
MISSION COMMAND STAFF TRAINER

THE ARMY'S PREMIERE MISSION COMMAND SYSTEMS COLLECTIVE TASK TRAINER

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The creation of complicated and often costly simulation programs and special applications normally accompany the introduction of various sophisticated digital Army Battle Command Systems (ABCS). These simulations programs and special applications produce situations/events in units' ABCS boxes which, in turn, stimulate operators/staff reaction. Examples of current simulation programs which support major command post (CP) training exercises are the Corps Battle Simulation (CBS) and the Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulations (JCATS). Though simulation programs like these support unit ABCS individual and collective task refresher and sustainment training, they have a tendency to cause high overhead in internal and external personnel support, extensive lead time for training coordination, cost, and equipment.

History — As a result of unit requests for ABCS stimulation assistance, the National Simulation Center originally developed a low-overhead software application — the Battle Command Staff Trainer (BCST) — which is now called the Mission Command Staff Trainer. The Product Director Common Software (PD CS), under direction of Program Manager Strategic Mission Command (PM SMC), has the responsibility to continue development, fielding, and training of the MCST. TRADOC Capability Manager Mission Command (TCM MC) is responsible for MCST requirements generation and oversight.

What MCST Is and Is Not — MCST is a software training program that operates on standard personal computer systems with Microsoft Windows XP. This program is applicable to both active and Reserve units, Mission Training Complexes (MTC), and Mission Command Centers of Excellence (MC COE). This software application, however, is not a substitute for ABCS or a replacement for CBS, JCATS, or other constructive training simulations. These systems were born of necessity and serve a very useful purpose for larger-scale training exercises.

Uses — MCST enables units to conduct battle staff training with the ABCS using internal resources with minimal setup, time, and effort. MCST facilitates individual and collective staff refresher and sustainment training for staff sections or entire staffs from battalion through Army Service Component Command (ASCC) levels. Significant training opportunities afforded by MCST include: maintain and improve highly perishable AMCS skills, train new staff personnel, apply staff coordination/battle drills, assist in battle rhythm development, and aid in train-up for exercises/events. This software provides an ability to stimulate battle staff reactions to friendly and enemy force events. MCST can be configured to communicate with the training unit's warfighting functions systems and inject friendly/enemy situational awareness data to those systems. It can tailor friendly force structure, roles, names, and icons to the unit that is being trained. Actions from

the MSEL may be scheduled to occur at specific exercise times or manually inserted during the exercise to initiate a staff reaction. MCST must only be used on training networks, never on real-world operational networks. The risk of mixing simulated and real-world operational events is too great.

How Units Receive MCST — Army units/organizations receive MCST new equipment training (NET) through coordination with the PM SMC MCST representative at their unit set fielding conference or unit equipment reset conference. Additionally, MCST software and associated training documentation can be downloaded through the MCST AKO download site at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/kc/10244567>. (AKO users will request access to this site from the MCST POCs listed at the end of the article.) The MCST computer program, pre-loaded scenarios, and a reference disk are included in the training package and are utilized by the NET teams during initial training. Another way to receive MCST training is online at <https://ctm.gordon.army.mil> site. Once logged in, go to "Rich Media Training." You can view the training online or download each training segment to view locally. If downloading, ensure each file is put in its own folder; then unzip each file. Once a training segment (file) is unzipped, click on the "player.html" and the training segment will begin.

New Equipment Training — Units/organizations should have their allocated ABCS equipment and finish ABCS NET before receiving MCST NET. During the MCST NET process, personnel from S3/G3 and S6/G6 sections receive instruction on how to connect the MCST into the ABCS network, operator training, and exercise scenario training. MTCs and MC COE's can receive MCST NET after training dates are established with the PM SMC MCST representative. A tiered support system provides assistance to units that encounter MCST issues. The support system contact information is located in the documentation on the MCST AKO download site.

Summary — Providing tremendous potential for Army battle staffs, MCST provides: a flexible training medium to maintain operator proficiency on their respective ABCS box; flexible training employment; low unit overhead in terms of exercise support personnel, training resources and cost. MCST stimulates the ABCS with situational awareness data and tactical messages that add realism to collective staff training.

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Once units receive MCST software, familiarize their units with it and use it, send suggested improvements and recommendations for new features to the individuals listed above.