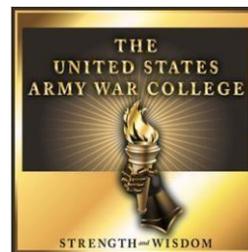Selected for publication in *The Army War College Review*

Making Sustainable Readiness Sustainable for the Army National Guard

by

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14. ABSTRACT

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Force Generation, Objective T-level, Mission Essential Task, Operational Reserve, Total Force, Synergy

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Abstract

The Army Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM) is the solution for the Army Total Force to prepare itself for tomorrow's decisive action fight. The Army National Guard (ARNG) serves as the operational reserve to the combatant commanders and the Joint Force under SRM, but only has approximately 25% of the training time in comparison to the Active component to achieve SRM Objective T-level readiness standards. In order to make sustainable readiness sustainable for the ARNG, the Army must re-align SRM implementation (ways) to objectives (ends) to accommodate the component's part-time training calendar. This includes: 1) modifying annual ARNG readiness training to accommodate a focused-path SRM implementation approach; and 2) modifying ARNG SRM Objective T-level evaluation criteria to emphasize core METL tasks. These changes will provide the training focus and synergy necessary to enable ARNG units to maximize limited training time per year, and to build readiness through the five-year ARNG SRM progressive readiness cycle toward full operational capability in the mission year.

Making Sustainable Readiness Sustainable
for the Army National Guard

Everyone in the streets and the windows said, 'Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes! Don't they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!' Nobody would confess that he couldn't see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool.

—Hans Christian Andersen[1]

Bull Run. Kasserine Pass. Task Force Smith. In the storied history of the United States (U.S.) Army, Americans encounter moments of catastrophic failure at point of first contact with the enemy.[2] In such cases, the failure often rests not so much on the part of those who fought and lost, but rather, on the strategic leaders who neglected to prepare an Army honestly for a war to come.[3] According to Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Execution Order 001-16 (*Sustainable Readiness*), the Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM) is the solution for today's Total Army to prepare itself for tomorrow's first fight.[4] But will SRM succeed?

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in April 2016, General Mark Milley acknowledged that only one third of U.S. Army forces were then at acceptable levels of combat readiness. He attributed this, in part, to the Army's continuous deployments over 15 years into the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.[5] To address this problem, General Milley had already begun pivoting the Army's readiness approach from the Army Force Generation model (ARFORGEN) to SRM.[6] Army SRM promotes a more sustainable readiness geared toward decisive action rather than counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in response to perceived conventional threats from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. The Sustainable Readiness Model reached full operational capability (FOC) across the Total Force beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2017.[7]

To enable the One Army readiness concept for decisive action, the Army applies SRM mission essential tasks (MET) and performance metrics equally to the Active, Reserve, and National Guard components: one Army, one standard. This enables U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) to meet its mandate to prepare "a combat ready, globally responsive Total Force in order to build and sustain readiness to meet Combatant Command requirements."[8] Army Forces Command provides active component (AC) units approximately 220 training days per year to train and equip to meet SRM MET standards, as well as the myriad of other concurrent mandatory training requirements.[9] It provides Army National Guard (ARNG) units, to meet the same requirements and standards, a five-year progressive readiness model built on 39 to 63 training days per year.[10] The dichotomy is striking, and begs the question: are SRM MET readiness goals achievable across the ARNG?

This is not to belie SRM as an approach. A feasible SRM for the Total Army is necessary, and, as such, demands a methodology that is both reasonable and attainable across all components without sacrificing "One Army" capabilities or standards. However, analysis of SRM strategy under the "Suitability, Acceptability, Feasibility - Risk" (SAF-R) model identifies significant misalignment of implementation (ways) to objectives (ends) for the ARNG component.[11] This portends a high risk for SRM failure across the Guard, with strategic implications: if ARNG units cannot attain acceptable MET performance standards, they cannot serve as in extremis contingency reserves for combatant commanders and the Joint Force. Analysis under the SAF-R model suggests that sustainable readiness for the ARNG is not achievable on its present course. However, a realignment of ends and ways may make it so.

In order to make SRM sustainable for the ARNG, the Army must re-align implementation (ways) to the objectives (ends) concerning ARNG MET readiness training to accommodate the component's 39 to 63-day annual training calendar. Such realignment includes the following principal actions: 1) modify annual ARNG readiness to accommodate a focused-path SRM implementation approach that concentrates training almost exclusively on unit METs and METL tasks; and 2) modify ARNG SRM Objective T-level evaluation criteria to emphasize core METL tasks to enable ARNG units to gain and sustain synergy in common performance competencies across METs. This approach will enable ARNG units to maximize limited yearly training time and build readiness through the five-year ARNG SRM progressive readiness cycle toward FOC in the mission year.

Sustainable Readiness Defined

The HQDA EXORD 16-001 defines sustainable readiness (SR) as "the Army's force generation concept adapted to the needs of a contingency force that is globally responsive and regionally engaged."[12] The Sustainable Readiness Model aligns directly with current guidance from the Army Chief of Staff to improve readiness for decisive action, and to foster a One Army approach that integrates the AC and reserve components (RC), including both the Army Reserve and ARNG. Under ARFORGEN, Army readiness centered on known and emergent needs in a COIN environment: namely, providing rotational units for OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). Under SRM, Army readiness shifts focus to known, emergent, and contingency requirements in a decisive action threat environment.[13] General Milley identified SRM as "designed for all three components and

for all types of units," with a goal to achieve combat readiness for global contingencies for two thirds of the Total Army by 2023.[14]

