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MOBILIZATION OF 2ND MEDIUM TANK BATTALION 20TH ARMOR

MAINE NATIONAL GUARD

Lieutenant Leroy L. Stilphen, Jr.

AOC-2

## MOBILIZATION OF 2ND MEDIUM TANK BATTALION 20TH ARMOR

### MAINE NATIONAL GUARD

During the Berlin crisis, a great many National Guard and Army Reserve units were called to active duty. Most of these units had problems of some sort. You cannot expect Reserve or Guard units to convert from civilians to full time soldiers overnight. Most of the units that had difficulties overcame them after a short period of time. This article deals with one such unit.

#### ALERT PHASE

The 2-week training period from 1 September to 15 September 1961 started out uneventfully for the 133d Armored Group, Maine National Guard. The three tank battalions and supporting elements arrived at Camp Drum, New York on 2 September and proceeded to go into bivouac.

On 5 September the 133d Armored Group was placed on alert by Department of the Army. The situation in Berlin had materialized to the point where President Kennedy had decided to show the Communist Block of Nations that the United States would not back down to anyone. Certain National Guard and Army Reserve units were being placed on standby alert pending mobilization.

The remaining time at summer camp passed without incident and the Maine National Guard returned to home station on 15 September 1961.

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THE MOBILIZATION PHASE

Approximately two weeks later, on 28 September, the commanding officer of the 2d Medium Tank Battalion called his company commanders together and informed them that they had been mobilized. The company commanders informed their personnel about the mobilization.

A few key personnel in each unit were to enter active duty on 1 October. These were the company commander, 1st sergeant, supply sergeant, motor sergeant, and the company clerk. The remainder of the personnel in each unit were to report to their respective armories on 15 October. The next 11 days were spent taking physicals, packing all of the unit's equipment and rail-loading the wheel vehicles of the battalion. The necessary paper work was completed and the battalion was ready to go.

REPORTING TO ACTIVE DUTY STATION

On the 27th of October, the 2d Battalion left home station for Fort Campbell, Kentucky, the home of the 101st Airborne Division. When the battalion landed at Campbell Army Airfield our advance detachment was on hand to show us to our billet area. Various personnel from post headquarters were on hand to show us around the post.

Our wheeled vehicles arrived and we also received our tanks from

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Fort Knox. After unloading the vehicles, the separate companies went into maintenance, preliminary gunners' exams and subcaliber firing. Fort Campbell did not have the facilities for the battalion to fire the main gun so the battalion went to Fort Stewart, Georgia, for ~~our~~ service firing and ~~our~~ ATT's.

SERVICE FIRING AND ATT'S

On the 23d of November, an advance detachment left by convoy to proceed to Fort Stewart, Georgia. The commanding officer had informed the battalion that we were to be training under the Intensified Combat Training Program or ICTP as it is commonly called. Here, the battalion was to complete service firing and then go into platoon, company, and battalion ATT's within a 2-month period. The battalion was eager to prove that a National Guard outfit could score as high as an Active Army outfit.

The main body arrived at Fort Stewart on 1 December and promptly went into bivouac at Camp Oliver. This was a tent city about 20 miles from the main post.

We fired tables IV through VIII B and on tables VIII A and VIII B qualified 78 percent of the battalion. After firing our service tables the battalion started ATT's. The competition was

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been during platoon tests and each company tried its best to have the honor platoon. The scores ranged from the very high 70's to the low 90's.

During the company ATT each company had a platoon of airborne infantry from the 101st attached. These personnel were very efficient and greatly enhanced our problem.

The 2d Medium Tank Battalion, 123d Armor, Kentucky National Guard, another outfit called up, acted as our Aggressor. In turn, we were their Aggressors.

The battalion ATT was a 72-hour problem and we encountered a few drawbacks. The biggest of these was communication. The equipment that we had drawn was old and it took a magnificent effort on the part of the communication personnel to keep it working. It rained continuously the entire length of the problem, and the communication got worse and worse.

Two major factors in our successful completion were the enthusiastic response by the companies and the long hours put in by the battalion communications platoon.

