



by David Weart

Editor's Note: This article was modified from its originally published version on February 7th, 2023.

Simply stated, the Army should expand the Master Tactician Test (MTT) offered at the Command and General Staff Operations Course (CGSOC) and create a stand-alone Additional Skill Identifier (ASI).

Expanding the MTT to the operational force and creating a permanent ASI has potential leader development and organizational benefits analogous to how the Master Gunner and Master Fitness programs transformed the Army's gunnery and physical fitness programs. The current MTT administered at the CGSOC resident course tests Field Grade Officers on the intricacies of modern warfare and the application of U.S. Army doctrine through a three-phase assessment. Studying for and taking the exam gives all participants an assessment of their knowledge and application of the tactical and operational levels of warfare before assuming Field Grade level assignments. However, in its current design, the MTT is only available to CGSOC resident students, thus limiting its potential Leader Development and

Education benefits to the total force.

Expanding the MTT to the total force and creating a separate ASI has several potential benefits in the Leader Development and Education domain, while also contributing to the Army's Talent Management. Recipients of the ASI, called "Master Tacticians" would provide operational units with subject matter experts in Army Tactics and Doctrine. Ideal candidates for the exam and ASI include mid-career officers in Operations and Force Sustainment Divisions as well as NCOs in Battle Staff positions. This short paper examines the key potential benefits while outlining proposed exam administration and primary challenges to institutionalizing a Master Tactician program.

Potential Benefits:

1. **Subject Matter Expertise.** Certified Master Tacticians bring an immediate tangible benefit to tactical unit staff and command positions. Master Tacticians are subject matter experts in doctrine, MDMP, and tactical warfighting, thus increasing their ability to positively lead and influence organizational readiness.
2. **Leader Development and Education.** Relatively low overhead for direct investment in the Leader Development and Education domain for Army Doctrine and Tactics. The proposed test and distance learning material supply access to on-demand continuing professional education outside of the CGSOC course. Desiring tactical professionals can take the course to develop a baseline of their current knowledge and ability.
3. **Marketable ASI.** Producing a Master Tactician ASI creates an objective Knowledge, Skill, and Behavior attribute that ASI recipients can use as part of the Army Talent Management Strategy. Gaining units could advertise the ASI as a desired KSB. HRC assignment managers could use the ASI to facilitate skill set matching.
4. **Coded ASI Billets.** Developing a permanent and coded MTT ASI for operational units creates a desired skill set and billets for the mid-grade officers and battle staff NCOs similar to the Ranger, Sapper, and Master Parachutist coded positions.

Exam Administration

1. Build upon the current multiple-choice MTT as a baseline for the future test. Test participants should receive a distance learning course to prepare for the exam. The current Distance ILE common core modules are a useful model for a potential MTT preparation course. Subsequent phases for the MTT should include a practical application portion where the test taker prepares and briefs an operational plan to a proctor. Administering this phase would likely require proctoring the exam remotely.
2. MTT participants schedule their exams through specific intervals throughout the year

at local Army education testing centers.

3. To protect test integrity, the MTT should have multiple variations. Army education centers would administer the multiple-choice phase as a “closed book” exam. Recommend using a similar model to how Prometric testing centers administer exams.

Potential Challenges and Future Considerations

1. **Challenges.** Initially, I identified the two primary challenges as scaling the MTT test administration outside of CGSOC and creating a permanent Master Tactician ASI. The section above addresses options for alleviating exam administration challenges. Developing a Master Tactician ASI would likely require a DOTMLPF Change Recommendation (DCR) and senior leader emphasis.
2. **Future Considerations.** The initial concept for the test is primarily focused on the current 150 multiple-choice MTT. Administering subsequent phases of the MTT is feasible but would require additional resources for test proctoring, such as access to virtual teleconferencing and matching schedules between examiners and test administrators.

As the latest [FM 3-0](#) Army Operations states: *Good leaders understand tactics, the abilities of their own and enemy units, what is possible in any situation.* Developing tactical professionals at the unit level through a certification process, such as the MTT and proposed ASI, directly contributes to organizational readiness for combat. As the Army modernizes its doctrine, organizations, and equipment to field a force capable of winning in dynamic operating environments, broadening the MTT program and creating a unique skill identifier is an opportunity to directly invest in the Army’s leading competitive advantage, its people.

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