Army SRM operationalizes the ARNG by: 1) supporting an Army Total Force approach, including both AC and RC units providing capabilities to the Joint Force; 2) increasing ARNG C2-level readiness under the Commander's Unit Status Report (CUSR) across the component to address risks to operational demand; and 3) leveraging ARNG units to support deploying forces in the early to mid-phases of global operations.[15] Most importantly, according to HQDA EXORD 16-001, the Army developed SRM to "establish feasible readiness objectives for all AA [battalion and separate company] reporting units, synchronize resources to meet those objectives, and to forecast unit and strategic readiness against operational demand for risk assessment and mitigation."[16] In determining readiness objectives for all AA reporting units, SRM does not distinguish CUSR Objective T-level performance criteria or standards between AC and ARNG AA reporting units, despite the extraordinary difference in available training timelines to attain those goals. Both components report CUSR Objective T-level readiness in accordance with the requirements stipulated in Army Regulation (AR) 220-1 (*Army Unit Status Reporting and Force Registration - Consolidated Policies*), and the *Leader's Guide to Objective Assessment of Training Proficiency*.[17] The Army G-3/5/7 published the *Leader's Guide* in 2017 as the interim authority for CUSR Objective T-level reporting until AR 220-1 and all other supporting regulatory and training documents are updated to reflect the new requirements.[18]

As the SAF-R analysis below suggests, this approach presents high risk regarding the ability of the ARNG, and in turn, the Total Force, to meet MET

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performance requirements to the levels expected under SRM. Such failure has strategic

implementations. It would negatively impact the Army's operational and strategic reach

and limit force options for combatant commanders in extremis. Even worse, it might

require deployment of ill-prepared ARNG units as operational reserve forces into

decisive action contact with an enemy.

<p align="center">SAF-R Analysis of SRM for ARNG</p>

A SAF-R analysis of SRM identifies misalignment for the ARNG between SRM

implementation (ways) and required MET performance capabilities and standards

(ends). This misalignment leads to both intrinsic and external risk to successful ARNG

performance under SRM.

<u>SAF-R Test: Suitability</u>

The Sustainable Readiness Model ranks high in suitability for the ARNG. It

establishes readiness goals for the component aligned to Joint Force needs and

performance requirements. It enables the part-time component to serve as an effective

operational reserve globally when performing to SRM readiness standards. The SRM

approach also requires RC-specific capabilities that are critical to Total Force readiness.

Headquarters, Department of the Army EXORD 16-001 defines these as:

- Support a modular Total Force (AC/RC) to provide Army capabilities to the Joint Force;

- Target increased RC C2 levels of readiness to address specific risks to meet overall demand;

- Provide a balanced (AC/RC) and feasible readiness outcome while reducing year of execution crisis management in resources.[19]

These traits fully align to the ARNG mission and its capabilities. The ARNG codifies

them under their federal mission as "maintain[ing] properly trained and equipped units,

<p align="center">5</p>

available for prompt mobilization for war, national emergency, or as otherwise needed."[20]

<u>SAF-R Test: Acceptability</u>

The Sustainable Readiness Model ranks moderate in acceptability for the ARNG. The model conforms with the legal requirements of United States Code Title 10 and Title 32.[21] It aligns directly with the Army National Guard mission statement to maintain ready units available for prompt response for war or national emergency.[22] Army National Guard service members conducting extended annual training schedules in SRM Prepare Year (PY) 3 and PY4 appear to retain protections under the *Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act* (USERRA).[23]

However, the unilateral expansion of annual drilling days from 39 up to 63 for high demand ARNG units, implemented under the new ARNG readiness program entitled "*ARNG 4.0: Focused Readiness*," essentially increases the service requirement for such units by approximately 60% per year.[24] This increase will present personal and legal difficulties to Guardsmen, their families, and employers. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) acknowledges this in its brochure, "*ARNG 4.0 - Families, Employers, and Communities.*" In it, NGB advises that "while ARNG 4.0 increases expectations on Soldiers, Families and employers, it delivers a more capable ARNG..."[25]

National Guard Bureau provides further insight on the anticipated negative impact of the increased PY3 and PY4 training timeframes for a key constituency within its ranks: college students. Under the new model, not only will part-time Soldiers find their training unilaterally extended, but the traditional respect the National Guard rendered to collegiate schedules will disappear. Guard Soldiers may find themselves deploying for three-week Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) or Combat

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Training Center (CTC) events in timeframes that negatively impact their ability to complete their studies. National Guard Bureau acknowledges this, stating, "In particular, Soldiers who are also full-time students may face increasing difficulty balancing additional training requirements with their collegiate obligations."[26] The NGB solution is to point stakeholders struggling under these new ARNG-inflicted scenarios to Guard-supported Family Readiness and Employer Support offices in their respective states.[27]

The ARNG's decision to extend the traditional 39-day training year, established under the *1916 National Defense Act*, and to do so to support routine training rather than mobilization in a time of war, may lack constituent support at all three stakeholder levels: Soldier, family, and employer.[28] All have shown significant patience with the extended training and deployments of ARNG Soldiers since 2001 in support of OEF and OIF. Such protracted activities during the ARFORGEN readiness cycle centered around scheduled mobilizations and overseas deployments in support of wartime operations. The *ARNG 4.0* policy does not. Instead, it extends ARNG yearly training commitments simply to add training time to meet self-imposed Army readiness requirements. Stakeholders may resist or contest it - personally, legally, and corporately. Therefore, stakeholder response presents moderate extrinsic risk to ARNG SRM success by potentially lowering retention, recruiting, and employer support for units identified as high-demand on extended training cycles. Unfortunately, these are the units the ARNG most needs to keep at a contingency-response level of readiness. Of greater note, as analysis below demonstrates, more training time for the part-time force, even 60% more, will not decisively resolve the readiness issue.

