



MISSION COMMAND TRAINING PROGRAM HISTORY

The Mission Command Training Program is the United States Army's capstone combat training center (CTC). MCTP started off as the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) in 1987. Its original goal was to improve battlefield command and control through stressful and realistic combined arms training in a combat environment. BCTP met this need while also providing Division and Corps computer-driven simulation training. Effective, 10 May 2011, BCTP was officially re-designated the U.S. Army Mission Command Training Program, MCTP.

The command conducts or supports combined arms training that replicates joint-interagency-intergovernmental-multinational operations in a decisive action environment at worldwide locations for Brigades, Divisions, Corps, Army Service Combatant Commands (ASCCs), Joint Force Land Component Commands (JFLCCs), and Joint Task Forces (JTFs) in order to create training experiences that enable the Army's senior commanders to develop current, relevant, campaign-quality, joint and expeditionary mission command instincts and skills. Most, if not all, of today's general officers have participated in a MCTP exercise at some point in their careers.

From its inception, MCTP has featured key elements of the CTC training model such as a "free-thinking" opposing force (OPFOR), the use of experienced observer/trainers, advanced technology to gather data and a basic rotational sequence from choice of scenario through a warfighter exercise to an after action review. These elements were combined with innovations unique to MCTP such as computer-simulated battle action, mobile observer trainer teams, and senior mentors for unit commanders to eliminate the collective training gap at higher echelons for command and control training.

The Gulf War and the end of the Cold War prompted the first calls to widen the program's mission to address the dramatically altered world situation. From then on, MCTP's mission range expanded both in the levels of headquarters it exercised and in the levels of conflict it simulated. MCTP added two teams, Team C, in 1992, to provide Brigade-level training in the new Brigade Command and Battle Staff Training (BCBST) program, and Team D in 1993 to pick up the mission of joint training for Army units operating at the joint task force (JTF) or Army force (ARFOR) level.

After 9/11, MCTP established a special temporary mobile training team to conduct installation force protection seminars and readiness exercises. In preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom, MCTP developed a special seminar series on counterinsurgency for all deploying Brigades. In 2008, MCTP continued to meet the needs of the Army with Teams Sierra and Foxtrot, which conducted seminars and embedded exercises for functional and multifunctional Brigades.

Initially composed of one exercise team, Team A, and a group of civilian contractors, MCTP executed its first warfighter exercise in January 1988 with the 9th Infantry Division (Motorized) at Fort Lewis, Washington. This validated the concept for a CTC collective training exercise for Divisions and Corps. Later in the year, MCTP established Team B to increase rotational capacity and the world-class opposing force. MCTP also became a separate unit under the operational control of what is now the Combined Arms Center, Training.

Currently, MCTP consists of eight operations groups (OPSGRPs). OPSGRPs Alpha and Delta are missioned to train ASCC, Corps and Division-level staffs; OPSGRP Charlie conducts Brigade warfighter exercises (BWFX); OPSGRPs Bravo and Foxtrot train functional and multi-functional Brigades; OPSGRP Juliet trains Special Forces units; OPSGRP Sierra trains sustainment Brigades; OPSGRP X-Ray is responsible for exercise planning, exercise control and scenario design.

The program has consistently shown its ability to simultaneously participate and contribute to current operations and adapt its training programs to provide better support. MCTP will remain an “engine of change” for the current and future Army.

MCTP was awarded The Army Superior Unit Award on 15 October 2009 for outstanding meritorious service from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2008 and again on 5 May 2014 for outstanding meritorious service from October 2010 to 30 September 2011.