The Military Decision-Making Process: a Blueprint for Developing Your Unit's Mission-Essential Task List Crosswalk

by CPT Jonathan Hawkins

The U.S. Army has developed and maintained a set of doctrine since its inception. It has constantly expanded and refined this doctrine to ensure it remains a relevant point of reference in an ever-changing environment. Despite having unlimited access to this doctrine, however, leaders are often quick to look elsewhere to address a problem or challenge. Conducting a thorough and applicable mission-essential task list (METL) crosswalk is one of these "problems" leaders face – a problem that can be solved through the application of a commonly used piece of doctrine.

The most effective method of executing an accurate METL crosswalk that facilitates training management within a unit is through the use of the military decision-making process (MDMP). Executing a METL crosswalk using the MDMP in turn facilitates the execution of troop-leading procedures (TLPs) at the company/troop/battery level.

Each unit has a list of tasks, dictated by the Army, that it is expected to be able to perform. This list of tasks, known as a METL, is the guiding force behind a unit's training and should be an integral part of the training-management process. Conducting a crosswalk of these tasks down to the individual level is critical to a unit's ability to plan, execute and manage meaningful training that effectively builds proficiency in those Army-directed tasks. Once an accurate crosswalk is executed, it can be applied in several ways that facilitates parallel planning and builds efficiencies within a unit's training-management system.

This article identifies critical gaps in the typical method of executing a METL crosswalk; proposes an alternate, doctrinal-based method; and provides practical ways to apply the crosswalk in everyday operations.

Crosswalk steps

A thorough METL crosswalk is executed in two steps: inform and conduct. Too often these two steps are merged into one and leadership fails to be applied to the process. The "inform" step is what most are accustomed to: accessing the Combined-Arms Training Strategies (CATS) Website (https://atn.army.mil/dsp_CATSviewer01.aspx#) or another resource and researching, by task, what individual tasks are nested within a collective task according to that particular source.

While this process is important, it is only the initial step toward executing an accurate crosswalk of mission-essential tasks (MET). The second step, "conduct," is what gets left out most of the time. This step requires leaders to be more subjective, looking specifically at their mission set and applying the knowledge and experience held within their organization to ensure tasks are properly nested. This is where the application of the MDMP is most effective, enabling leaders at echelon to account for all factors and allowing commanders to remain central throughout the process. It is through "informing" and "conducting" that accurate METL crosswalks are built and proper nesting of tasks between echelons can occur.

The first step in building a METL crosswalk is to "inform." During this step, commanders and other leaders look objectively at what individual tasks must be trained to service a collective task. By doing so, leaders establish a base of understanding into the training that must be executed, at echelon, to build proficiency in their respective METs. Here, commanders implement the science of control, which is "based on objectivity, facts and empirical methods"[1] and is critical in building an accurate association between collective and individual tasks.

There are several resources available to help facilitate this process. These resources, which include CATS, Digital Training Management System (DTMS) and training circulars (TCs), break down collective tasks into a list of individual or lower echelon tasks, making it easy to document and use as a reference moving forward.

CATS, in particular, organizes tasks based first on branch or unit type, then by echelon. CATS not only breaks down collective tasks to individual tasks but also provides training and evaluation outlines that list the performance measures required for each task to be trained.

CATS and similar databases are phenomenal resources that leaders should reference while developing a crosswalk, but not solely rely on. As with anything else, these resources have gaps in capabilities that make the second step in the crosswalk process absolutely critical.

There are several capability gaps in the resources used in the "inform" step that prevent commanders and other leaders from exclusively relying on them to execute their METL crosswalk. The largest deficiency is that these resources are void of any subjective analysis and fail to apply factors that might affect a particular unit's crosswalk. One way this is evident is how tasks are prioritized. Executing a crosswalk purely using CATS or another resource typically causes leaders to rank the importance of their tasks based on the number of collective tasks that are serviced instead of what might be uniquely important for their particular unit.

For example, Table 1 depicts an armor company's high-to-low payoff tasks based on the commander's crosswalk. "Conduct TLP" is at the top, as training that task at the platoon level services the most supporting collective tasks (SCTs) at the company level. "Conduct a movement-to-contact," meanwhile, is prioritized at the bottom of the list because, due to the narrow focus of the task itself, it only services a small number of SCTs.

1-4	Low-payoff collective task
5-9	Medium-payoff collective task
>10	High-payoff collective task

	Platoon CCTs
1	Conduct TLPs (171-121-4045)
2	Conduct rehearsal (07-2-5009)
3	Integrate direct fires (07-2-3027)
4	integrate indirect-fire support (07-2-3036)
5	Conduct tactical movement (07-2-1342)
6	React to contact (07-3-D9501)
7	Conduct consolidation and reorganization (07-2-5027)
8	Conduct a passage-of-lines as the passing unit (07-2-9006)
9	Evacuate casualties (08-2-0004)
10	Treat casualties (08-2-0003)
11	React to indirect fire (07-3-D9504)
12	Conduct a movement-to-contact (07-2-1090)
13	Conduct area defense (07-2-9003)
14	Occupy an assembly area (07-2-9014)
15	Conduct attack-by-fire (07-2-1256)

Table 1. An example of an armor company's high-low payoff tasks. Also see TC 3-20.15, *Tank Platoon Collective Task Publication*, July 2013.