The Sustainable Readiness Model ranks low in feasibility for the ARNG. This is a critical concern, as the central tenet behind SRM lies in its achievability across the Total Force. Army EXORD 16-001 identifies as a key task for SRM "to establish feasible readiness objectives for all AA reporting units..."[29] However, SRM objectives are not achievable as currently defined for the ARNG due to fundamental misalignment with training timeframes. As noted, this misalignment presents substantial intrinsic risk.

Under the current SRM, ARNG units train for 39 days per year as standard demand forces, and up to 63 days per year as FORSCOM-identified high-demand units. The standard 39-day training year consists of 24 drilling days of unit readiness and mandatory training, and a consecutive 15-day annual training (AT) event for collective evaluation. The 63-day training year equates approximately to 42 drill days for training, and a 21-day AT for collective evaluation at either an XCTC or CTC event.[30] As noted below, neither schedule provides ARNG units with the necessary time to satisfactorily meet CUSR Objective T-level rating requirements, even ignoring the myriad of other Army-directed mandatory training imposed concurrently on units in the training year.

In 2002, a U.S. Army War College study compiled statistics on Army training requirements.[31] The study concluded that a standard AC company had 256 days available for training per year. However, that same company had 297 days of required training to accomplish all readiness and other mandatory requirements. The delta equated to a 41-day training deficit per year for AC units.[32] Since 2002, readiness and mandatory training requirements have increased, yet the calendar remains the same.[33]

In 2015, the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) quantified mandatory training requirements prescribed in AR 350-1 and over 1000 other Army

directives, regulations, pamphlets, and ALARACTs.[34] The NCFA noted that Army

leaders from all components conclude nearly unanimously that mandatory training

requirements severely impede the ability of units to conduct collective MET training.

Since the bulk of prescriptive and mandatory training requirements are the same across

the Total Force, the NCFA concluded that the ARNG and Reserve components have

too many requirements per year to train effectively.[35]

Also in 2015, HQDA G-3/5/7 completed its own assessment of requirements

against allotted training timeframes in conjunction with the Commission review. The

staff concluded that the AC had approximately 220 days of actual training time to

generate unit readiness.[36] Besides collective MET training, they noted that units needed

to complete mandatory training tasks identified in 1097 Army directives, regulations,

pamphlets, and ALARACTS. According to their findings, approximately 34% of these

documents, or well over 300, contained prescriptive taskings.[37] Since all requirements

are Army directed, they all apply to the Total Force. ARNG units must complete

essentially the same list of requirements as their AC counterparts in approximately 25%

of the time.

Figure 1 presents the training categories and time-to-task analysis as depicted in

the 2015 HQDA G-3/5/7 briefing entitled "National Commission on the Future of the

Army."[38] According to the analysis, the total timeframe needed for AC units to meet MET

and mandatory training requirements exceeds 365 days against 220 training days

allotted. This presents a 145 training-day deficit per year as the Army begins transition

from ARFORGEN to SRM. The HQDA G-3/5/7 analysis demonstrates that readiness for

the AC itself, as defined by MET and other mandatory training requirements, may be at

risk. To mitigate this, the Army G-3/5/7 staff recommended to Army strategic leaders the following four actions: prioritize unit training and enable risk management; create a more predictable training environment; reset mandatory training; and apply leadership.[39]
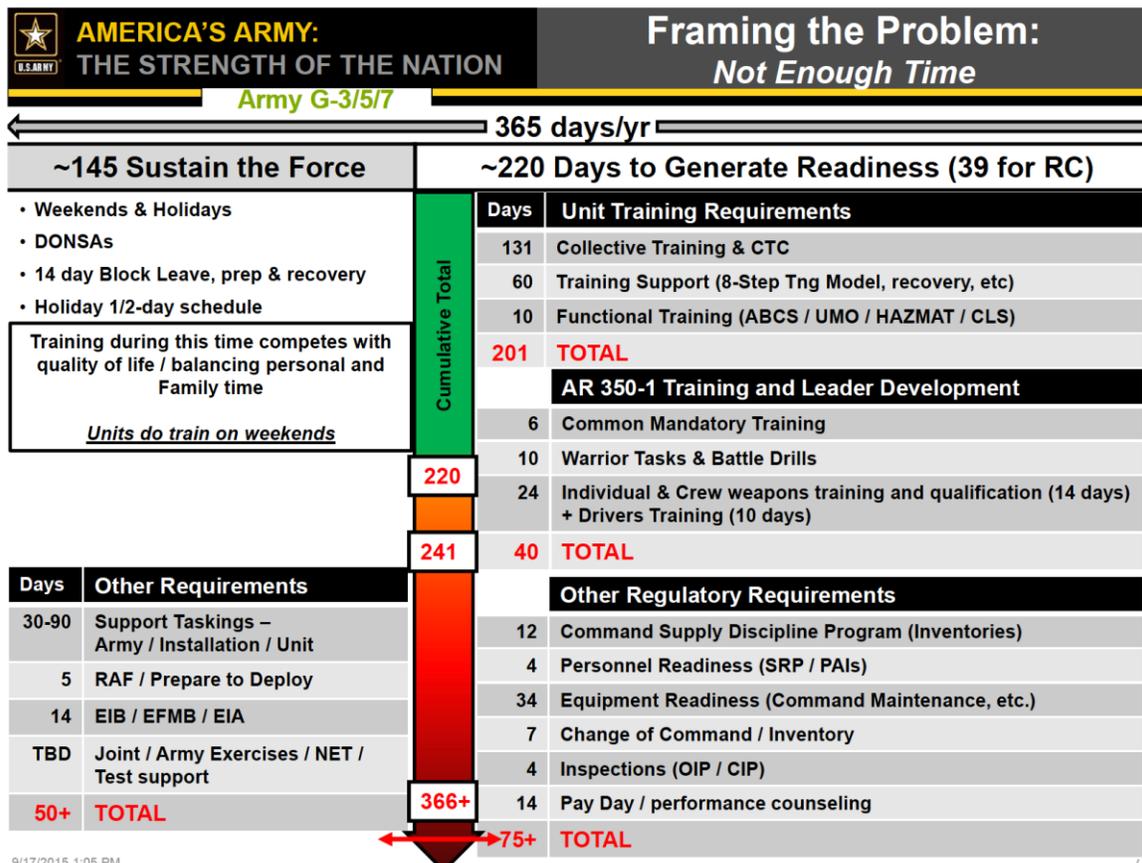
Figure 1. HQDA G-3/5/7 Assessment of Requirements versus Training Days[40]

