

# **304th Military Police Battalion Undergoes Convoy Training in Atlanta: Nashville Reserve Unit Gets Practical IED Training at Fort Gillem Reactionary Course**

*By Sergeant Ryan C. Matson*

Atlanta, Georgia, may be a long way from Iraq, but Army Reserve Soldiers of the 304th Military Police Battalion recently conducted convoy training near Atlanta to help them prepare for possible deployments to places like the Middle East.

About 100 Soldiers from the battalion trained on the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Reactionary Course at Fort Gillem, Georgia, 15–17 November 2007. The course, which winds around a 6.2-mile stretch of Fort Gillem, contains various scenarios and dangers to which Soldiers must react as they negotiate it in a convoy of high-mobility, multipurpose, wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs).

According to the officer in charge of the reactionary course, the main objective of the course is to provide realistic training on the threat of IEDs in Iraq and on methods used in reacting to that threat. “The course pretty much covers the forty warrior tasks that Soldiers need to know for convoy operations,” she said. “We focus on these collective tasks and provide realistic and practical training on convoy operations.”

Members of a 304th advance party arrived at Fort Gillem on 14 November to pull and stage the HMMWVs that would be used for the course. The main body of the unit then arrived and drew their equipment.

The training began with three to four hours of classroom instruction where the Soldiers learned about the proper use of escalation of force, employment of gun trucks, actions at a convoy reorganization site, execution of motor movements, conduct of a convoy brief, and troop-leading procedures for a convoy. The unit was then divided into three separate platoons that trained on three vital battle drills—procedures for rolled-over vehicles and downed drivers, aid litter and tactical care, and IED countering.

On 17 November, the 304th completed three convoy runs through the reactionary course. The convoy commanders led the Soldiers through a simulated mission to deliver humanitarian supplies to Iraqi nationals. During the training, the 304th encountered hostile villagers who were angry about the fact that an Iraqi child had been injured during a previous mission. The Soldiers were also faced with a variety of other challenges along the way, including a sniper and a simulated IED explosion.

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who served as convoy and assistant convoy commanders indicated that the training was beneficial for the unit. “We learned how important the communication and prior planning [are] to running



Photograph by Specialist Josh Risner

**Soldiers from the 304th Military Police Battalion form a line of staged HMMWVs as they prepare to negotiate the IED Reactionary Course.**

a convoy. You have to have all of your ducks in a row before you head out,” said one of the NCOs.

Many of the young Soldiers agreed that the training was valuable. “I learned quite a bit from the training because this was the first time I had done this type of mission,” said a supply specialist from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 304th Military Police Battalion. Another Soldier indicated that the training provided her with several lessons that she may be able to use in the future.

According to the NCOs, the Soldiers performed their training well. “I think, considering that you have several Soldiers who are support Soldiers and some who are MPs [military police], that it actually helps us in the long run,” one of them said. “We gain experience from everybody. Once we get the cohesion going on, we’ve got a pretty good unit.”



Photograph by Specialist Josh Risner

**Soldiers from the 304th Military Police Battalion perform security functions around a HMMWV during the IED Reactionary Course.**

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