

Paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, engage targets during combat applications training at Range 1 on Oct. 26.



photos by Sgt. Mike Pryor/2nd BCT PAO

Training to shoot, move, communicate

by Sgt. Mike Pryor

2nd BCT PAO

The three paratroopers race for cover behind a wooden barricade and immediately begin engaging targets.

They are fast, but in control, moving rhythmically, like pistons on a strange and deadly machine.

As one pops up to fire, another drops down to switch out magazines. With every action they take, they call out to each other.

"Moving left!"
"Moving Right!"
"Loading!"

Behind every action these paratroopers take is a thought process. Each time they shoot, move and communicate, what they are really doing is thinking.

Teaching Soldiers to attain this blend of instinctive action and deliberate thinking was the goal during the Combat Applications Training Course held Oct. 23 through 27. The course

uses marksmanship as a vehicle to develop problem solving capabilities in leaders that can be applied to any task.

The five-day course was held for about 40 non-commissioned officers and junior officers from a task force headed by the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division.

In the first phase of the course, instructors worked with students to strip apart their firing techniques, breaking each action down into its most basic components. The students were then shown how to make adjustments that would increase their effectiveness on the battlefield.

Every new technique the



1st Lt. Michael Syvertsen of 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, moves from one wall to another under the covering fire of fellow paratroopers during a shoot, move, and communicate exercise at range 42 Oct. 25.

instructors demonstrated was drawn from combat experience, not from a textbook or manual.

After making a few small adjustments to his grip and positioning, Spc. William Luce of Troop B, 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, noticed

immediate results.

"I was hitting black (on the target) every time," Luce said.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the marksmanship phase was that students were constantly encouraged to make sure they understood the battle-

field justification for the techniques they were learning.

This would help them when they took the training back to their units.

"It's about training the trainer. Unless we understand it ourselves, we can't teach anyone," said Staff Sgt. Buddy Tucker of Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 325th AIR, 2nd BCT.

The next phase of the course forced the students to apply the techniques they had learned in problem

solving drills.

The drills incorporated discrimination targets, magazine changes, ammunition considerations, and movements, all designed to challenge the paratroopers' focus.

During the barricade drill, the paratroopers

were given varying loads of ammunition, which forced rapid magazine changes as they had to keep steady fire on the targets downrange.

Making sure the Soldier next to you has enough ammo to keep shooting while you reload isn't normally a consideration on a range, but it's a huge one in combat and that was the point of the exercise.

"It's a lot of thinking out of the box," said Sgt. Bryan Ellis of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 325th AIR.

"What we're learning here is what we're going to be doing (in Iraq)," said Sgt. Paul Williams, a squad leader with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 325th AIR. "We're not going to be lying down in prone in the middle of the road. We're going to have barriers, buildings, and trucks — stuff we're going to have to find cover behind and learn how to fire from that position."

"It's a thinking man's game once we're over there," he said.

Task Force Eagle wins hearts, minds of local community

by Capt. Becky Lapidow

HQ Task Force Eagle

SATARI-KHANJAKAY, Afghanistan — The concept of "winning the hearts and minds" is so often heard in the media when discussing the War on Terrorism that it has almost become meaningless.

Winning the hearts and minds overseas can be especially tough in a country such as Afghanistan where decades of armed conflict have made the rural population leery of armed Soldiers bearing gifts.

Despite this challenge, elements from the Afghan National Army, Headquarters Company, Task Force Eagle, and Company C, Task Force Eagle conducted a combined medical assistance and humanitarian assistance mission for the townspeople of Satari and Khanjakay Oct. 12. They handed out much needed supplies such as shoes, food and clothes as well as provide medical attention they needed.

Together, American and Afghan soldiers, demonstrated the meaning of winning the hearts and minds by showing the locals the benefits of supporting their Islamic Republic of Afghanistan government's efforts to bring security and stability to the



photo by Capt. Becky Lapidow/HQ Task Force Eagle

1st Lt. Roger Chen, 1st platoon leader, Company C, 37th Engineer Battalion from Fort Bragg, N.C., helps local girls carry the supplies they've just received from a humanitarian assistance mission set up between the towns of Satari and Khanjakay, Afghanistan on Oct. 12.

area of Paktika province.

The CMA and HA stationed themselves at a local school where they performed medical screenings and gave humanitarian assistance packages.

Security elements from the ANA and Co. C, led by 1st Lts. Keith Muehling, Roger Chen and 1st Sgt. Gary Montano helped set up inner and outer rings of security. The key to the missions success was to

ensure an ANA lead so that the townspeople could see the role their army played in improving their daily lives.

By working directly with the ANA, Afghan citizens such as

Abdullah Khan could see that "assistance is good, it's beneficial. The ANA and American troops are good people," Khan said.

During the medical screenings, symptoms such as burns, pink eye, diarrhea and skin infections were treated by ANA doctors and Task Force Eagle medics.

Medic Staff Sgt. Stacey Varga and her assistants Cpl. Sofia Gomez and Spc. Jennifer Kleinsnitz with the aid of two ANA medics wasted no time treating more than 50 children who came for treatment. They also assisted in supporting the medical requirements of adult women and young girls.

In a separate room, Sgt. David Yusko and Pfc. Robert Ellenwood assisted in treating adult males who needed medical attention. The medics worked non-stop to treat everyone who came for aid. As with the Afghan lead in security, it was critical to have the ANA doctors and medics present to treat patients.

Not only did the Soldiers provide assistance to the ANA doctors, the doctors also had an opportunity to learn from their American counterparts.

See **Hearts**, page 3B