RETURN TO HOME STATION

After completing the ATT's, the battalion was airlifted from Hunter Air Force Base in Savannah, Georgia, to Fort Campbell. The

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personnel of the battalion got a chance to see our wheeled vehicles airloaded. The Air Force crews were very efficient and very helpful in our airloading problems. The Air Force personnel spent three days showing us how to use the various tie-down devices.

The next few months were spent in supporting various elements of the 101st Airborne Division in their field problems. The battalion certainly learned a lot about Airforce operations and I am sure that the airborne personnel learned to respect our tanks a lot more than they had before.

Some of the battalion officers had a chance to evaluate the 101st in their APT's and they gained quite a bit of knowledge on the armor-airborne link-up.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

There were some problems that the battalion had not counted on. We did not know at the time that Fort Campbell did not have adequate facilities for an armored battalion. We had no facilities to fire service ammo; therefore, we had to transport the battalion over 600 miles to fire and run our APT's.

Another problem was that there was no armor whatsoever on Fort Campbell. We had to draw our armor from Fort Knox. We did not receive full TO&E allowances; therefore, we had to combine companies

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when we supported the airborne. It was practically impossible to requisition parts for our tanks.

On our initial call-up, the battalion had had no training on rail-loading. This made the actual rail-loading twice as long and twice as hard. Periodical classes on rail-loading would ensure that on call-ups, personnel would be familiar with rail-loading.

Having up-to-date medical history forms all made up would help during the initial rush.

ADVANTAGES OF ACTIVE DUTY

There were a great many advantages of our tour of active duty. One of these was that the battalion had a chance to get all of its junior officers through Armor Officer Basic at the Armor School. After we returned for Fort Stewart, the company commanders and some of the staff officers went to the Associate Course, thereby giving the battalion 100 percent officers who were school trained.

Another advantage was the opportunity to have a majority of our junior officers serve as company commanders on active duty. This gave them valuable experience which will remain with them quite a while.

Our mechanics and cooks had the opportunity to attend various service schools which greatly enhanced the overall operating

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capability of the battalion.

The amount of training both in the field and in the various service schools was an immeasurable help and advantage to the battalion. Each individual departed from active duty with the feeling that the battalion had accomplished its mission far beyond the most favorable estimate made by any of the battalion personnel. The battalion had again proved that you could take reserve troops and send them through stepped up training and be able to implement them into Regular Army units.

As I am writing this article, I read in the papers that they intend to unite the National Guard and Army Reserve. This, I believe is an excellent idea because it will place all of the Nation's reserve forces in the same category as far as training goes. This plan will tend to better the Guard, the Reserve, and most of all the Regular Army, in that the united power of all three makes the United States Army an unbeatable team dedicated to the freedom of the world and to America.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Lieutenant Leroy L. Stilphen, Jr., 02303509, was commissioned in June 1960 from Maine Military Academy, Augusta, Maine. He graduated from Armor Officer Basic Course, in December 1960. He was called into Federal service in September 1961 during the Berlin crisis and was released on 27 September 1962. He returned to state control with the National Guard of Maine. In 1964 he was voluntarily ordered to active duty to attend Associate Armor Officer Career Class No. 2. He is currently waiting for his acceptance on extended active duty.

ORIENTATION ON WRITING PROJECTS

Appendix 2 to Annex A to Supplemental Material

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

US ARMY ARMOR SCHOOL  
Fort Knox, Kentucky

AIBKAS-GS

Date 15 JAN 64

SUBJECT: Submission of "Article for Publication"

TO: Director, General Subjects Department  
ATTN: Effective Writing Instructor  
US Army Armor School  
Fort Knox, Kentucky

1. In accordance with paragraph 1, annex A to supplemental material, "Orientation on Writing Projects," enclosed is my article for publication.
2. In the preparation of my article, I have followed requirements as outlined in the afore-referenced annex A. Further, I have included a bibliography of all sources that I ~~used~~ in the preparation of my article.
3. My article is submitted to you as a complete article.

Leroy L. Stelphen Jr.  
(Signature)

LERoy L. STILPHEN JR  
(Typed Full Name)

1/LT ARMOR  
(Rank) (Branch)

A/AOC#2  
(Class)

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