Of particular note, however, is the Army G-3/5/7 response regarding RC implementation of these same training requirements. While aligning readiness requirements versus training days for the AC, Army G-3/5/7 analysts did not attempt such a solution for the RC. Analysts did acknowledge parenthetically that where the AC had approximately 220 training days to complete over 365 days' worth of readiness and other mandatory training requirements, the RC component had 39.[41] Furthermore, the Army G-3/5/7 staff did not identify in their task-to-time evaluation potential additional

requirements ARNG units face for DSCA, state-mandated training, or emergency response events annually.

Such misalignment of ways versus ends for ARNG units portends risk of failure for ARNG readiness as an operational reserve facing contingency deployment, potentially directly into decisive action combat. However, as Wong and Gerras conclude in "Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession," an Army which continues to set unrealistic and unattainable goals, particularly in a competitive culture, inherently fosters leaders who equivocate on standards, or simply lie, to survive professionally.[42] Under ARFORGEN and COIN, such equivocation may have led to poor but easily corrected performance in theater, and perhaps some casualties in the lower threat COIN environment. Under SRM and a decisive action, global contingency strategy, it portends a more serious risk.

SAF-R Test: Risk

The SAF-R evaluation indicates both intrinsic and external risk to successful ARNG performance under SRM. Intrinsically, the ARNG component faces a significant misalignment of SRM implementation (ways) versus readiness goals (ends). With essentially only 25% of the training time as AC units to complete the same Objective T-level and other mandatory training standards, ARNG units will find it difficult to achieve similar decisive action readiness performance capabilities as their AC counterparts. On top of these same requirements, ARNG units often face DSCA and state-mandated training, as well as real-world emergency responses for civil support missions. The Army does not appear to account for such Guard-specific events in its task-to-time analysis, as the Army G-3/5/7 task-to-time slide demonstrates (Figure 1). These

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unaccounted-for tasks add to the requirements ARNG units face that compete with already tenuous ARNG SRM training schedules.

Externally, the ARNG risks decline in the support and morale of Guardsmen, their families, and employers due to unilaterally extended yearly training calendars and potential off-cycle XCTC and CTC deployments for high-demand units. This is despite the fact that the extension to even a 63-day training schedule fails to address the training timeframe problem at its core: the deficit for ARNG units to meet readiness requirements is well beyond 24 additional training days. The extended training year fails to resolve the primary issue, while potentially fostering negative second order effects related to lower stakeholder support.

Conclusions Regarding SAF-R Analysis of SRM

The implications are strategic for the Total Army. The SAF-R analysis demonstrates SR objectives for ARNG units are unachievable for the ways allocated, indicating risk to Total Force readiness.[43] Failure of ARNG units to genuinely achieve SRM readiness objectives will limit combatant commander force options to respond to contingencies in real time with capable units. Army National Guard Officers and Noncommissioned Officers, facing unreasonable training conditions to achieve complex decisive action readiness goals, will face pressure to take unacceptable risks. Many may choose instead to equivocate on readiness standards and reporting to survive professionally. Can the Army mitigate this dilemma for the part-time force?

A solution requires simultaneous adjustments to both the SRM ways and ends to align a feasible strategy under such timeframe constraints. Such a solution is difficult, but possible. To enable SRM feasibility for the ARNG, the solution must realign the ARNG approach to the part-time nature of the component. It must implement a focused-

path readiness training methodology that empowers units to achieve core SRM end-state goals. Finally, it must accomplish both in a manner that avoids unnecessarily increasing the training commitment of drilling units in the direction of a full-time force. An ARNG Focused-Path SRM implementation accomplishes these goals.

ARNG Focused-Path SRM Implementation

Success on the battlefield of tomorrow rests in large part on the ability of ARNG units to perform MET and subordinate METL tasks in extremis as a contingency reserve force. A Focused-Path SRM training approach enables FORSCOM to mitigate ARNG timeframe constraints. It enables FORSCOM to meet its mandate to prepare the ARNG as a viable component of "a combat ready, globally responsive Total Force in order to build and sustain readiness to meet Combatant Command requirements."[44]

SRM Objective T-Level Ratings: The Total Force Standard

Army SRM Objective T-level training and evaluation is standardized across the Total Force. For example, Table 1 identifies MET and METL training requirements for Infantry battalions under both AC and ARNG Infantry Brigade Combat Teams.[45] Both component units train to the same standards in all six METs and 36 subordinate METL tasks per year in accordance with standardized Objective T-Level rating criteria.[46] Subordinate units at the company, platoon, and squad levels also concurrently train their own collective MET and METL tasks at echelon, as well as participate in battalion MET training events.

