



Soldiers from Delta Company, 341<sup>st</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion, conduct low-level voice interception during the field training exercise Panther Strike Lite on February 8, 2020, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. Panther Strike Lite was a battalion-level exercise featuring human intelligence, signals intelligence, and counterintelligence in preparation for Panther Strike, a 300<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Brigade exercise at Camp Williams, UT.

## Army National Guard Military Intelligence Training Exercises

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by Major Christopher Mision

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### Introduction

Over the last decade, the Army National Guard (ARNG) military intelligence (MI) enterprise has developed a number of annual collective training exercises to support the evolving needs of the ARNG's intelligence warfighting function throughout the 5-year sustainable readiness cycle. These events have focused on three areas: the brigade combat team (BCT), the expeditionary-military intelligence brigade (E-MIB), and the 300<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Brigade (MIB) (linguist). This article describes exercises Cyclone Fury, Talon Strike, and Panther Strike, which support the three focus areas.

### Cyclone Fury

Cyclone Fury is a tailorable collective training exercise designed to assist ARNG BCT commanders with the certification of the BCT's intelligence warfighting function in Prepare [year] 3. The exercise leverages live and constructive inputs, by way of role players and the Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Tactical Proficiency Trainer, to simulate and stimulate BCT intelligence systems and to facilitate the Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS) Tier 3 and Tier 2 certifications for crews and platforms, respectively. The Indiana Intelligence Center Foundry Platform staff designs, hosts, and facilitates the exercises, which

take place at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, located near Butlerville, Indiana. The training gives the training audiences the ability to leverage varying environments and domains to meet the units' training objectives. The initial iteration of Cyclone Fury was structured to prepare the 33<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team S-2 and Delta Company, 766<sup>th</sup> Brigade Engineer Battalion (MI company), to certify their intelligence warfighting function before participating in a Joint Readiness Training Center rotation. Another tailored Cyclone Fury exercise was conducted in November 2019 to allow the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger MI Battalion to certify their intelligence warfighting function on Tier 3 tasks and the integration of electronic warfare (EW) and cyber capabilities.

### The Army National Guard's 5-Year Sustainable Readiness Cycle<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ Prepare 1 ("year one"): Units focus on individual training such as duty military occupational specialty qualified training, weapons qualification, driver training, professional military education, Pre-Command Course, and attendance at other types of Army schools and institutions.
- ◆ Prepare 2 ("year two"): Units build upon training received in Prepare 1 by focusing on individual skill proficiency and certifications.
- ◆ Prepare 3 ("year three"): Units focus on sustaining individual skill proficiency and certifications.
- ◆ Prepare 4 ("year four"): Non-deploying select sustainment, maneuver support, and medical units will conduct a culminating exercise such as at a combat training center, a contractor technical evaluation, or a Joint Readiness Training Center training event. Apportioned units in Prepare 4 continue to train for unified land operations and would be the most likely units to be mobilized in a "surge" environment. Deploying units will prepare for a mission readiness exercise.
- ◆ Mission/Ready ("year five"): Units will maintain collective training proficiency at the level organized (e.g., detachment/company, battalion, and brigade or higher staffs).

Moving forward, the Indiana Intelligence Center will continue to hone Cyclone Fury's alignment with MITS certification and the soon-to-be-published Cyber and Electronic Warfare Training Strategy to support the future integration of cyber and EW in the BCT's MI company. Cyclone Fury's collective training team has worked in conjunction with the program management office for EW and cyber and the signals intelligence (SIGINT)/cyber/EW tabletop exercise to better align scenario development with upcoming BCT intelligence warfighting function force structure changes. Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, in its current form, stands ready to provide units with a complex and ready-to-

use training range for SIGINT, EW, and cyber integration in a multi-domain operations space that is scalable to support MITS Tiers 3 through 1 certification when integrated with Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Ongoing work between the ARNG G-2 and ARNG G-3 to incorporate MITS Tier 3 and Tier 2 certifications into Exportable Combat Training Center exercises will ensure, along with Cyclone Fury, the ARNG BCTs are trained, certified, and ready before participating in a combat training center rotation or entering a ready year.

### Talon Strike

Talon Strike is the 71<sup>st</sup> E-MIB's annual collective training exercise based in central Texas, supporting both the 636<sup>th</sup> and 250<sup>th</sup> MI Battalions and other National Guard MI units. Talon Strike targets an integrated collection-focused training scenario that feeds into analysis and exploitation elements, leading to subsequent refined or adjusted collection criteria that aim to exercise all steps of the intelligence process across all intelligence disciplines.

In 2019, Talon Strike executed single-source collection lanes at Camp Bullis near San Antonio, Texas. The exercise generated reports analyses and developed situational awareness for both the 71<sup>st</sup> E-MIB and the 58<sup>th</sup> E-MIB staffs to conduct military decision-making process training, enabling and improving readiness for the 58<sup>th</sup> E-MIB's Central Command mobilization. Additionally, geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) training executed from Camp Bullis focused on full motion video processing, exploitation, and dissemination.



