



U.S. Army Rangers with the 75th Ranger Regiment conduct field training for a unit task force training operation at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Aug. 20, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Garrett Shreffler)

Unit Training Management

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Combined Arms Center – Training

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After more than 11 years of combat, have our officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) lost their ability to plan, prepare, execute, and assess quality training at the brigade, battalion, and company level? Since the start of the war, with shortened dwell times and back to back deployments, the planning and resourcing of training events were frequently driven by the higher headquarters, and in many cases, execution of the training was supported with external mobile training teams, contractors, or other external capabilities. As we draw down our forces in Afghanistan and face reduced training resources, commanders and leaders must be innovative and take full ownership for individual and collective home station training. Commanders and senior NCOs must reinvigorate the art and science of unit training management (UTM) in our junior leaders—how

to properly plan, prepare, execute, and assess training, focusing on mastering the basics at the individual, crew, and small team level with quality home station training. Learning the science of UTM is easier than learning the art, which leaders achieve with the experience of senior leaders coaching, teaching, and mentoring our junior leaders to excellence.

When I reflect back on all the units I have had the privilege to serve in over the years, I ask myself, what made a few of them stand out more than the others? The best units conducted tough, realistic, performance-oriented, and standards-based training that focused on the fundamentals. The leadership, both officers and NCOs, were always present and personally leading, assessing, and training their units. They understood mission command before they knew it by name. They knew how



A U.S. Soldier studies coursework during a classroom exercise as part of Basic Leader Course at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 24, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)

to train units and individuals because they read the doctrine and practiced UTM skills during multiple assignments. Leaders in these high performing units knew the importance of “Training to Train” and would never allow untrained leaders to train their Soldiers.

Do our leaders understand the philosophy and principles of mission command as outlined in *Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*? Do our young commanders and NCOs know their roles in UTM? Have they read and do they understand the principles of training and leader development in *ADP 7-0*? Do they know how to integrate both training and leader development objectives into their unit training plan? Do our leaders know what training support enablers and training management tools are out there to help them conduct training within their organizations such as the Army Training Network (ATN) and the Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS)? This information paper talks to those essential skills and knowledge.

Effective commanders use the principles of mission command to empower their subordinate leaders to conduct unit training and leader development at all levels. *ADP 6-0* states, “Mission Command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent in the conduct of unified land operations.” The six principles of mission command are to build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander’s intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk. We must train to become a force with adaptable leaders and versatile units. Units must be able to conduct decisive action through the application of offensive, defensive, and stability operations tasks.

Training, education, and experience occur in three domains.

Institutional Domain: the Army’s training and education system that encompasses initial military training (IMT), professional military education (PME), functional training, cultural and language training, and troop schools.

Operational Domain: where individual, leader, and collective training occur per the commander’s unit training plan while at home station, CTCs, during joint and combined exercises, at mobilization centers and while deployed.

Self-development Domain: learning that supports planned, goal-oriented learning that reinforces and expands the depth and breadth of an individual’s knowledge base, self-awareness, and situational awareness.

It applies to both military and civilian cohorts within the Army profession in three variations – structured self-development, guided self-development, and personal self-development. Self-development is a critical aspect of leader development and individual success. It requires continuous self-assessment to determine individual gaps in skills, knowledge, and attributes to develop a personal plan to mitigate these gaps, fostering a life-long learning ethos in leaders at all levels.

Individual training is the foundation of a unit’s ability to conduct its mission and focuses on proficiency of individual skills, i.e. warrior tasks and individual military occupational specialty (MOS) skills based upon skill level. In order for a unit to conduct an assigned mission its members must be proficient in their MOS and skill level to create capable squads and platoons. As a young NCO, a sergeant major once told me, “Do not become overly focused on the culminating event. If you and your Soldiers master the basics, with little additional training, you can successfully execute nearly any mission.”

Collective training is the primary focus of unit training in the operational domain. It builds upon individual skills learned in all three domains and introduces additional skills which support the unit’s mission. Unit training focuses on building readiness and collective task proficiency to execute on the unit’s mission essential tasks (MET).

One of the most critical and often misunderstood requirements is the leader development program within our units, required by *AR 350-1*. The Army’s leader development program encompasses all three of the training domains – operational, institutional, and self-development. Leader training requires synchronization between these to ensure that it is continuous and progressive throughout a Soldier’s career. Leader development is critical to ensure we deliver quality, performance-oriented, standards-based training to our Soldiers. Good leaders develop good training and education, and good training and education produces good leaders. Soldiers that are

trained by untrained leaders leads to less than optimal training outcomes and results in “the blind leading the blind.” Always expose Soldiers to what right looks like and the only way to do this is to make sure you train your leaders before they train their Soldiers.

