

# THE MOBILITY OFFICER – MASTER OF DEPLOYMENT

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**T**oday's Army is undergoing a transformation into an expeditionary force capable of rapidly deploying anywhere in the world. A thorough understanding of the deployment process and Defense Transportation System is key to achieving this end. Until recently we relied on an ad hoc team of officers and NCOs in the units supported by a cadre of installation movement coordinators to plan and execute unit deployment and redeployment operations. This arrangement worked with limited success; however, as the complexities of the system increased new challenges were created that could not be met with the existing lineup. The Mobility Officer (MO) program was brought about to fill the gap in deployment expertise, especially in the divisions, and the results have exceeded expectation.



The Mobility Officer, a warrant officer with military occupational specialty (MOS) 882A, was established in 1997 to provide the Army with a skilled technician in the areas of deployment and movement control. The original intent was to replace Transportation Corps lieutenants with MOs in certain transportation units but the plan was modified. The revised plan put mobility officers in the division transportation offices of the ten active divisions and the two Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCT) as well as the movement control battalions and movement control teams. The plan also gave priority to the divisions and SBCTs to fill their positions with graduates of the first classes.

As the first class of MOs prepared to graduate, MG Mortensen, then the Chief of Transportation, sent letters to each of the division commanders introducing the mobility officers and explaining the rationale behind the program. The mobilities took it from there and have emerged as a deployment success story. Through their efforts they quickly matured into the commander's "go to" staff officer for

deployment advice, planning, execution, coordination, and training. The MO is a competent and proven expert who presents the commander with solutions to the deployment problem. He is a proficient technician who:

- Advises the commander on the joint deployment process.
- Ensures rapid transmission of movement requirements into the Defense Transportation System.
- Develops and conducts training associated with unit movement operations.
- Identifies and remedies deployment issues.
- Plans and coordinates deployments and redeployments.
- Provides expert distribution advice to facilitate theater sustainment operations.

To achieve the desired deployment competency level an intense training program was designed, launched, and recently revised. Candidates must first



complete the Warrant Officer Candidate Course at Fort Rucker. The new warrant officers move to Fort Eustis for the 19-week Mobility Officer Warrant Officer Basic Course that includes extensive instruction in the joint deployment process, the Defense Transportation System, unit movement operations, strategic mobility operations, and joint deployment information systems. These information systems include:

- Joint Operations Planning and Execution System (JOPES)
- Joint Force Requirements Generator II (JFRG II)
- Transportation Coordinator's Automated Information for Movement System II (TC AIMS II)
- Transportation Coordinator Automated Command and Control Information System (TC ACCIS)
- Global Transportation Network (GTN)
- Deployment and Sustainment Support Tool (DS2T)
- Automated Air Load Planning System (AALPS)

- Single Mobility System (SMS)
- Joint Deployment Logistics Model (JDLM)
- World Wide Port System (WPS)

The course culminates in an intensive computer-based exercise where the MOs deploy a brigade from CONUS to an overseas theater. It brings together the skills and knowledge acquired during the course and challenges the MOs to practically apply them to work through the deployment paradigm. The exercise is conducted in the state-of-the-art Deployment and Distribution Exercise Center where the collaborative environment is ideally replicated. Recently a class of mobilities and a class of division transportation officers joined together to tackle the complexities of deploying a brigade task force. The interchange was profound, encountering the issues during the exercise that are typical of those confronted in an actual deployment.

The course was extended from the original 13-week program to one of 19 weeks based on a task analysis involving MOs planning and executing recent deployments. With the completion of the course the mobility officers have a complete understanding of the process and will be able to review and validate unit movement plans, create deployment force packages, analyze and manage TPFDDs for supportability, and track deploying forces and sustainment cargo with automated information technology. A Mobility Officer Warrant Officer Advanced Course is now under development for introduction in FY07 to prepare CW3 MOs for assignments at division and echelon above corps.

There are now 52 MOs in the active force, and they have demonstrated the value of the program particularly during deployments in conjunction with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This was especially evident in the divisions where the mobility officers proved their worth during every aspect of the deployment. MAJ James Kazmierczak, Division Transportation Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized), reported that CW2

Joseph Peck was the recognized deployment expert in the division. He advised commanders and their movement officers at every level and served as the division spokesman at deployment conferences. He was instrumental in establishing training sessions for the unit movement personnel to enhance their understanding of deployment procedures and to facilitate the coordination between the deploying unit and the installation support network. Mr. Peck was selected as the 2003 Transportation Corps Warrant Officer of the Year in recognition of his accomplishments during the deployment and redeployment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division.



