



Spc. Joshua Robichaux, a parachute rigger with the 5th Quartermaster Theater Aerial Delivery Company, 39th Transportation Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, receives virtual land navigation training on April 29, 2015, at the Baumholder Digital Training Center in Germany. (Photo by Sgt. Daniel Wyatt)

Be Realistic: A Model for Home-Station Training

The 16th Sustainment Brigade leveraged partnerships and technology to create realistic home-station training environments for its units.

■ By Maj. Aaron D. Beam and Jeff Hodges

Army sustainment units are the daily workhorses of the operational force. These organizations satisfy support requirements around the clock, sustain themselves, support named operations, and prepare for full-spectrum unified land operations (ULO).

The training time available to a multifunctional sustainment unit is limited; customer support requirements consume a large majority of

the commander's resources at every echelon. This leaves very little calendar space for foundational warrior training, small-unit collective training, and staff training. All types of Army organizations, but particularly multifunctional organizations, use existing training enablers and support packages to maximize the limited time available to conduct core home-station training at the crawl and walk levels.

The 16th Sustainment Brigade's approach to home-station training was to be committed to realistic and challenging training, partnered with a home-station training enabler, and focused on high-quality training support to accomplish the commander's training objectives across every echelon within the brigade. The brigade, stationed in Baumholder, Germany, partnered with the Joint Multinational Simulation Center's

(JMSC's) Kaiserslautern Mission Training Complex (KMTC).

Brigade Background

The 16th Sustainment Brigade is the sole sustainment brigade assigned to U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). It is fully committed to the "Strong Europe" concept, which is to assure, deter, and win in a complex world. As a subordinate organization of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, the brigade provides sustainment support throughout the U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility (AORs).

In addition to supporting forces assigned to USAREUR, the brigade supports the European Rotational Force assigned to the U.S. European Command from the continental United States. The brigade's subordinate organizations are located in Baumholder, Kaiserslautern, and Grafenwoehr, Germany, and Vicenza, Italy. The brigade moved from Bamberg, Germany, to Baumholder in November 2013 after its redeployment from Operation Enduring Freedom.

Overall Training Challenge

The JMSC provides mission command training support throughout the USAREUR AOR for all types of training, from warrior tasks through joint task force staff collective training. The KMTC, with locations in Kaiserslautern and Baumholder, is a subordinate division of the JMSC and provides Title 10 training support throughout the western Germany corridor. The KMTC, with a staff of 17 personnel (Army civilians and support contractors), provides mission command training support.

The 16th Sustainment Brigade was faced with a series of training challenges throughout fiscal year 2014. These challenges were present at nearly every echelon of the command and required a crawl- and walk-level training environment (a means) that would prepare the Soldiers to successfully execute a run-level training

event (an end).

The brigade used existing products and services available from the KMTC staff to respond to these challenges at three different levels: warrior tasks, small-unit collective training, and brigade staff collective training.

The Knights University

Following its deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom in 2013, the 16th Sustainment Brigade noticed that the future leaders it sent to USAREUR's Warrior Leader Course (WLC) had an alarming failure rate. Years of deployments and deployment-focused training, coupled with daily sustainment missions, had led to a significant decrease in the "Knight's Brigade" Soldiers' ability to conduct land navigation. Of the 16th Sustainment Brigade students sent to WLC, 17 percent failed and were returned to the unit.

This challenge prompted a change to how the organization prepared its Soldiers to attend the course. The brigade decided to launch the Knights University, an internal program of instruction (POI) to prepare Soldiers for WLC.

Because of the brigade's land navigation failure rates, three days of the Knights University are dedicated to land navigation. Day one is the crawl-level event—a land navigation refresher. Day two is the walk phase using KMTC assets. During day two, the Knights University leaders use the land navigation training program within Virtual Battle Space 3 (VBS3), the Army's tool for individual and small-unit collective training. Day three, the run phase, is the actual execution of a land navigation course in Baumholder.

The KMTC staff uses the land navigation module, which was originally developed by the Army's Training Brain Operations Center. The module was changed by adding the Grafenwoehr Training Area land navigation course terrain, which had been developed by JMSC. Every start point and checkpoint on the lane was recreated in VBS3.

Grafenwoehr Training Area land navigation special maps and map protractors are provided to Knights University Soldiers. Leaders are detailed to conduct the training, and the KMTC staff provides training and over-the-shoulder support for VBS3.

