



MAJ. DEANNA BAGUE

Sgt. Sylvester Price, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Brigade, Army Evaluation Task Force, 1st Armored Division, sets up the battle command common system.

(Right) Members of the 5th Brigade, Army Evaluation Task Force, 1st Armored Division, operate current force technology systems during a simulated scenario in their tactical operations center.



PHOTOS BY MAJ. DEANNA BAGUE

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Fort Bliss Public Affairs

The 5th Brigade, Army Evaluation Task Force, 1st Armored Division, stood up a tactical operation center Aug. 1 to test their communication network in a tactical environment. AETF personnel stood up the TOC and became fully operational within 48 hours.

The task force, which is part of the Future Force Integration Directorate, is designed to test, refine and validate Future Combat Systems technologies, said Sgt. Maj. Cornelius Barlow, Brigade Plans, FFID.

Military officials define FCS as the Army's modernization program consisting of manned and unmanned networked systems and sensors that will provide leaders and Soldiers on the ground accurate and real-time information through the use of leading-edge technologies and capabilities allowing them dominance in complex environments.

"Our mission, ultimately, is to increase the survivability of our warriors in Afghanistan and Iraq by employing equipment, brigade combat teams and the AETF," said Barlow. "All this will be employed with Spin Outs ... Spin Out 1 should be starting pretty soon."

The task force will insert certain systems and technologies to test and evaluate over the next eight years, said David Hampton, Future Force Integration Directorate, Fort Bliss. The insertion of these technologies, termed "Spin Outs," will occur three times within the eight-year course, he said. The AETF is expected to receive the first future force technology Spin Out in fiscal 2008. Spin Out 1 technology includes the Non-Line of Sight Launch System, Tactical and Urban Unmanned Ground Sensors, said Hampton.

During the TOC exercise, the task force's personnel completed a sequence of training on the equipment and systems that comprised the network inside the TOC. These systems include the maneuver control system, command post of the future, all source analysis system, advanced field artillery tactical data system and several others, said Maj. David Hayes, communications officer, Headquarters Battalion, AETF, 5-1 AD.

This exercise allowed everyone to fully understand the capabilities of

5-1 AETF goes TACTICAL with integrated network



2ND LT. JOSEPH PENNELLA

The Secure Mobile Anti-Jam Reliable Tactical-Terminal is set up on a humvee outside the tactical operations center.



2ND LT. JOSEPH PENNELLA

The Secure Mobile Anti-Jam Reliable Tactical-Terminal is set up to provide secure connectivity during a tactical operations center exercise at Fort Bliss.



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Sgt. Thomas Elliot, left, and Sgt. Sylvester Price both of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Brigade, Army Evaluation Task Force, 1st Armored Division, review information on the battle command common system.

their systems, said Hayes. These systems can integrate with other systems to pull everything together to provide information to the commander at the right time and in the right sequence for the commander to make a decision, he said.

"Folks are really excited because they can finally put their hands on this and start to understand how it all works together," said Hayes.

The brigade has grown from just 30 Soldiers to nearly 1,000 in nine months. This is the first time members of AETF have had the opportunity to put all the systems together and use communication equipment to link all the systems together to pass the data, said Hayes.

"We receive information, process it, evaluate it, generate orders or responses based on that information, and conduct the execution of those missions," said Hayes.

The simulated scenario presented to the Soldiers in the TOC was a familiar one, based on real war occurrences. All simulated places and events were representative of the theater of operations where real fighting happens on a daily basis. The events posed in the scenario required Soldiers to use different systems in the communications network. The entire network was distributed to and from a number of locations, said Lt. Col. Brian Cook, Bde. Operations Officer, 5-1 AD.

The TOC exercise provided staff sections the opportunity to master their equipment to achieve interoperability between their systems, said Cook. This is the foundation for the next node of larger equipment testing.