

# PERSHING

## in Europe



by  
**SP5 Alan C. Jacobson**

The officers and men of Pershing units in Europe play an important role in the NATO umbrella of defense.

The parent organization for Pershing in Europe is the 56th Field Artillery Brigade, a command assigned directly to USAREUR and located in Schwaebisch Gmuend, about 30 miles east of Stuttgart. The brigade has four subordinate units: the 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, also located in Schwaebisch Gmuend; the 1st Battalion, 81st Field Artillery, located in New Ulm, about 50 miles southeast of Stuttgart; the 3d Battalion, 84th Field Artillery, located in Neckarsulm, about 50 miles north of Stuttgart; and the 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry, with headquarters and one line company located in Ludwigsburg, 15 miles north of Stuttgart, and two line companies colocated with their supported battalions.

The 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry, is the only infantry unit in the United States Army that is organic to an artillery unit. This is an indication of what the 56th Brigade is all about—teamwork. The brigade is one of the few units in the Army to employ as many as 74 different enlisted MOS's, from clerks and medics to topographic-instrument repairmen and helicopter technicians. The brigade is really a combined arms team, drawing manpower not only from artillery but also from infantry, signal, engineers, and ordnance. For example, soldiers from the Signal Corps might have MOS 26L, tactical microwave systems repairman; the Corps of Engineers supplies a number of MOS's, such as 52B, power generator equipment operator/mechanic; the Infantry Branch is represented by MOS's 11B, 11C, and 11F. Unlike most units, the brigade has, within its Pershing battalions, organic direct support capabilities that enable quick repair of most of its equipment.

The Pershing missilemen, however, are those who are

directly responsible for insuring that the Pershing mission is accomplished. They complete their advanced individual training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This 8-week AIT course is designed to familiarize MOS 15E personnel with the various components of the Pershing system and introduce them to the specialized job skills required by Pershing. Upon graduation, selected personnel attend the Pershing Laying Specialist Course to acquire more advanced knowledge of the unique system for gaining direction for the missile. The most advanced systems course taught at Fort Sill is the Pershing System Maintenance Course for selected warrant officers and enlisted specialists. Noncommissioned officers prepare for their supervisory responsibilities by attending the Pershing Noncommissioned Officer Course. The Pershing equipment studied in these courses includes the erector-launcher, a combined launching platform and transporter for the missile; the programmer-test station, which contains the system computer and solves the gunnery problem; the power station, which provides high-pressure and conditioned air and all electrical power for the system; and the battery control central, an expandable van used as the command and control center.

As mentioned above, teamwork plays an important part in the 56th Brigade. The intricacies of the Pershing system demand that members of the brigade know their jobs thoroughly, and those who work directly with the missile itself, with few exceptions, must be able to move from one job to another with proficiency. This teamwork extends to everyone in the brigade, for without the assistance of the various support personnel, the equipment wouldn't operate for very long. In addition to cooperation and teamwork, training plays an important part in the 56th Brigade soldier's routine. Garrison training, periodic field training exercises, and duty at the combat alert status (CAS) site, where firing batteries are on 24-hour alert, help to maintain the high state of readiness required by Pershing's mission in Europe.

In many respects, the culmination of training in Europe is the artillery/ordnance and operational test firings that take place in Utah and Florida. For these tests, selected units in Europe return to CONUS for actual firing of the Pershing missile. The artillery/ordnance firings, conducted to test equipment improvements, take place at Blanding and Green River, Utah. For the operational test firings, the crews, missiles, and related support equipment are taken intact from the CAS site and transported to Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, home of the Air Force Eastern Test Range, where the missiles are fired just as they would be in Europe. No one knows who will be "tapped" for an operational test, and this keeps the crews on their toes.

Being a member of the brigade does not mean all work



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**The azimuth laying specialist carefully aligns the Pershing on the firing azimuth.**

and no play. Travel to the many nearby countries occupies much of the soldier's off-duty time. Armed with a 3-day pass, a soldier can see many of the wonders of "old world" Europe.

In addition to private travel, members of the brigade can take advantage of the "Pershing R&R Program," whereby 3-day passes are authorized and transportation is made available to take the soldiers and their wives to an Armed Forces recreation center at Berchtesgaden, Garmisch, or Chiemsee in the Bavarian Alps. Also available to members of the command is the Berlin Orientation Tour, which includes a week of administrative leave in Berlin to see the sights.

"Quick, Reliable, Accurate," the motto of the 56th Field Artillery Brigade, is appropriate to the teamwork that encompasses all members of the brigade. The Pershing system is one of the primary deterrents to worldwide conflict. The officers and men of the 56th Brigade realize this, and they work hard to get the job done. When they can, they take the opportunity for travel and new experiences; but above all, they accept the responsibility that is theirs. ☒

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