

THE LIFE OF A WARRIOR LEADER

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In case you have not heard, there is a message coming. As an Army leader, if you want to see the cutting edge, look to Europe. U.S. Army Europe's (USAREUR's) "Strong Europe" campaign priorities of leader development, readiness, and enabling the alliance aim at making the 30,000 Soldiers assigned in Europe today look like the 300,000 Soldiers of yesteryear. The Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment (Warrior Battalion) are USAREUR's opposing force (OPFOR) at the Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, and count themselves part of that 30,000. The Warriors, like everyone, are incredibly busy. They are getting the mission done with competent small unit leaders. Leaders don't grow on trees, and there aren't millions of dollars available for off-season free agency negotiations. Therefore, the Warrior Battalion pursues the only option available: develop their own leaders through the "farm system" approach. There is arguably no better place for a lieutenant or captain than in USAREUR's leadership laboratory, where 1-4 IN is the premier leadership factory. The Warrior Battalion is sending the message to the Army and its allies that the opportunity for developing competent and capable leaders of character is at Hohenfels, Germany.

ADP 6-22, Army Leadership, states, "The fastest learning occurs when there are challenging and interesting opportunities to practice leadership with meaningful and honest feedback and multiple practice opportunities." Most units spend more than a year preparing for a single rotation at a Combat Training Center (CTC). A trip to Fort Irwin (Calif.), Fort Polk (La.), or Hohenfels may be the only opportunity a lieutenant or company commander will have during his key developmental assignment to fight a breathing, free-thinking OPFOR. Warrior Battalion officers execute between five to six decisive action training environment (DATE) rotations per year. Within these rotations, the Warrior Battalion's missions vary across the range of military operations. For the battalion to provide a world-class OPFOR, 1-4 IN's formations must be trained and lethal prior to the rotation beginning, but to fully leverage the precious few weeks of "white space" between rotations, the formation must capitalize upon the opportunity the rotation provides to build training readiness and develop its leaders.

The standard model for a DATE rotation consists of situational training exercise (STX) lanes focused at the company level for the rotational training unit (RTU). The Warrior Battalion provides OPFOR mostly at platoon level and below. The OPFOR companies receive the intent for each STX lane, which may vary from a platoon defense of a



Soldiers with 1-4 IN help a Romanian soldier zero his MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) prior to the start of a Joint Multinational Readiness Center rotation. (Photo courtesy of author)

village, to a platoon movement to contact, to a platoon deliberate attack. In each instance, the OPFOR platoon leader executes troop leading procedures (TLPs), develops hasty graphics, issues an operation order (OPORD), and fights his platoon. A platoon may execute between four to five STX lanes per rotation, which translates to a platoon leader having as many as four opportunities per rotation to defend, conduct movement to contact, attack hastily, or attack deliberately. With just four rotations per year, that's 16 deliberate opportunities in STX scenarios for a leader to get repetitions! That's eight times the required number according to the Combined Arms Training Strategy (CATS) website (<https://atn.army.mil/>). In the instances when the OPFOR requirement is less than a platoon, squad leaders or sections leaders have a similar opportunity, and the platoon leader operates in a supervisory capacity. The battalion utilizes staff officers armed with training evaluation outlines (TEOs) to evaluate platoons and ensure feedback is available so these opportunities are not thrown away. This system has secondary and tertiary effects with the feedback helping companies and platoons see themselves while at the same time helping the battalion leadership identify and evaluate companies' key collective tasks and the battalion's overall training readiness.

During actual exercise days (X-days), the battalion and its companies operate in a free-play environment whereby the battalion conducts the military decision-making process (MDMP), issues an order to the companies, conducts a combined arms rehearsal, and executes its operations against the RTU. The battalion lives in the field, conducting reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance, attacking and defending, and completing combat service support (CSS) requirements to include maintenance and logistics package (LOGPAC). Battalion leadership moves around the battlefield visiting companies and platoons, spot-checking fighting positions, and monitoring maintenance and Soldier morale. Just like with the RTU, the X-days provide the next level of realism above the STX lanes.

