

## **MCTP prepares USARPAC during Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2012**

Story by Lt. Col. Anna Friederich-Maggard, MCTP Sr. Public Affairs Officer

**FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii** – As Operations Group A's main body of the Mission Command Training Program arrived at the Honolulu Airport last week, their advance party was already on site here at U.S. Army Pacific Command and in the central area of the Republic of Korea, laying the groundwork for their roles as Observer, Coach/Trainers in support of Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2012, a key exercise designed to strengthen the readiness of ROK and U.S. forces.

UFG12, which kicked off Mon., is based on realistic scenarios and enables U.S. units to train on their essential tasks with a 'whole of government' approach. Although the majority of the exercise is simulated, it still enhances the units' combat readiness and improves the joint operability between ROK and U.S. forces. This annual exercise involves approx 80,000 troops from the ROK and the U.S.

The role of the MCTP OC/Ts in this exercise is multi-faceted and encompasses many levels of expertise, which is vital in an event of this magnitude.

Lt. Col. Chris Corizzo, OPSGRP A Sustainment Chief, defined the OPSGRP's mission as "coaching and training units on the art and science of mission command and how staffs operate to support the commander's decision making."

A simple enough definition, but there is nothing simple about what they do. Corizzo listed some of the special functions MCTP brings to the table.

"The groups possess the experience and knowledge to provide recommendations across a broad spectrum of expertise ranging from fires, force protection, intelligence, air and missile defense and medical support to sustainment

operations and civil affairs, which helps the units improve how they operate,” said Corizzo.

Due to the recently changed Field Manual 3-93 theater Army construct, units are changing the way they conduct operations.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Robert Clark, the MCTP senior mentor for UFG12, said he finds this exercise unique in that not only is USARPAC fully engaged in their ongoing mission, but they’re simultaneously participating in this exercise which is helping them become more familiar with a changing mission set.

“This exercise is not like the past Mission Readiness Exercises where units are preparing for deployment to theater, this one is focused on supporting operations forward in a very dynamic environment,” said Clark. “MCTP and OPSGRP A are tools they are using to help them in their transition,” Clark added.

The preparation and coordination required of the OC/Ts for exercises like UFG12 is daunting and there is a lot of travel involved if you’re a member of MCTP OPSGRPS or play a supporting role. OPSGRP personnel travel approximately 20-25 weeks each year to support exercises such as UFG12. This may seem excessive, but the knowledge and experience they bring to the training units is priceless.

A day in the life of OC/Ts supporting UFG12 is not an easy one. It requires persistence, initiative and at times much patience.

Lt. Col. Randy Stapfer, the OPSGRP A chief OC/T said, “a typical day consists of interfacing with their training unit staff counterparts ensuring they are effectively communicating with their higher and subordinate units, planning for current and future operations and preparing or reacting to the many situation-driven scenarios thrown their

way. But most importantly, ensuring they know how to analyze information in order to make good recommendations to the commander allowing him or her to make informed decisions.”

“At the end of the day we are able to take what we’ve seen/heard and perform what we call a ‘hot wash’ with the trained units and offer recommendations to improve their performance as a staff in the future,” Stapfer added.

The approximately 100 MCTP officers, non-commissioned officers and civilians supporting UFG12 here have about 2,000 combined years of experience they bring to the table. With statistics like that, it’s not surprising that MCTP is one of the premier training organizations across the Army.

*Training exercises like Ulchi Freedom Guardian are carried out in the spirit of the Oct. 1, 1953, ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty and in accordance with the armistice. These exercises also highlight the longstanding military partnership, commitment and enduring friendship between the two nations, help to ensure peace and security on the peninsula, and reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the Northeast Asia region.*