

Strategy Research Project

Strategic Training Management: Training to Win in a Complex World

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Abstract

The Army faces a challenge today similar to the one faced following the Vietnam War. The past decade of war created a generation of agile and adaptive leaders focused on the current fight. Army leadership of the 1970s developed concepts that generated the most tactically and technically proficient army in the world exhibited in the tactical success of Desert Storm. The Army leadership of today must prepare the force for the future while engaged in the challenges of today. General Milley's initiative to make Readiness priority #1 and the recently published Army Directive 2016-05 set the conditions to create an Army prepared to train to win in a complex world. This strategic research project examines the training revolution following Vietnam, the effects of ARFORGEN on how the Army trains, and the initiatives outlined in Army Directive 2016-05. It goes on to examine the change effort of GEN Dempsey to engrain Mission Command in Army culture and compares that effort to GEN Milley's effort to make readiness priority #1. Highlighting the critical challenge: failing to educate and train those required to execute the requirements and enable them to monitor and correctly report readiness status per the EXORDs puts the entire effort at risk.

Strategic Training Management: Training to Win in a Complex World

“Readiness is priority 1, and there is no other #1.”¹ GEN Mark Milley in one of his first acts as Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) set the focus for his tenure as Chief. In January of this year in a memorandum for all Army leaders, GEN Milley issued Army Readiness Guidance for the first time. “This guidance provides the purpose, direction, and motivation for the Army to regain combined arms capability in tactical formations while improving key aspects of overall strategic readiness.”² Two factors drove the CSA to provide this clear purpose and focus. First, the Army requires a common standard and shared understanding of unit capabilities and readiness to ensure the Army’s ability to fulfill its requirements for the Joint Force and accomplish our non-negotiable contract with the American people to keep them safe and protect their interests. Secondly, Senior Army leaders need a better narrative to articulate Army capabilities and readiness to accomplish assigned requirements to our civilian leadership in the current resource-constrained environment.

For the 25 years before the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Army trained for a known enemy, be that the Soviets, the Iraqis or the Krasnovians. The last thirteen years of conflict shifted the training focus from High-Intensity Conflict to Hybrid Warfare. For five years (2005-2010) the Army almost solely focused on Counter-Insurgency Operations (COIN) to relearn the lessons Vietnam and enable success in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2010 with the draw down and Iraq, the Army began to emphasize both Combined Arms Maneuver and Wide Area Security.³

The current Army Operating Concept focuses on all three levels of war: tactical, operational and strategic to address the problem of how to “win in a complex world.”⁴

GEN Perkins, the Commander of Training and Doctrine Command, goes on to define the problem like this:

“Win” occurs at the strategic level and involves more than just firepower. It involves the application of all elements of National Power. Complex is defined as an environment that is not only unknown, but unknowable and constantly changing. The Army cannot predict who it will fight, where it will fight, and with what coalition it will fight. To win in a complex world, Army forces must provide the Joint Force with multiple options, integrate the efforts of multiple partners, operate across multiple domains, and present our enemies and adversaries with multiple dilemmas.⁵

The AOC presents the Army with a dilemma similar to what it faced following the end of the Vietnam War in the 1970s. Over that period, a group of innovative senior leaders led a revolution in training that resulted in the most tactically and operationally capable force the world has ever seen. In the pages that follow, we will examine that revolution in training the force, followed by an explanation of how the Army currently generates and reports training readiness to frame a discussion of the recently enacted Army Directive to build training readiness. Then an examination of Mission Command’s incorporation into Army culture will serve as an example of how best to implement the Directive and change how the Army enables, evaluates, and reports Training Readiness.

Following the end of the Vietnam War, the Army examined its training processes and began a series of improvements that led to units capable of the tactical and operational success the Army experienced in Desert Storm. The key problem with training in the 1970s was the old Army Training Program (ATP) that had not evolved since World War I.⁶ The ATP identified the subjects taught and the amount of exposure time required for a Soldier to be considered trained.⁷ Once a Soldier completed the prescribed time the Army deemed him trained and sent off to his unit. The training

adapted over time to train vast numbers of Soldiers, but they only received minimal levels of training. The system also relied on the selective service to provide the personnel for the training. The end of the draft combined with a growing capabilities gap with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact caused Army Senior Leaders to determine that better training was the means to address the gap.⁸

The Army developed and implemented a “systems approach to training” (SAT) to revitalize the training development and implementation process.⁹ Training and Doctrine Command established the Army Training and Evaluation Programs (ARTEPs) as a performance-oriented program for collective training. ARTEPs defined specific missions and capabilities along with tasks, conditions, and standards to be met by the unit for mission and task accomplishment.¹⁰ Training and Evaluation Outlines (T&EOs) describe tasks, conditions and standards for each task. T&EOs “provide information on the task, training objectives, related individual training objectives, resource requirements, and applicable evaluation procedures.”¹¹ The identification of training objectives, resources, and evaluation procedures differed greatly from the ATP, which focused on time allocated to training vice outcomes of training. In implementation, ARTEPs became capstone-training events rather than the training strategies their creators envisioned. As a result, TRADOC added Mission Training Plans (MTPs) to ARTEPs. MTPs linked the “how to train” of the ARTEP with missions the Army could assign that unit in a single document.¹² The MTP “described a progressive training program from individual task through battalion level mission.”¹³ This adaptation gave leaders a building block approach to gain proficiency on their core capabilities. Having established a standard

for training based on the missions and tasks units were expected to accomplish, the next step was to link training to resources required.

