



Lt. Col. Paul Ramsey, deputy commander, 4th Cavalry Brigade, Fort Knox, Ky., and Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Fagan, 4th Cavalry Brigade senior enlisted advisor, discuss strategies and future plans during a command post exercise, or CPX, for the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, a National Guard unit out of Vermont. The CPX was one of several training events the 86th will complete over a two-week period to enhance their readiness. (photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Crofoot)

Trainers, Mentors Ensure Reserve-Component Readiness

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First Army Division East trainers/mentors play an integral role in ensuring Reserve Component units maintain a high degree of readiness. Recently when members of the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, a National Guard unit, conducted a command post exercise at Fort Drum, N.Y., Soldiers from 4th Cavalry Brigade, First Army Division East, were standing ready as trainers/mentors and subject matter experts.

“They mentored and evaluated us on everything from start to finish,” explained 1st Sgt. Thomas Graves, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, or IBCT. “They give us ideas on what we need to do to move forward. They truly have the mentorship role, teaching us how to get over hurdles that maybe other Guard units still struggle with.”

With a geographically dispersed brigade such as the 86th IBCT — headquartered in Vermont and composed of Soldiers from five different states — Graves said the trainers/mentors from 4th Cavalry Brigade were essential to success of the command post exercise, known as a CPX.

“They have a lot of experience there,” he concluded. “As trainers, they are very much in tune with doctrine and Department of the Army policies. First Army is using their background to teach us many best practices in various areas, like equipment, strategy, techniques, tactics and procedures, and even communication.”

As the mission in Afghanistan winds down, training to maintain the operational reserve’s high level of readiness becomes essential in ensuring national security decision makers have a trained and ready force to respond to unforeseen contingencies. This CPX is the first of several training exercises the 86th IBCT will complete over a two-week period, explained Lt. Col. Paul Ramsey, deputy commander, 4th Cavalry Brigade, Fort Knox, Ky.

“They’ve come together for their two weeks of annual training to conduct a series of events in order to prepare them to go to the [Joint Readiness Training Center],” said Ramsey. “The overriding event is the platoon situational training lane exercises that will validate their platoon.”

The CPX, Ramsey explained, focuses primarily on the

brigade staff. Col. John Boyd, 86th IBCT commander, echoed the importance of validating his staff.

“From my perspective it allows us to exercise the staff, to train the staff, and then to pull each of those war fighting functions together, synchronize them and get those

staff officers to understand why their piece of the puzzle is so important and how all of those pieces coming together are what makes that brigade that much more lethal on the battlefield,” Boyd said.

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