

South Dakota National Guard

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Mobile Training Teams bring artillery classroom to Soldiers' backyard

By 1st Lt. Rebecca Linder
2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute)

FORT MCCOY, Wis. –The South Dakota Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) is bringing the field artillery classroom to Soldiers throughout the Midwest through its Mobile Training Teams.

Based out of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the 2-196th RTI provides MTT instructors who travel to teach a variety of 13M and 13P basic, advanced and senior leader field artillery courses, which allows units to train their Soldiers at, or close to, their home station.

The MTTs specialize in the Multiple Launch Rocket and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems.

Instructors and students of the course say it enhances training, saves money and allows for better networking among Soldiers looking to further develop their artillery skills.

"The 13M MTT has taught more than 650 hours of NCOES (noncommissioned officer education system) instruction alone," said Sgt. 1st Class Neal Stratman, 13M instructor and MTT member. "I enjoy going out to different states and instructing. Not only do we meet great students along the way, we are able to network with others in the field artillery community, which only builds and expands our force."

"These courses create about an 80 percent cost savings for the unit and it drives retention and readiness," 1st Sgt. Micheal Seefeld, senior operations NCO, Field Artillery Subject Matter Expert cell. "Soldiers get to train closer to home and many of them get to see their families and sleep in their own bed at night."

In June, MTT members traveled to Fort McCoy to train Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery Regiment, Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Recently back from a deployment in Afghanistan, the course was an opportunity for Soldiers of the 1-121st to continue to train together in their home state, alongside those they served in combat with.

"Training in a familiar environment with the people I deployed with and the equipment we used makes the classes that much more enjoyable – the class is more cohesive this way," said Staff Sgt. Matthew McIntyre, resupply vehicle ammunition section chief with the 1-121st. "Many of us have worked together for the past six years, which means we can jump right in and start training without any icebreakers."

This request is one of eight that the 2-196th has fulfilled within the last year from requests within the state and MTTs outside the state. Nearly 130 Soldiers, in addition to the schoolhouse's forecasted requirements, have been trained by the 2-196th RTI in the 13M and 13P military occupational specialties.



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Besides Wisconsin, instructors from the 2-196th have conducted courses in Wyoming, Kansas, Colorado, and throughout South Dakota.

States are also using a training strategy to increase the amount of Soldiers they can put through schools per year by conducting courses during their annual training periods in relation to their deployment cycle.

One of the units who took advantage of this cost-saving approach, the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, was able to allow 55 Soldiers to receive training in professional military education during their annual training in the unit's deployment cycle reset year.

"If I had it my way, this would be the way of the future," said Seefeld.

"The cost efficient methodology of MTTs should be how courses are conducted in order to maximize fiscal responsibility while establishing the ability to keep the force trained at many levels," said Stratman.

More than 300 field artillerymen across the nation have been trained this fiscal year from instate requests and MTT requests.

The amount of training has gone above and beyond the projected number and field artillery schoolhouses are projected to train approximately 450 by the end of the year, said Seefeld.

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



160623-Z-GY802-001: Staff Sgt. Matthew McIntyre, left, a student in the Multiple Launch Rocket Specialist and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System Advanced Leader Course, tutors Sgt. Jack Nicholson, also a student, on where to download the HIMARS training pods during a squad training exercise June 23, 2016, in Fort McCoy, Wis. Both students are members of the 1-121st Field Artillery Battalion, Wisconsin Army National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Rebecca Linder/Released)



160623-Z-GY802-002: Sgt. 1st Class Neal Stratman, left, instructor for 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), South Dakota Army National Guard, discusses a training scenario during a squad training exercise with Staff Sgt. John Eckert, a launcher chief for the 1-121st Field Artillery Battalion, June 23, 2016, in Fort McCoy, Wis. Stratman, along with two other instructors from the 2-196th, conducted a Multiple Launch Rocket Specialist and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System Advanced Leader Course as part of a Mobile Training Team for 12 students from the Wisconsin Army National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Rebecca Linder/Released)



160623-Z-GY802-003: Sgt. 1st Class Neal Stratman, an instructor for 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), South Dakota Army National Guard, evaluates students on conducting a HIMARS reload operation, June 23, 2016, in Fort McCoy, Wis. A Mobile Training Team from the SDARNG conducted the 15-day Multiple Launch Rocket Specialist and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System Advanced Leader Course for members of the 1-121st Field Artillery Battalion. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Rebecca Linder/Released)



160623-Z-GY802-004: Sgt. 1st Class Neal Stratman, instructor for 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), South Dakota Army National Guard, evaluates Staff Sgt. John Eckert, a student of the Multiple Launch Rocket Specialist and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System Advanced Leader Course, on reload operations, June 23, 2016, in Fort McCoy, Wis. A SDARNG Mobile Training Team went to Wisconsin to conduct the course which allowed Eckert, recently back from a deployment to Afghanistan, to receive professional military education in his home state alongside Soldiers he deployed with. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Rebecca Linder/Released)



160623-Z-GY802-005: Sgt. 1st Class Neal Stratman, center, instructor for 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), South Dakota Army National Guard, conducts an after action review with students after a training exercise, June 23, 2016, in Fort McCoy, Wis. Stratman, along with two other instructors from the 2-196th, conducted a Multiple Launch Rocket Specialist and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System Advanced Leader Course as part of a Mobile Training Team for 12 students from the Wisconsin Army National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Rebecca Linder/Released)

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