In 1989, work began on a comprehensive force training strategy as a transition plan to modernize the Army's training system.¹⁴ The effort became Combined Arms Training Strategies, commonly referred to as CATS, which are task-based, event-driven unit and functional strategies designed to train units to reach proficiency at executing their core and Mission Essential Tasks. Like ARTEP-MTPs, CATS use collective tasks and training events to improve unit proficiency at tasks. CATS provide much more fidelity than ARTEP-MTPs on training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations (TADSS) incorporation into the training. They also serve as a means for the Army to generate readiness and requirements for resources to increase readiness.

Organized in a crawl, walk, run methodology, CATS provide the commander a proposed methodology to train, what TADSS are available for training the desired task as well as other related tasks that are logically trained during the same training event. In 2005, the Army transitioned from printed ARTEP-MTP to the digitally delivered CATS.¹⁵ Currently, there are 662 CATS for all unit types and components. The DA G3/5/7 owns the CATS program, which the Training Management Directorate, Combined Arms Center-Training administers. CATS rely on CATS developers at each proponent to develop and vet each strategy through the operational units that can execute the task. The CATS developers work in close collaboration with the training developer/doctrine writers at the proponent to accomplish this.

Key during this time of evolution was the role of the training developer/doctrine writers, those responsible for writing the tasks and developing the doctrine. The Army in

general and its proponents, in particular, placed great emphasis on ensuring the personnel with the right experience received assignments to these positions. These Soldiers were subject matter experts with recent operational and training experience. More importantly, officers serving in these positions looked at them as beneficial for future progression. As such, these positions drew some of the most talented officers in the force.

Beginning in the late 1990s and especially following the start of OEF and OIF, officers remained in the operational force instead of serving in those positions. Officers, whether by their choice or by that of a commander who did not want to break up their team, remained in the same units for multiple deployments. This combined with manning deploying units at over 100% strength caused a drain in talented active duty officers serving in doctrine writer/training developer positions. The focus of training exacerbated the loss of talent. The Army focused on quickly generating units to deploy and fight. To meet the needs of the Combatant Commanders, the Army implemented the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process.

The ARFORGEN process's goal was "to provide a sustained flow of forces for current commitments and to hedge against unexpected contingencies."¹⁶ ARFORGEN rotated units through three force pools: reset, train/ready, and available. Each force pool had associated readiness levels to ensure that units received the proper resources at the proper times to deploy when needed and service the requirements of their supported Combatant Commander. The implementation of this process and the focus of deploying units on accomplishing the key events required to deploy caused a degradation to training management across the force. Training focus for the Army

began to shift with the draw down in Iraq. Army senior leaders began to see evidence of issues with unit training management and took steps to identify and address the problem.

From October 2013 to February 2014, the Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG) conducted an inspection of Unit Training Management across the force. The findings were stark and sent the message of the dire state of unit training management to Senior Leaders throughout the Army. The inspection produced findings in six key areas: doctrinal understanding, understanding and utilizing enabling systems, training assessments, training resource management, virtual, constructive and gaming (VCG) devices, and the organizational inspection program.¹⁷ The DAIG found all of these areas lacking. It also found that the Army as a whole lacked a doctrinal understanding of unit training management. In fact “cohorts of leaders in the operational force were found who received no formal institutional instruction on training management.”¹⁸

The inspection found that leaders failed to follow doctrine in developing Unit Training Plans and “often omitted key required items including assessment plans, required resources and risk identification/mitigation for key tasks not trained.”¹⁹ The higher headquarters driven training environment of ARFORGEN constrained the development of long-term unit training plans. Units often skipped key steps in the Unit Training Management process due to the fact higher headquarters dictated the key training events. Additionally, units programmed and drove the POIs for most of the preparatory training due to the nature of the requirements. This environment caused a

lapse in the most important step of Unit Training Management: the commander-to-commander dialogue in the development and implementation of the Unit Training Plan.

According to doctrine, the Commanders' Dialogue is an opportunity for a subordinate commander to engage his supervising commander on his training plan development.²⁰ This dialogue is the venue to discuss collective tasks identified in mission analysis to be trained, the subordinate commander's current assessment of those tasks, the time required to reach proficiency on the identified tasks, risks, and associated mitigation measures, and significant unit readiness issues that may impact training.²¹ Due to the tight timelines of the ARFORGEN process, higher headquarters often developed detailed plans down to the company and platoon level to ensure completion of all requirements before entering the Available pool. The perceived focus of ARFORGEN on gates and events vice task proficiency permeated the force. Brought about by the constrained timelines and resources, this perception caused commanders at all levels, especially company and battalion level, to focus on checking the block training plans developed by their higher headquarters instead of applying the rigor of doctrine to develop individual unit training plans. These higher headquarters developed training plan had additional impacts on how units conducted training meetings.

