



*Soldiers from the 261st Ordnance Company and civilians from McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, Oklahoma, load missiles onto flatbed trailers during Operation Golden Cargo in June 2011. (Photo by Sgt. Ferdinand Thomas)*

## Making the MOST of Mobilized Ordnance Specific Training

Joint Munitions Command facilities provide ordnance units with training that they could not accomplish otherwise. Expanding this program would provide greater benefits.

■ By Col. James Groark

In 2007, ammunition platoons often needed six months to become proficient in their ordnance tasks because they lacked hands-on predeployment training. To fill this training gap, the Joint Munitions Command (JMC) led an initiative to improve the readiness of deploying ammunition units using mobilized ordnance specific training (MOST). Since its implementation, MOST has successfully closed the training gap for proactive ammuni-

tion units that have taken advantage of hands-on training at ammunition depots and from JMC's skilled civilian workforce.

However, recent lessons learned in Afghanistan and Kuwait have identified a lack of hands-on ammunition training prior to deployment. This gap remains because of a shortage of rigorous, realistic exercise platforms for the Army's 60 modular ammunition platoons—42 of which are in the reserve component.

These findings should trigger the ordnance community to reinvigorate and expand the MOST program in order to provide ordnance Soldiers with the skills required to win on tomorrow's battlefield. When a Soldier is in contact with the enemy, nothing is more valuable than ammunition.

### Reinvigorating MOST

Expanding MOST would create a synergized training partnership that



*A Soldier from the 163rd Ordnance Company, an Army Reserve unit based in California, stencils ammo boxes as part of mobilized ordnance specific training at Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky.*

incorporates the expertise and resources of JMC, the Defense Ammunition Center, the Combined Arms Support Command, the Ordnance School, First Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve.

For example, the Defense Ammunition Center and the Combined Arms Support Command would provide lessons learned from the current fight and requirements for the future fight that would be incorporated into MOST training events. This would ensure units stay abreast of current training and wartime requirements.

The Ordnance School has designed a 96-hour “Ammunition Crucible”

that will soon be available through the Combined Arms Training Strategy planning tool. The training event provides tasks, conditions, and standards for ammunition units setting up operations in an austere environment and executing core mission-essential tasks.

First Army will advise, train, and assist MOST training to achieve readiness requirements directed by the Department of the Army. In other words, the best of the institutional training domain combined with challenging, wartime replicative hands-on missions will provide the Army’s modular ammunition platoons with training opportunities that are not available at home station.

## A Two-Phased Approach

MOST consists of a two-phased approach: munitions individual sustainment training (MIST) and munitions unit sustainment training (MUST). (See figure 1.)

MIST allows individuals and small teams of ammunition specialists to support JMC missions while receiving tailorable training on critical individual munitions tasks. These tasks include ammunition storage, shipping, accountability, and stock control.

MIST is available throughout the year at participating JMC depots such as Tooele Army Depot (TEAD), Utah; McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, Oklahoma; Crane Army Ammunition Activity, Indiana; and Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky. It is a win-win opportunity when these JMC depots partner with ammunition units that are close by. For minimal transportation cost and administrative effort, ordnance Soldiers can sharpen their individual skills while supporting the local depot’s mission requirements.

MUST builds upon MIST and provides modular ammunition platoons with an annual or capstone event designed to increase collective proficiency on mission-essential tasks. JMC facilities accommodate unit training plans based on the commander’s training objectives. The technical training available includes explosives safety, supply stock control, storage procedures, surveillance, blocking and bracing, loading operations, materials handling equipment, inventory, maintenance, and firefighting.

## What MOST Can Accomplish

The MOST expansion would build multi-echelon, joint training events in a field environment. Opportunities exist to synchronize functional munitions training at JMC depots with other collective training events such as Nationwide Move, a logistics mission that transports excess ammunition between JMC-managed installations. Integrating joint and interagency training audiences with ammunition units

eliminates the potential for stovepiped training and increases opportunities for mission command at all echelons.

An excellent example of the potential of MOST is Operation Overblast, an exercise conducted by the 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in April 2015 at TEAD. The unit provided mission command for the 60th Ordnance Company, which conducted multiple collective and individual tasks in a field environment while directly supporting TEAD's mission workload.

The commander's training objectives achieved by the 60th Ordnance Company included the following:

- Deployed assets from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, to TEAD.
- Exercised mission command as part of an expeditionary task force.
- Conducted ammunition logistics support and interagency training with TEAD personnel.

- Supported TEAD in preparing major munition shipments (50-plus containers) to Korea, Australia, Japan, and other areas requiring support.

- Augmented the TEAD fire department and conducted specialized search and rescue training.

The 63rd Ordnance Company commander said that Operation Overblast provided a true collective training event that focused on munitions skills that are rarely accomplished at home station and barely addressed during combat training center rotations.

### Training Resources

A one-stop shop for units requesting MOST opportunities resides with the JMC Army Reserve Element Detachment located at the JMC headquarters at Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. The detachment provides nationwide coordination

among all components for MUST missions at JMC depots. In addition, the Mission Analysis, Readiness and Resource Synchronization system provides units with the capability to search for, review, and nominate units for ordnance and ammunition collective training events. This tool is located at <https://mobcop.army.mil/MARRS/default.aspx>.

The reserve component personnel assigned to the detachment are ready, reliable, and skilled Soldiers that allow JMC to expand its global support to the warfighter and provide individual and collective training opportunities at 14 JMC depots by leveraging Soldier augmentees.

The Army's 60 modular ordnance platoons require more functional training opportunities. The Army cannot create adaptive, skilled, and trained munition sustainers without enough exercises and collective training that mirror the functional complexity of modular ammunition platoons' wartime missions.

If mandated and fully funded, MOST would fill the individual and collective training gap. The combination of expanding MOST opportunities, Army Reserve collective training exercises, and combat training center rotations delivers the required balanced approach to ensure the Army's munition sustainers win on tomorrow's battlefield.

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Examples of MIST/MUST Training	
Standard Examples	Advanced Examples
Munitions familiarity	Stock development and review
Field storage and handling	Sustainment information systems
Store, issue, and receive	Advanced demilitarization
Inventory and accountability	Nonstandard munitions
Materials handling equipment	Effects
Compatibility	Rotary-wing and rail operations
Explosives safety	Advanced explosives safety
Vehicle and container inspections	Weapon platform familiarity
Blocking, bracing, and tie-down	Munition master gunner training
Standard Army Ammunition System–Modernization	Electrical safety and high-energy retaining ordnance

Figure 1. This chart lists examples of mobilized ordnance specific training, which includes munitions individual sustainment training (MIST) and munitions unit sustainment training (MUST).