



# TSM STRYKER/BRADLEY CORNER

## THE NEED FOR A STRYKER MASTER TRAINER IN THE SBCT

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**STRYKER MASTER TRAINER COURSE.** This course is designed to train selected NCOs who assist unit leaders in planning and implementation of Stryker weapon, gunnery, and vehicle maintenance training. The Stryker Master Trainer Course trains basic and advanced marksmanship and training management techniques required for SBCT in the following areas: remote weapons station (RWS); advanced infantry marksmanship strategies and skills (AIMSS); Javelin; Stryker family of vehicle weapons system training; SBCT weapons training; preliminary gunnery; and target engagement.

— FM 3-22.3, *Stryker Gunnery*, Chapter 3

The operational demand for a Stryker master trainer in the Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT) is a demand that must be met. Almost every Stryker unit in the Army has identified and tasked an NCO, usually one with master gunner experience in a mechanized or armor unit, as their Stryker master trainer or master gunner. The need for a Stryker master trainer is clearly apparent with the Stryker units. As an Army, we must be willing to embrace this requirement from the units in the field as it needs to be immediately addressed. Stryker units, by the modified table of organization (MTOE), have no allocation for a Stryker master trainer. This is in stark contrast to mechanized infantry units and armor units. Both types of units have master gunners at the corps, division, brigade, battalion, company, and some at the platoon level. They are a critical part of ensuring quality training, sustainment, and proficiency for the commander. They are the subject matter experts on every gunnery-related issue not just at the individual and crew levels, but more importantly and often overlooked, at the collective level as well. Both the Infantry and Armor Schools have recognized the need for formal training of these individuals to ensure a safe, even plane of training across the Army. Master gunner schools were developed long ago, and it is required attendance for an NCO in order to fill these MTOE positions. Yet no formal master gunner or master trainer school has been required for Stryker units, as of yet. To underscore, most units are filling this void with Bradley or Abrams master gunners from within their unit.

One issue that many have with the establishment of a master gunner course for the Stryker is the fear that the focus would shift away from the primary focus or real weapon of Stryker units, which is of course, the infantryman. There are several ways to approach this argument. The attitude of the Army in relation to Stryker units, the platform, and the weapon itself is captured in Chapter 3 of FM 3-22.3: *“A Stryker platoon’s strength comes from the skill, courage, and discipline of the individual Soldier. Each infantryman’s capabilities are enhanced by teamwork and cohesion in squads, crews, teams, and platoons. This group dynamic is an essential ingredient to a platoon’s success in close combat. Platoon training must therefore focus on developing tough, combat-ready platoons. The individual Soldier must have the skill and will to not just participate in a close fight — but to dominate it. Training events that require subordinate leaders’ use of initiative to take independent actions are essential when preparing for the decentralized operations of the modern battlefield.”*

Many light infantry units have adopted the master gunner in respect to small arms and are using it effectively. It is essentially the same mission as a mechanized or armor MG, just without the big bullets. One counterargument is that the units have already identified the need and are filling the void with other master gunners. This validates the fact that the weapons system itself is not the focus or the bulk of knowledge that the master gunner is able to contribute; it is his knowledge of gunnery, gunnery-related skills, knowledge of individual and collective training at all levels and how to form all of this into a streamlined, efficient gunnery program that focuses on all training from 9mm to MK-19 and M2. Or, what is essentially the Merriam Webster’s definition of gunnery, *“[the] branch of military science that comprehends the theory of projectiles, and the manner of constructing and using ordnance.”* To avoid the “system-focused mindset” we simply do not call the position a master gunner — though as defined as, *“the art of shaping Soldiers into cohesive teams with the ability to systematically destroy everything in sight”* — the position could be designated as Stryker master trainer. A simple efficient Stryker master trainer mission statement would resemble something like the following:

“To train select NCOs to design and implement weapon systems

gunnery and maintenance training programs. A trained Stryker master trainer can:

- Establish and conduct individual and crew gunnery training;
- Develop a short-range training program (SRTP) for a battalion-sized unit from preliminary gunnery through platoon gunnery;
- Execute maintenance, maintenance training and maintenance management of organic weapons systems and components;
- Establish and execute range operations; and
- Be knowledgeable in the use and training of all Stryker-related training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations (TADSS).

