



Observations from the Field: The Enterprise of Training

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Executive Summary

In the Army's ongoing effort to focus training on the next threat, the training mechanism itself becomes an unspoken issue. Instead of building readiness in decisive units, the training community has regressed to the wholesale training of soldiers. While many senior Army leaders see training numbers produced by the training community as witness to significant strides toward readiness, the opposite may actually be true. Synchronizing training results with the Army leadership's readiness expectation has not happened. There is no adequate picture painted by usage numbers to indicate personnel trained, and why or how that training meets the commander's intent for unit readiness. This is the result of a training community disconnected from the units it supports. This gap must be bridged to produce the desired readiness end-state.

The first step toward this readiness end-state is to re-harness the power of the training community. This change should be carried out from the home-station training level into the operational domain. The community needs to focus on creating a better model for measuring training effectiveness. The focus can no longer be simply on just training soldiers. It must reorient to build decisive units. This monumental task requires the training community integrate inside the units they support. Such an intimate relationship will focus the training effort, support readiness generation, and produce the highly trained force tomorrow's commanders will require.

The Requirement of Training

Sustainable readiness is not about being ready at one specific time. It is about building and sustaining readiness over long periods of time.

–General Robert Abrams, FORSCOM Commander.¹

The Army has employed a large architecture of training enablers toward a single end.² These enablers, are a means to establish “an aggressive pursuit of decisive action proficiency in order to win in a complex world.”³ This training community employs an amalgam of professional trainers and powerful technology to accomplish its single most important task — to provide a standard of world class training.

Thousands of Department of the Army civilians (DAC) and contract civilian employees populate this community dutifully to support the Army's training needs. Their goal, by design, is to reach every soldier and to ensure each of them are trained to meet tomorrow's threats. This training community provides a wide range of services from the basic marksmanship range to the latest new equipment training (NET) of a mission command system. All of these personnel serve in their own microcosms of a larger effort instituted by each installation Army wide. Their missions depend on the type of tenant units which vary significantly from post to post.⁴

Yet for all the different missions and training opportunities they represent, there is a common standard in this loosely knit community. It is not unusual for them to tell you that at the end of the day their mission boils down to the often used phrase, “I train soldiers.” A phrase that confesses dedication to the overall mission, regardless of how it gets accomplished. While incredibly noble, it is becoming apparent throughout our formations just “training soldiers” does not meet the requirement set forth by Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 7-0, “The Army provides combatant commanders with trained and ready units, leaders, and individuals.”⁵



Merely saying we “train soldiers” falls deceptively short of acceptable standards. Soldiers will always be the recipients of training. A bigger challenge is to say we “build and maintain ready units.”⁶ The training community must re-orient to meet this challenge. Such a change naturally demands the proper training of leaders and soldiers alike from the home-station level through the operational domain.⁷ It additionally mandates that training be cumulative throughout unit force generation.

Currently the training community does not go much beyond just training the “individual” as outlined in ADRP 7-0 section 1-1. As a result, units are comprised of clumps of soldiers haphazardly trained. Many of these soldiers will not equal a measure of prescribed unit readiness.⁸ This is an important concept the training community has lost sight of. Readiness cannot be produced by simply “training soldiers” wholesale. There is a larger, more focused, effort that must be taken into consideration.

The Army and the training community need to re-examine why training soldiers wholesale became the order of the day. It must be scrutinized how this thinking equates to building “ready forces.”⁹ We have to reconsider the concept of just “training soldiers,” and understand that in doing so, holistic unit readiness has failed.

Instead, the Army and the training community need to hold themselves accountable to several qualifying factors. Accountability for who those soldiers are, and what position they hold are critical in responsible training. It must be evaluated as to how right soldiers are for the opportunity in light of the unit’s readiness requirement. All training toward these goals start at home-station as the foundation of readiness generation.

The 2012 Army Training Strategy specifically puts the responsibility of training units on the commander, as they “must once again be held accountable to ensure their units are capable of performing their assigned missions...” Building decisive units holds the feet of every leader, both uniformed and civilian, to the fire of responsible training.