The inspection found that units conducted training meetings, but most, especially at Company level, served as calendar synchronization meetings. Doctrinally the purpose of a training meeting is to coordinate and resource planned training and assess training conducted.²² Training meetings as calendar synchronization meetings is a logical result of training in the ARFORGEN model. Training for deploying units is

dictated and regimented with resources allocated by higher headquarters to ensure subordinates are ready for the next gate. The focus was on the execution of training using the plan and in most cases subject matter experts provided by a unit's higher headquarters. To say the company and battalion commanders were not doing their job is inaccurate; their job description evolved and especially in a garrison environment became more managerial. Leaders could exercise initiative and agility during training, but the planning of training required no rigor on their part. As a result, a key element of training was often overlooked: the use of Training and Evaluation Outlines in the discussion of upcoming and completed training.

The inspection found little use of T&EOs in the evaluation of training, especially at the Company level and below.²³ This lack of use of the Army standard is a major concern in ensuring a shared understanding exists in how units conduct and evaluate tasks. The proponent accountable for each individual and collective task owns the development of that task's T&EO.²⁴ T&EOs provide the framework for the unit to prepare for and evaluate the training of each task. They also provide the quantitative information in the form of performance steps and performance measures that an evaluator can use during the training event to assess the performance of that task. This evaluation then informs the commander's assessment of the unit's proficiency in that task.²⁵

Without T&EOs, how do commanders assess their proficiency at their assigned tasks? The DAIG report concluded that for some units, lack of T&EO use led to the impression that attending a training event results in being proficient at the tasks identified to be trained.²⁶ In the author's experience, commanders and their

subordinates would draw on experience, tactics, techniques and procedures and unit standard operating procedures to make that assessment. By doing this, commanders introduced risk in their ability to accomplish the task, as the Army standard requires. This risk would go unidentified and only during execution of the task during a mission would the results be felt. Just as the Army confronted a capabilities gap following the Vietnam War, the DAIG Inspection of Unit Training Management identified that the Army faces a training and experience gap as it trains to fight and win in a complex world.

In response to the DAIG report and to revitalize unit training management across the force, the Combined Arms Center-Training launched an effort to educate the institutional and operational force on training management doctrine and processes.²⁷ This effort included updating all the programs of instruction for Unit Training Management in all Officer and Noncommissioned Officer Education courses. In one instance, the time allocated to instruction on Training Management increased by 18 hours for the core portion of Captains formal training. However, increasing the instruction alone cannot solve the training issue. The challenges of the bureaucratic environment that permeate formal education systems can lead to it having limited effect.

Without a thorough understanding of doctrine and strict adherence to the proponent-developed program of instruction, it is possible that instructors will default to their experiences. To further complicate the issue, most of the instructors currently serving in these schools have an experience set based on the ARFORGEN model, and as discussed earlier, that limited the execution of training management doctrine. It is imperative that officers and NCOs experience the dialogue required by current doctrine and gain the initiative needed to plan, resource, and execute quality Combined Arms

Training in both Combined Arms Maneuver and Wide Area Security. Ensuring instructors adhere to the proponent developed POIs will do that. Understanding the frame of reference of each generation is important as we seek to understand this challenge.

Officers who entered the Army before 2000 have a much different frame of reference than those who entered after. The focus on training that began in the late 1970s with the development of the ARTEP created officers with a capabilities set that flourished in a Systems Approach to Training. Senior Army leaders inculcated the Battalion Training Management System into the Army culture. Officers and Soldiers at all levels understood their role in the training process and the desired outcomes. When a new lieutenant arrived at a unit, his Platoon Sergeant had the experience to mentor him in developing a training plan and organizing training in a garrison environment. For a majority of the current generation of officers and NCOs below the grade of Lieutenant Colonel and Master Sergeant, this is not the case.

The changes to the mission, shifting focus of training brought about by the actions of a thinking and adaptive enemy, and the ARFORGEN process deteriorated this skill set. It was not a conscious decision. The deterioration occurred due to the focus of leaders, at all levels, to generate the required skills in the forces deploying to fight and win the war on terror. Doctrine changed and adapted over the last thirteen years, but a number of factors limit the Army leadership's ability to inculcate these changes.

Beginning in late 2004, the value of providing education to officers and NCOs at the proper time for each's future responsibilities shifted to education occurring when

allowed by the supported commander. This shift occurred to ensure deployed and deploying commanders could accomplish their mission. The shift to Commander-driven attendance to professional military education (PME) caused huge backlogs with many officers and NCOs deferring training for numerous years. Commanders either choose to keep personnel for the mission, or they were unable to release personnel to attend schooling due to stabilization or lock in for the next deployment. The results of this shift generated some extremely adaptable and talented officers for operations in the current operating environment, but their grounding in and understanding of doctrine, especially training doctrine, was lacking; as such, they were unprepared for future responsibilities.

