

War games prepare Bayonet Soldiers for battle

By Pfc. Nathan Goodall
170th Brigade Public Affairs

When it comes to conducting brigade level operations, the brigade and battalion commanders, and their staffs, have to be well trained and proficient in their jobs to move troops on the battlefield.

Soldiers with the 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducted a war fighter exercise here in July to sharpen their skills.

A war fighter exercise is hands-on training for the brigade and battalion staffs that can be compared to the situational training exercises used to train Infantrymen. Much like the Infantry's situational training exercises, the war fighter exercise was designed to simulate an operation during deployment, said Capt. Logan Dick, an assistant current operations officer and battle captain with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 170th IBCT.

Soldiers set up tactical operation centers for the brigade staff and for the staffs of each battalion within the brigade. Through visual communication systems and radio technology, Soldiers within the centers were able to relay information and commands, said Maj. James Allen, the 170th IBCT executive officer.

"We set up our tactical operation centers exactly the way we would anticipate employing them in the field," said Allen.

All actions taken by commanders and their staffs were run through a computer simulation that allowed the brigade and



Photo by Pfc. Nathan Goodall

Maj. Bruce Carter, the 170th IBCT fire support officer, and Pvt. Jason Hescocock, a fire support specialist, go over mission plans during the war fighter exercise here in July.

battalion staffs to receive a mission, create a plan, and then execute the mission. The simulator provided computer-generated Soldiers, enemy combatants, and reactions to every command the staffs employed. Through use of this

simulator, the staffs made sure that they will be able to maneuver Soldiers at lower echelons and complete missions when deployed, said Allen.

"This is the time when we can test our systems," said 1st Lt. Jennifer Goulet,

the 170th IBCT brigade medical operations officer. "We need to find out what works and what doesn't work before we get to the real, live situation."

Each staff component participated in the training like they would in an operation during deployment. Medical staff personnel conducted all the patient tracking, which included calling in medical evacuations for wounded Soldiers, said Goulet.

The communications staffs set up and maintained the communications systems for the tactical operation centers, said Pfc. Douglas Feltner, a Colfax, Ind. native, now an information technology specialist with HHC, 170th IBCT.

"We basically ensure that all the commanders are able to have connectivity to the networks and make sure that they are able to communicate back and forth," said Feltner.

By having each staff component come together as a team, the staffs were able to work together to complete the mission, said Allen.

"I was amazed at the level of performance we had," said Allen. "The willingness to learn, the willingness to improve and take constructive feedback, and get better was just phenomenal. It's because of teamwork that we're ready to go on to the next step."



Photo by Pfc. Nathan Goodall

Members of the 170th IBCT brigade staff go over mission plans during a war fighter exercise here in July. A war fighter exercise trains commanders and their staffs to plan and execute missions in a combat environment.