

ADAPT AND OVERCOME:

MTTs Meet Demands of Operational Units

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More than 2,500 years ago in the Grecian city-state of Sparta, military training was viewed with such seriousness that 12-year-old boys were taken from their mothers and entered into military service where they remained until after their 40th birthday. The Spartans also had a unique way of supporting their allies in a time of war. The Spartans sent leaders and trainers. If an ally required aid, they did not send their entire army; they sent one or a small group of soldiers to train and lead their ally's army. How effective was this method? The results speak for themselves as the most powerful military force of the time, Athens, was soundly defeated by the smaller, less experienced city-state of Syracuse with the help of the Spartan commander Gylippus. The U.S. Army has a similar method for training units preparing to deploy who may not have the time or funds to send all of their Soldiers to Fort Benning, Georgia, for training: the mobile training team (MTT). The MTT offers a time and cost efficient alternative to resident training at Fort Benning. The current operations tempo of the global war on terrorism creates an environment where training time, family time, and refit time are constantly competing. With only 12 to 15 months between deployments, every day is valuable. The MTTs provided by the 197th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning enable units to maximize their post and pre-deployment training time and funds. The MTTs provide some unique advantages over traditional on-site Fort Benning training in that they provide the same quality trained Soldiers to units through mobile and flexible courses and present both the units and the Army with a cost and time efficient alternative.

The 197th offers a variety of courses that are currently fielded as MTTs. There are seven courses offered by the 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment: Bradley Fighting Vehicle Master Gunner J3 and A3, Mechanized Leader ODS and A3, Stryker Transition, Stryker Leader, and Stryker Master Trainer. The 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment currently offers 12 courses: Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator and Master Trainer, Sniper, Sniper Employment Leader, Long Range Marksman, Short Range Marksmanship, Small Arms Weapons Expert, Javelin, Anti-Armor Leader, Infantry Mortar Leader, Combatives Level III, and Indirect Fire Infantryman (BNCOC). In total the 197th Infantry Brigade offers 18 courses that are MTT capable and

deliver quality training to any military installation in the United States and abroad. In the past three years alone, MTTs have trained more than 4,200 service members with 13 different active duty Army units, three National Guard units, three Special Operations units, and two Department of the Navy units.

The MTT also offers unique flexibility and adaptability in that they can tailor the courses to meet a commander's specific needs. During post and pre-deployment training time frames, a unit's schedule is overfilled with training events and mandatory deployment requirements. MTTs adapt to a unit's schedule and if dictated by the supported commander, condense the course to fit a specific training period or training requirement. Although deviating from the program of instruction (POI) for a specific course might not allow a Soldier to earn an additional skill identifier (ASI), it does allow the meat and potatoes of each course to be taught in a time-constrained environment. In addition to adjusting the POI schedule, MTTs operate in any training environment around the globe. MTTs frequently travel overseas and to combat theaters in order to conduct courses. Just recently, a two-Soldier MTT returned from Afghanistan where they trained National Guard cooks and mechanics on how to operate 120mm mortar systems in order to perform their own force protection. Within the first week of instruction, the National Guard Soldiers were defending their outpost by utilizing their newly acquired skills of providing effective



Private Scott Davis, *The Fort Campbell Courier*
Soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) familiarize themselves with heavy armored vehicles during an MTT at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in July 2007.



Private Mary Gurnee, *The Fort Campbell Courier*

Troy Carty, a U.S. Army Sniper School instructor, relays information to a student sniper from other instructors during a Sniper MTT at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in July 2007.

indirect fires against the enemy. In addition to the anywhere and anyplace mentality, POIs can also be modified for a unit's future deployment area of operations. For instance, a unit deploying to Afghanistan requests a POI modification that incorporates the effects and conditions of mountain warfare added to an upcoming Sniper MTT. The requested Sniper MTT then utilizes current theater tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and after action reviews (AARs) to customize the POI for the unit's future deployment. The different MTTs utilize the "real world" or "in theater" feedback in the form of AARs and TTPs in order to constantly modify and revamp their POIs to maintain the most up-to-date training and relevancy.

In addition to the scope and mobility advantages that MTTs offer, they also provide cost and time benefits over their traditional resident counterparts. The cost of sending Soldiers to a particular school at Fort Benning versus funding an MTT to a requesting unit is much more expensive in the long run. For example, for fiscal year 2009 the 197th is sending five Combatives level III MTTs to other installations for instruction, and each MTT will train 36 Soldiers at a time. Each MTT will consist of five instructors. That

is 45 instructors sent out Army-wide to instruct 180 Soldiers. The cost savings of sending 45 instructors TDY versus sending 180 Soldiers TDY to Fort Benning is obvious. The Combatives level III MTT in FY '09 will easily save the Army thousands of dollars.

The time savings in course structure, unit training time, and family time of the Soldiers offer significant benefits to not only the unit, but the Army as a whole. When Soldiers travel TDY to Fort Benning for any number of POIs conducted by the 197th, there are extraneous days utilized for travel. Soldiers are authorized travel days to and from Fort Benning, and instruction is limited during the weekends. When an MTT travels to an installation, only the instructors lose days due to travel. In addition, if permitted by the sponsored unit, MTT instruction can take place over the weekend in order to finish the course during a time-constrained period. The time utilized for travel and weekends allows the Soldiers in training to maximize their time on home station prior to the next deployment. Soldiers and leaders utilize this critical time to still perform their duties in a limited capacity while attending a designated course. However, it is imperative that Soldiers attending the

MTT course are allocated time to receive the full benefits of the training and perform well on graded evaluations. This requires commanders at all levels to make the MTT instruction a priority so this limited resource maximizes the unit's training time and funds. Finally, the time savings created by the MTT format, allow Soldiers to maximize family time prior to their next deployment. Soldiers do not have to spend anywhere from one week to as much as 62 days, in the case of the Bradley Master Gunner Course, away from their homes and families. The time spent at home station between deployments is precious family time that no Soldier wants to waste unnecessarily. The MTT offers a cost and time-savings option that benefits not only the Army, but its two most precious resources — the Soldier and time.

MTTs provide unique advantages over traditional resident training. They provide the same quality trained Soldiers to units through mobile and flexible courses and provide the Soldiers, the units, and the Army with a cost and time efficient option. No matter where Soldiers are stationed — from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Camp Corregidor, Iraq — MTTs deploy and train Soldiers to standard. In addition, the MTTs retain an amount of flexibility that allows adaptation to current combat TTPs, a commander's schedule, and to future deployment AOs. Time and cost savings provided by MTTs are undeniable and during a high operations tempo, the advantage offered is immense. For further information regarding MTTs offered by the 197th Infantry Brigade, Fort Benning, Georgia, unit operations officers can contact the 197th Operations Officer at (706) 545-4816 or DSN: 835-4816.

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