Most senior leaders today operate under the assumption that their subordinates know and understand how to train. As a junior officer in the mid-1990s, the author benefitted from the training revolution of the 1970s and 80s. He received a training calendar with blocks of time throughout the training cycle to train his unit on priorities derived from the battalion mission, the commander's intent and the author's assessment of his unit. He developed and briefed a training plan, including tasks to be trained and training objectives, to the commander two levels up. Once approved, that plan became a contract on the readiness it would generate. The ARFORGEN model limited this process for units on a mission. At the height of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, units would rotate to theater every twelve months. For units to meet all the training gates to deploy, unit training became extremely regimented, and training plans dictated by the training requirements and time available. This squashed initiative when it came to home station training and denied a generation of officers and NCOs the experience of planning original squad, platoon, and company level training. The initiatives that began

as a response to the DIAG report started to address this gap. These initiatives and other improvements are applied to policy and doctrine through the recently published Army Directive 2016-05 (Building Training Readiness).

In the fall of 2014, the Chief of Staff of the Army directed the Department of the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations (DA G3/5/7) to develop a more objective means of determining training readiness levels. In conjunction with this, he desired a means to associate better the cost of training with the level of readiness generated. In a sense he was seeking a means to relay to the Army's civilian leaders and members of Congress the actual cost to generate and maintain the readiness of the force to win in a complex world. This requirement resulted in the DA G3/5/7 tasking the Army Director of Training (DOT) to begin the Assessing and Reporting Training Readiness (ARTR) Effort. This effort sought to enable commanders at echelon to more objectively assess their readiness and articulate the risk they are assuming in their training. The outcomes of this effort will allow Senior Army leaders to articulate better current training readiness to our civilian leaders and tailor resource requests in the current resource-constrained environment.

This effort resulted in Army Directive 2016-05 signed by the Acting Secretary of the Army on February 11, 2016. This Directive presents four initiatives to improve how the Army builds training readiness.²⁸ First, it established the Sustainable Readiness Model, a new force generation model to replace ARFORGEN. Second, it updated tasking and mandatory training through changes in Army policy to prioritize and protect Army training. Third, it established a common readiness baseline for like units that includes objective evaluation criteria to improve assessing and reporting training

readiness. Finally, the development of a methodology to tie unit training activity, its associated costs, and the readiness generated to enhance current resourcing models to better allocate resources to generate the required readiness across the force. The initial step is to implement a new force generation process to replace ARFORGEN.

The goal of the Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM) is to produce trained and ready units for known requirements while simultaneously building readiness in enough additional units for the Army to be optimally postured to react to unforeseen contingencies.²⁹ The SRM will do this by aligning requirements and units to service those requirements over a five-year period. This alignment will serve two purposes: it will provide Combatant Commanders visibility on their allocated forces, and it will provide units a focus for training. This training focus combined with more objective readiness reporting standards will enable Senior Leaders to better identify units for unforeseen contingencies. To better enable training within the framework of SRM, the Army will establish more clearly defined training priorities and an Army standard for protecting planned training.

To clarify requirements, priorities and authorities, the Directive and its supporting EXORD establish four improvements to current training enterprise policy and processes. The first improvement is to adjust policy to provide emphasis on the importance of unit training to meet training readiness objectives and the central role of the commander in doing so.³⁰ This improvement nests the SRM defined readiness objectives and identifies the commander as the crucial individual in meeting and articulating the accomplishment of those goals. Expanding on this emphasis is the second improvement that enables a predictable training environment. The Directive

institutes an Army tasking policy to protect company level training by establishing a training lock-in and a disciplined tasking process, especially for taskings impacting Brigade and below units.³¹ The training lock-in at the company level, six weeks for active and 13 for guard and reserves, enables long-term planning and the proper time for resourcing and preparation; setting in policy conditions that support effective training management. By establishing a common planning horizon and disciplining the tasking process predictability in training calendars at units will increase. The Directive's improvements to how the Army manages mandatory training further enhance this greater predictability.

The EXORD also clarifies the authorities for the approval and prioritization of Department of the Army-directed training. It divides current mandatory training requirements into either training requirements dictated by Department of the Army, which will reside in AR 350-1, or a command responsibility, to be included in AR 600-20.³² This delineation empowers commanders at lower levels to manage risk but maintains at Department level training in areas that the SecArmy or CSA are unwilling to accept the risk. The DCS, G-3/5/7 now must approve all mandatory training and consolidate mandatory training requirements in a Department of the Army Pamphlet (DAPAM). This DAPAM will allow leaders at all levels a one-stop means to identify mandatory training requirements and frequency. The predictability generated by the training lock-in combined with the ability of commanders to understand the totality of DA-directed training requirements will allow more time for leaders to plan, conduct and assess training.

