



TSM STRYKER/BRADLEY CORNER

STRYKER RESET: How Can TRADOC Assist?

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As the Army continues to transform into a modular force and unit life cycles start to take shape, there are a variety of challenges that units need to address, none more so than the challenge of unit reset. As units complete successful deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq, they are quickly faced with the reality that a significant amount of leadership experience and technical knowledge will be lost as 75-80 percent of the Soldiers depart the unit as their life cycle terms expire. Shortly thereafter, units receive an influx of new Soldiers with varying backgrounds — light, heavy, airborne and, now, Stryker. In the case of Stryker units, however, the likelihood of receiving a Soldier with previous Stryker experience, particularly in the case of senior NCOs and officers, is remote. This creates a need that is specific to Stryker units during their reset period — a need for TRADOC to provide Stryker leader conversion training, new equipment training teams/mobile training teams (NETTs/MTTs), and institutional programs of instruction (POIs) designed to introduce officers and NCOs to Stryker-related doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs).

Leader Conversion Training

(See July-August 2005 issue of *Infantry Magazine* for more details.)

Currently, the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) Transformation Team (STT) at Fort Benning, a subordinate element of the TRADOC Futures Center, is the enabling force behind the Leader Conversion Training Program (LCTP). LCTP events provide a doctrinal base that enables leaders to understand and to employ SBCT capabilities. In its current form, LCTP consists of three elements:

1) **University** — a three-day information, orientation, and education event that provides an overarching view of what is unique to a SBCT;

2) **Senior Leaders Course (SLC)** — a 10-day course that supports the SBCT commander's leader development program focused on

the brigade and battalion staffs;

3) **Tactical Leaders Course (TLC)** — a seven-day event designed to teach junior SBCT leadership how SBCT units fight, again supporting the SBCT commander's leader development program at the company/platoon level. Originally intended to provide a doctrinal foundation for new Stryker formations, the LCTP enhanced the successful transformation of three Stryker brigades deployed to Iraq in support of OIF (3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division [SBCT 1], 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division [SBCT 2] and 172nd Infantry Brigade [SBCT 3]). These units performed, and in the case of 172nd IN (SBCT 3), are performing admirably in theater as they apply the doctrine taught to them.

As the first unit to tackle reset, 3/2 IN (SBCT 1) did so with approximately 80 percent of the leadership in the ranks of E-7 and above remaining in the unit. So, given that the vast majority of those personnel had taken part in leader conversion training, there was not a specified need for another iteration of the LCTP. For 3/2 IN (SBCT 1), the doctrinal foundation and the ability to train incoming personnel were already in place. SBCT 1's reset, however, was an anomaly in that a majority of the leadership held in place. For future SBCTs, however, they will experience the inverse, as much of the

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leadership knowledge leaves with the Soldiers as they PCS upon their return from theater during the unit's reset window (in the case of SBCT 2, approximately 80 percent of the unit will PCS). Given the uniqueness of the unit, the challenges of digitization and the probability of receiving Soldiers and leaders with no Stryker experience, SBCT commanders identified a need for more leader conversion training. The STT has met that need by developing and resourcing another LCTP for unit reset. SBCT 2, the 1/25 IN, is the first Stryker unit to receive this training (currently scheduled to begin in May 2006) and will establish a footprint for future SBCT resets.

NETT/MTTs

Considering that the Stryker brigade is still a relatively new force, officers and NCOs coming into a resetting SBCT face the probability that they will have a steep learning curve when they arrive. In addition, as Stryker units continue to evolve, new equipment and improved digital software continue to be produced to outfit the SBCTs. Therein lies a requirement for Soldiers with Stryker experience who remain with the unit after

redeployment to undergo training on new equipment as it is fielded in the unit; examples of this are the Mortar Carrier B, the M777 lightweight 155mm towed howitzer, the NBC Recon Vehicle and the Mobile Gun System (MGS). To assist in the training of Soldiers who have never served in a Stryker unit and in the training on new systems, the 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment sponsors a NETT that covers the full spectrum of units/personnel that compose the SBCT. Comprised of three E-7s and two E-6s, the 1-29th Infantry NETT works in conjunction with NET teams assigned by other TRADOC institutions (Fort Knox, Fort Sill, Fort Leonard Wood, and Fort Sam Houston) to provide quality assurance and control to the instruction that is given to the SBCT. All instructors are certified through the Instructor Trainers Course at Fort Benning, and the 1-29 Infantry NETT monitors and analyzes instruction given by General Dynamics Land Systems (GDLS) representatives during the training. Using the 29th Regiment after action review (AAR) format, the NETT provides feedback to instructors in an effort to consistently improve the training. Given that the NET team

develops the POI for the training and members are cross-trained on the different Stryker variants, the NET team can also stand in and teach NET classes, if required.