Leaders accomplish this through the application of the Army’s principles of leader development when leaders and units develop training strategies, plans and programs. As leaders develop training objectives, they develop leader development objectives. As leaders we must demonstrate to our subordinates the attributes and competencies as outlined in *ADP 7-0, Training Units and Developing Leaders*.

Commanders are the units’ primary training manager. However, all leaders must take ownership of training within their units, with NCOs taking ownership of training for individual Soldiers, teams and small crews. NCOs must be part of the unit training plan from beginning to end. Commanders must exercise mission command in order to allow subordinates to determine how to train their Soldiers. Commanders need an understanding of the higher commander’s intent and visualize the culminating event and the key collective tasks the unit must train in order to achieve the end state. Commanders then describe their vision to their staff and direct the training. Commanders then lead the unit during training. How can you influence a subordinate leader’s development if you never observe them in action with their Soldiers and provide them honest, helpful feedback? Finally, the Commander and NCOs must assess training. Without knowledge of their weaknesses and additional guidance from their leaders, subordinates tend to stay in their comfort zone, training tasks that are already proficient rather than tackle the tasks that need improvement. Leaders need to identify areas for improvement and develop plans to increase proficiency through training.

We achieve this by providing bottom-up input into the training plan and by conducting quality, performance-oriented, standards-based training to build confident, adaptive and agile leaders and versatile units. Training begins the moment Soldiers enter the Army and continues until the day they depart, but it must build upon previous skills and knowledge—i.e., it must

be progressive and sequential over a Soldier’s career. The challenge is determining in which domain we conduct the training and at what level. When you plan training for your unit, ensure that you apply the principles of unit training, as defined in *ADP 7-0, Training Units and Developing Leaders*.

The Army Principles of Unit Training

- Commanders and other leaders are responsible for training.
- Noncommissioned officers train individuals, crews, and small teams.
- Train to standard.
- Train as you will fight.
- Train while operating.
- Train fundamentals first.
- Train to develop adaptability.
- Understand the operational environment.
- Train to sustain.
- Train to maintain.

There are many well-developed references and resources available to guide leaders while planning and executing training. *ADP 7-0* provides the concepts for how the Army trains units and develops leaders, while *ADRP 7-0* and the Army Training Network provide the details for those concepts. The Unit Training Management (UTM) feature found on the Army Training Network



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Hope Ealey (left), chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials specialist with 16th Sustainment Brigade ensures a M50 series gas mask is properly fitted at Baumholder, Germany Feb. 12, 2020. (U.S. Army photo by Ismael Ortega)

(ATN) is a web-based method of delivering unit training management to the Army in the form of modules, tutorials and examples. *ADP/ADRP 7-0* provides the doctrine; ATN provides the “how-to.”

A critical component of the “how to” are the Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS) that are digitally

delivered to the Army via the Digital Training Management System (DTMS) and ATN. CATS provide trainers HQDA-approved doctrinal training strategies, replacing Army Training and Evaluation Programs (ARTEP) and

Outlines (T&EO) which contain the task, conditions, standards, performance steps and performance measures required to accomplish training. Within DTMS, commanders and trainers have access to digital tools which



U.S. Army Pfc. Llasmin Martinez, an automated logistical specialist from 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th ADA Brigade, performs the 3-Repetition Maximum Deadlift event of the Army Combat Fitness Test at Stout Field, Fort Bliss, Texas, Jan. 27, 2020. (U.S. Army photo by LaShawna Custom)

can facilitate construction of customized training plans and events. DTMS provides the ability to see the plan on a calendar.