Table 1. Infantry Battalion METs and METL Tasks for AC and ARNG Units[47]

IBCT Infantry Battalion MET and METL Tasks		
07-BN-1028 Conduct an Area Defense	**07-BN-1072 Conduct a Movement to Contact**	**07-BN-1092 Conduct an Attack**
· 06-BN-5076 Synchronize Fires	· 06-BN-5076 Synchronize Fires	· 06-BN-5076 Synchronize Fires
· 07-BN-6084 Conduct Survivability Activities	· 07-BN-1252 Conduct a Combined Arms Breach of an Obstacle	· 07-BN-1252 Conduct a Combined Arms Breach of an Obstacle
· 17-BN-0308 Synchronize Close Air Support	· 07-BN-6082 Conduct Mobility Activities	· 07-BN-6082 Conduct Mobility Activities
· 17-BN-1007 Conduct Recon Activities	· 17-BN-0308 Synchronize Close Air Support	· 17-BN-0308 Synchronize Close Air Support
· 63-BN-4878 Provide Internal Sustainment	· 17-BN-1007 Conduct Recon Activities	· 17-BN-1007 Conduct Recon Activities
· 71-BN-5100 Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process	· 63-BN-4878 Provide Internal Sustainment	· 63-BN-4878 Provide Internal Sustainment
	· 71-BN-5100 Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process	· 71-BN-5100 Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process
07-BN-1262 Conduct an Air Assault	**07-BN-1272 Conduct Area Security**	**55-BN-4800 Conduct Expeditionary Deployment**
· 06-BN-5076 Synchronize Fires	· 06-BN-5076 Synchronize Fires	· 12-BN-0004 Prepare Personnel for Deployment
· 07-BN-6082 Conduct Mobility Activities	· 07-BN-6084 Conduct Survivability Activities	· 55-BN-4801 Conduct Actions Associated with Force Projection at the Battalion Level
· 17-BN-0308 Synchronize Close Air Support	· 17-BN-0308 Synchronize Close Air Support	· 55-BN-4804 Conduct Deployment Activities at the Battalion Level
· 17-BN-1007 Conduct Recon Activities	· 17-BN-1007 Conduct Recon Activities	· 71-BN-5100 Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process
· 71-BN-5100 Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process	· 17-BN-9406 Conduct Lines of Communication Security	
	· 17-SQDN-9225 Conduct a Screen	
	· 71-BN-5100 Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process	

The CUSR SRM Objective T-level evaluation criteria are also the same across components at each T-level rating (Figure 2). Unlike the AC, however, standard ARNG units will build progressive readiness toward identified mission years, rather than sustain it. Even so, some high-demand ARNG units, such as Armored Brigade Combat Teams, will need additional annual training time to develop effective readiness to support the Joint Force. To enable this, FORSCOM provides these units with extra training days beyond the standard 39 per year, up to a total of 63.[48]

Rating*	Individual / Crew-Served / Platform Qualification	Mission Essential Task (MET) Proficiency	Collective Live Fire Proficiency	Continuous Training Days to Achieve T1
1	≥ 90%	≥ T- in all METs	Unit Live Fire conducted at appropriate echelon as determined by Live Fire Gates	≤ 10 Days
2	≥ 80 to < 90%	≥ T- in 50% or greater of METs (No U)		≤ 35
3	≥ 70 to < 80%	≥ P in 50% or greater of METs (≤ 1 x U)		≤ 90
4	< 70%	≤ P- in greater than 50% of METs (or > 1 x U)	Not Live Fire Proficient	> 90

*Overall T-Level determined as the lowest rating across the foundational components

Figure 2. SRM Objective T-Level Rating Criteria for the Total Force[49]

Sample ARNG SRM Training Year: Why It Does Not Work

Table 2 identifies an estimated task-to-time chart for an ARNG Infantry battalion conducting PY3 training under the current SRM Objective T-level approach. The ARNG battalion must obtain an Objective T-level rating of T- for 50% of its six unit METs, with a minimum of P- in each of the remaining three. This mirrors the requirements of an AC counterpart training to the same Objective T-level rating. Using a 63-day annual training timeframe as a best case scenario, the ARNG battalion must accomplish these ratings, as well as complete all non-MET mandatory and other required training, in 42 available training days.[50] The remaining 21 days are dedicated to performance evaluation at an XCTC event.[51]

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Table 2. Sample ARNG Training Day Allotment for a High Demand Infantry Battalion[52]

Battalion Requirements	Training Days	% Training Year
MET 1: Conduct an Area Defense (07-BN-1028)	4	10
MET 2: Conduct a Movement to Contact (07-BN-1072)	4	10
MET 3: Conduct an Attack (07-BN-1092)	4	10
MET 4: Conduct an Air Assault (07-BN-1262)	3	7
MET 5: Conduct Area Security (07-BN-1272)	4	10
MET 6: Conduct Expeditionary Deployment Ops (55-BN-4800)	4	10
AR 350-1 and Other Army-directed Mandatory Training	8	19
Personnel Readiness Activities (APFT/PHA/Records)	3	7
DSCA/State Training	2	4
Mandatory State/Local Events	2	4
Annual Training Unit Preparations and Load-out	4	9
Total ARNG Training Days for PY3	42	100
Total AC Training Days for PY3	199	

As Table 2 demonstrates, the ARNG battalion with 42 PY3 training days has approximately 79% fewer days to accomplish all tasks to the same standard as its AC counterpart, which is afforded 199 days. This essentially forces the ARNG battalion to train each complex MET and all its subordinate METL tasks (at all echelons) in approximately four non-consecutive drill days. This leads to a superficial approach to complex battalion collective training due to significant timeframe constraints.

Also, for the ARNG Infantry battalion, the six subordinate companies, fires detachment, and specialty platoons all train concurrently on their supporting METL tasks, often at widely separated armories that preclude collective training above the company echelon. Therefore, subordinate units often must conduct their own MET and METL task training simultaneously but disparately in preparation for, and sometimes

even as part of, battalion collective training. Army National Guard battalions may only assemble occasionally per training year for collective training due to both travel costs and time constraints for subordinate units. For instance, the Infantry companies in the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry, Arizona Army National Guard, average more than 100 miles per unit in travel distance to their battalion's collective training site at Florence Military Reservation.[53] Their deployment, set-up, break-down, and re-deployment timelines for a battalion training event away from home station negatively impact collective training opportunities over a two-day drill weekend.