Train to Build Decisive Units

We’ve got to change our mindset. As we get smaller, we’re going to have to maintain and sustain readiness over time. That is a huge mindset change for our force, [but] that is what we need based on our requirements.

– General Robert Abrams, FORSCOM Commander¹⁰

When soldiers are trained, they are equipped with skills or a knowledge set necessary to conduct some type or level of activity to some specified standard.¹¹ In too many cases this vague requirement set forth by the doctrine does not benefit the unit. The singular fact soldiers were trained superficially supports resource consumption. But it says nothing, nor indicates any real data, about how the unit made solid gains toward readiness.

The universal truth to training in every unit is eventually measured in command confidence. AR 350-1 states, “The commander’s primary responsibility is to ensure his unit can perform its mission essential tasks the unit was designed to perform...” Every commander seeks the confidence that he or she can complete their mission based on the true collective capability of the unit. This capability is measured as readiness.

Readiness is unit, even mission specific.¹² It is the true capability a unit has at the point of deployment. Army Regulation (AR) 220-1 does not, in this case, name a specific point at which this readiness should be measured. However, the point of deployment is used here because at that point a unit is the product of two critically important elements of readiness. The two critical elements are the training conducted, and then even more importantly, the capability retained from the training. These two critical elements build the foundation of effective readiness generation. The goal for unit readiness generation is the achievement of command confidence.

Whatever training the unit executed through the sustainment readiness model, the point of development is where the commander finally assesses the unit’s cumulative training. In short, as the 2012 Army Training Strategy states, we “train units to be versatile and to the required level of readiness in order to provide ready forces to



combatant commanders worldwide.”¹³

For the moment, misplaced trust in the training community currently thwarts progress toward readiness generation. Commanders responsible for training their units entrust the community with their soldiers. When the commander is ready to deploy, the unit is holistically ill-prepared.¹⁴ This is not an unfamiliar scene as those at the Combat Training Center (CTC) level can attest. Units spend a force generation cycle meeting all of the prescribed training requirements, but when they are set in the CTC environment on a collective training mission, the readiness isn't there.

It is hardly a question of whether soldiers took advantage of training opportunities. The deficiency starts early, at home-station training, where the unit starts to build the foundation of future capability. The gap occurs when the unit does not benefit from the training. Soldiers were trained, but still miss meeting the unit's expected state of readiness requirements.¹⁵ General Abrams sums it up best by saying “..Commanders must stringently guard against the tendency to assume that training event execution automatically equates to task proficiency.”¹⁶

Units must also understand the training process extends through operations. Training and experience are the two basic elements which ultimately build decisive combat units. While training takes the soldier through processes and techniques to accomplish something, it is the experience of the training the soldier takes away. When formal training significantly drops after the point of deployment, experience continues to build the unit's decisive capability. Maximizing experience can only take place when a solid foundation of training is laid at the onset of force generation. This again makes home station individual training the key to unit readiness generation.

To acquire a solid training foundation, training rosters must be focused. Soldiers must be the right personnel for the training as well as for the resources expended. They must then subsequently retain the training long enough to be capitalized on by the unit during operations. In order to provide “ready forces to global combatant commanders...training in units focuses on improving unit, soldier, and leader proficiencies.”¹⁷ The implication of just “training soldiers” says nothing about working toward the collective proficiency of the supported unit.

Collective unit proficiency, or readiness, must be a complete training process from start to operational end. The window for readiness generation is short. Maximizing time and resources within this window requires unit focus and initiative. It also requires leaders to grasp the concept that trained and ready soldiers are the building blocks of decisive units.

Soldiers sent to training at home station must be the right soldier for the maximum return on the training. When trained, they form the foundation of the unit's capability. This maximized training is the catalyst for true unit readiness. Readiness generation then extends beyond home station to CTC level activity.

At the CTC level units capitalize on the individual training conducted at the home station. They use this opportunity to work collectively on problem sets they will likely face in theater. Units not in possession of the right individually trained soldiers stumble at this point. The foundation for a decisive unit was never laid, so no further capability can be laid on top of this broken foundation.