During the few weeks between rotations, the battalion focuses not only on recovery but also setting the conditions for junior leaders to succeed. These conditions include the incremental training model of moving from individual training to collective training. Throughout these off-cycle weeks, Warrior leaders are doing the routine things routinely, namely command maintenance, training management, counseling, and physical training to name a few. Readiness systems are an essential condition for the Warrior Battalion to empower junior leaders. One of the most critical readiness systems is the refinement process of current standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure they are viable. Another system is the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)-accredited OPFOR Academy, which ensures junior leaders and Soldiers understand the intricacies of the battalion's specialized mission. Finally, each Warrior leader receives a handbook designed specifically to provide the tools necessary to help the new lieutenant on the ground. Spanning the gamut of topics from the Ranger Creed, Army Values, and Warrior Redlines, to functional aspects such as TLPs, weapon and vehicle characteristics, 9-line medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) request, offensive and defensive considerations, and range card templates, the Leader Book provides small unit leader's a quick reference guide to the essentials for success not only in the "Box" but on any battlefield.

Figure 2 depicts quarterly events spanning training, leader development, and routine systems, which contribute to the overall development of the Warrior leader in accordance with ADP 6-22.

Warrior leaders are also messengers for the battalion throughout Europe. They have carried the message about what a Warrior leader can do to Lithuania where they led a squad through a multi-national squad competition, to Bulgaria where they provided OPFOR at the NATO partner's training center, and distinguished themselves in USAREUR's Best Warrior Competition. Wherever the Warrior Battalion sends its Soldiers, it's also sending leaders who deliver the message that the Warrior Battalion gets the mission done. At the same time these leaders, captains, lieutenants, and NCOs, are having incredible experiences from which to draw insights for the battalion as well as themselves as leaders.

Often the message recipients come to the battalion as well. The Warrior Battalion builds a composite team every single rotation of U.S. Army Reserve component and allied/partnered nation units. From the U.S. side, the battalion receives a National Guard infantry company and National Guard/U.S. Army Reserve engineer assets that it task organizes into the formation during rotations. The battalion typically utilizes that National Guard infantry company as a company team by task organizing it with 1-4 IN armored/mechanized platoons during the rotation. From the multinational side, the battalion integrates two to five multinational partners into the formation during a rotation. What this means for the organic Warrior leaders is that they're on the cutting edge of multinational

interoperability — learning about other cultures and perspectives; creating successful tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for interoperability; and identifying risk and ways to mitigate to accomplish the mission and successfully do “business.”

The battalion’s goal is to make those multinational partners full members of the Warrior team. They receive translated leader handbooks and SOPs. They execute warm-up training scenarios under Warrior leader supervision so that risk and training deficiencies are identified and their capabilities can be implemented to their maximum effectiveness while maintaining safety. Often a proven TTP is to embed a Warrior leader in the partner-nation formation to ensure effective communication. The opportunity for the Warrior leader is obviously profound. These steps enable the Warrior Battalion to achieve the goal of helping individuals and teams realize their potential and accomplishing the mission.

Yes, the message is coming. If you as an Army leader want maximum repetitions at doing what you joined the Army to do (fight in a challenging environment against a tenacious and capable enemy), then you need to join 1-4 IN — USAREUR’s OPFOR and leadership factory.