Training Success

An initial use case was conducted in October 2013 to determine if this support package was an effective solution. The brigade leaders were very satisfied with the environment, and the training support package was included as a formal component of the Knights University POI. Since then, the KMTC has provided a land navigation training environment for more than 400 Soldiers in the Kaiserslautern area, including all 16th Sustainment Brigade Soldiers headed for WLC.

To assess the overall value of this environment, the KMTC developed a four-question survey to be given to students during each training event. These yes-or-no statement questions are asked before and after each land navigation training event:

- I am confident in my ability to visualize map terrain.
- I am confident in my ability to use a lensatic compass.
- I am confident in my ability to use a map protractor.
- I am confident in my ability to execute dismounted land navigation.

The survey results indicate a 17-percent increase in confidence following the event. Most importantly, the Knights University three-day land navigation POI has decreased land navigation failures within the brigade from 17 percent to 3 percent.

The 106th FMSU's Training

The 106th Financial Management Support Unit (FMSU), a company-sized organization, is a subordinate formation of the 16th Sustainment Brigade. The FMSU headquarters is located in Baumholder, and its



Leaders from the 106th Financial Management Support Unit issue orders during Virtual Battle Space 3 convoy operations training. (Photo provided by 21st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office)

detachments are in Kaiserslautern, Grafenwoehr, and Vicenza.

The FMSU commander's greatest challenge was collective training; putting the unit on the road many times per year to train collectively is time-consuming and cost prohibitive. More importantly, the support to FMSU customers would be significantly degraded. In order to conduct one day of training, a traveling detachment would not be available to provide financial support for four days.

The 106th FMSU approached the KMTC with a single question: Can the KMTC create an environment that allows the FMSU's units to conduct collective, crawl-level, mission-essential task list training from their home stations? Just as with other 16th Sustainment Brigade training events, the KMTC leveraged tech-

nology to meet the challenge.

The 106th FMSU required a training environment that would support one of its primary mission-essential tasks, "Protect the FMSU." The unit commander wanted his detachment commanders to train these tasks while maintaining the ability to observe the training. He also wanted to facilitate an after-action review at the conclusion of the training day.

The 106th FMSU selected the terrain to be used during the event and created an operation order that provided the detachments with the information necessary to begin troop leading procedures. At the same time, the KMTC staff initiated a joint exercise life cycle for the event. The JMTC tactical gaming branch and the Vicenza Mission Training Complex were included in this joint exercise life cycle.

Three planning conferences and a series of internal testing events were conducted to prepare for the July 2014 event. The government nonsecure network connected the sites to create a seamless training environment.

The event was conducted as planned on July 17, 2014. The FMSU commander and detachment commanders accomplished their core warrior and collective task training objectives.

This event was the first time that VBS3 had been used in this manner (using a government network to distribute an environment to four locations in two countries). The four locations were connected using existing encryption devices and the enterprise unclassified network; no funding was required to lease a commercial circuit for this training event.



Soldiers from the 16th Sustainment Brigade's 106th Financial Management Support Unit huddle for a tactical convoy briefing during a training exercise involving Soldiers from four geographical locations in Germany and Italy on July 17, 2014. (Photo by Sgt. Daniel Wyatt)

Brigade Staff Training

The 16th Sustainment Brigade staff is, like any other staff in the Army, fully engaged in day-to-day operations and planning for upcoming support missions. Unlike other brigade staffs, however, it is a theater-level asset that receives, stages, integrates, and sustains Army and multinational units across two continents. Very little time is available for this staff to dedicate to internal staff training; literally every day brings new requirements and changing landscapes.

Two internal staff exercises, designed as crawl-level events, were conducted to prepare the staff for a final run-level command post exercise (CPX). The first of these internal training events was a staff exercise (STAFFEX) conducted at the Baumholder Mission Training Complex in August 2014. The following goals were the STAFFEX training objectives:

- Understand the unique role the brigade has in ULO.
- Understand how ULO principles affect the organization's mission with regard to geographic location.

- Conduct the military decision-making process (MDMP) with a focus on deployment readiness and theater opening.
- Build teamwork across the staff.

The KMTC staff prepared a full higher headquarters operation order with annexes that enabled the staff to begin planning for a large-scale theater opening mission. The JMISC provided a mission command program instructor to provide an MDMP overview and over-the-shoulder support to the staff during the event.

During this four-day event, the brigade staff visualized the challenges associated with operational reach and the sustainment tasks associated with theater opening, initial reception of forces, and the sustainment of a large field force for an extended period of time.

