



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lynnwood Thomas taken Oct. 19, 2019) U.S. Army Spc. Daniel Strickland, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter mechanic with Task Force Aviation, removes a UH-60 Black Hawk engine during a phase maintenance inspection at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Oct. 19, 2019.

Readiness: Do Your “MATH”

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Since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, the United States Army has served in a wide range of missions placing significant demands on Soldiers and leaders. These demanding military environments require reviewing measures in place to assure Soldiers and leaders have the skills and attributes needed to meet the U. S. Army’s top priority: *Readiness* (McCarthy, 2019).

To achieve Readiness, leaders must first be able to define what Readiness means. Organizational leadership needs to articulate exactly what the unit is required to focus on in order to be combat ready. If they fail to do so, small unit leaders will attempt to define readiness on their own, which could create an ambiguous and confusing environment. This article offers a way to define Readiness using the four Readiness domains shared amongst all military forces: *Maintenance, Administrative, Tactical, and Hardware* (MATH). If units do their “MATH,” they will be combat ready for the future fight.

Maintenance Domain

The dictionary defines maintenance as “the process of maintaining or preserving someone or something, or the state of being maintained” (Maintenance, n.d). Therefore, it is practical to view the Maintenance readiness domain as one that requires maintenance of *self, family, and equipment*.

Self

Leaders must prepare Soldiers for the physical challenges of fulfilling the mission (Department of the Army, 2019c). Therefore, physical readiness training plans need to be rigorous and incorporate appropriate skill level tasks to maximize efficiency and combat readiness. Furthermore, the hardships of everyday life in the military can be mentally exhausting; hence, leaders must emphasize Soldier recovery programs to *sustain* mission focus and effectiveness (Department of the



(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ramelb taken Nov. 17, 2019) U.S. Army Soldiers with the 224th Sustainment Brigade and family members are served a meal during the unit's fall festival at American Legion Hall 496 in Lakewood, Calif., Nov. 17, 2019.

Army, 2016). With the help of behavioral health experts, and an environment that fosters emotionally intelligent leadership (Horval, 2020), units will be able to minimize combat and operational stress and maximize the return of Soldiers who may be temporarily medically impaired with diagnosed stress-related or behavioral disorders. Additionally, both Soldiers and leaders should work toward becoming more self-aware and self-regulated.

Self-awareness is a candid understanding of one's needs, principles, thought patterns, goals, motivations, emotional reactions, ambitions, strengths, and limitations, and how these issues affect other people. This consciousness takes an extended period to develop, requires commitment, and is accompanied by feedback from others (Department of the Army, 2019a). Once developed and regularly practiced, self-awareness allows people to manage their conduct, enhance interactions and relationships, and intensify or gain a desired effect (Issah, 2018). *Self-regulation* follows self-awareness, and through one's thoughts, feelings, and actions, emotions can be regulated, creating

a positive environment (Department of the Army, 2019a).

Family

One of the most critical needs of a Soldier is family time. However, sometimes this is not an option due to deployments or training cycles. When family issues such as financial trouble or marital disputes arise, they can affect Readiness and create problems at the unit or organizational level. Educating Soldiers and spouses on available resources, like financial planning through Financial Readiness Programs, can provide the skills needed to cope with stressful life events (Department of the

Army, 2020). Additionally, investing in building an active family readiness group (FRG) can help build organizational family cohesion, manage family-related stress, and serve as a communication link between deployed Soldiers and their family (Department of the Army, 2016).



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Justin Navin taken Jan. 28, 2020) U.S. Army Staff Sgts. Jonathan Jones (left) and Christopher Nakatani, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conduct an inventory of Army Combat Fitness Test equipment at Fort Campbell, Ky., Jan. 28, 2020.

