



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Klutts , 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team PAO, 7th Infantry Division)

U.S. Army soldiers with 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division, exit a CH-47 helicopter during a Gryphon Tomahawk mission readiness exercise at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., 21 February 2014.

Back to the Future

Managing Training to “Win in a Complex World”

Capt. Paul Lushenko, U.S. Army, and

Maj. David Hammerschmidt, U.S. Army

Training and leader development form the cornerstone of operational success.

—Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 7-0

The importance of training—including training management—to the profession of arms is well established. Less clear is whether company and field grade officers, having served in regular deployments since 2001, can effectively plan, prepare, execute, and assess realistic training using new information technology tools such as the *Integrated Training Environment*—a combination of “live, virtual, constructive, and gaming training enablers” that should create a “realistic training environment.”¹ This system, expected to be fielded to all Army installations by 2020, provides an architecture that reduces the need for large, expensive, one-time field exercises. It helps commanders use their systems effectively and efficiently to conduct training.² It also represents a cost-effective solution to replicate the complexity of future operations and achieve sustained readiness.

Consistent with the Army’s training heritage, platoon leaders through brigade training and operations officers must focus training on conducting mission-essential tasks in an environment characterized by innumerable threats and vulnerabilities. These officers must go back to the future and inculcate the counsel of past master trainers such as Gen. George C. Marshall. After serving as the assistant commandant of the Infantry School from 1927 to 1932, Marshall reflected that training officers must “get down to the essentials, make clear the real difficulties, and expunge the bunk, complications, and ponderosities.”³

Given the undisputed importance of effective training, the purpose of this paper is to show that training management is as much a lost art as it will be the wave of the future. The 2014 *U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command [TRADOC] Pamphlet 525-3-1) is predicated on striking the right balance between readiness and the pursuit of future capabilities.⁴ It is training and the management thereof, however, that senior leaders consistently say will ensure “Army forces thrive in chaotic environments” to prevent, shape, and win.⁵

This discussion begins with an overview of how Army leaders conceive of training management and how training practitioners are conducting training amid austerity. Next, it addresses three factors contributing to a loss of training expertise among members of the company and field grade cohorts. Such introspection is difficult but necessary before Army leaders can address this problem. Finally, the article argues that it is up to senior leaders to set the conditions for company and field grade officers to gain training expertise. Through leader development, senior leaders can restore training management competency across a generation of subordinate Army leaders and align resources against requirements.

How Does the Army Manage Training During Austerity?

Because of sequestration, as well as a concurrent loss of training management expertise, planners are investigating how to achieve sustained readiness using fewer resources. Such study is increasingly important given that Army force generation (ARFORGEN) has outlasted its usefulness, according to senior leaders such as Maj. Gen. Terry Ferrell, commander of the 7th Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM).⁶

The ARFORGEN rotational cycle represents a byproduct of the Army’s counterinsurgency strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan. It facilitated “unit readiness over time, resulting in recurring periods of availability of trained, ready, and cohesive units.”⁷ Deploying units were certified through exercises at one of three combat training centers (CTCs): the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (Hohenfels, Germany), the Joint Readiness Center (Fort Polk, La.), and the National Training Center (Fort Irwin, Calif.). Spending caps, the reduction in force, and an international landscape fraught with human security challenges—such as Japan’s triple disaster in 2011—have influenced innovative approaches to home-station training during a time of ARFORGEN’s waning relevance.⁸

Company and field grade officers have experimented with three general, if not mutually supportive, training approaches: regionally aligned training, live-environment training, and what this article calls *CTC-like training*. Senior leaders have yet to anoint one approach as the preferred model. A brief



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Klutts, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team PAO, 7th Infantry Division)

U.S. Army soldiers with 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division, participate in a Gryphon Tomahawk mission readiness exercise at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., 21 February 2014.

discussion of each will help with deconstructing training as a lost art and determining how to foster training management as the wave of the future.

Regionally aligned training. As chief of staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond Odierno has committed the Army to being globally responsive yet regionally engaged. Regional alignment enables the Army to “rapidly deploy, fight, and win whenever and wherever” America’s interests are threatened.⁹ This concept provides for an array of forces, usually at less than even company or platoon strength, affording commanders tailorable and scalable options. Such forces are supposed to be comparatively more culturally attuned, based on focused training. Consequently, advocates argue that regionally aligned forces are more capable of conducting a range of operations spanning from security cooperation, to consequence management,

to high-intensity combat.¹⁰ To apply regional alignment, land-based forces are positioned close to regional threats and vulnerabilities. This allows for more battle-focused training, enhanced responsiveness, and heightened interoperability with allied and partnered nations.