Under the above circumstances, no battalion MET, and consequently no subordinate METL task, can reasonably be trained to a decisive action standard. Most importantly, this 63-day annual training scenario represents the best possible case for an ARNG Infantry battalion. Army National Guard Infantry battalions training under the standard 39-day RC year, such as during PY1 or PY2, must meet MET standards (and all other requirements) in 24, rather than 42, training days. This decreases available training time for battalion METs to as low as two days each.

The Sustainable Readiness Model attempts to mitigate such performance risk inherent to the ARNG part-time component by implementing a 5-year SRM progressive readiness model. However, ARNG battalions training to the same standards with approximately 21% of the training time per year as their AC counterparts cannot establish a feasible readiness upon which to build. Instead, ARNG units must leverage training synergy. The Focused-Path SRM approach accomplishes this by: first, concentrating limited ARNG training time on MET and METL tasks as opposed to other

non-MET training requirements; and second, by progressively building capability across the training years in those core METL tasks common to all unit METs.

<u>SRM Focused-Path Solution: Why It Works</u>

The SRM Focused-Path approach mitigates the part-time ARNG component time-to-task risk in two ways: first, by training and evaluating only two METs per year, which enables focus; and second, by progressively training and evaluating common METL tasks across the training years, which enables synergy. The combination of focus and synergy empower ARNG units to build genuine proficiency over the five-year progressive readiness cycle. Units concentrate on training depth and quality over time, rather than a broad, superficial attempt at quantity on a schedule that cannot support it.

Analysis of the sample ARNG Infantry battalion METL identifies the following core tasks that appear most common across the six battalion METs:

- Conduct the Mission Command Operations Process
- Synchronize Fires
- Synchronize Close Air Support
- Provide Internal Sustainment for Battalion

These METL tasks encapsulate the core mission enablers for an Infantry battalion across MET requirements.[54] The Focused-Path methodology elevates these core METL tasks to first-tier evaluation and reporting under the unit's CUSR Objective T-level rating.

Sample ARNG Focused-Path SRM Training Year: Mitigating the Risk

Table 3 identifies a sample 42-day (of 63) PY3 training year for an ARNG Infantry battalion re-aligned to a Focused-Path approach. Under this model, the unit spends approximately two-thirds of its training time focusing on MET training in preparation for a

21-day XCTC evaluation event. The XCTC is pre-programmed to evaluate the two

identified PY3 METs.

Table 3. Focused-Path SRM Approach for ARNG Infantry Battalion PY3 Validation[55]

Training Task	Training Days	Percent Training Year
MET 1: Conduct an Area Defense (07-BN-1028)	8	19%
MET 2: Conduct a Movement to Contact (07-BN-1072)	8	19%
METL 1: Mission Command	3 (+16 w/METs)	7%
METL 2: Synchronization of Fires	3 (+16 w/METs)	7%
METL 3: Synchronization of Close Air Support	3 (+16 w/METs)	7%
METL 4: Internal Sustainment	3 (+16 w/METs)	7%
AR 350-1 and Other Mandatory Training (weapons qual., driver training, etc.)	6	14%
Personnel Readiness Activities (APFT/PHA/Records)	2	5%
DSCA/State Training	1	3%
Mandatory Events (command-directed missions, changes of command, regulatory requirements, AT load out)	5	12%
Total ARNG Training Days for PY3	42	100%
Total AC Training Days for PY3	199	

In this example, the battalion trains to a deeper level in PY3 on the METs

"Conduct an Area Defense" and "Conduct a Movement to Contact," while gaining a third

year of progressive collective proficiency in the core METL tasks critical to all METs.

The unit conducts three dedicated training days to each core METL task, plus 16 days

of further training implementing those common tasks as a component of collective MET

training. By practicing the core METL tasks as evaluated ones alongside both METs,

the unit gains a synergy of focus, essentially performing 16 extra days of core METL

task training as a component of MET training. This is as opposed to the current SRM

approach, which provides six superficially trained METs (along with the plethora of other

mandatory training requirements and events) in 42 non-consecutive days. The

Focused-Path approach enables better quality MET training, and more effectively applied progressive readiness based on core METL tasks applied under such higher quality MET application.

While this approach may appear initially as an increase in SRM Objective T-level rating requirements, in fact, it delivers quite the opposite result. Since ARNG Infantry units under the Focused-Path model will only train to two METs per year as opposed to six, their evaluated training requirements are significantly reduced, and they regain focus. The core METL tasks, against which they are already training, are pulled upward into first-tier evaluation as key performance indicators of progressive readiness. They provide command-level emphasis in the cross-MET capabilities of mission command, synchronization of combat power, and sustainment. Their elevated emphasis under Focused-Path SRM, and their evaluation under Objective T-level criteria, serve as both reinforcing and embedding mechanisms to sustain performance.[56] As such, they promote synergy. The unit brings together focus and synergy twice per year during collective MET exercises, and then again under annual training XCTC MET evaluation. Since the two METs are more deeply trained than six, the supporting core METL tasks are more effectively exercised. This improves growth in progressive readiness across the five-year cycle.

Over the course of training from PY1 to PY3, the unit rotates through all six METs at two METs per year. It builds progressive readiness through the core METLs as it practices each MET independently, and then collectively. By PY4, the battalion is able to execute any maneuver task with minimal practice as it has progressively developed its core METL capabilities over three years. This enables the unit to then successfully

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train and execute all METs in PY4 as part of a CTC rotation. At the end of PY4, ARNG

units will demonstrate T- or better capability in all core METLs, and at least P level

proficiency in all METs. If called upon by a combatant commander in their mission year,

the unit will have the core capacity to respond with reasonable effectiveness to any

contingency despite developing their capabilities in a part-time training environment.