The fourth initiative focuses on assessing and reporting training readiness. This initiative includes two main components: evaluations of task proficiency and assessments of unit training readiness. And may be the most critical of the four initiatives. As discussed earlier, T&EOs are the Army's method of establishing the tasks, conditions and standards for training a task. It is the commander's responsibility to evaluate task proficiency based on his subjective assessment of the performance of that task. The EXORD clarifies these steps by first defining a clear set of task proficiency standards. The existing standard of Trained, Practiced, and Untrained (T/P/U) becomes Fully Trained, Trained, Practices, Marginally Practiced, and Untrained (T/T-/P/P-/U)(see figure 1).³³ This stratification combined with the establishment of Task Proficiency Criteria by which to objectively evaluate the performance of a task based on the T&EO adds fidelity and objectivity to training that has not existed in the training enterprise to date. The objectivity introduced for task evaluation is also applied to overall unit training readiness as the EXORD establishes and adjusts policy and standards for training readiness assessments.

Objective Task Evaluation Criteria

Plan and Prepare				Execute						Assess	
Operational Environment				Training Environment (LW/C/G)	External Eval	% Present at Training / Authorized	% Leaders Present at Training / Authorized	Performance Measures	Critical Performance Measures	Leader Performance Measures	Task Assessment
SQD & PLT	CO & BN	BDE & ABOVE	U L X								
Dynamic (Single Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (4+ OE Variables & Hybrid Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (All OE Variables & Hybrid Threat)	Night	Yes	Yes	≥85%	≥80%	≥90% GO	All	≥90%	T
								80-90% GO		80-89%	T-
Static (Single Threat)	Dynamic (Single Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (All OE Variables & Single Threat)	Night	No	No	65-74%	75-79%	65-79% GO	<All	<80%	P
						60-64%	60-74%	51-64% GO			P-
	Static (Single Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (< than all OE Var. & Single Threat)	Day	<60%	<60%	<50% GO	U				

Task Dependent
Task Independent

Figure 1. Objective Task Evaluation Criteria³⁴

The Directive and its associated EXORD adjust the process for assessing training readiness and establish distinct definitions and standards for training readiness levels. The primary effort in this area is establishing an Authoritative Task Framework, to provide a common doctrinal structure for collective and individual tasks that support Army tactical missions and operations.³⁵ The Authoritative Task Framework organizes all current and future Army tasks into a simple, clear and nested hierarchy for use by commanders and trainers at all echelons.³⁶ This framework aids in establishing an objective standard for reporting by creating a means for developing shared understanding of tasks a unit can accomplish by unit type and echelon.

The Directive and EXORD go on to further standardize unit Mission Essential Task Lists. As stated earlier, all Brigade and above units have Department of the Army directed METLs on which they report their readiness. The EXORD directs the establishing of standardized METL down to the Company level.³⁷ As with Brigade standardized METLs, the Army will construct Battalion and Company standardized METLs with tasks that “reflect the fundamental collective tasks the unit was designed to perform for Decisive Action during Unified Operations.”³⁸ In addition to standardizing the METLs, the EXORD establishes two additional criteria in a units training readiness assessment: individual and crew qualifications and collective live fire proficiency.³⁹ The EXORD clearly explains all of these enhancements in the definitions and standards of training readiness levels (T-Level), see figure 2.⁴⁰

Objective T-Level Definitions				
T1	The unit is assessed as a minimum of “T-” in all of its METs. Greater than 90% of the unit’s individuals, and teams are qualified, unit achieves a T- (Trained) proficiency at the appropriate qualification gate for its unit type / echelon. Resource constraints do not limit the unit’s ability to train. The unit is prepared to provide the capabilities for which it was designed and can be employed immediately for Unified Land Operations (ULO).			
T2	The unit is assessed at a minimum of “T-” in most of its METs with no “U”. At least 80% of the unit’s individuals and crews are qualified, and subordinate units have achieved T- (Trained) proficiency for the appropriate qualification gate at least one level below that required of its echelon. Resource constraints have minimal impact on the unit’s ability to train, and the unit needs no more than 35 continuous days of additional training to provide the capabilities for which it was designed. The unit can be employed for ULO.			
T3	The unit is assessed at a “P” or better in most of its METs with no more than one “U”. Less than 80% of the unit’s individuals, crews, and sections are qualified, and subordinate units have completed the appropriate qualification gate at least two levels below that required of its echelon. Resource constraints may limit the unit’s ability to train, and the unit needs no more than 90 continuous days of additional training to provide the capabilities for which it was designed before it can be employed for ULO.			
T4	The unit is assessed at “P-” or less in most of its METs; the unit is not prepared to execute the mission for which it was designed. The unit has resource constraints, has not completed any of its required qualifications, and needs at least 90 days of additional training before it can be employed for ULO.			
T Level	Mission Essential Task Proficiency	Individual / Team Qualification	Qualification LFX Gate	Continuous Training Days to Achieve T1
T1	≥ T- in all METs	≥ 90%	Unit LFX at directed echelon	10 Days to RLD
T2	≥ T- in most METs (No U)	80-89%	Unit LFX at one level below directed echelon	≤ 35
T3	≥ P in most METs (≤ 1xU)	70-79%	Unit LFX at two levels below directed echelon	≤ 90
T4	≤ P- in most METs	<70%	Unit LFX not complete	>90