One example of a regionally aligned training approach is a program called Pacific Pathways.¹¹ Training planners expect that units participating will complete a CTC rotation, followed by no more than three back-to-back exercises or security cooperation events in the unit’s partnership area during a six-month deployment.¹² More than 800 soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, recently executed the first Pacific Pathways iteration: Garuda Shield in Indonesia (September 2014), Keris Strike in Malaysia (September 2014), and Orient Shield in Japan (November 2014).¹³

An informal assessment of these exercises indicates general advantages and disadvantages of a regionally aligned training approach. The main advantage is that this approach effectively synchronizes training in time, space, and by unit. However, it seems myopically focused on maneuver forces divested from the intelligence providers that should situate their deployment. Another disadvantage in the Pacific is that planners must determine how to resource units over an expansive and noncontiguous region. One exercise participant reported that as the 2nd Battalion transitioned from exercise to exercise, soldiers often languished waiting for arrival of their equipment via contracted sea vessels.¹⁴ This countermanded their ability to train and rapidly respond to a contingency, causing one junior officer to assess that Pacific Pathways “is minimally achieving what it was briefed to accomplish.”¹⁵ Also questionable is whether regional alignment is simply a move to solidify the “hub and spokes” alliance system centered on the United States. This system has provided security throughout Asia since World War II, but it is under pressure from China’s reach for regional hegemony.

Live-environment training. A live-environment approach expands the scope and audience of training management to include soldiers with less common military occupational specialties that support intelligence, including analysts, teams, and other capabilities.¹⁶ A pillar of the integrated training environment, through live-environment training soldiers can face real-world problems to improve their competencies while concurrently facilitating the missions of combatant commanders.

It is important not to confuse live-environment training with the Worldwide Individual Augmentation System, however.¹⁷ The former approach attempts to build enduring command-support relationships to cultivate soldier competency through on-the-job training. The latter forecasts the need for augmentees and identifies candidates to fill vacancies and niche requirements such as collection management. Perhaps the most glaring disadvantage of the live-environment training approach is its ad hoc quality.

Authors Gregory Ford and Ammilee Oliva, writing for the *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, state

the 25th Infantry Division uses “live-environment training ... to build capacity and capability within the division’s intelligence warfighting function.”¹⁸ Ford and Oliva assert that this live-environment training program is largely predicated on “knowing who to call.”¹⁹ Because of personnel turnover, it may be difficult—if not impossible—for senior leaders to replicate the apparent success of this and other live-environment training across all branches and components of the Army. Regardless of its ad hoc nature, live-environment training does help protect against a loss of technical proficiency, in particular, by maximizing training opportunities. In addition, it allows for decoupling the training of less common military occupational specialties from maneuver units comprised mainly of infantry, armor, and field artillery skill-sets. This is an important consideration given that a traditional CTC rotation risks subordinating the training of highly specialized soldiers to the training objectives of the maneuver commander. The increasing constraints on resources and time, caused by sequestration, can only increase this negative potential.

CTC-like training. According to Maj. David Rowland, amid austerity, “brigades and garrisons will need to leverage all available resources, necessitating collaboration among multiple Army commands and requiring multi-echelon and multidiscipline training.”²⁰ In contrast to regional alignment and live-environment training, this third approach to training management replicates a CTC scenario to certify deploying units using home-station resources, third-party observer-controller-trainers, and a degree of external support. Agencies such as the Training Brain Operations Center, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, and Operations Support Technology, Inc., provide the advantage of designing realistic scenarios that are relatively affordable.²¹ Another advantage is that CTC-like training uses mission command and facilitates integration of intelligence and sustainment enablers into maneuver planning and operations.

During Operation Gryphon Tomahawk in February 2014, the 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade trained more than 800 soldiers at JBLM for approximately one-fifth the cost to send a Stryker infantry battalion from the state of Washington to the National Training Center, according

to Rowland.²² In addition, Rowland says that “Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment ... received multiple iterations of cordon and searches, key leader engagements, ambushes and raids (including an air assault) over the course of the three-week exercise—all intelligence driven.”²³ The 109th and 502nd Military Intelligence Battalions provided intelligence through their multifunctional teams.

Arguably, CTC-like training best represents the integrated training environment. Yet, this approach is undergirded by two key assumptions, the invalidation of which could undermine its utility.

