



## CONVOY TRAINING BUILDS RAINBOW SKILL AND CONFIDENCE

Story by MSG Corine Lombardo, 42nd ID

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Fort Drum, NY -- For 42nd Infantry Division Soldiers, traveling in and throughout Iraq may be one of the greatest hazards they will face while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

To prepare for this, Rainbow Soldiers at Fort Drum are undergoing training in basic convoy movement. Being able to identify and react to ambushes and improvised explosive devices while traveling is the primary focus of the training received. These battle skills will eventually enable them to identify and react effectively to these types of threats.

Over 200 Soldiers from the Division's headquarters company participated in the convoy operations and live fire training which took place in late July. All Rainbow Soldiers will receive this training before deploying for Iraq later this year.

Every scenario that involves a mock bomb, ambush or explosive device is designed and overseen by observer controllers or OC's. These instructors, many which have recently returned from Iraq, belong to the 2nd Brigade, 78th Division.

"Being able to react to a situation instinctively is what this training is all about. You learn the task and how to react to the task, to the point when you no longer have to think about it. It just becomes instinct," said SFC Raymond Barger of the 1st Bn. 314th Infantry Regiment and an OC for the convoy operations training. "On the ground in Iraq you need to move fast and communicate well to survive," he added.

The training was conducted in the traditional Army fashion of 'crawl, walk and run'. Soldiers spent time learning the basics first, practicing what was taught, and then finally

performing the task to standard. During the three day training, Rainbow Soldiers began their instruction with class-room style training out in the field and progressed through practical exercises using Humvee and cargo trucks. Throughout their training, Soldiers faced simulated attacks upon themselves and their vehicles by opposing forces firing AK-47 assault rifles and smoke grenades.

Additionally, Soldiers wore the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, or MILES, a laser-tag like training system that uses blank rounds to simulate gunfire. The training aids were used to make the training as realistic as possible and to replicate what Soldiers can expect to encounter based on lessons learned so far in Iraq. Not only did Soldiers react to enemy fire, but had to evacuate casualties from disabled vehicles. The training culminated with M-16 live fire from their moving vehicles.

"We're taking the Army standards and the OC's real world experiences and putting them together, so when we go to Iraq and do the same type of missions, we can succeed and come home safely," said CPT John Columbo, Intelligence Officer with the 42nd Infantry Division.

For many Rainbow headquarters Soldiers, this is the first opportunity for them to train in convoy operations. SGM Lawrence Leonardo, Division Intelligence Sgt. Major watched the progression of his Soldiers throughout the training, "Over the last few days we've taken the basics, combined them with our operating procedures and allowed our Soldiers to practice and train on these procedures and techniques to develop individual instincts," said Leonardo. "We have improved significantly throughout this training."

The convoy training 42nd Division Soldiers receive during pre-mobilization provides a basic understanding and familiarization. Rainbow Soldiers will partake in more aggressive convoy operations training prior to movement into Iraq, ensuring Soldiers have adequate time to rehearse and build on the skills they acquire here.



## Rainbow Soldier Exceeds the Standard

Story and Photo by SPC Christopher Connelly, 42nd ID



SSG Arthur Evans (right), C Co., 642nd MI Bn receives an award from SSG David Deihl at Ft. Drum's EST on July 28.

Ft. Drum, NY -- A Soldier from the Rainbow's 642 Military Intelligence Company received top honors from the Engagement Skill Training (EST) Facility at Ft. Drum in late July.

SSG Arthur J. Evans from Company C, 642nd MI Bn. based in Syracuse is now one of the elite Soldiers to score expert on the M9 simulation course at the EST.

Approximately one of every 400 Soldiers achieve the expert marksmanship level on the M9 since the EST was founded over 18 months ago. Since then, only seven Soldiers have fired expert on the M9 and only two with M16 rifles, according to instructors at the EST.

The simulator is set up to monitor and score marksmanship based on the number of times a round hit the target, with more points added for hitting target center. Evans received a score of 195 out of 200, which equates to 40 hits out of 40 shots.

Robert Rhodes, a 15-year veteran and instructor at the EST, established the program to recognize Soldiers who exceed the standard and fire expert with their weapon. Soldiers who shoot expert receive a certificate, their name engraved on a plaque that hangs on the wall of the EST and a coin designed by Rhodes. "This is something we do for the Soldiers," said Rhodes.

"Soldiers should take advantage of using the EST for extra training," said Evans, adding that "this is the next best thing to live fire."

The EST simulator allow Soldiers to conduct realistic small arms marksmanship training from M9 pistols to the MK19 grenade launcher in different tactical scenarios and in different types of terrain.

All Rainbow Soldiers are encouraged to utilize the EST. "Vehicle drivers that find themselves using an M9 pistol should take advantage of the opportunity to become more familiar with it" said Dennis Haynes, the 42nd Infantry Division Training Aids, Devices and Simulations Facilitator.

## U.S. Seeks More Protection For Soldiers In Iraq

Roadside bombs and rocket-propelled grenades have taken a gruesome toll on U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although better body armor has protected heads, necks and torsos, military officials want to learn how to protect limbs.

The U.S. Army has jumpstarted an effort to send soldiers special attachments for their body armor.

The Deltoid and Axillary Protector is a removable attachment to Interceptor Body Armor that covers the shoulder and underarm, areas especially vulnerable when soldiers ride in convoys. Improvised explosive devices often hit the sides of vehicles, injuring soldiers. The Interceptor vest protects the neck, torso and groin against fragmentation and 9mm ammunition. The system's removable front and back ceramic plates protect against 7.62mm NATO rounds. The attachment would protect against fragmentation and 9mm caliber ammunition.

Body armor experts at the U.S. Army's Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier began their search for an arm protector in March, after soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq came up with the idea, developed a design and hired a private company to ship them a custom-made version.

The Army experts looked at nine different prototypes and selected one that should provide protection without severely hampering mobility, they said. Still, the attachments will be hotter and heavier.

"Everything is a balance. We want every soldier to come back without injury, but we also want these guys to be effective on the battlefield," said Brig. Gen. James Moran, PEO Soldier commander. "We are going to give [soldiers] more protection, but it's going to come at a cost."

## Is your voice being heard?

A priority task for Rainbow Soldiers before they leave for Iraq is to ensure that they fill out absentee ballots for the upcoming national elections.

Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division should make sure their voices are heard, and the one way to do this is by voting. Since Soldiers are deployed, they are required to submit absentee ballots before October 11th in order for their votes to count. But many are not sure what an absentee ballot is and how to fill one out.

Your first step is to check the state-by-state instructions on the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) to determine the deadline for submission of a registration card and absentee ballot request. The same is true for submitting a ballot. Ballot deadlines differ by state.

The Army is recommending that all Soldiers register to vote by absentee before August 15th. By doing so, they should receive their ballots sometime in September and can have them postmarked for return before the October 11 deadline.

### THINGS TO HELP ENSURE YOUR VOTE IS COUNTED

- Ensure that you complete an application for your absentee ballot using the hard copy or on-line version.
- Make sure your local election official has your current mailing address.
- Sign and date all election materials.
- Fulfill your state's witness/notary requirements if required.
- Ensure that your ballot is postmarked.
- Register to vote and request your ballot in a timely manner – no later than August 15th.
- VOTE – mail your ballot no later than October 11th.

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