Readiness is the overarching goal of force generation. It is a meticulous process that requires the same stringent planning as any other critical military operation the unit will conduct. Forecasting soldiers who will most benefit the unit by being trained must become a fundamental part of the training process. While it seems tedious to conduct this type of planning, it is a process that will build a decisive unit. It is a process not entrusted lightly to others. This is especially true when those entrusted are not focused on the same paramount goals as the unit.

The point here is that the training community must fundamentally change its approach to training. As the saying goes, “mind your dollars and the pennies will look after themselves,” so is it with the building of decisive combat units. If we mind the building of the unit, the right leaders and soldiers will reap the benefit of the right training.¹⁸



An Enterprise to Train

We have to unburden our young company commanders so they can focus on those fundamentals.

–Lt General Stephen Townsend, commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps.¹⁹

Training must be a focused enterprise of readiness generation. AR 350-1 clearly states, “To this end, an enterprise solution is required to more efficiently and effectively manage and synchronize the various [training support system (TSS)] functions, be more responsive to the ARFORGEN process and user needs for training support capabilities and enablers, and maintain common standards of training support at all installations.”²⁰ The harder part is refining the architecture to become just such an enterprise.

Creating this enterprise must be conducted toward one singular end, building units of decisive combat capability. This requires a holistic approach to achieving the command’s ultimate state of readiness as a decisive force on the battlefield. It implies building a force that has attained an internal effectiveness based on the right soldiers in possession of the right training and experience. It also insists the precious little time and resources available are effectively applied toward that end. This focused use of training and resources builds a momentum of readiness generation.

Organic Integration

Readiness generation should be the tracking of quantifiable data. Commanders must know how units are trained by position and then how well the person in that position did during the training. They need to know that person’s training contributes to operational readiness. They need to know how the training path enables senior leaders to train their soldiers in unit standard operating procedures, battle drills, and critical tasks related to the unit’s METL. In essence, commanders need quantifiable data proving the unit is on a maximized training path to actual readiness generation.

This quantifiable information becomes the necessary data for the computation of the unit’s readiness as a whole. This is virtually the same as battle tracking enemy force capability. If we can make educated estimates on how ready the enemy is to fight us, we should also have the ability to honestly calculate our own readiness as well. The result should be that when someone asks if the Army is ready for tomorrow’s fight, there is an actual quantifiable answer.

The training world is throughput based. A numbers game played for legitimacy and funding. This is the nature of how programs are paid for by the Army. The hard truth is, all programs, especially those in the training architecture, require money to survive. These programs are only funded when they work, and therefore most programs work hard to be funded.

Harnessing that motivation is a game changer for units looking to be properly trained. The numbers show throughput, a large capacity for throughput at that. The training community just needs to be reoriented to achieve something more than mere numbers production for program survival. No longer should either the Army or the training community claim success by how many soldiers attended training. All personnel responsible for training need to be held to task for generating readiness, not just numbers.

Currently in the training community there is no tangible need to see each soldier as a specific contributor toward an end capability of a specifically supported unit. The Army is seen as a faceless mass of soldiers. This large mass is broken into smaller masses by several mitigating factors. But no matter which factor breaks down the mass, it is still not a unit striving toward an end capability, it is only a faceless mass of soldiers. Mitigating the mass to an element of soldiers isn’t often done so for a focused set of military occupational specialties (MOS), or a combined capacity, or a common anything that will equal readiness generation when the training is complete. Often times this isn’t the direct fault of the trainers, but of the units.

The mismatch of soldiers to training is frequently the result of the units putting in soldiers who meet



temporal requirements but are the wrong soldiers for the information given. These soldiers very often are due to PCS, or are in some way ineligible for the unit's mission. Often these soldiers are too new to understand the information in the context of the unit's METL, or training objectives, or glide path to deployment. This failure on the part of the unit to not synchronize the right soldiers with the right training validates why the training community has to consider the Army as the faceless mass of potential customers for future program survivability.