The Stryker master trainer is the NCO a commander or S3 turns to and says “I need more gunners for my ICVs,” to which he replies, “the whole company sir, or did you have a smaller number in mind?”

The Stryker master trainer’s abilities are built from the foundation of an NCO’s core competency to train individuals, crews, and teams. Stryker master trainers can be your subject matter experts in Stryker training

to include: vehicle operation, maintenance, weapons training, gunnery, ammunition management, building and fully utilizing ranges, live-fire development, training device use and implementation, and training management. Stryker master trainers, like their master gunner brethren, are able to contribute more than just vehicle knowledge and how to run gunnery.

A Stryker master trainer is the Stryker commander’s walking continuity book for each company, battalion, and/or brigade staff. Working from that NCO core competency, the master trainer can take an individual and shape him into a gunner or part of a crew. He is also ever mindful of the need to get Soldiers and crews ready for collective live-fire training with minimal impact on the ever decreasing white space on a calendar. Each commander’s master trainer knows what resources are needed and how to request and use them. He knows the necessary training devices and how to train others in their use. He can run a program to always have ready a pool of available gunners or crewman. He can be that NCO who conducts the initial training a new Soldier receives upon arrival to an SBCT. With his

expertise and training management skills, he can develop the plan for individual through crew weapons and vehicle training (9mm-105mm and ICV-MGS) and present it to the commander for approval. He then can help execute the training, constantly advising the commander thus allowing him time to prepare his collective training plan.

The need in the operational Army for a master trainer brings to light the possible need for an additional skill identifier (ASI) for those that have completed the Stryker Master Trainer Course. This in no way would limit the commanders on the ground or require that it would be mandatory for one to be Stryker master trainer certified; it would simply assist the Army in ensuring control and management over those trained and assist them in the assignment of “the right man for the right job assignment criteria.”

The Stryker master trainer is not finished when the unit transitions into collective training. He continues to advise the commander on areas of resources, ranges, and live-fire training. While the unit has moved on from individual to collective training, he continues to monitor the status of individual and crew qualifications. He is prepared to plug a hole where needed either by establishing a qualification range or recommending a



replacement from the pool of trained Soldiers he helped develop in the individual/crew training phase. Home station or deployed commanders can turn to their Stryker master trainer and say, “I need more gunners,” and he can make it happen.

Ideally, commanders would want every NCO in their unit to have these skill sets, but this is not realistic or possible with today’s operational tempo (OPTEMPO). The question that rises now is how many master trainers are needed and at what level. In mechanized infantry, the master gunner position goes down as far as platoon level. The complexity of BFV systems necessitates a need for smaller ratio of master gunners to Soldiers to be trained.

Stryker systems — while complex — allow first line NCOs to execute the majority of individual training and maintenance supervision with a Stryker master trainer acting as the right guide. At company level, the Stryker master trainer can be the one who helps develop the plan for training and helps conduct the training; his focus is to develop the Soldiers behind the triggers and the operators of the systems.

Stryker master trainers at battalion would focus more on the management of training. They would work very closely with the S3 and commander to develop the plan and preparing for platoon live-fire training. They ensure that the resources are available to the companies to execute their individual and crew training. He would conduct training on new devices or doctrine and certify evaluators. The battalion Stryker master trainers would mentor the company Stryker master trainer and help develop future Stryker master trainers.

At brigade, the Stryker master trainer would be more a training/resource manager. This Stryker master trainer would work with the SBCT S3 to ensure that the commander’s training guidance is fully supported with the right resources and would advise the commander on weapons training within the SBCT. He would develop and execute new Stryker warrior training for recent arrivals into an SBCT. He would be a supporter and not a supervisor for battalion Stryker master trainers. He keeps them up-to-date on new doctrine and guidance and conducts train-the-trainers as needed for new devices.

It is necessary that we fulfill the need of one Stryker master trainer at company, battalion, and brigade levels. This will only enhance the level of proficiency and execution of weapons and vehicle training in an SBCT. Commanders and operations officers will only benefit from having a highly trained NCO next to them that can advise and support a critical piece in the training strategy.