First, CTC-like training may not always facilitate a higher degree of maneuver-intelligence integration. During Gryphon Tomahawk, multifunctional teams operated in concert with ground forces. Unfortunately, they did not integrate as early or as often as needed, nor at all necessary echelons of command.²⁴ The extent of the integration often pivoted solely on capabilities briefs delivered to the maneuver commander, usually a platoon leader.²⁵

Second, CTC-like training presupposes the availability of training management proficiency not always present across battalion and brigade staffs comprised mainly of company and field grade officers. Gryphon Tomahawk demonstrated, according to Rowland, that “a high-quality training exercise is possible at home station given thorough planning and an adaptive and creative staff.”²⁶ However, it also showed that competency for planning, preparing, executing, and evaluating training represents CTC-like training’s soft underbelly.

Training Management as a Lost Art

Among 100 promising captains recently assembled by Gen. Odierno during the inaugural Solarium Symposium at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., mid-July 2014, one officer expressed a desire for junior leaders to become “the experts at training that we [in the Army] once were.”²⁷ Even given innovations embodied by the regional alignment, live-environment, and CTC-like training management approaches, there is a shortage of training management expertise across the captain and major ranks.

If accepted as true, this statement begs several questions. What factors explain an erosion of training management expertise among company and field

grade officers? What lessons can senior leaders extract from this lost art to animate the Army’s operating concept? More specifically, what measures will enable the Army to go back to the future to capitalize on the integrated training environment?

Three factors help explain how training management became a lost art: ARFORGEN, the lack of training management education within the institutional domain, and inconsistencies regarding how to enable mission command in a home-station training environment.

Army force generation. Senior leaders instituted ARFORGEN in 2003. This constituted the single greatest transformation to the Army’s readiness system since the Cold War. ARFORGEN serves as both a supply-based and demand-based process designed to systematize the progress of units through three force pools called RESET, Train/Ready, and Available. At a bureaucratic level, ARFORGEN represents more of a “process of systems” envisioned to sequence, synchronize, and optimize disparate “organizing, staffing, equipping, training, deploying, sustaining, modernizing, and mobilizing” systems.²⁸

The extent to which ARFORGEN has streamlined these systems is debatable. Col. Rodney Fogg, in a strategy research report for the Army War College, argues that ARFORGEN is misaligned with the Army’s personnel management system—resulting in a delay, if not a loss, of development opportunities for junior and mid-grade officers.²⁹ Fogg observes, “the cohort of leaders developed in combat over the last decade has become proficient at operating within a fast-paced and rapidly changing tactical environment.”³⁰ At the same time, Fogg states that they are “less familiar with how to use their skills in the more regimented, policy-driven and regulated environments while ... in Army garrisons.”³¹

Lt. Gen. Michael Tucker, commander of First Army, more directly criticizes the hidden costs of ARFORGEN, particularly among company and field grade officers. In a 2011 article, he writes that much “unit structure and training competency that existed nine years ago are no longer present.”³²

The institutional domain. The institutional training domain—professional military education, in effect—should be the medium through which to cauterize the hemorrhaging of training management



(Photo by Sgt. Melissa Parish, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division PAO)

Capt. Cory Roberts, an instructor at the Captains Career Course-Common Core Proof of Principle, gives guidance to Capt. Kate McCray on her progress, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., 1 September 2011.

competency. Not only does the institutional domain transcend all components and branches of the service, but also soldiers consistently navigate between the institutional and operational domains for training and education.

Moreover, Brig. Gen. Joseph Martin notes that TRADOC, including Fort Leavenworth's School of Advanced Leader Training, has sought to standardize the education of training management across the institutional domain.³³ Still, based in large part on ARFORGEN, brigade commanders consistently identify training management as a shortfall among recently promoted captains. For captains attending the Maneuver Captains Career Course (Fort Benning, Ga.) therefore, "a basis of understanding of training management is now taught in the course."³⁴ While majors matriculating into the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth are trained and developed to conduct unified land operations, they also graduate with a thorough understanding of the Army's military decisionmaking process.³⁵ Commanders at battalion level or higher use this process to plan training.³⁶

Based on sequestration and ARFORGEN, however, fewer captains and majors privy to revamped training approaches are available, sharply mitigating the ability of the institutional domain to instill such competency any time soon. This situation exacerbates training management as a lost art.