By creating a command climate that emphasizes MET focus and core METL task

synergy rather than broad, superficial MET training across the SRM progressive

framework, ARNG commanders develop units prepared to exercise agility and

disciplined initiative in combat and achieve success whatever the mission. The

approach works for all ARNG combat, combat support, and combat service support

units, not just Infantry types. It works because all such units have assigned METs with

corresponding METL tasks, and all perform at some level the core functions of mission

command, synchronization of combat power, and sustainment.[57]

Leveraging the ARNG SRM Progressive Readiness Timeline

Army National Guard Infantry units applying the RC 5-year progressive readiness

approach for SRM are expected to move through Objective T-level readiness stages

from T4 to T2 over a four-year timeframe. The progressive cycle culminates with each

unit at T2 for its Available (fifth) Year.[58] Units executing the Focused-Path approach

under such conditions complete a significant portion of mandatory training in PY1 and

PY2, when they are required to maintain a lower T4 readiness rating.[59] Table 4 depicts

the differences in focus for an ARNG Infantry battalion between PY1 and PY3.

Table 4. Focused-Path SRM Transition from Mandatory to MET Training Emphasis[60]

Task	Prepare Year 1		Prepare Year 3	
	Training Days	% of PY1 Training Time	Training Days	% of PY3 Training Time
2 METs	10	26%	19	49%
4 Core METL Tasks	5 (+10)	13%	8 (+19)	21%
AR 350-1 and Other Mandatory Training	15	38%	4	10%
Personnel Readiness Activities	2	5%	2	5%
DSCA/State Training	2	5%	1	2%
Mandatory Events	5	13%	5	13%
Total for PY	39	100%	39	100%

A significant portion of the PY1 training year is devoted to qualifying Soldiers in AR 350-1 and other mandatory requirements versus attaining proficiency in the collective battalion METs. This works as SRM Objective T-level standards for PY1 are generally T4, which do not include a live fire requirement.[61] By PY3, units are focused significantly more on MET training to a T3 level at the expense of AR 350-1 and other non-MET mandatory requirements. The effort on mandatory training in PY3 is on brief refreshers and limited retraining of core requirements, such as SHARP and Suicide Prevention, to support focus on decisive action METs and core METL tasks.

The Value of Training Focus and Synergy in the Part-time Force

Combatant commanders need ARNG units that are fully able to execute decisive action operations as an operational reserve to the Joint Force, including under in extremis contingency conditions. The Focused-Path SRM model leverages focus and synergy to enable the Guard to meet this requirement in approximately one quarter of the time available to its AC counterpart. The approach focuses on MET training over non-MET mandatory training, then on a reduced MET training load per year, and, finally, on the progressive evaluation of core METL tasks over METs. The approach still

ensures ARNG units train on every MET and all mandatory requirements in the 5-year ARNG progressive readiness cycle. The Focused-Path SRM approach mitigates the part-time training nature of the Guard component to provide combatant commanders with more highly prepared ARNG units stepping into their theater and moving into decisive action contact with enemy in support of the Joint Force.

<div align="center">Caveats to the Focused-Path SRM Approach</div>

Admittedly, the Focused-Path SRM approach does not resolve all issues regarding successful SRM implementation for the Guard component. In particular, it does not address the current misalignment of strategic means to ends, in terms of both training resources and funding. Both are fixable: the Army can re-allocate training resources, and Congress can appropriate increased funding. What neither can do is add the time necessary to the ARNG training year to enable the Guard to attain the same Objective T-level performance readiness as its full-time counterpart, short of changing the very nature of the part-time force itself. The *ARNG 4.0* policy, which expands training for high-demand units from 39 days to a maximum of 63, attempts to mitigate the timeframe dissonance. However, while the extra days certainly help, they are not decisive.

Focused-Path SRM mitigates the part-time ARNG training schedule by leveraging training focus and synergy to create a training whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. It provides a better option to train the ARNG, with the added benefit of keeping the part-time force decidedly part-time. This maintains the core attributes that have made the National Guard the bulwark behind U.S. strategic power and projection since the *1916 National Defense Act*, and which all National Guard stakeholders, including Soldiers, families, and employers, have supported for generations. As an

added benefit, the synergy SRM affords by training only two METs per year, and the core METL tasks progressively, reduces required training resources and funding across the component annually. This mitigating effect on SRM means is an added benefit that may provide substantial training resource and funding synergies over time.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Readiness Model as it stands today for the ARNG is an Emperor with no clothes. No ARNG unit can attain AC-level proficiency in all METs and supporting METL tasks, as well as complete the myriad of other Army and ARNG mandatory training requirements, in 39 to 63 training days per year. Progressive readiness, under such conditions, fails to add decisive value. Units cannot build on a readiness they cannot effectively attain from the first. Leaders, fearing they will be deemed unfit for their position, may equivocate on standards and reporting metrics.

Evaluation under the SAF-R model supports this conclusion. It indicates both intrinsic and external risk to successful ARNG SRM performance. Intrinsically, the ARNG component faces a significant misalignment of SRM implementation (ways) versus readiness objectives (ends) based on its part-time training year applied against full-time AC performance standards. The ARNG solution to mitigate this challenge, unilaterally adding up to 24 training days for high-demand units, fails to deliver a decisive resolution. Worse, it fosters external risk by potentially eroding stakeholder support as it breaks from the traditional 39-day ARNG training model.