Figure 2. Objective T-Level Definitions⁴¹

The Directive and its supporting EXORD go into much greater detail explaining the authorities, responsibilities, and processes across the training enterprise which will enable these changes. The challenge will be its implementation and whether the Army

will give the effort enough time and space to succeed. As discussed earlier, the training environment of the 1990s grew from an over 15 years of effort by TRADOC. It will be beneficial to examine another more recent change to Army culture. Over the following pages, an examination of the Building Training Readiness effort outlined in Army Directive 2016-05 and its EXORDs using John Kotter's eight-stage change process is combined with a review of the implementation of Mission Command to inform the way ahead with inculcating change in both areas across the Army.⁴²

To begin, we will examine the efforts of GEN Milley and his predecessor to establish a sense of urgency, build a guiding coalition, and develop and communicate the vision for change in the area of readiness in general and training readiness in particular. We will compare these efforts to the effort to implement mission command, which over the last six years, saw the Department of Defense and the Army establish a sense of urgency, create a guiding coalition, and develop a strategy in conjunction with extensive communicating of the change vision.⁴³ Following a discussion of these efforts, a detailed examination of the challenges to generating change in such a large organization is conducted. Then, a discussion of the changes already implemented to generate quick wins and empower broad-based action. Finally, a discussion of the next steps in the implementation of Army 2016-05 with challenges and a recommendation. For through the implementation of mission command principles, the conditions are set for the Army to truly inculcate the changes to training directed and make readiness priority #1.

Building on the efforts of his predecessor, GEN Ray Odierno, GEN Milley immediately established a sense of urgency for Army Readiness in his initial message

to the Army. By clearly placing Readiness as the top priority, he alerted Soldiers and leaders across the force to the shift in focus. Under GEN Odierno, Leader Development was the number one priority, but the Army arguably had multiple focus areas during his tenure. GEN Odierno issued “Marching Orders” and two “Waypoints” during his time as Chief. All are well-written documents explaining the strategic goals and the CSA’s vision for the Army, but they all lack a clearly defined list of rank ordered priorities focusing the force on leader development. GEN Milley further clarified his vision and priorities in “Army Readiness Guidance, Calendar Year 2016-17”; clearly articulating to the force his change vision and priorities in rank order.

GEN Odierno, as the CSA, successfully built a guiding coalition for the effort to refine the Army’s training readiness processes. GEN Odierno introduced the concept during the Army Training and Leader Development Conference (ATLDC) in 2014. The Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Allyn, oversaw the effort which began in earnest in February 2015.⁴⁴ Drawing on a broad coalition of Colonel level representatives from all Components, major subordinate commands, centers of excellence, and the operational force allowed a consensus to form on the importance of the effort and outcomes achieved. As the effort continued to mature, touchpoints involving the VCSA, FORSCOM Commander (GEN Milley at the time), and TRADOC Commander (GEN Perkins) ensured shared understanding and consensus amongst a guiding coalition of senior leaders. The transition of GEN Milley from FORSCOM Commander to CSA maintains this consensus and momentum. Now to examine efforts to implement mission command across the Army.

The Army introduced Mission Command in doctrine in 1982 through FM 100-5, Operations, as mission orders in which commanders clearly state their objective, establish the limits or controls necessary for coordination, and delineate “available resources and support from outside sources.”⁴⁵ Identifying the need to create a sense of urgency, GEN Martin E. Dempsey, then TRADOC Commander established the Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCoE) in 2010. The mission of the MCCoE is to develop, integrate and synchronize Leader Development, Army Profession, and Mission Command requirements and solutions to prepare leaders and units to successfully exercise Mission Command in the execution of Unified Land Operations.⁴⁶

Shortly after assuming duty as the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Dempsey framed the strategic importance of Mission Command for the future force.⁴⁷ Citing the dynamic security environment and accelerated pace of change and speed of operations, the Chairman espoused the importance of leaders across the DoD operating within the principles of mission command to prepare the force to face the complex and adaptive threats of the contemporary environment.⁴⁸ Through the Mission Command White Paper, the Chairman established a sense of urgency and communicated his change vision across the Department of Defense.⁴⁹ GEN Dempsey’s experience at TRADOC and his position as the Chairman enabled him to direct a guiding coalition of the service chiefs and draw on the knowledge and experience MCCoE to lead the change effort across DoD.

