



United States Joint Forces Military Training Center Targets Deploying Units

By Major Michael J. Malone

The United States Joint Forces Military Skills Training Center, located at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, has shifted focus from international competition to training small units for deployment. Originally, the mission of the Center—operated by the United States Army Reserve Command—was to train U.S. Reserve officers, cadets, and midshipmen who had completed the Confédération Interalliée des Officiers de Réserve (CIOR)—(translated as Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers) professional development course to compete in the annual North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) CIOR Military Skills Competition, with the ultimate goal of winning a gold medal. But considering the ongoing training needs in support of the Global War on Terrorism, that goal no longer seemed adequate. Training for competition is now secondary to the mission of providing effective professional development and peak performance training in leadership and advanced military skills to small deploying units.

The Center reevaluated its end customer, deciding that the Department of Defense would be better served with well-trained, cohesive combat teams than with the prestige of winning the CIOR competition among our allies. The Center cadre is composed of Soldiers who are tops in their warfighting skills. The United States Army Reserve and United States Marine Corps Reserve marksmanship cadre include several who wear the President's Hundred Tab, which is awarded to the top 100 shooters each

year at the national shooting match at Camp Perry, Ohio. The lead land navigation instructor is a United States Navy Reserve SEAL officer who—because of his expertise—has been tasked with teaching land navigation skills to active duty Navy SEALs. Opening the curriculum to include pre-mobilization training for deploying teams seemed to be the logical next step.

The most recent beneficiary of this shift in mission focus was Facility Engineer Team (FET) 19, United States Army Facilities Engineering Group—Southwest, 416th Engineer Command. Scheduled to deploy to support base camps with engineer services and construction management, FET 19 underwent a 3-day team-building exercise at Camp Bullis, Texas. The exercise involved intensive training on the M9 pistol and M16A2 rifle, advanced land navigation, and combat first aid. The pistol and rifle training went beyond the engagement of static targets and focused on real-world decisions the Soldiers would be making in a deployment environment.

The training did not focus solely on warfighting skills, but integrated a constant theme of team building throughout. With facilitation from the Center cadre, the individual team members discussed their personal backgrounds and objectives for the deployment. In several subsequent sessions, the team had an opportunity to review higher-level command missions—from the commander in chief to the team's group commander. The culminating event was the development

of the team's mission statement—by the team—as it related to their upcoming deployment: *Deploy to the United States Army Central Command's area of responsibility and effectively provide quality facility engineering and engineer planning support to assist supported forces in the accomplishment of their mission.* This exercise will prove invaluable to the cohesiveness of the team as it continues its preparation for deployment.

Even though it's no longer the primary mission, the Center still trains selected Reserve officers to compete in the annual NATO CIOR Military Skills Competition. Approximately 160 Reserve officers and cadets from 19 NATO countries take part in the competition, which tests the competitors in warfighting skills such as rifle marksmanship, pistol marksmanship, orienteering/land navigation, land and water obstacle courses, combat first aid, and NATO policies (including the law of war) in a 3-day military competition. The competition not only provides international exposure to junior officers but also develops friendships and strengthens the NATO bond—which is an ideal way to foster cooperation between the various Reserve forces.

For more information, contact the United States Joint Forces Military Training Center at (210) 221-1206 or view its Web site at www.uscior.army.mil.



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