

MEDIA RELEASE

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Arkansas's Field Artillery Brigade Completes Operation Western Strike

~ Soldiers successfully complete Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise and artillery gunnery qualifications

By: Spec. Stephen M. Wright

ROBINSON MANEUVER TRAINING CENTER, N. Little Rock, Ark.: -- The Arkansas National Guard's 142nd Field Artillery Brigade finalized participation and successfully completed an emergency deployment readiness exercise and artillery gunnery qualifications at Operation Western Strike. Western Strike is a large scale, multi-state, field artillery training exercise held at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming.

Five battalions hailing from three separate states comprised the 142nd Field Artillery Brigade and was commanded by Lt. Col. Nick Jaskolski. Three battalions from Arkansas, one from Alabama and another from Tennessee participated in the operation.

The 142nd conducted rail load operations from three different locations to include Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee. This movement required over 270 rail cars and five trains that moved over 950 pieces of equipment which spanned the course of four days and required over 150 Soldiers to complete.

2nd Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, Arkansas National Guard, fired over 1,100 rounds of 155mm during Operation Western Strike using their M109A6 Paladins. The paladin is a self-propelled Howitzer cannon that fires 155mm projectiles and has an effective range surpassing 18 miles when using Rocket Assisted Projectiles (RAPs).

1st Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, Arkansas National Guard, fired forty rounds of 298mm Reduced Range Practice Rockets (RRPR) from their M270 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS). The MLRS is capable of firing 12 guided and unguided projectiles up to 26 miles away in less than one minute by a crew of three Soldiers or firing two ballistic missiles such as the U.S. Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), it can hit targets 190 miles away.

1st Battalion, 117th Field Artillery Regiment, Alabama National Guard, fired nearly 1,300 rounds of 155mm from their M777 towed Howitzers which have the same firing range as the M109A6 Paladin.

1st Battalion, 181st Field Artillery Regiment, Tennessee National Guard, fired over 65 rounds of 298mm RRPRs from their M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS). The HIMARS differs from the MLRS by being wheeled as opposed to tracked, and it only fires 6 guided or unguided projectiles or one ballistic ATACMS as it only houses one firing pod as opposed the the two housed on an MLRS.

The 217th Brigade Support Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, Arkansas National Guard successfully completed over 80 supply distribution missions which included the safe and timely delivery of over 40,000 gallons of fuel, over 31,000 meals, nearly 500,000 small arms rounds and over 100 rockets.

Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Arkansas National Guard, was utilized during Operation Western Strike as simulated opposition forces in order to enhance the realism and overall training of the brigade during the two week long exercise.

-30 -

**B-roll and photos from the ceremony are available for media use from the Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/ANGPAO>

Video Links:

Operation Western Strike Commander Speaks about Tennessee Battalion: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607910/operation-western-strike-commander-speaks-about-tennessee-battalion>.

Operation Western Strike Commander Speaks about Alabama Battalion: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607891/operation-western-strike-commander-speaks-about-alabama-battalion>.

Operation Western Strike Commander Provides an Operations Overview: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607871/operation-western-strike-commander-speaks-overview-operations>.

Operation Western Strike Commander Thanks Employers and Families: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607916/142nd-field-artillery-brigade-commander-thanks-families-and-employers-their-support-during-operation-western-strike>.

Arkansas National Guard Medical Company Assists with Operation Western Strike: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607633/arkansas-national-guard-medical-company-assists-operation-western-strike>.

Arkansas Field Artillery Unit Fires Multiple Launch Rocket System During Western Strike: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607386/arkansas-field-artillery-unit-fires-multiple-launch-rocket-system-operation-western-strike>.

Arkansas National Guard Field Artillery Unit Fires Mobile Artillery at Operation Western Strike: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607339/arkansas-field-artillery-unit-fires-m109a6-paladins-during-operation-western-strike>.

Arkansas Assistant Adjutant General Visits Soldiers at Operation Western Strike: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607314/arkansas-assistant-adjutant-general-operations-visits-guardsmen-operation-western-strike>.

Arkansas National Guard Roadside Ambush Training: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607949/roadside-ambush-operation-western-strike>.

Arkansas National Guard IED and Ambush Training: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/607666/arkansas-national-guard-conducts-ied-ambush-training-field-artillery-convoys>.