Compounding this problem, these mismatched soldiers are not met by the trainers with any resistance to access the training. This is where the failure begins when "training soldiers" is the only achievement sought. Sign-in rosters are limited in range from just asking for a name and unit, to other arbitrary qualifying factors that include MOS, rank, and unit. This isn't to enforce a vetting process for targeted audiences. The more information collected in concert with the higher numbers reported, the better proof the training community provides a valuable service. This is the throughput based nature of the training community.

When asked how the training community supports the command, they provide a spreadsheet of throughput (also called usage) numbers to prove they work hard. It is easy for everyone to say there was a positive impact, when the truth is quite the opposite. Instead of tracking only throughput, if those spreadsheets tracked the training of soldiers by position held, it may well be shown the training architecture hardly works effectively. Throughput only shows whether the unit took advantage of training opportunities, it does not track effectiveness.

Instead of working on their own to fill training seats and empty rooms, they should be working directly for the commands they support. These assets should, in garrison, be considered part of the regular unit staff if not part of the command staff itself. Training community assets, such as qualified representatives of the Mission Training Center (MTC) directors, should be a part of the garrisoned unit at every echelon. These representatives will work to synchronize unit efforts and resources from an internal perspective.

Such organic representatives become the steward of unit training in accordance with the commander's intent. They house and manage all of the unit's standard operating procedures (SOPs), battle drills, and training scenarios. They drive training toward an established intent and advise the commander on the development of the unit toward the expected state of readiness. This representative is tied in with unit rosters, over-watches personnel trained by position, and vets initial training rosters for applicability to the program of instruction (POI).

Such an enterprise finally closes the gap between the training community's resources and the unit's training requirements. Commands and trainers do not currently have the close working relationships at every echelon. The 2012 Army Training Strategy states, "senior mission commanders must ensure TSS is integrated and prioritized to meet tenant unit commander's training requirements."²¹ Instead, they all too often run parallel with each other, and keep the each other at arm's length away.

The current gap keeps the command and the trainers from understanding each other's needs and requirements. In fact, there are cases throughout the Army, even now, where the lack of a close working relationship generally stifles the use of TSS and MTCs. Embedded representatives create a direct avenue to those resources and will help cut through self-imposed obstacles that thwart this effective relationship.

The training community as part of the staff must justify the expenditure of resources, and attest to the training they provide. They must also show how they support the glide path to unit readiness in keeping with that specific commander's intent. Through this relationship, commands will know soldiers are being trained correctly. They will see how training conformed with their specific intent. Finally, they will track why soldiers were or were not right for the training.

The Mission Training Complex as Institutional Memory

Embedding a representative in the staff would allow the MTC to act functionally as the legacy training managers of the unit. Such a direct relationship allows the unit's needs to be directly addressed in concert with the available training community resources and capabilities. Schedules between the unit and the training community



can be synchronized to ensure the right soldiers are met with the right training. Resource allocation can be targeted specifically toward unit readiness generation to meet the commander's intent. Better still, all the effort a unit puts into its own success can be archived and accessed over the succession of several command teams and personnel turnovers. A good example of this close working relationship would be unit SOP development.

There are always good intentions toward developing standard operating procedures within a unit. The MTC can offer a dedicated apparatus to not only help with development of the SOP but the training to exercise it. As the battle drills and SOP are written and finalized, the MTC will become the archivist of these important documents.

The nature of the MTC allows for the safe keeping and longevity of life for the unit's institutional memory. With the SOP, Battle Drills, and previous training scenarios safely kept and easily accessible, the MTC can ensure the unit will capitalize on its own training history, lessons learned, and emulate past successes. The DAC and the contract civilian staff will be the enduring memory of the unit which commanders rely on to maintain unit continuity over long periods of time.²²

Many elements in the Army utilize the legacy nature of the DAC and civilian staff in this capacity. The different personalities, command styles, and mission variables often make the work of previous command staffs seem unessential. Yet a charter for the MTC as the repository for the SOP can empower the legacy staff to ensure these important documents are preserved and trained on. This partnership with the training community makes the trainers a fully vested member in the unit's success.