Equipment

Commanders are ultimately responsible for ensuring both individual and organizational equipment are properly maintained; however, noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are the primary stewards of achieving maintenance standards. Equipment maintenance provides us the ability to *shoot, move, and communicate*, and is a combat multiplier central to operational success. Soldiers must be able to engage the enemy with impeccably maintained weapons. If weapons fail to *shoot*, our enemies will survive. Also, tactical movement is inherent to our profession. If vehicles cannot *move*, then warfighters cannot maneuver, re-inforce, or supply. Furthermore, if communication systems are unable to *communicate*, leaders cannot provide accurate and timely information to units. Without critical information, it will be impossible to execute combat operations successfully. (Department of the Army, 2019d)

Administrative Domain

Many administrative requirements are demanded of Army leaders every day. Evaluations, awards, counselings, legal actions, medical processing, online training, and many others. These tasks must be adequately managed so they don't become distractions or negatively impact combat readiness. Leaders that effectively manage administrative systems know their people, show their higher headquarters accurate information, and foster collaboration and innovation, demonstrating the mission command philosophy.

Effective administrative management systems not only maximize training opportunities and allow freedom of maneuver for both NCOs and officers, but they also create an environment of efficiency allowing leaders to be more effectual with subordinates. For instance, leaders that complete evaluations punctually do not need to play catch up in the office, which allows them to spend more time with their troops. The same goes for award submissions and other administrative



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Timothy Hamlin taken April 1, 2020) U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jesse Remington, an infantry squad leader with Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2d Cavalry Regiment, secures a simulated casualty as part of the testing phase for the Expert Infantryman Badge and the Expert Soldier Badge in Bemowo Piskie, Poland, April 1, 2020.

necessities. Additionally, being “green” demonstrates care for Soldiers, thus, building trust and respect, which are values that correlate with Army retention and readiness (Lopez, 2018).

Tactical Domain

Army publication *ADP 7-0: Training*, asserts that tactical training must occur continuously, including while in garrison, at a training center, or in a combat environment (Department of the Army, 2019b). Both

Army doctrine and decades of combat experience dictate that the tactical domain, at a minimum, must consist of five fundamental categories: *shoot, move, communicate, medicate, and survive* (Department of the Army, 2019d). Each fundamental area is essential and must be mastered if units and individuals are to be considered ready for combat. The tactical domain is a requisite for all Soldiers, regardless of military occupational specialty.

Every Soldier must qualify with their assigned weapon systems. However, combat arms units broaden the *shoot* category by mastering both direct and indirect fire weapon systems, basic and advanced marksmanship, long-range precision fires, call for fire, close air support and close combat attack training, and maneuver live-fire exercises.

Additionally, every Soldier must *move*, either by foot or by a land, sea, or air platform. Therefore, land navigation, licensing and certification training, driver training, motorpool operations, packing lists, pre-combat checks and inspections, and troop leading procedures all require attention. Furthermore, every Soldier must *communicate*, either verbally or nonverbally, through the use of digital platforms, radio systems, dialogue and interaction, or hand-and-arm signals. Organizations cannot lead, fight, develop, counsel, team-build, or fully support the priorities of their leaders without the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

Every Soldier must also be capable of performing tactical combat casualty care (TC3). They must know how to *medicate* themselves and others, especially if a 68W (combat medic) is not present to prevent one or more of the three leading causes of battlefield death:

hemorrhage, tension pneumothorax, and airway problems (Department of the Army, 2014).

Finally, to *survive* austere environments and complex operations, all Soldiers must be physically fit, trained, educated, and capable of donning a protective mask in 9-seconds or less (Department of the Army, 2019d).

Hardware Domain

Hardware is defined as “major items of equipment or their components used for a particular purpose” (Hardware, n.d). Having the major items of equipment necessary to defeat our adversaries is paramount; however, the components for each are equally important. Imagine going to the field without basic issue items or components of end items for your vehicles, weapons, and night vision devices. Similarly, a unit would find it difficult to operate a tactical operations center (TOC) without pens, markers, paper, desks, maps, and so on. Therefore, it is wise to regularly conduct preventative maintenance checks and services, manage equipment shortage lists, monitor classes of supply, and maintain platoon, company, and TOC readiness kits that are stocked with essential items (Department of the Army, 2017). Unless organizations obtain and maintain all the necessary hardware to perform mission essential tasks, Soldiers will not be able to properly train or fight.

Conclusion

The Army Chief of Staff Gen. McConville has made it clear that winning matters. And in order to win, you have to be ready. Readiness means taking care of your people, equipment, logistics, and tactics. Achieving Readiness is not easy, so do your “MATH.” ■

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