



200th RED HORSE 2015 Field Training Exercise (FTX)

The 200th RED HORSE Squadron (RHS) accomplished many training requirements during the Field Training Exercise (FTX) May 15th-18th, 2015. The FTX simulates being deployed in a hostile environment while completing various mission requirements and providing defense from enemy actions. The FTX ensures unit readiness through several forms of training accomplished within the three day Unit Training Assembly (UTA). This year, the FTX was hosted at the 200th RED HORSE Det 1 in Mansfield, Ohio. Det 1's 26 acre training site provides realistic operating grounds for various scenarios and a designated area for field housing. Det. 1 and Camp Perry alternate hosting this training event annually.



This year's FTX involved 256 RED HORSE members, eight Wing Inspection Team (WIT) members, five Opposition Force (OPFOR) members, and ten general support members. In total, 279 RED HORSE personnel were fully trained on the contingency skills and field training requirements. The field exercise takes place in a bare base environment and includes overnight field training consisting of a minimum of 36 continuous hours. The scenario for this year's exercise was based around a mock deployment to Niamey, Niger. The mission was to arrive in theater, establish a working basecamp, and improve the existing airfield. The main threat that existed in this region of Africa is from a local terrorist group known as Boko Haram. Due to this terror group's efforts at destabilizing the region, security measures had to be implemented immediately upon arrival to the area. Before beginning the exercise, all of the playing members retrieved their individual protection equipment, chemical protection gear, and weapons. After all personnel had their equipment they headed out to *deploy*. With the first objective of everyone arriving at their main area of responsibility completed the FTX went live with many new tasks needing immediate attention.



The second objective of the FTX was to establish a working basecamp. The first and most critical step in establishing a basecamp is implementing proper Command and Control (C2) to manage the progress of the many tasks that need to be accomplished. The C2 element was the responsibility of the Tactical Operations Command (TOC). Once established, the TOC distributed work orders to multiple sections each responsible for a piece of the overall objective. These orders included manning ten separate Defensive Fighting Positions

(DFPs) along with two mobile patrol elements, constructing eight Small Shelter System tents, setting up the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU), installing a field shower and shave package, implementing a power production plan for the camp through the use of various sizes of generators, and deploying heavy operating equipment to the airfield. Setting up a camp capable of housing and supporting 250 personnel is complicated and chaotic but due to the hard work, expert knowledge and skills of RED HORSE personnel, objective two was successfully completed as was the first day of training.



On the second day of the exercise several missions were ordered so that the many different career-fields were given opportunities to implement and train on their unique skills. In addition to all of these tasks being accomplished the OPFOR team armed with M4s, smoke grenades, and ground burst simulators, continually engaged our airmen in various ways to test their abilities to react and combat hostile engagements. Two separate convoy missions comprised of four M-series vehicles and 20 personnel each were dispatched to forward operating areas where our engineering assistants were engaged in performing a site

surveys for potential worksites. The structures troops were busy installing revetments which are defensive structures used to *harden* shelters against certain types of hazards. The airfields shop was also actively engaged training its' members on semi-tractor and heavy equipment operation, expedient airfield crater repair, and footer construction.

The most challenging inject used for this FTX occurred with the OPFOR team coordinating an attack on the airfield using mortars which carried a risk of chemical warfare agents. This required a base wide response for all personnel to immediately take shelter and don their chemical protection gear. Following the mortar attack the TOC ordered a phased response to search the base for signs of damage, casualties, chemical contamination, and any unexploded ordinance. The Airfield Damage Assessment Team (ADAT) was also activated to perform a survey of the airfield and begin operations to restore the runway to an operable condition.





A tremendous number of tasks and challenges were presented to airmen, non-commissioned officers, and officers alike, and in a manner commensurate to the RED HORSE motto, *Lead, Follow, or get the Hell Out of the Way!*, all members rose to the occasion and performed their tasks quickly, thoroughly, and professionally. Being part of the RED HORSE means being ready at a moment's notice to be able to go and take part in whatever mission is asked of us. The FTX is one small aspect of the type of training we conduct continually in order to maintain our skills to be a rapidly deployable expeditionary engineer force.



(The 200th RED HORSE Squadron, Ohio Air National Guard, is based out of Camp Perry and Mansfield Ohio, pictures by TSgt Joe Harwood, story by SrA Cory Bishop and SrA Joseph Hall)