Conclusion

In a world where resources and funding are legitimized by large numbers of throughput, it is urgent we recognize the shortcomings of the wholesale training of soldiers. The current training initiative does not build readiness. It creates haphazard, unaccounted for training of soldiers. We look to these trained soldiers to equate into some state of readiness, but the reality is we aren't training the right soldiers, so readiness isn't being generated. The detrimental shortcomings to units are inconceivable. Instead we need to re-harness the power of the training community, bring its architecture to bear, and no longer just "train soldiers."

Direct organic representation ultimately makes the training community what it should have been all along - the great repository of the unit's institutional knowledge and the source of its future capability. No longer parallel to the unit, but under the direct supervision of the commander, the training community will house the unit's training legacy and institutional memory to safeguard them against dissolution, disrepair, and neglect. They can ensure work established by one command is built upon the by the succeeding commands thereafter. Soldiers are no longer large masses trained wholesale for the benefit of program survivability. Instead they are properly trained toward the benefit of the unit, and toward the benefit of the soldier to the left and right of them as they stand on the battlefield. The obvious benefits of such an enterprise are limitless for tomorrow's Army.

Toward that end, it is imperative we build an enterprise of focused, integrated, and accountable training. This enterprise should be organically embedded in the tenant units the training community supports. It should encapsulate and exploit the training community professionals, and the architecture of technology they possess, to train the tenant units they support. As one collective enterprise, these powerful elements will synchronize their efforts, manage their resources, and hold themselves accountable for building units of decisive combat capability.

When the call comes, you must be ready. Readiness has to be and continues to be the number one priority in U.S. Forces Command. There is no other priority. If you ever think you're going to need an Army, if you ever think you're going to use an Army, then you better have a good one, and it better be ready.

– General Abrams, FORSCOM Commander²³



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NOTES:

1. Michell Tan, "FORSCOM Boss: After Two Wars, Army Must Rebuild Core Competencies," *Army Times*, October 31, 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/defense/show-daily/ausa/2015/10/31/forscom-boss-after-two-wars-army-must-rebuild-core-competencies/73555156/>.
2. For the purposes of this document the terms "training architecture" and "training community" will refer only to the enablers outlined in ADRP 7-0, sections 3-60 and 3-61. This section speaks specifically to the support units receive from the installation itself in terms of resources provided by the installation (AR 350-1 2014, 5-5) and then specifically by the mission training complexes (MTCs). (ADP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 23 August 2012), 3-10).
3. Gen. Robert B. Abrams, FORSCOM *Command Training Guidance* (CTG) - Fiscal Year 2016 (Department of the Army Memorandum for Commanders), Part 1.
4. Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, August 2014), 5-5.
5. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 23 August 2012), 1-1.
6. ADP 7-0, 9
7. Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno, *The Army Training Strategy*, 3 October 2012, 4.
8. ADP 7-0, 9.
9. *The Army Training Strategy*, 9.
10. Michelle Tan, "Abrams: Building Readiness is 'Crunch Point' for Army," *Defense News*, October 14, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/show-daily/ausa/2015/10/14/gen-abrams-building-readiness-crunch-point-army/73921012/>.
11. ADRP 7-0, 1-4.
12. AR 220-1, *Army Unit Status Reporting and Force Registration – Consolidated Policies* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 15 April 2010).
13. *The Army Training Strategy*, 6
14. The Oxford Dictionary Online defines holistic as "Characterized by comprehension of the parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole." (Oxford University Press), accessed 11 July 2016, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/holistic.
15. ADP 7-0, 3-70.
16. FORSCOM *Command Training Guidance*, 3.
17. *The Army Training Strategy*, 9.



18. ADRP 7-0, 1-6.
19. Tan, "Building Readiness is 'Crunch Point.'"
20. AR 350-1, 5-5.
21. *The Army Training Strategy*, 17
22. Installation Management Command, *The College of Installation Management* white paper, 4 January 2016, 9, <http://www.imcomacademy.com/ima/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CIM-4Jan2016.pdf>.
23. Michelle Tan, "Abrams: Army Needs 'Realistic Training' For Readiness," *Military Times*, October 12, 2015, <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/defense/show-daily/ausa/2015/10/12/abrams-army-needs-realistic-training-readiness/73807692/>.