



4th MEB: New Unit, New Mission

By Captain Robert M. McCullough

On 16 October 2008, the United States Army activated its second Regular Army maneuver enhancement brigade (MEB)—the 4th MEB—at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. At the same time, Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) and the 94th Signal Company were activated, and the 193d Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) was reactivated—all as organic units of the 4th MEB.

United States Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) assigned the 4th MEB training readiness authority (TRA) for the 5th Engineer Battalion and the 94th Engineer Battalion (both already stationed at Fort Leonard Wood) and the 92d Military Police Battalion (restationed to Fort Leonard Wood from Fort Benning, Georgia). The commanding general of the United States Army Maneuver Support Center (MANSCEN), in his role as senior commander at Fort Leonard Wood, also assigned administrative control of these units to the 4th MEB, which is under the TRA of 1st Infantry Division.

The 4th MEB has a dual mission—to train Soldiers for the current conflicts and to prepare for its role as Task Force Operations for the chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) consequence management response force (CCMRF). Task Force Operation's higher headquarters for the CCMRF mission is Joint Task Force–Civil Support (JTF–CS), based at Fort Monroe, Virginia. The mission of this task force is to deploy to an incident site, establish command and control of designated Department of Defense forces, and provide defense support of civil authorities to save lives, prevent injury, and provide temporary critical life support.

The MEB is one of the Army's newest concepts, as part of its transformation to a lighter, more lethal force. Developed at Fort Leonard Wood by members of the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, the MEB brings all the maneuver support facets together in a multifunctional brigade for the Army. Maneuver support operations integrate the complementary and reinforcing capabilities of key functions,



**HHC 4th MEB Soldiers
working as a team to
problem-solve at the
TOCEX**

tasks, and systems of protection, movement and maneuver, and sustainment to enhance the freedom of action of the supported commander (division, corps, joint task force [JTF]).

When the 4th MEB activated, it received a training focus from the Army, centering on the core competencies of MEBs. The brigade's core mission-essential task list (CMETL) is as follows:

- Conduct command and control.
- Protect the force.
- Conduct maneuver support operations.
- Conduct support area operations.
- Provide sustainment.
- Conduct stability operations.
- Conduct consequence management.

The MEB contains no organic units other than its HHC, a signal company, and a BSB. The staff includes CBRNE, engineer, and military police functional operations and planning cells. The staff also includes a fires cell, area operations section, and airspace management section that support the capability of the MEB to be assigned an area of operations. During full spectrum operations, the MEB could potentially command and control unique combinations of units, such as CBRN, civil affairs (CA), engineer, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), military police, air and missile defense (AMD), and/or a tactical combat force (TCF).

The Army gave the brigade a specific training focus when it received its CCMRF mission in December 2008—the directed mission-essential task list (DMETL). The DMETL crosswalks directly to the MEB CMETL, with the addition of “conduct defense support of civil authorities (DSCA)” in place of “conduct stability operations.” Task Force Operations’ CCMRF mission is: On order, Task Force Operations deploys and establishes the brigade task force at a designated location within the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) joint operations area and executes CBRNE consequence management operations in support of civil authorities to save lives, mitigate human suffering, and facilitate recovery operations in a CBRNE environment.

Task Force Operations executes the consequence management and DSCA missions in strict adherence with the principles of the U.S. Constitution and public law. When directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, USNORTHCOM provides DSCA, and Task Force Operations functions under the operational control of United States Army North (USARNORTH) and JTF–CS.

In preparation for the brigade to assume the CCMRF mission, FORSCOM identified additional units to work under the task organization of the 4th MEB. These units include an Army unit from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, with robust manpower capabilities; the Marines’ Chemical–

Biological Incident Response Force from Indian Head, Maryland; an Air Force unit that will provide engineering capabilities, expertise, and equipment; an Air Force radiological assessment team (AFRAT) that provides rapid, global response for radiation and nuclear accidents/incidents to deliver radiological risk assessment for contingency planning, consequence management, and site recovery; and several additional transportation and chemical companies and platoons from around the country. After those units were identified and the 4th MEB published its train-up operation order for the mission, the units began their own training programs.