In response to the GEN Dempsey’s directive, the Army developed a strategy to implement Mission Command. The Army Chief of Staff identified “an intellectual and cultural shift” required “to yield the desired Mission Command outcomes” and the

importance of those outcomes to enable the Army “to prepare for and execute assigned missions.”⁵⁰ The strategy sets out three strategic ends (SE): SE1- “all Army leaders understand and practice the MC philosophy”; SE2- “Commanders and staffs effectively execute MC WfF (Warfighting Function) Tasks.”; and, SE3- “A MC system enables commanders, staffs, and units to effectively execute the Mission Command war-fighting function.”⁵¹ This framework is the Army’s attempt to empower broad-based action and generate short-term wins.⁵²

As one examines the Mission Command Strategy, one of the challenges to change becomes readily apparent: more than four governance processes and forums govern the Army Mission Command Strategy implementation.⁵³ The governance process is a symptom of the larger problem that constrained the implementation of mission command from its inception in 1982: the centralized and managerial nature of the Army.⁵⁴

Mission Command is commander-centric but enabled and executed through the staff. The structure of staff, at echelon, is organized to coordinate and supervise the functioning of their organizations.⁵⁵ This managerial and centralized approach, which started early in the last century, is deeply engrained in Army culture.⁵⁶ This culture runs counter to the principles at the heart of Mission Command: empowered subordinates and decentralized execution within the clear intent of their higher commander.⁵⁷

Exacerbating this are the numerous mission command systems developed during the last 12 years of persistent conflict.⁵⁸ Material solutions to address valid requirements generated by organizations in contact were fielded in some cases without the necessary doctrine, education, and training.⁵⁹ These systems enabled commanders

and their staffs at echelon to maintain visibility and generate information or data requirements down to the lowest level. Produced with the best intentions, these systems created the illusion of situational awareness while only providing raw data. This data, in turn, was only as good as the user uploading it into the system.

With the intent of shrinking the power distance to enable mission command, these systems overwhelm subordinate headquarters with requirements for data entry limiting the most critical resource for a subordinate commander: time. Army Directive 2016-05 directly addresses this central challenge to implementing Mission Command. In Annex A to the EXORD, the Army clearly establishes in policy two methods to protect and create time for commanders. The steps create a predictable training environment and reset mandatory training generate time to enable commanders to plan properly and resource their training while empowering leaders to make decisions at echelon on risks they need to assume to accomplish their mission. These initiatives address the time available for commanders, but the processes that generated the mission command systems is another aspect of the managerial and centralized culture of the Army.

As in corporations, the Army is a bureaucracy. The bureaucracy enables the Army to function efficiently, by establishing and enforcing standards; and identifying and resourcing requirements for the Army to accomplish its missions. The Army does this through processes established by policy. The challenge for the Army, at the enterprise level, is to avoid what happens in corporations. Senior executives in business focus on supervising a process, vice taking personal ownership and driving the process toward the desired result.⁶⁰ This managerial and centralized culture empowers the bureaucracy where mission command empowers the commanders. The building training readiness

effort also empowers commanders, but other leaders within the enterprise must take action.

Enterprise level leaders must operate within their processes by actively driving that process within the principles of mission command with the goal of empowering commanders. These efforts should include active engagement with the operating force during the implementation of the building training readiness directive. Centers of Excellence must work in close collaboration with operational units in the development of the task hierarchy and refinement of collective tasks. The focus on meeting the needs of the force through an active dialogue between the institutional and operational domains is key to successful implementation. The guiding coalition must encourage and role model this. A challenge to successfully role-modeling this focus are the biases carried by the agents implementing that change.

As discussed earlier, the frame of reference of senior leaders differs greatly from that of their subordinates. Successful implementation of mission command must address the underlying assumptions that shaped their frame of reference.⁶¹ The situation in the Army of the 1990s was similar but simpler than today's environment: "doing more with less"; frequently being away from home for training; and a shrinking force due to reasons beyond the control of the Army.⁶² These conditions led to careerism and a perception of zero defects that, despite the best efforts of our Senior Leaders, persists today.⁶³ As a means to realign these underlying assumptions the Army has taken steps to generate some short term wins.

The decrease in promotion rates to MAJ and LTC and the increased focus on the opportunities available for broadening assignments for CPT and above can adjust the

Army's institutional collectivism to better align with the principles of Mission Command by rewarding officers who seek challenging broadening assignments, such as doctrine writer/training developer, with promotion in a more competitive selection process.⁶⁴ The challenge remains the ability of the culture to reinforce these embedding mechanisms over time by rewarding officers who perform exemplary in broadening assignments equally with those who do so in operational assignments.⁶⁵ Doctrine, policy and messaging from the guiding coalition to include Secretary of Defense supports this, but it must bear out in practice to successfully change the culture.⁶⁶

The Army Directive on Building Training Readiness and its EXORD set goals and suspenses for changes to the training enterprise that improve not only the readiness of the force but the understanding of that readiness at echelon. However, the EXORD fails to establish a clear plan to implement the change in the force. It clearly establishes ownership for the tasks and suspenses for task accomplishment but does not clearly articulate the plan to implement the process across the force. An examination of the actions taken to generate short-term wins and maintain the momentum of change for mission command and the challenges faced during this time will greatly inform the means to implement the building training readiness directive.

Over the last six years, the efforts of the former Chairman and Army Chief of Staff have set the conditions for the required cultural shift to enable the successful implementation of mission command. GEN Milley's efforts to continue the building training readiness effort have yielded a clear vision for change and created a sense of urgency, but challenges endure which must be addressed to institutionalize and operationalize these concepts. First, it is imperative that the guiding coalition link these

two efforts together to maintain the momentum, continue to lead the change, and in the future anchor it in the culture of the force.⁶⁷ In addition to maintaining the momentum of change, efforts must be made to address the underlying assumptions that shape Army culture.

