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800 82nd Paratroopers Dropped Into Ft. Campbell During Exercise

About 800 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg were airlifted from Pope Air Force Base and airdropped Sunday morning into Ft. Campbell, Ky., as part of a graded readiness exercise, officials said.

The exercise is being held in conjunction with a Military Airlift Command operational readiness inspection of Pope's 317th Tactical Airlift Wing, local military officials said.

Twenty C-130 aircraft departed from Pope in the early morning hours and 12 of the propeller aircraft dropped passengers from the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment and eight

aircraft dropped cargo at two drop zones, said Capt. Ken Smith of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps public affairs office.

"Everything went okay. There were no problems, so everybody landed there okay," Smith said.

In addition to the 82nd paratroopers, soldiers from 1st Corps Support Command, the 35th Signal Brigade and 1st Special Operations Command also participated in the Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise, Smith said.

Graders from corps also accompanied the troopers in the exercise, Dragon Team 9-86, he said.

Troops were alerted to the

exercise Thursday, and within 18 hours some of them were en route via ground transportation to Ft. Campbell, Smith said. Some of the troops traveled in tractor-trailers, and some traveled in CH-47 Chinook helicopters, he said.

Troops will begin returning to Ft. Bragg on Wednesday, Smith said.

In the meantime, the evaluation process includes checking the troops as they live temporarily in a field setting for perimeter defense, establishing communications, supply lines and security, Smith said.

The evaluation process includes "all the tie-ins they would need in a go-to-war situation," he said.