The training management process mirrors the operations process. As with any operation, thorough, proper planning is essential to training. Quality training is determined by analyzing the units' mission and ability to complete the mission. The Army has standardized the METL for Brigade and above units, so that the Army can answer the question "Ready for what?" Given the brigade's HQDA-standardized METL, battalion and company commanders develop their unit Mission Essential Tasks (METs) that supports and 'nests' with the brigade's METs. To complete the analysis, each commander must understand the mission of their unit, the higher commander's guidance, and refer to his unit METL to understand what capability the unit requires for the mission. The commander will use this information along with input from his/her subordinate leaders to conduct mission analysis. Units

Mission Training Plans (MTP) (ALARACT 164/2005). They provide leaders with everything they need to know about required for training their particular unit—from mission essential tasks to exercises to gain proficiency on those tasks, and the resources needed to plan, prepare, and execute the exercises, i.e. training aids, devices, simulators and simulations (TADSS). They are a descriptive (not prescriptive) unit training tool which provides leaders a task-based, event-driven strategy to train for missions, functions and capabilities. CATS are based upon the unit's design, equipment, manning and Table of Equipment (TOE) or Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA). They provide a recommended crawl, walk and run progressive training methodology for the unit to systematically build and sustain task proficiency by providing comprehensive information for each training event, including purpose, execution guidance and expected outcome. CATS identify the training audience, milestones, duration of the event, and required classes of supply.

DTMS and ATN provide Soldiers with easy access to the proponent-approved Training and Evaluation

identify what key collective tasks (KCTs) they must train, and the time and unique resources necessary and available. The commander then determines specified and implied tasks, which become the unit's KCTs. During the commanders' dialogue, commanders obtain approval from their higher commander of the proposed KCTs, the current and projected rating of these, and they identify the required resources to execute their training plan. Later, the commander briefs their unit training plan (training briefing) to their higher headquarters and they agree to a "contract" with the higher commander providing the necessary resources. The subordinate commander executes the training plan.

Preparation is the next step of training management. A key component of unit training management is the training meeting. Training meetings are an essential function in order to help manage training in units. Training meetings provide an opportunity for junior leaders to provide bottom-up input which is critical to determining training requirements. During training meetings commanders identify/refine training objectives,

determine support requirements, identify evaluators, identify observer-controller/trainers (OC/Ts), identify opposing forces, complete PCCs/PCIs, determine if and when the unit will conduct rehearsals, and build training schedules. Training and certifying the trainers, conducting PCIs, etc. is all essential to successful training. Many units utilize the Eight Step Training Model as a TTP when preparing training for their units. Although not included in *ADP/ADRP 7-0*, it is a commonly accepted practice and is found on ATN. To assist units, the [Leaders Guide to Company Training Meetings](#) is posted on ATN, easily downloadable for review/use. ATN also has excellent videos on how to conduct company, battalion, and brigade training meetings.

Commanders must assess training and leader development in their units to ensure objectives and standards are met. Through this assessment the commander will determine if the unit met their training and leader development objectives and if the training plan requires changes. After Action Reviews (AARs) are a great tool to assess training. Whether formal or informal, AARs allow leaders to recognize what they need to sustain and improve—either as they complete the rest of the training or as they consider requirements for future training or retraining and recovery. Leaders must ensure they allocate time on their unit training calendar for AARs. [The Leaders Guide to After Action Review](#) is also posted on ATN.

As units plan future training it is important to take the time to identify and become familiar with the training support resources on your installation. At each installation the Director of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) manage and oversee the installation's ranges, training areas and facilities, Training Support Centers (TSC) and Mission Training Complexes (MTC). There are many different TADSS,

for example: OPFOR clothing, MILES, simulations such as JCATS, Games for Training, and virtual simulators such as CCTT and AVCATT available at the TSC and in the MTC to enable leaders to train in a more realistic training environment. While, live, virtual, constructive, and gaming enablers can be used individually, the more that can be employed simultaneously, the more realistic the training environment.

I realize this paper does not lead you through from start to finish on how to develop a unit training plan. There are no easy solutions to building and executing a training plan. It takes a desire to learn/relearn training management skills and knowledge, organization, innovation, attention to detail in planning and preparation, the ability to analyze the readiness of the unit and its leaders, and the ability to determine the most effective and efficient ways to develop leaders and achieve training objectives. As a leader responsible for training with a focus on home station training you might ask yourself, where do I start? You can begin by familiarizing yourself and your Soldiers with the new Army doctrine. Next, visit your installation's DPTMS and become familiar with all the training areas and training facilities on your installation. Go online to the Army Training Network and explore the training resources designed to assist you in developing a training plan. Finally, I would say "take personal responsibility for training your Soldiers".

After 11 years of war in multiple theaters, the Army is once again in transition. To ensure that we are prepared to continue to succeed in today's fight while preparing for the next, we must reinvigorate the training culture across all three training domains. This only happens if we recognize that the best trainers are the best leaders, the best leaders are the best warfighters, and the best warfighters are what we want. ■



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