The first phase in training individuals or a brigade staff for DSCA is to impart a unique set of individual and leader skills, created through self-study, online training, and MEB-focused briefings—including an introduction to CCMRF, an introduction to the MEB, and functional area-specific briefings (military police, engineer, logistic). Besides typical Army individual training, an individual in the MEB can expect increased training on media awareness, the Posse Comitatus Act, antiterrorism, rules for the use of force (particularly important during a homeland mission), and CBRNE-specific tasks.

Leader training includes all of the above individual training, with some additional emphasis on DSCA. A company-level leader can expect to train on DSCA in a four-hour online course titled “Tactical DSCA.” The distributed learning orients the participants and develops awareness, comprehension, and competence. All staff sergeants (serving in a sergeant first class position) and above in the brigade will complete the DSCA Phase I Online Course (8–10 hours). Senior leaders will execute a resident DSCA course focusing on intergovernmental and interagency response.

In late May 2009, the JTF–CS sent a mobile training team to Fort Leonard Wood to prepare the brigade for the CCMRF mission. The training brought together the subject matter experts from JTF–CS and Task Force Operations to train them in CCMRF mission operations. Exercising the processes and procedures of the mission, the training taught key leaders how to network with their counterparts in the task force at other bases. During the three-day span, there were about 30 classes that prepare leaders to immediately jump in and be effective in a crisis situation. Leaders also learned about methods of operation, potential issues, and possible solutions.

The first major exercise in the certification process was the Dauntless Response Command Post Exercise, conducted in a field environment. Since all of the units are spread throughout the continental United States, the exercise was distributed in a joint network node-based tactical network, so that each unit participated from its home location without having to deploy Soldiers, Airmen, and Marines to Fort Leonard Wood.

The next major phase of training was the mission rehearsal exercise for all of the units assuming the Fiscal Year 2010 CCMRF mission. This exercise, Vibrant Response 09 (VR09),

took place in late July through early August 2009 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Vibrant Response is a USNORTHCOM-directed, USARNORTH-executed, joint CCMRF mission rehearsal exercise designed to train and exercise USARNORTH JTFs and CCMRF task force headquarters staff in homeland defense and civil support processes. At the end of this exercise, the Task Force Operations command and control capability was validated and key leaders and staffs were trained and ready to assume the CCMRF mission.

The final stage of the CCMRF certification process was the validation of the entire unit during an emergency deployment readiness exercise and field training exercise. This was the pinnacle training event and involved all units coming together to train at a simulated CBRNE incident site. The entire regular Army CCMRF JTF alerted, marshaled, and deployed according to actual mission timelines and procedures, then conducted consequence management operations in support of federal, state, and local authorities. This was the first full exercise of the CCMRF and presented a tremendous training opportunity.

While the 4th MEB trains for and executes its CCMRF mission, it also continues to execute its role as the FORSCOM TRA higher headquarters to the 92d Military Police Battalion, the 5th Engineer Battalion, and the 94th Engineer Battalion. Each of these FORSCOM units has a different tactical mission focus and a different Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) timeline. The 92d is preparing for future military police missions in Southwest Asia. The 5th redeployed from Iraq and its own 14-month combat tour in July 2009 and continues its engineer and military working dog team deployments to both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The 94th recently completed reset (recovery from its 15-month combat tour in Iraq and retraining in preparation for a future Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom deployment).

“The 4th MEB has a challenging future ahead—a national homeland security mission of critical importance to the United States, with continuing support to the War on Terrorism with military police and engineer units. This is a challenge the brigade enjoys, and the 4th MEB relishes its role as a key member of the great 1st Infantry Division, JTF-CS, and MANSCEN teams.”

—Colonel Robert H. Risberg
Commander, 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade



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