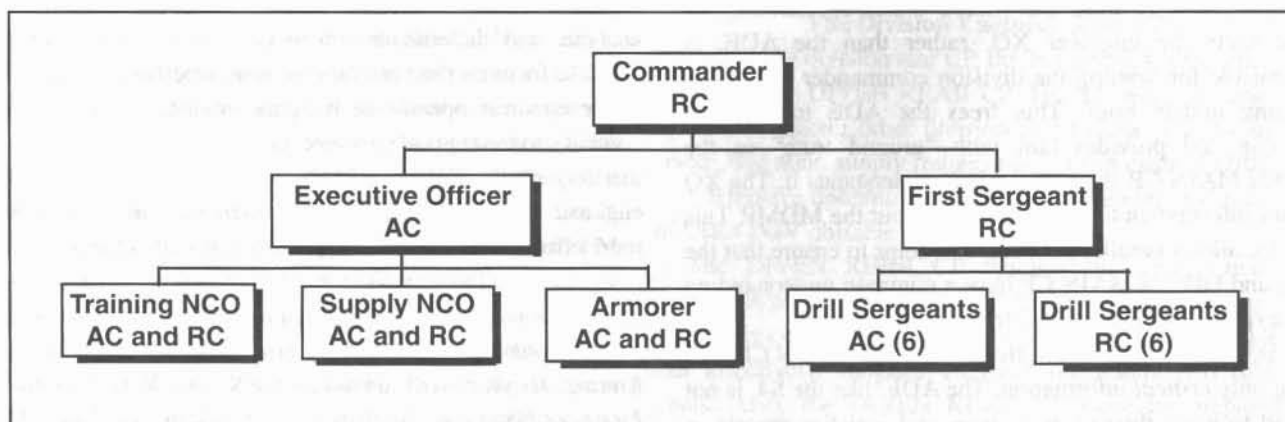


Figure 1. Organization of the TBE company



OSUT trainees negotiate obstacles on the Confidence Course

Combat Engineers and 12C Bridge Crewmembers, and was inactivated on 31 July. The mission included eight separate cadre increments, or rotations, over 16 weeks. Figure 2 shows the role of each increment.

Coordination

The TBE executive officer and senior drill sergeant are critical members of the team since planning must extend past the two-week rotations. Coordination and arrangements for field training exercises (FTXs) and graduation are completed six to eight weeks in advance. Using some Active Component personnel in the TBE company

the battalion commander and turns over the continuity book. The incoming rotation receives a legal orientation, safety classes, and commander briefings. Meanwhile, soldier training does not cease or even slow down. To ease the transition, reserve soldiers arrive with their driver's licenses, defensive driving course cards, range safety cards, and updated training records.

Preparation

The TBE mission requires significant preparation from both the Active and Reserve Components. The 98th Division prepares extensively throughout the year with

Increment	Week	Activity
1	1	Activation ceremony, mission preparation Company fill
	2	
2	3	Unit-taught subjects, drill and ceremony, Army Physical Fitness Test First aid, map reading, NBC
	4	
3	5	Rifle marksmanship, weaponer, zeroing, field fire Rifle qualification, U.S. weapons, hand grenades
	6	
4	7	Basic FTX, individual tactics, night ranges Confidence Course, bayonet training, hand-to-hand combat
	8	
5	9	End-of-Course Test, drill and ceremonies competition, basic graduation Demolitions, accident avoidance, combat construction
	10	
6	11	Landmine warfare, medium-girder bridge, battle drills Bailey bridge and armored vehicle-launched bridge training
	12	
7	13	Ribbon bridge and armored combat earthmover training Combat engineer FTX, End-of-Course Comprehensive Test
	14	
8	15	Final inspection, out processing, graduation Inactivation ceremony, closeout procedures
	16	

Figure 2. Schedule of TBE increments for a 12B/12C OSUT cycle

weapons qualification; nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) training; drill and ceremonies; common task training; field training exercises; physical training; and instruction preparation. The 169th Engineer Battalion and the 98th Division coordinate year-round. As the mission approaches, the 169th sends a mobile training team to New York to answer questions and address specific training needs. This allows face-to-face contact with team members, most of whom have never met. Given the Active Component turnover, it is difficult to use the same experienced personnel from year to year. However, many of the reserve drill sergeants have been coming to Fort Leonard Wood for more than a decade.

The reserve company commander for the first TBE increment goes to Fort Leonard Wood for the cycle laydown. At that time, training events are scheduled, resources are allocated, and training areas are assigned. Once the TBE laydown is complete—along with laydowns for companies that will be backfilled—reserve drill sergeants know which training will take place during their two-week rotation, and they can prepare in detail.

Meanwhile, Echo Company cadre at Fort Leonard Wood prepare the orderly room, purchase supplies, establish accounts, and prepare barracks for the new company. The 98th Division sends a series of S3 liaison officers and non-commissioned officers before activation to help prepare for a successful mission. The 169th and the 98th Division conduct weekly conference calls to coordinate details and provide information for upcoming increments.

The TBE mission culminates with the graduation of the OSUT cycle of trainees, where a motivated and disciplined group of 12B and 12C soldiers are ready to make an immediate contribution to their Army units. The final increment closes the orderly room and billets, replenishes supplies, conducts the inactivation ceremony, and makes initial preparations for next year's mission. After-action comments are compiled and the 98th Division hosts a conference in New York, where all participants discuss lessons learned and suggest procedures to improve the next mission.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned from the recent TBE mission follow:

- Coordination among first sergeants on barracks rules, policies, and areas of responsibility is key to success. The TBE company rarely has its own barrack since it would be vacant nine months of the year. If an Active Component company has a small fill of soldiers, that company shares its barrack with the TBE company. If all companies have large classes in session, the TBE company splits and one platoon occupies each of the barracks.
- The 98th Division liaison officer must arrive well before the mission begins. He opens accounts, arranges billeting, coordinates transportation, and ensures that

each increment of TBE cadre receives logistical support. The division liaison officer is one of the most important individuals in the entire mission.

- Reserve drill sergeants must do everything expected of active drill sergeants so the two will be viewed as equal in the eyes of trainees. Reserve drill sergeants should pull their fair share of duties but no more. A successful technique is to put TBE drill-sergeant slots on DA Form 6 (Duty Roster) and rotate each increment into those spaces. During physical training, the 1st Engineer Brigade wears specially purchased red road-guard vests with white name tags. The brigade purchased vests for TBE cadre and had name tags made and sewn on before the cadre arrived. Any action that makes the reserve cadre indistinguishable from the active cadre pays big dividends.

Conclusion

The TBE mission can only succeed through teamwork and frequent communication. Reserve Component soldiers must coordinate with their civilian supervisors to attend annual training. Active Component personnel must provide accurate and timely information on the training cycle. There are many moving pieces and lots of opportunities for error. The TBE works because of a spirit of cooperation and constant coordination. The training base expansion is an ideal example of how the Active and Reserve Components can work as equal partners to perform a difficult mission.



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