West Point Negotiation Project Finishes Negotiation Seminar with First Special Forces Group
Fort Lewis, Washington – 22 November 2011

“We are here today because the number one thing we need to do better down range is negotiation”, the Company Commander told the Team Leaders and Team Sergeants of the First Special Forces Group. The group of Special Forces soldiers from the Second Battalion of the First Special Forces Group gathered for a day and a half of negotiation training taught by the West Point Negotiation Project.

The West Point Negotiation Project conducted its sixth Mobile Training Team (MTT) since the project began offering MTTs three years ago. WPNP has also taught MTTs for the 25th Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division, the 10th Mountain Division, 173rd Airborne and the Navy SEALs. This was the West Point Negotiation Projects’ (WPNP) first MTT with an Army Special Forces unit. Most of the Team Leaders are Captain’s with varying numbers of deployments, while the Team Sergeants are E7s/E8s and have been deployed numerous times with several having over 10 deployments.

Several special operators who attended said that they found the training to be very beneficial. One Team Leader commented on the training provided by WPNP, “Formal negotiation training provided an excellent baseline for all future key leader engagements, which are the bread and butter of Army SF missions.” Most of the members of the unit had no formal negotiation training despite continually finding themselves in situations where their mission depended on successful negotiations with local foreign indigenous defense (FID) forces, adjacent units, or even their own chain of command.

The MTT team consisted of WPNP Co-Director, Major Zach Mundell who led most of the instructional and debrief sessions. He was assisted by Cadets Jonathan Stevens (12), Christian Zarnke (13) and Luke Hutchison (13), who led the preparation for, and participated in, each of the negotiation practical exercises. Major Zach Mundell commented, “Overall I was very
pleased with how the MTT turned out. We received very positive feedback as well as ideas to improve our training in the future as we continue to grow the MTT program.” The cadets were equally pleased with the overall experience. “It isn’t every day that we have the chance to rub elbows with people in the special operations community. Having the chance to meet SF operators and learn about the real challenges they face has been an amazing opportunity,” stated Cadet Stevens. Cadets Hutchison and Zarnke were pleased to see that the negotiation concepts they had been worked so hard to master and communicate were received with such enthusiasm.

Within days of returning to West Point, WPNP received another request to train an infantry unit at Joint Base Lewis-McCord in February. Three officers from the unit had been present for the training to 1SFG and want the training for their junior leaders. In March the project expects to travel to Europe for the first time, conducting MTTs for units in Germany. WPNP was founded in 2009 to enhance the ability of military leaders to conduct negotiation in the complex and challenging situations they face in both combat and peace. It holds an annual conference attended by cadets and military officers from across North America, consults on a variety of projects across the Army, and conducts MTTs for deploying units. For more information, visit [www.wpnp.org](http://www.wpnp.org).