According to Chris Campbell in a 2014 *Stars and Stripes* article, officer separation boards identified nearly 500 majors and 1,200 captains for early release or retirement.³⁷ As sequestration continues to compel a winnowing of the force's end strength to perhaps as low as 420,000 soldiers, senior leaders anticipate further cuts.³⁸ Similarly, because of the prolonged conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, some 4,000 majors in year groups 2003 or earlier have not attended intermediate-level education.³⁹

Further compounding this diminished population of junior officers formally educated in training management is the so-called optimization of intermediate-level education. According to Maj. Gen. Gordon Davis, the optimization policy emplaced a merit-based selection process for resident attendance of CGSC that would provide "the right education at

the right time for the right officer.”⁴⁰ Authorized by Secretary of the Army John McHugh in 2012, Army Directive 2012-21 (Optimization of Intermediate Level Education) initiated a transition from inclusive to selective attendance of CGSC.⁴¹

While officers not selected for resident attendance of CGSC are still afforded either a satellite-campus or distributed-learning experience, it stands to reason that such substitutes will not as rigorously indoctrinate the skills required to manage training.⁴²

Mission command. Inconsistent understanding of and support to mission command also threaten to further frustrate training management. According to Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, the term mission command is defined as “the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders.”⁴³

The principles of mission command include building cohesive teams through mutual trust, creating shared understanding, and accepting prudent risks. Prudent risks include those that accompany giving subordinates the opportunity to exercise disciplined initiative. Feedback provided during the Solarium conference reaffirmed that Army leaders should apply this philosophy if they wish to retain talented junior officers from the millennial generation.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, the Army’s ongoing reconsolidation and reorganization of forces stand to temper the sort of archetypical application of mission command so effective in Iraq and Afghanistan. Retired Army Lt. Gen. David Barno writes in the *Washington Post* that “risk-taking is systematically extinguished by layers of rules, restrictions, and micromanagement aimed at avoiding any possible shortcomings.”⁴⁵ Brigade commander Col. Curtis A. Johnson also notes that “the garrison environment often creates conditions where junior officers are not only being told what to train on but how to do it.”⁴⁶ He



(Photo by Martha Armstrong, Fort Rucker PAO)

Lt. Gen. Peter M. Vangjel, inspector general, Office of the Secretary of the Army, addresses Captain's Career Course students during an officer professional development session, Fort Rucker, Ala., 26 June 2013.

continues, “in addition to the planning responsibility being stripped away by a higher headquarters, so are many of the assessments required throughout the training cycle.”⁴⁷ Set against these and other warnings, the Army’s movement to garrison sets the conditions for a further divestment of training management development and responsibilities from company and field grade officers for at least two reasons.

First, numerous experts, such as Donald E. Vandergriff, contend that the institutional (generating) force seemingly disagrees with the operating force on how to implement mission command.⁴⁸ While the latter has attempted to integrate combat-derived lessons related to mission command, namely trust and underwriting risk, the former is still preoccupied with auditing for compliance, primarily regarding no-notice or short-notice tasks.⁴⁹ These countervailing perspectives of mission command reinforce the state of training management as a lost art.

They lead to making junior officers more concerned with satisfying ostensibly time-sensitive checklists disseminated from higher headquarters rather than forecasting and appropriating resources against training plans. Mandatory “AR 350-1” tasks (tasks for which units must be trained, according to Army Regulation 350-1) are a manifestation of such discontinuity.⁵⁰ The majority of required tasks are unrelated to preparing for combat but consume an exorbitant amount of time and resources that company commanders could otherwise expend in building an eight-step training model to facilitate execution of a mission-essential task.⁵¹

Second, although completion of such tasks would hardly accord “enough time for a junior leader to plan, execute, and assess his or her training,” according to Johnson, brigade, division, and corps headquarters continue to align their planning and operation cycles against a wartime operations tempo.⁵² This is understandable given an era of persistent conflict punctuated by the recent activities of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Yet, the corresponding reduction of troops available to complete myriad training and operational tasks stretches units to the brink of exhaustion. Training management will remain a lost art if

home-station commanders fail to prioritize their unit training ruthlessly against mission-essential tasks for the simple fact that subordinate leaders will possess limited time, resources, and leader development.

Training Management as the Wave of the Future

Considering the tradeoffs embedded in ARFORGEN and the lack of training management instruction within the institutional domain, how can senior leaders best prepare junior officers to conduct training management? The answer lies in the conduct of leader development activities, through which senior leaders can engender agile and adaptive junior leaders. This solution will enable the Army to capitalize on innovations within the integrated training environment, epitomized by regionally aligned, live-environment, and CTC-like training management approaches.