CW2 Samuel “Bo” Hardin represented the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division at Joint deployment conferences where the details of deploying the division were ironed out. He ensured that the employment guidance of MG Petraeus, then Commanding General of the 101<sup>st</sup>,

was translated into force packages that allowed the division to rapidly assume its combat role upon arrival in theater. CW2 Hardin had to work through the daunting challenge of deploying with the total authorization of ammunition for the division. Typically, units move with only the minimum essential ammunition, however the full load for the 101<sup>st</sup> was packed in 193 20-foot containers. He spent countless hours coordinating with the Port of Jacksonville, Crane Army Depot, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, and the Coast Guard on the delivery, storage, and loading of these containers, ensuring the process was completed without a hitch.

CW2 Mark Brubeck, the Mobility Officer in the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, faced many of the same challenges as Mr. Peck and Mr. Hardin, namely training and improving the deployment awareness



of the leadership. Soon, however Mr. Brubeck and the DTO staff were faced with a far more difficult dilemma. Initially the 4<sup>th</sup> ID was destined to move through Turkey to engage enemy forces in the northern provinces of Iraq, but that option



was dismissed for political reasons. Once it was decided that the division would move through Kuwait, the vessel discharge sequence and the associated troop flow had to be totally revamped.

Countless hours were spent synchronizing the arrival of personnel moving by strategic airlift with their equipment on board strategic sealift. In addition, the division deployed an advance party, comprised of a cadre of operators for virtually every type of equipment to assist in unloading the equipment and moving it into staging areas in the event of delays in the airflow.

Once on the ground in theater the MOs provided additional benefits to combatant commanders in the planning and executing moves of units and sustainment throughout the area of operations. The MOs worked in close coordination with the movement control battalions and movement control teams arranging convoys and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of fuel, ammunition, food, and water to combat forces throughout the battlespace. With the decision to limit the logistical stocks on the ground, visibility of sustainment in the distribution pipeline became an important element of their responsibilities. MOs worked closely with their counterparts in the distribution community to use the data resident in the in-transit visibility system to make the necessary diversions of enroute sustainment. Moreover, the Division G3 frequently asked them for transportation support feasibility input to plans for future operations.



The intent of redeployment is returning forces to their home station rather than building a force for combat operations. Therefore the preparation involves reestablishing unit integrity and accountability of personnel and equipment. As the theater established the support structure, the MOs assisted their commanders and staffs in developing the specific procedures, estimates, analyses, and timelines for the execution of their redeployment plan. They quickly assessed the unique aspects of redeployment and set about establishing the support network and the appropriate training for the UMOs.

The mobility officers called on every bit of experience and knowledge gained in their training to overcome the challenges of deployment and redeployment operations, however, they soon realized that this was not enough. This small group of deployment experts recognized the strength of their collective experience and knowledge and established an informal network to share information. It proved to be an invaluable resource especially for the units deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to a constant stream of emails they frequently saw one another at deployment conferences and were able to pass on insights valuable in overcoming some of the obstacles they encountered.

Task Force Modularity is a recent initiative to transform today's division-based force into brigade-sized components. The authorization for MOs in the active force will increase from 66 to 109. A significant aspect of the initiative will be to add a Mobility Support Element, composed of a MO and a E6 88N Mobility NCO, in each brigade combat team and E6 88N Mobility NCOs in each of the maneuver battalions to provide their respective commanders with professional, full time deployment expertise. Based on this foundation the vision of the Chief of Transportation calls for the assignment of mobility officers and NCOs to all brigade and battalion units.

The MO program has been a success from the outset and has provided the expeditionary Army with a core of deployment technicians who have overcome

numerous obstacles in deploying and redeploying the forces to and from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait. Through their dedication and hard work they have gained the confidence of the commanders and staffs.



The Transportation Corps continues to seek candidates interested in joining the corps of dedicated and skilled Mobility Officers. The minimum prerequisites are to be an E4 promotable; have two years of documented deployment experience; and possess a current SECRET security clearance.

The requirement for two years of documented deployment experience and the clearance are not waiverable. The experience serves as a foundation for understanding the deployment material presented in the course. The clearance is a prerequisite for the JOPES and JFRG II training and the deployment exercise where JOPES and JFRG II are an integral support element. Graduation from the Unit Movement Officer Deployment Planning Course and an associate's degree are desirable additional qualifications. If you are interested in the Mobility Officer Program contact Warrant Officer Proponency, Office of the Chief of Transportation, commercial (757) 878-1326 or DSN 826-1326.