

Planning and Executing Battalion Training and Certification

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL LILLARD D. EVANS

Responding to the direction and vision of the commander of the 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, Brigadier General Terence J. Hildner, the 49th Transportation Battalion developed a training and certification program for companies and smaller units deploying to Afghanistan.

With the drawdown of Operation New Dawn in Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, the Army is in the process of reshaping its structure for the future. Throughout both wars, the sustainment community has faced turbulence in the mission command of subordinate units. Over the past 10 years, sustainment battalion- and brigade-level headquarters have deployed as stand-alone elements. As a consequence, these headquarters developed unity of command both when transitioning their subordinate companies and detachments before deploying and, once deployed, after receiving their attached units.

Over the years, many sustainment battalion- and brigade-level headquarters inactivated. Consequently, the Army found that many battalion headquarters were providing mission command to larger and larger formations. My former battalion, the 49th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control), 4th Sustainment Brigade, grew from 200 to 1,300 Soldiers and provided mission command to 10 company- and detachment-level organizations. The battalion also had to create a support operations section in order to manage a massive support mission at its home station at Fort Hood, Texas.

Many of the sustainment battalions that receive additional units in response to deployments essentially become brigade-sized elements. A normal brigade staff has over 200 Soldiers with several special staff functions. Battalion staffs, by contrast, consist of 50 to 70 Soldiers depending on the type of battalion.

Furthermore, the sustainment community will absorb more force structure changes in the future with the inactivation of many more battalion-sized headquarters. In many cases, the remaining battalion headquarters do not have the requisite knowledge to train many of the subordinate units that they will inherit. As a movement control battalion, we were faced with that proposition.

We succeeded primarily because of a strong training and certification program of units deploying or preparing to deploy.

Brigadier General Hildner's Leadership

With a clear understanding of the turbulent environment, the late Brigadier General Terence J. Hildner set a vision for the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) upon his arrival at Fort Hood in August 2010. [Brigadier General Hildner died of natural causes while on duty with the command in Afghanistan.] His vision was to train and then certify the training of each unit assigned to the sustainment command. This included units preparing for deployment as well as units conducting local training events.

Brigadier General Hildner also focused on subordinate battalions receiving culminating training events, such as training at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, or the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. If those training events were not compatible with a battalion headquarters' training objectives, he ensured that the battalion would participate in a Unified Endeavor exercise or a command post exercise-sustainment. Most importantly, he required subordinate battalions to develop training events to certify units below the company level, such as platoons, detachments, and teams.

Brigadier General Hildner applied his experience at the Army Combined Arms Support Command and the Army Training and Doctrine Command to developing the training and certification program. His vision and passion were obvious.

Certifying Training Events

To execute Brigadier General Hildner's guidance and intent, the 49th Transportation Battalion developed certifying training events for movement control teams

(MCTs), finance detachments, and casualty liaison teams (CLTs) using situational training exercise lanes. We conducted alert training events to prepare the battalion and two subordinate units for the command and control chemical-biological-radiological-nuclear response element and global response force missions.

We also were notified that our petroleum company would deploy to conduct a convoy escort mission in Afghanistan. So we developed and executed a battalion gunnery program, much like a maneuver battalion, in order to certify 24 convoy escort teams (CETs) according to Training Circular 4-11.46, Convoy Protection Platform Gunnery, tables I through IX.

The battalion created an MCT Academy to train MCTs on their technical skills. We also focused on training the MCTs on active web-based systems to assist in movement management and control. Finally, we developed a situational training exercise that was held at the end of the 2-week instruction period to test the Soldiers' skills. (See a related article, "The Training of Movement Control Teams," in the March-April 2012 issue of *Army Sustainment*.)

After an Army Audit Agency audit of the financial management support company, Brigadier General Hildner directed the battalion to train and certify finance detachments locally before the detachments executed their longstanding finance community Diamond Saber exercise. We trained and certified the finance detachments on customer vendor services and disbursing through a weeklong situational training lane.

With the upcoming deployment of two to four four-

man CLTs, we created and conducted a CLT situational training exercise lane in order to certify each team on its core operations before it deployed in support of a level III medical training facility.

The following five articles provide more insight and details on each training event and the certification process. Each unit, along with the 49th Transportation Battalion staff, planned and coordinated for many months to ensure that the training and certification process could be a stand-alone training event if no other training was available.

With clear vision, guidance, and intent provided by Brigadier General Hildner, the 49th Transportation Battalion was able to plan, create, and develop training events to ensure the success of our companies, platoons, detachment, and teams.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL LILLARD D. EVANS WAS FORMERLY THE COMMANDER OF THE 49TH TRANSPORTATION BATTALION (MOVEMENT CONTROL) AT FORT HOOD, TEXAS. HE IS CURRENTLY ASSIGNED TO THE JOINT STAFF, J-4, DISTRIBUTION DIVISION. HE HOLDS A B.S. DEGREE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING FROM SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY AND AN M.S. DEGREE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM. HE IS A GRADUATE OF THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICER BASIC COURSE, THE COMBINED LOGISTICS OFFICERS ADVANCED COURSE, AND THE ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE.

IN MEMORIAM

BRIGADIER GENERAL TERENCE JOHN HILDNER

20 FEBRUARY 1962—3 FEBRUARY 2012

COMMANDING GENERAL

13TH SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)

19 AUGUST 2010—3 FEBRUARY 2012

DIED IN KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