Because leader development should accentuate the trust that underlines mission command, it goes beyond the occasional leader professional development session. Leader development is about certification as well as shared risk. Subordinate leaders who lack the experience and expertise to align resources against requirements feel most heartened by commanders who do not marginalize them but rather model and impart doctrinally sound planning and evaluating tools.

To develop junior leaders, senior leaders should enact leader certification programs that teach the essentials, including how to conduct training meetings and quarterly training briefs, manage schedules, coordinate tasks among various organizations, and use the eight-step training model. The 7th Infantry Division’s new certification program could serve as a model for other units.⁵³

Ultimately, leaders are accountable for the ability of their subordinates to effectively and efficiently manage training. If leaders neglect this responsibility, they could very well erode trust. And “when we begin to erode trust,” Gen. Martin Dempsey warns us, “we begin to erode the profession.”⁵⁴ A sense of mutual trust and shared risk between commanders and junior officers, therefore, is key to overcoming the deficit of training management expertise and will ensure it becomes the wave of the future. ■

Capt. Paul Lushenko is the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company for the 502nd Military Intelligence Battalion, 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. He is a distinguished honor graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and holds an M.A. in international relations and a Master of Diplomacy from the Australian National University. He has deployed several times to Iraq and Afghanistan with Stryker and special operations forces.

Maj. David Hammerschmidt is the executive officer for the 502nd Military Intelligence Battalion, 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. He is a graduate of the University of Florida Army Reserve Officer Training Program and holds a Master of National Security and Strategy from the U.S. Naval War College. He has deployed several times to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines with air assault, airborne, and special operations forces.

Notes

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6. Comments made by Maj. Gen. Terry Ferrell at the 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's quarterly training brief, 30 September 2014.
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16. Paul Lushenko, "Intellectualizing the U.S. Army's Rebalance Within Asia," U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence, *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 40(3)(July-September 2014), 53-58.
17. The Worldwide Individual Augmentation System is the Army's personnel management method for resourcing military and civilian support to contingency operations, recurring operations, and exercises. See Department of the Army Pamphlet 500-5-1, *Individual Augmentation Management* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 3 January 2008).
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20. David Rowland, "Relevant, Cost-Effective, Home-Station Training," *Army* 64(6)(June 2014), 68.
21. The Training Brain Operations Center processes data from real-world combat environments to support the integrated training environment. See "Training Brain Operations Center," Stand-To online, <http://www.army.mil/standto> (accessed 9 November 2014). The Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization provides insight on recent advances in improvised explosive device technology and tactics. See the "JIEDDO," the website, <http://www.jieddo.mil> (accessed 9 November 2014). Operations Support Technology, Inc. replicates enemy communications to facilitate the training

of signals intelligence soldiers. See "OSTi" online, <http://osti.us/pages/home> (accessed 9 November 2014).

22. Operation Gryphon Tomahawk represented a brigade-level, CTC-like exercise designed to certify subordinate battalions for deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. For more information, see Rowland, 68.

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26. Rowland, 69.

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43. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, May 2012), 1.

44. Kevin Lilley.

45. David Barno, "The Army's Next Enemy? Peace," *Washington Post*, 10 July 2014, online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (accessed 12 October 2014).

46. Curtis A. Johnson, "An Army in Transition: Maintaining the Competitive Edge" (strategy research project, U.S. Army War College, 2012), 5, (available at www.dtic.mil).

47. Ibid.

48. Donald E. Vandergriff, "Misinterpretation and Confusion: What is Mission Command and Can the U.S. Army Make it Work?," *Land Warfare Papers, no. 94*, (Arlington, Va.: Association of the United States Army, February 2013), 5.

49. Paul Norwood, email to the authors, 16 October 2014.

50. Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, August 2014). AR 350-1 standardizes and governs mandatory training across all units in the Army regardless of their specific mission-essential tasks.

51. The eight-step training model provides a guide for leaders at the brigade-level or lower to align resources to requirements as well as to sequence and synchronize training. The steps consist of plan the training, train/certify leaders, conduct a reconnaissance,

issue an order, rehearse, execute, conduct an after action review, and retrain.

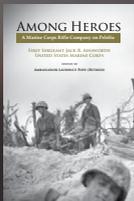
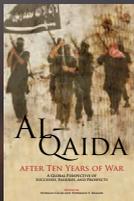
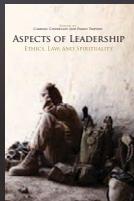
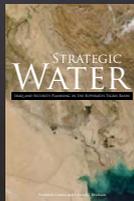
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