In an effort to assist the unit in meeting the reset timeline, TRADOC MTTs are extremely effective. Sending out mobile training teams for Sniper, Javelin and combatives, for example, is a tremendous contribution to a unit that potentially loses a vast amount of knowledge in these facets as a result of the reset process (3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division requested all of these MTTs during their reset period; these MTTs were funded by the STT). Visits by TRADOC MTTs provide units an opportunity to get a significant number of individuals trained without incurring the expenses (both in terms of money and time) that would be associated with sending Soldiers to the schoolhouse at Fort Benning. An "expeditionary" TRADOC provides vast experience to resetting units in the areas that they identify and can certainly ease the training burden on the unit. In addition, it allows the Soldiers to stay at home station to continue to integrate with their new unit. Upon completion of MTT training, a train-the-trainer foundation is established, enabling the unit to provide this training expertise to Soldiers throughout the entire SBCT. This has added significance for the infantry lieutenant, as an example, who finds himself responsible for the planning and execution of a cordon and search. The skill set that he has as a result of the initial MTT training (in this case, sniper training) and knowing the capabilities of a sniper team give him the confidence to properly employ snipers/designated marksmen and give his Soldiers the

confidence to close with and defeat the enemy in the close fight.

Institutional Training

In an effort to provide NCOs and officers with a Stryker foundation, the 1-29 IN authored four resident programs of instruction approved by TRADOC. The four POIs consist of the following: Stryker Pre-Command Course, Stryker Leader Course, Stryker Transition Course and Stryker Master Trainer Course. As Soldiers process through these courses, the intent is that they will be better prepared to make immediate contributions technically and tactically to the SBCT they are being assigned to. This is particularly critical for Stryker units experiencing a reset, as a vast majority of knowledge and experience has departed and will need to be adequately replaced.

The Stryker Pre-Command Course is geared for colonels, lieutenant colonels, and command sergeants major assigned to or on orders to a SBCT. This program is designed as a one-week (40 hours) add-on to the existing Infantry Pre-Command Course to prepare commanders and CSMs for their assignments. Its focus is on SBCT-specific issues concerning maintenance, operations, and capabilities. The culminating exercise for this course is a command post exercise (CPX). There are two phases to the course — 40 hours of resident training complemented with a distance learning portion.

The Stryker Leader Course is designed as a stand-alone three-week (120 hours) POI. The course focuses on tasks relating to the SBCT, such as vehicle orientation/maintenance, FBCB2 (Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below) and TADSS (training aids, devices, simulators and simulations), culminating in a situational training exercise (STX). Senior NCOs (E-7 and E-8) and officers (O-1 through O-4) with a branch component of Infantry (11), Field Artillery (13) and Engineer (12) will make up the class demographic. The intent of this course is to provide a solid foundation for Soldiers on orders to a SBCT, thereby easing their transition into the unit.

The Stryker Transition Course consists of NCOs in the rank of sergeant and staff sergeant on orders to a SBCT. The course is designed as a stand-alone, two-week (80 hours) program of instruction. The POI mirrors the first two weeks of the Stryker Leader Course so a Soldier who has completed the transition course will only need to attend the final week of the Stryker Leader Course. The major difference between the courses is that the transition course does not teach Stryker employment with a culminating STX.

To provide NCOs with a graduate-level learning opportunity, 1-29 Infantry created the Stryker Master Trainer Course. Designed for NCOs in the rank of staff sergeant through master sergeant who possess previous experience in Stryker units, this eight-week (320 hours) course trains selected NCOs on basic and advanced marksmanship, maintenance, communications, and training management techniques required for the SBCT. A prerequisite for attendance is previous completion of the Stryker Leader Course or Stryker Transition Course.

In an effort to validate the effectiveness of the POIs, pilot courses must be run first. The next pilot for the Stryker Transition Course was scheduled for January 30 through February 10. Pending equipment receipt and instructor certification, the earliest timeframe

RESIDENT STRYKER COURSES

Stryker Leader

Length: 3 weeks (120 hrs)

Audience: O-1 thru O-4, E-7 thru E-8

Focus: Vehicle orientation, capabilities, FBCB2 and TADSS; culminates with a STX

Stryker Pre-Command

Length: 1 week (40 hrs)

Audience: O-5 thru O-6, CSMs

Focus: SBCT-specific issues concerning maintenance, operations and capabilities

Stryker Master Trainer

Length: 8 weeks (320 hrs)

Audience: E-6 thru E-8 w/previous Stryker experience

Focus: Advanced marksmanship, maintenance, communications and training management techniques

Stryker Transition

Length: 2 weeks (80 hrs)

Audience: E-5 thru E-6

Focus: Vehicle orientation, capabilities, FBCB2 and TADSS

to start the Stryker Trainer Course and the Stryker Leader Course would be 3rd Quarter of FY06.

Again, the intent of these courses is to provide officers and NCOs with a solid Stryker foundation upon which to work, thereby making them immediate contributors to their respective units. For a Stryker unit experiencing a significant leadership and knowledge base turnover during reset, this contribution from incoming personnel is critical.

Unit reset is a challenge for any unit, regardless if it's a light, heavy, airborne or Stryker unit. However, given the relative newness of Stryker formations and the impact of life-cycle manning, there are some unique challenges to address to offset the loss of a significant amount of technical and tactical knowledge as a result of reset. To meet the needs of Stryker units, TRADOC is in the process of developing, with the intent of implementing, concepts for leader conversion training, NETT/MTTs and programs of instruction that are Stryker-specific. An "expeditionary" TRADOC allows for resetting units to train a much higher volume of Soldiers than if the unit was forced to send Soldiers to the institution to receive the training. In addition, by introducing more Stryker-specific programs at the institutional level, Soldiers will arrive at their respective units more prepared to tackle the challenges inherent to operating in a new formation. Successful implementation of these concepts should ease the burden of reset on the unit and assist these units in achieving the high standards that previous Soldiers set before them.

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