The CPX

Using the same operational environment and products used and developed in the August STAFFEX, the brigade conducted a CPX in October 2014. In this particular exercise, the brigade operated from its deployable

command post located in the Baumholder training area. In addition to conducting a theater opening exercise, the brigade managed current operations within the USAREUR AOR.

The following were training objectives for the CPX:

- Conduct sustainment operations with a focus on theater opening functions (reception, staging, onward movement, and integration and the initial distribution system).
- Direct the establishment of the brigade support area.
- Direct operational area security.

In this particular exercise, the brigade, using a decisive action training environment scenario, received and staged U.S. forces in a hostile theater while maintaining current operations in the USAREUR AOR. The exercise was supported by the KMTC staff and its products and the 21st Theater Sustainment Command. It included exercise control, higher control, and observer-controller support to provide a complete exercise environment in support of the CPX.

The brigade began receiving critical

operational information a week before the exercise began so that the staff could continue with the MDMP initiated at the STAFFEX and prepare to execute the core reception, staging, and onward movement tasks during the CPX.

Three days after the CPX start date, the conditions were set for the brigade staff to enter into a very complex environment. Common operational pictures for current operations and the decisive action training environment were available so that the staff members could see themselves and their Soldiers in both theaters in real time throughout the exercise.

Critical information was provided throughout the event using a master scenario events list; a total of 437 injects were provided to the staff during the event. Most of the injects were provided by 16th Sustainment Brigade Soldiers role playing from response cells. These injects covered the entire range of information, from daily logistics and personnel status reports to troops in contact reports.

Live training aids and events were included as a component of the CPX. The USAREUR multinational counter improvised explosive device team and the 16th Sustainment Brigade-provided opposing force trained elements of the 16th Sustainment Brigade special troops battalion on identifying and reacting to improvised explosive devices and providing security throughout the exercise.

Additionally, the 5th Quartermaster Theater Aerial Delivery Company, a 16th Sustainment Brigade subordinate unit, airdropped supplies into the Baumholder training area. In effect, the brigade staff trained in a combined live and constructive simulation event, known within the training community as a blended training event.

So What?

What is the significance of the 16th Sustainment Brigade's training program? Training was planned, prepared, and executed, but was there any real value?

As mentioned, WLC land navi-

gation failure rates have decreased from 17 percent to 3 percent. More Soldiers are maximizing the unit's investment in WLC and not being returned to their unit for retraining and subsequent return to the course. More importantly, a greater number of Soldiers are gaining the confidence that is necessary to transition into a junior leadership position.

The 106th FMSU training events represented significant cost avoidance for the unit. The unit commander saved three days for each collective training event by avoiding two travel days and one preparation day. No travel dollars were spent, and the detachments stayed at their assigned locations to provide customer service to their units.

The 16th Sustainment Brigade STAFFEX and CPX provided the most significant cost avoidance. During the internal event, the KMTC provided the staff with a complete set of operational products. The unit used facilities and equipment provided by the Baumholder MTC. JMISC provided MDMP training and over-the-shoulder support during the STAFFEX.

The simulation model provided the 16th Sustainment Brigade with the opportunity to visualize and react to the delivery of personnel and goods, supply consumption, and the challenges that face a sustainment brigade during the early phases of a large-scale ULO.

The environment that the KMTC staff created is the only type of environment that permits this kind of operation, on this scale. A home-station, commander-centered exercise is the only opportunity the commander has to train his staff before deployment or for a larger scale CPX in which his unit will likely not be the primary training audience.

The 16th Sustainment Brigade incurred no monetary charges for any of the support it received. JMISC services for home-station training are a sunk cost to JMISC, JMTC, and USAREUR. The KMTC increased the value of its product lines by reusing

products throughout the training cycle.

This is not to say that there is no cost to the unit; a unit must assist in planning and preparing the training event and, in some cases, must provide the task trainers. These are critical tasks in support of an exercise, and the exercise will not be successful if a unit does not accept those roles.

The 16th Sustainment Brigade made full use of the products and services provided by the KMTC throughout fiscal year 2014. This relationship continues to mature and evolve as current training requirements are refined and new requirements are identified.

Synergy can develop between a unit and its enabler at any location. Success does not require new devices or additional resources; it simply requires adhering to the principles of home-station training, thinking big, and committing to getting the work done.

The synergy between the 16th Sustainment Brigade and the KMTC is a model that can be adapted at any home station as long as the trainers and enablers trust each other and commit themselves to setting conditions that allow the commander to achieve training objectives.

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