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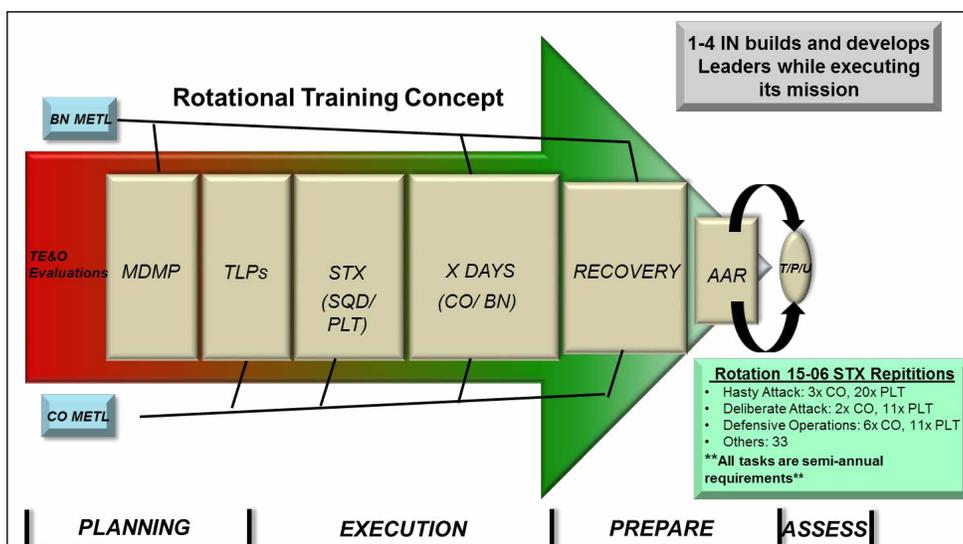


Figure 1 — 1-4 IN Leverages Each Rotation to Develop Leaders and Build Readiness



UNCLASSIFIED



The Warrior Leader

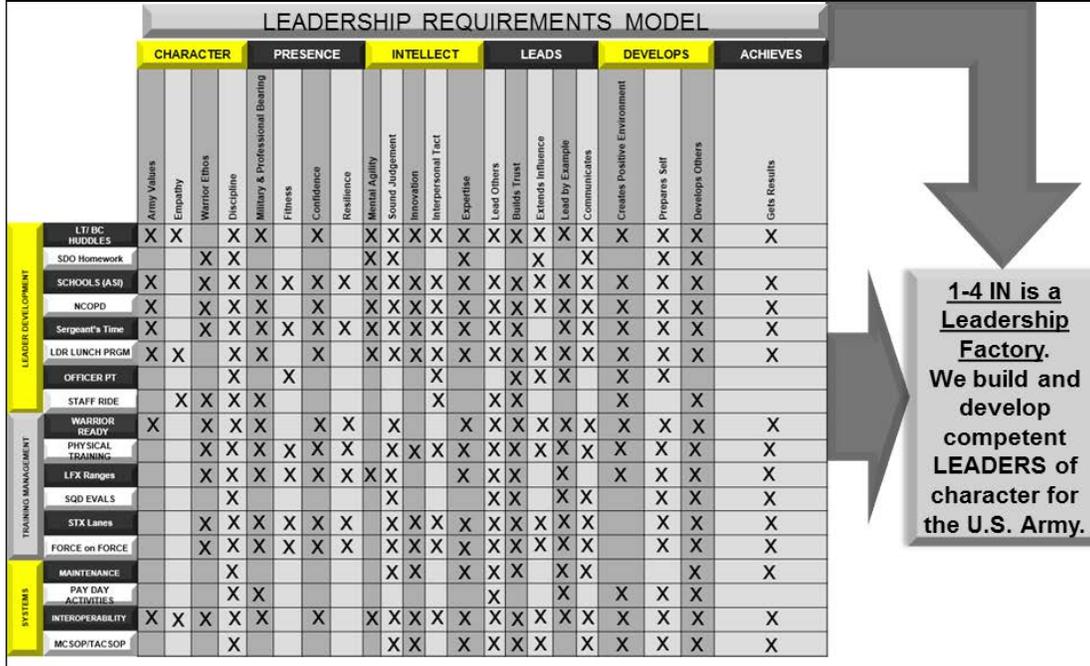


Figure 2 — 1-4 IN Leadership Requirements Model