



(Left) It's not a raft but a ride! This Soldier and his crew are fording a mountain river as part of an obstacle course during a nine-day situational training exercise held by the 14th Transportation Battalion. (Far left) It's up and over an hill of stone scrub. (Center) Brake modulation was put to the test when Soldiers were instructed to drive over a pile of logs. (Below) Sgt. Jeremy Deckard, 14th Trans Bn HHD vehicle mechanic, climbs through the top hatch of a submersed Humvee to put it in neutral before executing a towing exercise. Towing drills were taught during STX training as a part of showing what a Humvee can really do.



Story and photos
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Attention civilian "Hummer enthusiasts"...don't try this at home...our people are trained professionals.

"If you can't brake-modulate you should not be behind the wheel of a Humvee," said said Command Sgt. Maj. William Brown, 14th Transportation Battalion command sergeant major.

"Brake-modulaton allows you to ensure that power is applied to

all four wheels evenly in order to get yourself out of trouble," said Brown as he watched the Soldiers under his command take on a challenging obstacle course. "As long as there is one wheel with traction, knowing how to accurately brake-modulate will get you out of a jam."

The group of Soldiers were members of the 497th Movement Control Team-Livorno and the 386th MCT-Vicenza. They were participating in a five day Situational Training Exercise on the grounds of an Italian Army training

area outside Aviano.

The STX was followed by a four day Live Fire Exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

The MCTs are training for possible deployments.

The MCT mission is to facilitate cargo movement by ordering commercial or military assets (bus, plane ship or truck), coordinating customs documentation, diplomatic clearances, and manage documents which lead to payment of commercial carriers.

The job of the 14th Trans battalion's is to give the MCT

Soldiers the tools to face any situations they may come up against, said Brown.

Days one and two of the exercise were spent in classrooms training and rehearsing for the next three days of hands-on work.

A crucial part of the STX occurred on day three when Soldiers participated in an off-road driving course. This required team members to react to various scenarios.

Among these situations included reacting to sniper attacks, ambushes, blocked roads, and roll over drills geared toward survival in any situation, according to Brown.

"Most of our Soldiers have never driven a Humvee off-road," said Brown. "That is something we don't get to practice very often. We laid out a course which will challenge these Soldiers to apply the skills they learned in the classroom."

"It is important that these Soldiers have a high level of awareness about the capabilities of their vehicle," said Sgt. 1st Class Richardson, course instructor. "The more confident you are about your vehicle's capabilities, the more comfortable you are and the better your reactions are if you find yourself in a difficult situation."

Soldiers encountered rugged terrain both rocky and sandy in addition to the task of crossing a river at several points. At times course required drivers to be in the river and proceed further downstream.

Training in water has become especially relevant since, as recently as Dec. 8th, several Soldiers have died or been injured when their vehicle has flipped over in canals and rivers.

Humvees are capable of maneuvering through water but by no means are Humvees boats or submarines. The vehicles have submersible equipment, engine breathers, and elevated exhaust stacks that create a wake that prevents water from stopping the fans in the engine, according to Richardson.

"I enjoyed the training," said Spc. Franklyn McKesson, a Soldier with 14th Trans Bn. "I feel that I am better prepared for deployments. We learned about convoy procedures, troop leading procedures, and what our vehicles can do in different situations. It was interesting, informative, and fun."

"Safety is at the forefront of every exercise, said Richardson. "Kevlar, seatbelts, spotters, slow speeds, and paying attention are very important. These Soldiers will need to remember this training to be successful in combat."

"Who only knows what these Soldiers will see if deployed," said Brown. "This training is very much needed under any circumstances they may find themselves."