The ARNG Focused-Path training model for SRM mitigates these issues. It re-aligns SRM implementation and objectives concerning ARNG SRM training to accommodate the component's 39 to 63-day annual training calendar. It concentrates collective training on two METs per year, providing a focus that drives quality of training

over quantity. It concurrently modifies ARNG SRM Objective T-level evaluation criteria to emphasize development of progressive readiness based on core METL tasks. This approach fosters training synergy across unit METs. It enables ARNG units to gain and sustain readiness in common performance competencies across METs in one quarter of the time allotted to AC counterparts. It develops unit capabilities in which the execution whole becomes greater than the sum of the training parts.

The implications are strategic for the Total Army. Army National Guard units must attain MET performance objectives to serve effectively as in extremis contingency reserves for combatant commanders and the Joint Force. Focused-Path SRM mitigates ARNG SRM task-to-time risk, increasing the component's ability to achieve success both in training and on the battlefield. Regardless of where the Army's next point of decisive contact with the enemy occurs, one thing is for certain: it will occur.[62] Army National Guard units will perform their duties as operational reserve forces under such circumstances in accordance with the manner that Army strategic leaders today enabled them to adequately, and honestly, prepare themselves. The ARNG Focused-Path SRM approach mitigates the performance risk involved in using part-time forces as full-time performers in extremis. While the approach does not ensure success, it certainly promotes it.

Endnotes

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⁶ Ibid.

⁷ James Rexford, "Force Generation and Sustainable Readiness 101 Overview, US Army Reserve Command," briefing slides, Fort Bragg, NC, U.S. Army Forces Command G-3/5/7, November 1, 2017, 8.

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⁹ U.S. Department of the Army G-3/5/7 Staff, "National Commission on the Future of the Army: Enable, Resource, Build, Assess, and Sustain Training Readiness," briefing slides, Fort Bragg, NC, U.S. Army Forces Command, September 17, 2015, 7.

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¹¹ Department of National Security and Strategy, *Course Directive: Theory of War and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA; U.S. Army War College, 2018), 2-4.

¹² Army, *Sustainable Readiness*, 2.

¹³ Rexford, "Force Generation, Reserve Command," 9.

¹⁴ Murphy and Milley, *A Statement on the Posture*, 8.

¹⁵ Army, *Sustainable Readiness*, 2; James Rexford, "Force Generation and Sustainable Readiness 101 Overview," briefing slides, Fort Bragg, NC, U.S. Army Forces Command G-3/5/7, April 20, 2017, 88. Note this briefing differs from the U.S. Army Reserve Command version mentioned above.

¹⁶ Army, *Sustainable Readiness*, 3. AR 220-1 defines AA reporting units as "parent units...registered in the DRRS–Army database with UICs ending in AA. Parent units include battalions, separate companies-to include headquarters companies—and detachments and other organizations that, in general, have been designed for separate employment or discrete missions." See U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Unit Status Reporting and Force*

Registration – Consolidated Policies, Army Regulation 220-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, April 15, 2010), 38, https://history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/docs/r220_1.pdf (accessed March 27, 2018).

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[30] "XCTC Exportable Combat Training Capability: Training Done Right," 2018, http://www.xctc.org/ (accessed March 25, 2018).

[31] Leonard Wong and Stephen J. Gerras, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, February 2015).

[32] Leonard Wong, *Stifling Innovation: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 2002), 7-10.

[33] G-3/5/7, "National Commission," 7.

[34] National Commission on the Future of the Army, *Report to the President and the Congress of the United States* (Arlington, VA: National Commission on the Future of the Army, January 28, 2016), 77, http://www.ncfa.ncr.gov/ (accessed March 27, 2018).

[35] Ibid.

[36] G-3/5/7, "National Commission," 7.

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[38] Ibid., 7.

[39] Ibid., 8.

[40] Ibid., 7.

[41] Ibid.

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[45] Army Training Network, "Standardized Mission Essential Task Lists," https://atn.army.mil/dsp_DA_Standardized_METL.aspx (accessed March 25, 2018).

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[47] Army Training Network, "Standardized Mission Essential Task Lists."

[48] DAMO-TRC, "Objective T," 42.

[49] Army, *Leader's Guide*, 9.

[50] DAMO-TRC presents a 48.5-day PY3 training year scenario for an ARNG Infantry Brigade Combat Team. This consists of 24 drill days and a 24.5-day AT, which includes a 21-

day XCTC event. See DAMO-TRC, "Objective T," 41. The 48.5-day training timeline is, of course, even more constrained than the best case 63-day PY3 scenario used here.

[51] DAMO-TRC, "Objective T," 41.

[52] Author developed. See Figure 1 above, which identifies 220 training days per year for the AC. Table 2 reduces AC annual training days to 200 here to parallel the reduction in the ARNG 63-day PY3 training calendar to 42 days to account for the 21-day ARNG XCTC evaluation event.

[53] Arizona Army National Guard Infantry companies travel to Florence Military Reservation, AZ, from unit armories in Phoenix (65 miles), Buckeye (100 miles), Prescott (166 miles), and Tucson (88 miles). Average miles traveled per company equals 105. Mileage estimates calculated on *Mapquest Home Page,* www.mapquest.com (accessed April 16, 2018).

[54] Training Network, "Task Lists."

[55] Author developed. See Figure 1 above. Army G-3/5/7 defines these requirements in Figure 1 as AR 350-1 Training and Leader Development, including Common Mandatory Training, Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, Individual and Crew-served Weapons Training and Qualification, and Drivers Training. The analysts require 40 AC training days to meet requirements. Here, the ARNG receives six to achieve the same.

[56] Edgar H. Schein with Peter Schein, "How Leaders Embed and Transmit Culture," in *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2017), Kindle e-book.

[57] Training Network, "Task Lists."

[58] DAMO-TRC, "Objective T," 41.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Author developed.

[61] Army, *Leader's Guide*, 9.

[62] National Guard, "Foundations."