

Plains GUARDIAN

Volume 39, No. 1

Serving The Kansas Army and Air National Guard, Topeka, Kansas

December '93

35th MP Company battles Lansing SCAT Team

By Sgt. Debby Maschke

LEAVENWORTH, Kansas — Squad Leader Sgt. Chris Tharp, Lawrence, planned the joint training exercise between the 35th Military Police Company (-) and Lansing State Penitentiaries Special Control and Tactics Team (SCAT) with two goals in mind. He achieved both of them.

"My first goal has already been achieved — to get the unit out of the armory and train," said Tharp, squad leader of the 35th MP Company and SCAT team member.

Tharp's second goal was to give the SCAT team a better understanding of the National Guard, as they train on urban assaults and tactical

situations.

This training is skills that the 35th MP Company may be called upon to utilize in situations like the riots in Los Angeles and Somalia, Tharp said.

The urban training was set up by using a scenario placing the Guard in an offensive position against a dissi-

dent group planning to overthrow the government.

"We (SCAT Team) are a dissident group, financing operations by a series of robberies," said Capt. David Jesmore, SCAT Team commander.

"We have raided a National Guard armory, stolen all the military weapons, and are holed up in an abandoned farm house waiting for another dissident group.

The scenario would continue until the referees had concluded all MILES gear had sounded, "Or until all the guard members get killed or they kill the SCAT team and then we win," Tharp said.

Each team received a general briefing prior to the exercise. They were told who the enemy would be. They would be broken into three teams to each make an assault on the SCAT team.

The briefing did not include any background on what to expect from the enemy or the scenario to come. "They did not tell us anything about the way the SCAT Team trains, they say they are high speed and low drag and they really get into it," said Spec. Ardis Miller, Lawrence.

Despite rumors of the SCAT team's abilities, many members of the 35th MP Company were confident they would win.

"Their mission is to take care of prisoners, so we have a feeling that with them in a defensive position, they might be at a disadvantage because we are being offensive to secure the area," said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Markel, Olathe, 35th MP Company (-).

But members of the SCAT team were just as confident about their abilities. They train together in exercises at least once a month and have to pass the same physical fitness test as Guard members.

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"The abandoned farm house was a broken down two story brick building, in a vegetated area in Leavenworth, once used as a work farm by the Department of Corrections.

The plan was for about 17 SCAT team members, as dissidents, to protect the perimeter and building as about 20 Guard members attempted to overtake them.

To accomplish their mission, participants had available a protective mask, smoke grenades, CS grenades, an M16 rifle, blank ammunition, and MILES gear.



Sgt. Chris Tharp, Lawrence, assists Pfc. Everett Dannar, Overbrook, in zeroing his rifle on the MILES system in preparation for battle between the 35th Military Police Company (-) and Lansing Correctional Facility SCAT Team. (Photo by Sgt. Debby Maschke)



Pfc. Richard Scrivo, 35th Military Police Company (-) applies cammo paint before fending off aggressors. (Photo by Sgt. Debby Maschke)

MPs battle Lansing SCAT team

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"Our idea is to take as many of them as we can," said Officer Colin Nelson, SCAT Team first sergeant.

After participants cammied up and were trained, fitted, briefed and tested their MILES equipment the scenario began.

One at a time, each team was briefed on the scenario, formulated plans, and began moving through the tall grass on their way to the brick building just beyond the tree line.

But despite their efforts, for all three Guard teams the ending was the same.

As some had anticipated, the SCAT team prevailed. "I anticipated that we are going to assault the building and they are going to be dug in and we are going to get shot up the first time," Miller said.

Even though they were defeated, Guard members enjoyed the exercise if even only for a few minutes. "Just for a moment, and then I looked up in the windows and saw five guns," said Sgt. Mark Robinson, Leavenworth.

Both Guard and SCAT team members found the scenario to be an asset to their training. "I think this is beneficial because it improves the surviv-

ability of soldiers," Miller said. "We are not always going to be in the rear doing MRE's, MSR's (main supply routes) or doing OP's (observation points). We are going to be out there and have to know how to react."

This feeling was echoed by the SCAT team members. "Every little bit of training helps; you can never get enough training," said Nelson.

The scenario outcome will be evaluated by both teams. "They will be evaluated by each individual leading the section, each squad by its squad leader," said 1st Lt. Bryan Wise, Emporia. "We will critique it basically as a team," Jesmore said.



Cpl. Robert Culbertson, a SCAT Team member from Easton, Kan., camouflaged along the tree line waited for aggressors to attack his position. (Photo by Sgt. Debby Maschke)