

**O**n 3 October, the Chief of Field Artillery Major General Michael D. Maples presented the first-ever Alexander Hamilton Best ARNG Battery for 2002 to Captain Kory L. Knight, who accepted on behalf of his former command, B Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery (Multiple-Launch Rocket System), Army National Guard (ARNG), in Salem, South Dakota. Captain Knight until recently commanded B Battery and shared the 2002 leadership with First

Sergeants Wayne L. Brunke and Darold D. Diede. The battery is part of the 147th Field Artillery Brigade, headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The award was presented during the Senior Fire Support Conference Banquet at the Officers' Club, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The award is named after artilleryman, patriot and American statesman Alexander Hamilton, who commanded the Hamilton Battery, the first to fire in the Revolutionary War. The purpose of the award is to promote, sustain and recognize excellence in US Army Field Artillery batteries. (See the related articles "Best Battery Awards: Knox Award Reinstated and Hamilton Award Created" and "Alexander Hamilton—An American Statesman and Artilleryman" in this edition.)

The award's submission packet included a statistical data sheet and the battery commander's narrative. The following was taken from Captain Knight's narrative.

"B Battery just completed an absolutely remarkable year as illustrated by excellence in four areas: Readiness, Training, Force Modernization and Contingency Operations.

**"Readiness.** B/1-147 FA's most noteworthy achievement is its outstanding readiness posture, the number one priority. This unit was recognized as a distinguished member of the coveted SDARNG 100 Percent Club, which is awarded to units maintaining assigned strength at or above 100 percent of requirements. In fact, B/1-147 FA consistently maintained an average of 108 percent strength throughout the year. This was a direct result of highly proactive leadership and unit participation in the areas of recruiting, retention and sponsorship in predominantly rural areas.

"Unit status report (USR) available strength and military occupational specialty qualification (MOSQ)/senior leader qualification numbers remained well above the National Guard Bureau (NGB) goal throughout the year.

"The battery's strict emphasis on preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS) and the unit maintenance program resulted in an outstanding performance during the last command maintenance evaluation team (COMET) inspection with a superior score of 97.6 percent.

**"Training.** B Battery just completed one of the most rigorous training years in unit history. In addition to conducting three tactical operations center/battalion operations center (TOC/BOC) command post exercises (CPXs), B Battery excelled in high/low density training. After completing a successful battery/battalion training assessment mode (TAM) in July 2001, the battery sustained its skills by conducting section certifications, Table VII, in March and platoon certifications/qualifications, Table XII, in July. The FA tables training and evaluations were facilitated by the 2d Training Support Battalion, 289th Regiment, Fort Riley, Kansas.

## B/1-147 FA Wins 2002 Hamilton Best ARNG Battery Award

"Also noteworthy during annual training (AT) in July was the fact that B/1-147 FA was the first MLRS unit to conduct live-fire training at Camp Ripley, Minnesota, using operations area (OPAREA) safety. OPAREA safety is much more conducive to realistic MLRS training vice shooting from fixed firing points as done by all previous units. Additionally, B Battery was the first unit to conduct a live-fire exercise (LFX) at Camp Ripley firing all six launchers simultaneously from various firing positions.

"B/1-147 FA recently was awarded the 2002 Pershing Plaque at the NGAUS National Conference in Long Beach, California. This prestigious annual award is given to the battery/company in the Fifth Army Region that achieves the highest overall marksmanship average.

**"Force Modernization.** In addition to superb individual/collective training, B Battery also conducted new equipment training (NET) on three systems this year, including the M1068 command post carrier in December 2001, the single-channel ground and airborne radio system (SINCGARS) Version E radio in June 2002 and the advanced FA tactical data system (AFATDS) in July. AFATDS training was a challenge as it was concurrent with Table XII training.

"Recently, the battery was notified it will be one of the first ARNG units to field the M270A1 launcher in FY05.

**"Contingency Operations.** Soldiers of B Battery participated in a homeland security mission on 4 July at the Mount Rushmore National Monument. Mount Rushmore was designated as one of four high-priority monuments requiring security during the national holiday. Soldiers from B Battery also helped fire fighters in the Black Hills fight fires in August.

"B/1-147 FA is ready to react to any state or Federal mission. '*Prêt Et Volontiers*' is embedded on B Battery's crest and represents the battery—'*Ready and Willing!*'"



B/1-147 FA's most noteworthy achievement is its outstanding readiness posture, the number one priority.