

Olive Security Training Center

Explosive Growth, Explosive Training

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The private sector tactical training industry has grown rapidly over the past five years.

More and more shingles are being hung out, and with the growth of the Internet discussion groups and the proliferation of Web access, it is easier than ever for an instructor or training facility to get their name in front of prospective students. Meanwhile, many of the traditionally respected schools are still out there doing a steady business and providing great training. A select few of them are making significant changes to keep up with the growth of the industry and what they've identified as the needs of their students.

Readers of S.W.A.T. are probably familiar with Alan Brosnan and his Tactical Explosive Entry School (TEES). **TEES** has been around since 1991 and has developed a reputation as the premier private sector training facility for explosive entry techniques.

In addition to their primary location **TEES** has also operated a training operation in Brazil. Alan and his staff have taught a variety of tactical courses at both **TEES** facilities over the past 15 years, including executive protection and sniper courses. Catering primarily to armed professionals, TEES has been developing its curriculum to attract personnel from progressive law enforcement and military units from around the world, as well as professional private-sector security operators. Enter Olive Security Group.

Olive Security Group was founded in 2001 and has grown rapidly to become a leader in the private-security industry. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, with additional offices in Asia, the United States, Russia and throughout the Middle East, Olive's success is indicative of their progressive approach and ability to capitalize on opportunities. One of those opportunities was seen in the reputation of TEES and the abilities of Alan Brosnan, a former New Zealand SAS soldier and respected leader in the worlds of training and executive protection. Brosnan was a natural candidate when Olive decided to make training part of their repertoire.

In 2005, Olive Group purchased TEES and the headquarters facility in Arkansas and named Brosnan their corporate Director of Training. In addition to the land comprising the original TEES ranges and training areas, Olive purchased the surrounding property to bring the total area of the new Olive Security Training Center to 700 acres. I had the opportunity to visit the site and see the dramatic changes that were underway during the spring of 2006.

When you drove into the original TEES site (about 20 minutes from Memphis, Tennessee), you wound your way on a dirt road between acres of farmland to get back to the sandy ranges nestled in a low spot with several sheds and explosives magazines, two

railroad tie shoothouses and a couple of trailers, reinforcing the point that you were leaving the farm. The chain link fence and warning signs helped too.

On this visit, after turning the first corner from the highway, it became evident that things were changing--quickly! The first berms rising out of what used to be a soybean field are part of the industry-standard two-mile driving track. Constant radius turns, increasing/decreasing radius turns, single and double apex turns and a 3000-foot straightaway are just some of the features of the track. Although designed to incorporate the standards of current high-speed industry training, a closer look reveals internal cross roads, intersections and several of the aforementioned berms.

Why the berms on a driving track? This track is also the most advanced and realistic counter vehicle ambush training ever designed, purpose-built to allow live-fire drills, force-on-force training and IED simulation to be interspersed with driving instruction blocks.

The metal frame of what was about to become the garage and classrooms was erected next to a soon-to-be-paved skidpad. While I was visiting, the first of the company's Crown Vics was delivered. I was still over half a mile away from what I knew as "the training area" and I wanted to stop and take a class!

Around a couple more turns, I saw the area that used to be a few sheds and a trailer was also under significant development. Dozers, graders, front loaders, cement trucks and teams of contractors were busy assembling a variety of structures and creating roads and new ranges. These ranges will include two covered rifle-caliber shoot houses, a 700-yard sniper range and a purposebuilt breaching facility capable of mechanical, thermal, ballistic and explosive technique application.

When I met with Alan Brosnan and his growing staff, I was shown the plans for what would become the live-fire and explosive ranges as well as the unprecedented MOUT site. Nowhere else in the private sector is there anything close to what is being planned and built at the Olive Security Training Center (OSTC) site. In addition to the sheer size (15 square blocks) and live-fire capability, the MOUT site will also feature Middle Eastern architecture to help the prospective student base prepare for their likely area of operations more realistically.

Of course, I wasn't just there to look around, I was there to recertify in Explosive Entry. Having taken this course from Brosnan himself in 2001, I was looking forward to seeing how the other side of the expansion and development was going. Without an expanded staff of competent instructors, there was certainly no way that OSTC was going to keep up with the inevitable influx of customers that will be clamoring to take advantage of this incredible new facility.

John Mayer retired from the U.S. Army after 20 years of service, his last two years spent as a breaching and CQB instructor for the 7th Special Forces Group. Stepping into Alan Brosnan's shoes as the primary breaching instructor is no easy task, but

Mayer's experience with explosives and comfort as an instructor were evident during the seven days that I spent with him.

The assistant instructor during these courses was Jim Purdy, who served as a Navy SEAL for five years prior to becoming a tactics and breaching instructor for OSTC.

In addition to the first-hand experience as a student under Purdy and Mayer, I had the opportunity to spend some time talking shop with Todd Taylor, the Lead Tactics Instructor for OSTC. Todd retired after 20 years in law enforcement and has been very active in executive protection and training, both in the United States and abroad. Taylor has a long history with Brosnan and they both are progressive trainers with a wealth of experience to draw on in developing the programs at OSTC. Taylor's thought process and attitude toward practical training are sure to keep OSTC on the leading edge of tactical training. Taylor is having a large impact on the design of the ranges as well as curriculum development.

The new Olive Security Training Center and the staff that Alan Brosnan has assembled stand poised to become the most versatile and advanced large scale training center in the United States, if not the world.

[Editor's Note: From all accounts, the Olive Security Training Center will be a world-class facility. We hope to have a full report on the actual training conducted there in the near future.]

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