

Band Soldiers test convoy live-fire range



The convoy maneuvers around a wire obstacle during the live-fire range.

About 26 Soldiers from the Infantry Center Band conducted a training exercise to validate a convoy live-fire range for integration into the second phase of the future Basic Officer Leaders Course Tuesday.

The exercise, which took place at Ware Range, was conducted for two reasons, said Lt. Col. Alan Neyland, commander, 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment - to train a unit and to validate a concept for BOLC II.

Although many people may not know it, Neyland said, band members assigned to divisional installations have a wartime mission to perform security for the headquarters. Many bands have been deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he said.

“(When a band is deployed), as long as it is possible and safe, they perform for troops in the area to boost morale,” said Sgt. Alan Salsbery, a tuba player in the Infantry Center Band and squad member during Tuesday’s exercise.

“When it’s no longer practical, they switch to augmenting the military police,” he said, “guarding prisoners of war, pulling security, etc.”

Although the Soldiers of the Infantry Center Band do not deploy, when they move on to other band assignments, they could be called upon to go.

But no matter where a Soldier is assigned, no matter what a Soldier’s MOS, every Soldier must know the skills required for survival on the battlefield, Neyland said.

“They go to the range and zero and qualify, but very rarely do maneuver live-fire,” he said. “They have knowledge, but they are by no means expert. But during this training, their proficiency has increased.”

Equally important to training the Soldiers, Neyland said, is the role this exercise will play in the future of the Army.

The Army is presently developing a course to train all officers - BOLC. There will be three phases, he said.

The first phase will be any commissioning source, such as a

Course to be integrated into future BOLC II

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Lt. Col. Alan Neyland, Commander
1st Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment

military academy. The second source will be a “basic training” of sorts, a collective training for all officers in the Army. Lieutenants will go to their separate branch training during the third phase.

Neyland and the Soldiers of 1st Bn., 11th Inf. Regt., are responsible for creating the second phase, which will be conducted at Fort Benning and three other unidentified installations, Neyland said.



Sgt. Patrick Close, of the Infantry Center Band, runs back to his humvee after conducting 360-degree security around his convoy.

BOLC II, which is scheduled to be implemented in 2006, will incorporate the 40 warrior tasks and nine essential warrior battle drills identified by the chief of staff of the Army, he said.

One of those tasks is convoy operations.

“Convoy live-fire is a critical aspect of (training Soldiers),” Neyland said. “If you watch any news, you see convoys on a routine basis, ambushed, running into (improvised explosive devices).

“This range mirrors what’s happening in Iraq,” he said.

The exercise, which used a convoy of four humvees, trained the Soldiers how to set up 360-degree security around the convoy and how to react to road blocks, obstacles, enemy ambushes and improvised explosive devices, disabled vehicles and casualties, Salsbery said.

To ensure the training was as accurate as possible, Neyland called in a team of five observer/controllers and instructors from the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La.



Spc. Jason Lane moves to contact with his squad.

The team’s primary mission is training convoy live-fires, Neyland said. The team has assisted the Army’s transportation school and several divisional units across the Army.

Tuesday, these expert trainers executed initial training for the band Soldiers’, acting as OCs during the actual exercise

and certified the course for future use.

The training exercise will be conducted again in June or July, and will continue to get more challenging, Neyland said, with the introduction of more targets and obstacles to react to, like non-combatants on the battlefield.