Guardsmen from the Texas Army National Guard (ARNG) and California ARNG brief the Commander, 58<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary-Military Intelligence Brigade, Maryland ARNG, during a combined arms rehearsal, May 19, 2019, in San Antonio in preparation for Talon Strike 2019, a 2-week training event at Camp Bullis, TX.

Based on lessons learned and best practices rehearsed from 2019, Talon Strike 2020 targeted the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G-2's analysis and control element as the primary training audience to prepare for the Operation Spartan

Shield mobilization. Initially planned for more than 400 personnel across four different states and locations, travel restrictions and training limitations decreased Talon Strike’s audience to 52 personnel, largely populated from the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G-2. Exercise Comanche, a real-world scenario specifically tailored to the Central Command area of responsibility, brought an improved level of quality to training and directly led to increased readiness levels for analysts set for deployment to the Middle East.

In future years, the 71<sup>st</sup> E-MIB, 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and the Military Intelligence Training Center-Texas will partner to streamline MITS Tier 4 (individual certification) training and establish multiple iterations of MITS Tier 3 (crew certification) training exercises cut from the cloth of Talon Strike successes in previous years. Incorporating intelligence units, with priority based on the Sustainable Readiness Model cycle, and aligning them with specific scenarios for multidiscipline, high quality training will improve readiness, lethality, professional military education success, and ultimately retention, which are part of the Texas Adjutant General’s and ARNG’s training guidance goals.

### Panther Strike

The 300<sup>th</sup> MIB (linguist), a unit within the Utah Army National Guard, hosted a virtual annual training event from 7 to 22 June 2020. Attendees included 182 intelligence, linguistic, and industry professionals. Constraints from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in modifying the Panther Strike 2020 collective training exercise. Human intelligence (HUMINT), counterintelligence (CI), SIGINT, and all-source discipline Soldiers conducted training using resources from the Center for National Security Studies, the Center for Anticipatory Intelligence,

the National Guard Bureau G-2 MI Gym, and the Panther Strike Planning Team. Despite the difficulties and restrictions in place because of COVID-19, the brigade was able to accomplish both collective and individual training.

The Center for National Security Studies instructed 110 Soldiers from HUMINT, CI, and all-source intelligence disciplines. The training incorporated formal briefings and lectures followed by the attendees conducting regular collective practical exercises. The trainers instructed on the following topics:

- ◆ Introduction to national security system and process.
- ◆ Intelligence analysis.
- ◆ Middle East history, politics, and culture.
- ◆ Radical fundamentalism and terrorist financing.
- ◆ Law of war.

#### Panther Strike<sup>2</sup>

“Panther Strike is important because it is one of the few exercises in the country where we have a very robust footprint of military intelligence Soldiers and support structure together at one place.”

—LTC Kiley Laughlin, former commander of the 223<sup>rd</sup> MI Battalion, California Army National Guard

“We haven’t captured a peer nation platoon on the battlefield in a conventional situation in a really long time. There have been new laws and regulations added to interrogations and screenings. We need to adapt to the modern world so we are teaching them the way to perform it effectively, correctly, and legally for tomorrow’s war.”

—SSG Dan Mealy, instructor with the HUMINT training team during Panther Strike 2019



U.S. Army photo by SGT Nathan Baker

Military intelligence Soldiers participate in radio operation training during Panther Strike, June 6, 2019, Camp Williams, UT.

The National Guard Bureau G-2’s MI Gym enabled the brigade’s Soldiers to be the first users to go through the new EW trainer. MI Gym is a new National Guard Bureau G-2 program that is an unclassified online-based training platform requiring no software installation or hardware. Trainees use standard computers or laptops to access web-based training from commercial or Department of Defense networks. MI Gym’s Module 2 EW trainer provided the 300<sup>th</sup> MIB Soldiers multiple iterations to train radiofrequency theory, exploitation of target voice communications, map reconnaissance, site selection, and identification of signals of interest. The training was performed from the Soldiers’ respective locations. Forty-nine SIGINT discipline Soldiers trained on the EW trainer for a total of

392 hours throughout the event. The SIGINT training audience was able to train four of seven collective and individual tasks for their assigned mission essential task lists.

## Conclusion

The ARNG MI enterprise will continue to participate in exercises that develop the skill level of reserve MI Soldiers and units, and train and evaluate each of the MI specialties, including HUMINT, SIGINT, GEOINT, and CI at the team, brigade, and division levels. These opportunities provide an important focus on the basic tasks and integration of the

different specialties, with Soldiers practicing and reinforcing their individual and collective training tasks, while learning how to confront peer and near-peer adversaries. 

## Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, *Sustainment Training Strategy & Guide* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, November 2016), 68–69.
2. John Etheridge, “Panther Strike 2019,” Utah National Guard website, June 18, 2019, <https://ut.ng.mil/Site-Management/News-Article-View/Article/1879562/panther-strike-2019/>.

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