The key underlying assumption that inhibits implementation of both Mission Command the building training readiness effort is power distance.⁶⁸ Mission command systems created to decrease the power distance between commanders and subordinates have been coopted by the bureaucracy of staffs at echelon to generate requirements for subordinates to provide data points that feed the staff processes as opposed to creating shared understanding.⁶⁹ In the authors experience, Senior Leaders decreased power distance by engaging their subordinates directly utilizing command presence to reinforce their intent and role model mission command principles.⁷⁰ The next step involves Commander's at echelon role modeling other key principles of mission command, specifically the creation of shared understanding through which they establish, enforce and resource priorities. To accomplish this Commanders must discipline their staffs to adhere to the priorities as set and communicate their priorities clearly and directly to their subordinates through a commander to commander dialogue at echelon.

One achieves understanding through the processing of data to develop meaning.⁷¹ Mission command systems enable the processing of data, but it requires critical and creative thinking to produce knowledge and understanding.⁷² The proliferation of mission command systems and their associated data requirements before the proper embedding of the principle of generating shared understanding

resulted in staffs fixated on gathering data vice generating knowledge and facilitating the commander's understanding. Commanders must establish priorities for analysis to both focus their staff and enable their subordinates. In establishing these priorities, Commanders must consider their higher commander's intent and the risk that will be incurred by their prioritization. Once set, commanders must communicate these priorities and associated risk to commanders, both higher and lower, and the staff must be disciplined to operate by them.

As discussed earlier, in the training enterprise the Commanders' dialogue is the means to create shared understanding. The EXORD implementing Army Directive 2016-05 directs one Commanders' Dialogue following an external evaluation as a confirmation of the assessment of the units training readiness.⁷³ That engagement is the culmination of the units training plan and should be the final dialogue in a series of engagements that allowed the senior commander to shape and steer the training of his subordinate. The building training readiness effort and the new FM 7-0 need to clearly define the Commanders' Dialogue, establishing in doctrine and policy touch-points and expected outcomes to both educate the force and provide a framework for change.

In addition to the efforts outlined above, the DA G-3/5/7 must synchronize the changes to policy and doctrine described in Army Directive 2016-05 and its EXORDs across the other domains of DOTmLPF-P to ensure the success of the effort. Specifically, the Army requires an implementation plan to educate leaders on policy and procedural changes and train them in the execution of these requirements. Additionally, options for adjusting organizational structure to improve unit understanding and reporting of training readiness will assist in implementation. Failing to educate and train

those required to execute the requirements and enable them to monitor and correctly report readiness status in accordance with the EXORDs puts the entire effort at risk.

Based on the aggressive timeline for implementation, the normal means of educating and training the force on these changes to policy, doctrine, and processes through the appropriate PME is untenable. The Directive applies to the total Army, and the publication of the EXORDs immediately implements a majority of the changes.⁷⁴

Based on this aggressive timeline and the scope of the population required to apply these changes (Company Command Teams and up) the Army requires an aggressive plan to educate the force on these changes. The Army faced a similar challenge in 2015 with the sexual harassment/assault response and prevention (SHARP) crisis, which required immediate action to train and validate leaders across the force.

Due to numerous high profile SHARP incidents and pressure from our civilian leaders, Army leadership took steps to train and validate leaders, SHARP Victim Advocates (VAs) and Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs). The Department of the Army directed an Army-wide stand-down to conduct leader engagements, refresher training and review the qualifications for all personnel serving in those positions.⁷⁵ By laying out straightforward tasks and setting a timeline for completion, the Army was able to address the issue rapidly and create shared understanding of the requirements and expectations of leaders and SHARP personnel throughout the force.

An Army Training Readiness Stand-down beginning at the most senior levels would reinforce GEN Milley's focus as readiness is the #1 priority. Utilizing the Army Readiness Conference, the CSA enabled by subject matter experts would begin the

training. Training would continue through leader-led, train the trainer events at echelon that would generate shared understanding of the policy, requirements, and expectations across organizations throughout the Army. The Training Readiness Stand-down would be a quick win in that all officers and NCOs currently serving in leadership positions would be able to implement not only this directive but other directives as envisioned by the Secretary and the CSA. TRADOCs efforts through the training enterprise would consolidate the gains of the stand-down and produce more change as Soldiers attend professional military education courses increasing their understanding of the changes. These quick wins will increase shared understanding, but strategic patience is required to reap all the benefits of the Directive.

We developed an Army that quickly and decisively drove the Iraqis from Kuwait in Desert Storm through more than ten years of focused training and shared understanding of the outcomes that training generated. The challenges today, as outlined in the Army Operating Concept, are much more complex and ambiguous, and our training methodology and outcomes must adapt to address this. As outlined in the previous pages, Army Directive 2016-05, and its implementing EXORDs will provide the catalyst for this change if properly implemented and managed over time. Senior leaders must champion this change based on their adherence to the principles of mission command and the policies laid out in the EXORDs.

Endnotes

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