MODULES	DESCRIPTION
1. Small Arms Integration Module	Training in optics and devices for small arms and crew served weapons
2. Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) Training	FBCB2 systems and integration training
3. Remote Weapon Station Training (RWS)	Hands-on maintenance and operational training to include live-fire exercises with the RWS for both MK-19 and M2.
4. Training Management	Integrated training strategy for an SBCT, individual soldier weapons training strategy; crew served weapons training strategy; mounted soldier training strategy; cross training; squad, platoon and company training strategies; combined arms training; and long, short and near term planning.
5. Variant Characteristics	Capabilities, limitations, and training strategies of each Stryker variant. Hands-on training with available variants.
6. Range Operations	Establish a range, construct a surface danger area diagram, develop firing and non-firing data, conduct training area/range recon, develop a LFX scenario, execute range operations, train key range personnel, supervise range operations and conduct formal after action reviews.
7. SBCT Employment	How an SBCT fights, MGS employment, ATGM employment, SBCT in urban operations, SBCT in stability operations.
8. Training Aids, Devices, Simulators, and Simulations (TADSS)	Training in the use of EST, MILES XXI, LMTS, Drivers Training, Javelin BST/FTT, ATGM BST/FTT, ONESAF and MGS COFT
9. Short Range Training Plan	Students will prepare a short range training plan encompassing all weapons and vehicle specific training from individual through platoon LFX training.

Dissemination of information and mentoring of the company's Stryker master trainers from brigade and battalion will be essential to success. A similar effort would be required at the company level down to the platoon-level Stryker master trainer. The purpose is threefold:

- Ensures that the standards are known and complied with;

- Ensures professional development of all Stryker master trainers and builds depth in our relatively new Stryker master trainer program to ensure continued excellence; and

- Ensures that the most relevant doctrine, TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) and best practices, common to the threat faced by Stryker units are trained on throughout the force.

A program of instruction (POI) exists for the Stryker Master Trainer Course and was developed between the 29th Infantry Regiment and U.S. Army Infantry School Directorate of Operations and Training. The table on page 8 is a snapshot of the key areas of training.

*"It seems to me that a common standard set might be useful in a modular organization to preclude confusion. It also seems to me that we need to get serious about defining how we train mixed platoons and teams since it seems like that is the manner in which the field intends to use our Soldiers and systems."*

— **General William S. Wallace**  
Commander, TRADOC

The above quote by General Wallace, although referring to the need for some type of clear standards in gunnery, clearly defines the need for the Stryker master trainer in the Stryker community. The Stryker master trainer would be the common thread of

**The SBCT's lethality** is derived from its ability to focus overmatching combined arms support to the infantry assault at identified decisive points. Its array of direct and indirect fire systems allows the SBCT to shape the AO and achieve decisive outcomes using the MGS; TOW IIA/B antiarmor missiles; Javelin antiarmor missiles; 120-mm, 81-mm, and 60-mm mortars; and 155-mm artillery. Direct fire systems focus on destroying hardened and or fortified positions in support of infantry assaults.

— **Chapter 1, FM 3-21-31,**  
***The Stryker Brigade Combat Team***



Specialist Jeremy Crisp

*A Soldier with the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, watches for suspicious activity during a patrol in Mosul, Iraq in November 2005.*

standards in the Stryker community in regards to "gunnery." It also gives some left and right limits in how a Stryker master trainer would be useful to the commanders at the tactical level in developing more lethal units and what his duties would be.

The need for a Stryker master trainer has been clearly identified, both academically and by the units that employ the Stryker. Stryker master trainers can be a key asset to the commander in shaping the elements of an SBCT into a formidable and lethal combined arms team that has and will continue to be successful in combat.

We encourage commanders to assist in developing this requirement and ask them to contact the Stryker/Bradley Proponent Office with recommendations. The point of contact is Sergeant First Class Michael Hertig, the Infantry Center's lead for the Combined Arms Weapons Proficiency for the Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Draft FM 3-22.3. He can be reached at (706) 544-6201 or Michael.Hertig@us.army.mil.

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