Relying on CATS alone to do a METL crosswalk removes the commander from the process and instead relies on quantitative data to determine what tasks are most important. Given some analysis, this commander could

determine that, although "conduct a rehearsal" is an important task, his platoons' ability to conduct a passage-of-lines is more important based on his company's mission.

CATS shortcomings

Another gap in the capabilities of these resources is the failure to account for unique units or units in uncommon situations. Currently, CATS and similar resources serve as a "one size fits all" database that treats every like unit the same. This, however, is clearly not the case for several units. For example, one armor company in every armored brigade combat team (ABCT) across the Army has moved under the cavalry squadron as part of the Army's K-series modified table of organization and equipment. This creates an obvious difference in mission set, responsibilities and expectations of that armor company. It also does not take into account the mission for the squadron and how it differs from that of a combined-arms battalion.

Other examples include the forward-support companies (FSCs) and artillery batteries.

One of the several changes that came with the Army's K-series redesign is the movement of one armor company to the cavalry squadron in each ABCT. Among other things, this changed that armor company's mission from being one centered on closing with and destroying the enemy to one focused on reconnaissance and security. CATS has failed to account for this change. As a result, conducting an objective METL crosswalk using only the first step of the process will yield results focused on tasks critical to a standard armor company, not one task-organized within a cavalry squadron.

It could be argued that the armor company's METL itself must change to properly nest its efforts within the cavalry squadron. While this may be true, the commander's ability to execute an accurate METL crosswalk will help mitigate the effects of having a standardized METL and will focus training within the company on the tasks necessary to accomplish its new mission set.

An accurate crosswalk assists in identifying tasks that are common to both cavalry and tank organizations. For example, "integrate indirect-fire support" and "conduct tactical movement" are critical collective tasks (CCTs) for both scout and tank platoons. Identifying and prioritizing these tasks allows the company to simultaneously service both their Army-directed METs and the tasks necessary to accomplish their mission within the squadron.

Another way an accurate crosswalk helps is by effectively breaking down tasks to the individual level so the company is prepared to capitalize on training opportunities as they arise. Depending on how the squadron is task-organized with the integration of scouts and tanks, for example, the company might never have the opportunity to train a tank-pure platoon to "conduct an attack." However, a tank section operating in support of a scout platoon can train on "conduct an attack-by-fire," a supporting task to "conduct an attack" that was identified through a proper crosswalk.

Capitalizing on this training opportunity builds proficiency in that task at the section level, which, when built upon, ultimately leads to an increase in platoon proficiency and beyond. This level of analysis is something commanders cannot find on CATS.

Similar to the armor company in a cavalry squadron, FSCs do not have a METL that supports their specific mission set. The Army-directed METL for an FSC is generic, not tailored to fit the particular formation the FSC supports. The Delta FSCs in an ABCT, for example, are constructed to support the cavalry squadron. However, there are no METs addressing sustainment in a guard or screen, two essential tasks in the cavalry squadron's METL.

Also, the SCTs for four of the FSC's six METs ("conduct sustainment support in a movement-to-contact," "conduct sustainment support in an attack," "conduct sustainment support in an area defense" and "conduct sustainment support in area security") are identical. There is no delineation in how sustainment is trained to build proficiency in each of these tasks.

Many of these SCTs are the same as units in the brigade-support battalion and sustainment brigade – two formations with entirely different missions. Strictly using CATS to perform this crosswalk results in the identification of literally hundreds of crew and individual tasks with no prioritization. Applying subjective analysis that CATS or similar databases cannot provide is critical in developing an accurate crosswalk within an FSC.

Another unit that CATS does not accurately account for is the self-propelled artillery battery. If a battery commander executed a METL crosswalk strictly using CATS, critical tasks would be left out. "Operate an M109A6 driver's night-vision device" and other driver-related tasks, for example, are not covered. Tasks associated with basic or advanced driver's training obviously need to be a focal point in a battery's training plan, especially one that contains self-propelled artillery.

Other tasks left out are associated with communications. Artillery batteries have an inherent requirement to communicate long distances to deconflict airspace and process fire missions in support of units external to their formations. Specific communications tasks like "operate an AN/PRC-150C Harris radio" are not included under the artillery battery in CATS or similar databases.

Training on these tasks enables the battery to establish secure long-range voice and digital communications, which is especially critical when firing in support of a unit conducting a guard or other operations at increased distances. While it is true that these tasks do not have to be included in a METL crosswalk for a unit to train on them, excluding them from the crosswalk decreases its utility and limits its applicability to the unit's training management system.

