



CTC Notes



National Training Center

IED Defeat Training

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How is the National Training Center (NTC) adapting to the threats encountered by coalition forces in the Global War on Terrorism? The training center is continuously changing to meet current threats. In the past few years, NTC has evolved and now offers urban and subterranean training areas and a civilian populace on a noncontiguous battlefield with no suspension of battlefield effects.

NTC spirals in lessons learned from theater, feedback from combatant commanders, and observations from the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Task Force—to name just a few—to develop relevant, threaded rotational scenarios and events. Each rotation is 14 days of continuous operations against a free-thinking and adaptive enemy. This enemy employs current enemy tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), and each rotation is given a role in which it acts and responds accordingly.

One of the most prevalent and deadly threats on today's battlefield is IEDs. They are replicated at NTC by a variety of means, and NTC provides great opportunities for full-spectrum, multiechelon training to defeat them. From the sensor in the observation post and squad on the ground, to the battalion and brigade battle staffs and their commanders, defeating IEDs requires an integrated approach across the breadth of the organization.

The following paragraphs briefly highlight some of the many initiatives and training opportunities that NTC offers rotational units to assist and train them in IED defeat at NTC.

IED Training Aids

The Opposing Force (OPFOR) at NTC attempts to replicate current enemy TTP in the manufacture and emplacement of IEDs. The OPFOR has the capability to initiate IEDs by either hardware or by remote control. IEDs are divided into two main subcategories—detonating and nondetonating.

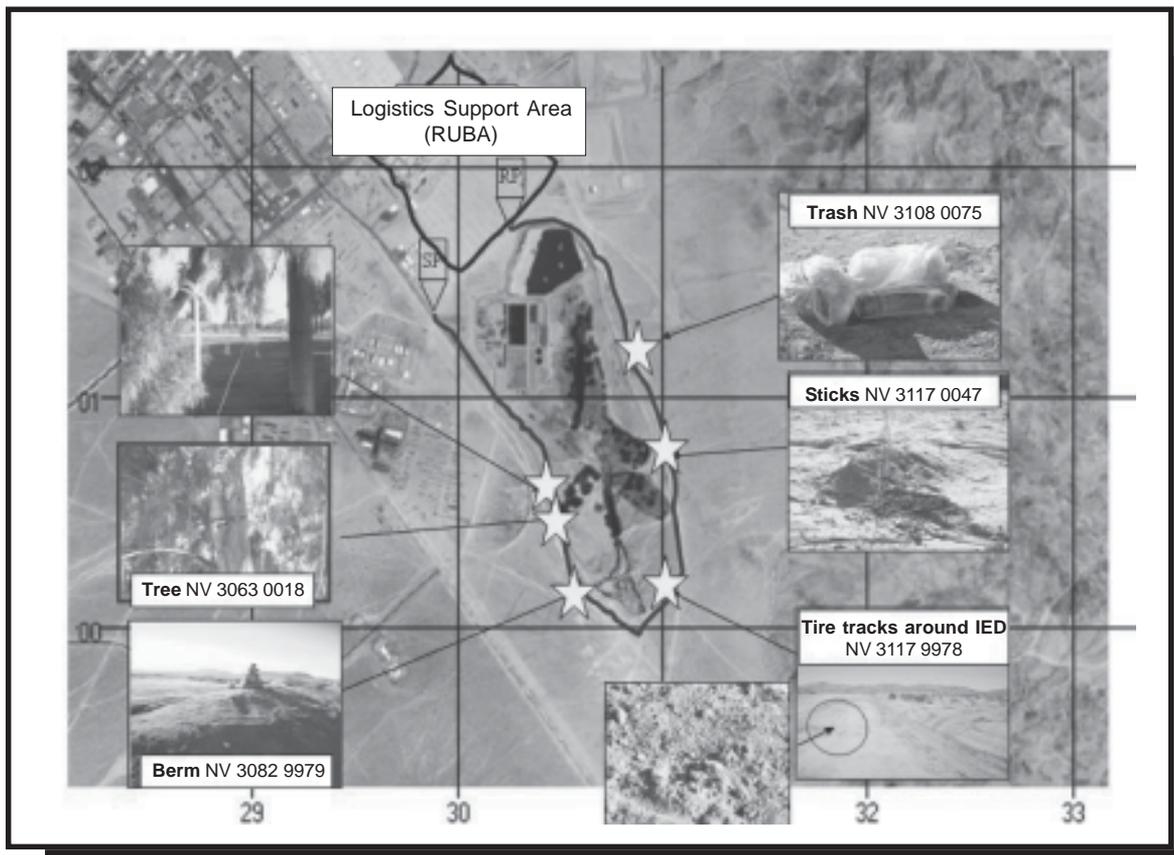
- *Detonating IEDs* are simply constructed and designed to test the unit's battle drills, reporting procedures, and casualty evacuation and vehicle recovery operations.
- *Nondetonating IEDs* are more complex and have all the components of an actual IED. They are designed to provide a more realistic and sophisticated device to train render-safe procedures to EOD technicians, and to better replicate visually what is found in theater. During each rotation, EOD personnel have the opportunity to use all their tools, including live demolitions, to neutralize explosive hazards.

Vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) are also replicated on the NTC battlefield. They consist of a vehicle, a smoke signature (such as a smoke generator or smoke pots), and an artillery simulator. Units have the opportunity to interdict, destroy, or react to the blast. Once a VBIED is detonated, postblast analysis or evidence collection may be conducted to determine the components and other characteristics that may be tied to an intelligence thread.

IED Indicators Lane

NTC offers an IED indicators lane that a unit is able to negotiate beginning on reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) Day 1. This lane is set up by observer-controllers using indicators seen in theater. The lane is approximately 3 miles long and contains five to eight IEDs. It is designed to show participants signs that might indicate an IED along the route.

The brigade is issued a sample order and an answer key that shows the indicator and location of each IED along the route. The unit executes the lane at its discretion. The lessons learned from this lane are taken and used throughout the rotation. Units that take advantage of this opportunity show a greater likelihood of detecting IEDs and taking appropriate action before they detonate.



IED Indicators Lane at NTC

Route Reconnaissance/Combat Patrol Force-on-Force and Live-Fire Lanes

There are two specific training events in which rotational units are guaranteed an opportunity to react to an IED: the combat patrol force-on-force lane and the combat patrol live-fire lane. During each of these lanes, the combat patrol encounters a myriad of events requiring actions and decisions, including enemy contact and react to an IED. The element can put to use its IED detection skills from the indicators lane, as well as exercise its IED battle drills, casualty evacuation, and reporting procedures.

During the live-fire lane, units conduct similar tasks, but do so using live rounds. This trains and stresses to the unit the importance of, among other things, direct-fire planning, fire control and distribution, muzzle awareness, and risk management.

For engineers, these lanes are an opportunity to conduct IED-focused route reconnaissance. They are able to hone their unique skills and tools because the lanes are specifically designed to increase repetitions and provide a higher density of IEDs for the engineer element to encounter.

Free Play/Mission Rehearsal Exercise

During each rotation, the unit's tactical operations center (TOC) is provided with detailed intelligence and data of past

enemy activity to allow them to develop patterns to predict future enemy activity. Before a unit's 14-day training rotation, the staff is given information on enemy activity with respect to—among other things—IEDs. As the rotation plays out, units will further develop enemy patterns, allowing the unit to predict future OPFOR IED placement methods and locations and prevent these placements by either interdicting the construction, setup, or initiation of the IED.

New Equipment

Recently, NTC acquired the MATILDA I robot that units can draw and employ during their rotation. They can request to have classes taught during RSOI on its operation, capabilities, and limitations. This device will then be available for issue to rotational units.

The MATILDA's primary use is for reconnaissance, and it can be employed in urban environments or on route reconnaissance when identifying possible IEDs. The color and black-and-white cameras allow for remote-control use, increasing standoff and allowing for quick identification of objects. The manipulator arm allows the operator to move objects, and the attached zoom camera allows for even more standoff when identifying suspected explosive devices.

NTC also offers rotational units the opportunity to improve force protection and project planning using HESCO® bastions,

New Jersey barriers, Class IV supplies, and other materials that are available to units in theater.

EOD Integration

Typically, the rotational brigade is augmented by one explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) company. This usually translates to a headquarters/operations section and one to two EOD teams, each consisting of two to three EOD technicians. While the EOD team is given an opportunity to train its military occupational specialty (MOS)-specific skills with respect to IEDs on the battlefield, the brigade hones its ability to integrate this critical combat multiplier into its formation. Since this may be the first time the brigade has worked with EOD personnel, perhaps one of the most difficult lessons learned is the need to provide dedicated security for the EOD team(s). NTC attempts to show cause and effect so the hard lessons are learned before arriving in theater.

Another unique opportunity at NTC is live demolitions for all EOD operations. While EOD renders safe or neutralizes explosive hazards throughout the brigade's area of operation, the brigade is trained on all the coordination, management, and procedures required to perform live demolitions in its maneuver space.

IED Defeat Seminar

NTC—along with the Army Engineer Association—will host an IED Defeat Seminar at Fort Irwin from 13 to 17 June 2005. There will be briefings, guest speakers, vendors, live demonstrations, and breakout sessions—all focused on defeating IEDs. NTC will showcase some of the tools and training that rotational units receive when deployed to the training center. The POC for this event is Captain Railsback at <sw12@irwin.army.mil>.



Captains Liffing, Railsback, and Louvet are currently serving as engineer company trainers at the National Training Center. All three are former engineer company commanders, are advanced course graduates, and have led combat engineer units during deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom. For further information, contact them via email at—

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