Applying MDMP

The "inform" step is crucial in developing an accurate METL crosswalk. It not only identifies the breakdown of each collective task but also creates a shared understanding within the unit of what tasks are necessary to train on to build proficiency at a higher echelon. The end product of this step is a spreadsheet that clearly shows the relationship between tasks at each echelon (Table 2[2]). This step, however, is typically the only one leaders complete when executing their crosswalk. This standard method of conducting a crosswalk fails to apply a level of subjectivity that comes with a commander's analysis. For this reason, the second step of "conduct" is critical in developing an accurate crosswalk.

Platoon CCTs	Conduct tactical movement (07-2-1342)	Conduct a rehearsal (07-2-5009)	React to indirect fire (07-3-D9504)	Occupy an assembly area (07-2-9014)	Conduct area defense (07-2-9003)	Conduct a passage-of-lines as the passing unit (07-2-9006)	Conduct a passage-of-lines as the stationary unit (07-2-9007)	React to chemical attack (03-3-D0035)	Treat casualties (08-2-0003)	Evacuate casualties (08-2-0004)	Conduct TLPs (171-121-4045)	Integrate direct fires (07-2-3027)	Conduct consolidation and reorganization (07-2-5027)	Conduct a bypass (07-2-9002)	React to contact (07-3-D9501)	Integrate indirect-fire support (07-2-3036)	Conduct a movement-to-contact (07-2-1090)	Conduct attack by fire (07-2-1256)	Conduct support by fire (07-2-3000)
Integrate direct fires (07-2-3027)	1	1			1						1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1
Conduct support-by-fire (07-2-3000)	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1		1	1			1
Integrate indirect-fire support (07-2-3036)		1									1	1				1			
Conduct TLPs (71-2-5100)		1									1								
Conduct an attack-by-fire (07-2-1256)	1	1		1		1			1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	
Employ obstacles (07-2-1396)		1			1						1	1				1			
Employ deception techniques (07-2-6045)		1			1						1					1			
Conduct a security patrol (07-3-9022)	1	1	1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		
Secure routes (07-2-1450)	1	1	1			1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Secure civilians during operations (07-2-4054)		1							1	1	1								
Conduct roadblock and checkpoint (19-3-2406)		1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1	1			1			
Plan unit-deployment activities upon receipt of warno (55-2-4828)		1									1								

Task																		
Perform staging activities (55-2-4826)	1	1		1		1					1		1						
Perform deployment-alert activities (55-2-4801)	1	1									1								
Conduct a passage-of-lines (07-2-9007)	1	1	1			1	1				1	1			1	1			
Conduct a follow-and-support	1	1	1			1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total supported tasks	9	16	6	4	4	6	2	1	7	7	16	10	8	2	8	10	4	3	3

Table 2. Reproduction of a spreadsheet example of tank-platoon CCTs crosswalked against company SCTs, the resulting product of the "inform" step.

The "conduct" step is where a unit's METL crosswalk goes from an objectively developed spreadsheet to an integral part of the way training is managed and conducted. It is during this step that commanders implement the art of command, defined in Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-0 as "the creative and skillful exercise of authority through timely decision-making and leadership."[3] The application of this leadership is the key difference between "conducting" and "informing" a crosswalk. This step is best accomplished through the use of MDMP.

MDMP provides an excellent framework that can help guide commanders and other leaders to conduct an accurate crosswalk that can be practically applied in several ways. The first thing the MDMP does is it enables the commander to drive the process. The first principle of Army unit training is that commanders and other leaders are responsible for training.[4] This responsibility makes their direct involvement in this process critical.

The other benefit of using the MDMP is the doctrinal structure it provides. Although MDMP is typically conducted at the battalion level or higher, commanders at all levels can use the steps to ensure they thoroughly and deliberately create their crosswalk.

Step 1 of the MDMP is "receipt of mission." By this time, commanders and other leaders have already objectively developed the spreadsheet and should have a firm understanding of what needs to be done to complete the crosswalk.

Step 2 is "mission analysis" (MA). One of the primary steps within MA is the identification of specified, implied and essential tasks. This step forces commanders to look at their units specifically and determine what tasks must be trained to accomplish their assigned mission.

Specified tasks, as they relate to a METL crosswalk, are the unit's Army-directed METs. These tasks are specifically assigned to the unit and serve as the base of tasks to be analyzed. Implied tasks are the subtasks that the unit must train to build proficiency in their specified tasks.

A lot of these tasks were identified in the "inform" step using CATS and other resources but, as stated earlier, it is likely that key tasks were missed with the absence of any subjective analysis. An effective way to identify implied tasks is to draw a sketch or set of graphics that depicts a collective task as the objective and outlines the supporting tasks necessary to accomplish the mission. This helps the commander conceptualize all the tasks his subordinate element will have to execute to properly perform that collective task.

Take Figure 1, for example. The specified task the commander is analyzing is "conduct an attack." By drawing a sketch, the commander is able to work backward to determine what his unit will have to do to successfully conduct an attack on Objective Lions.
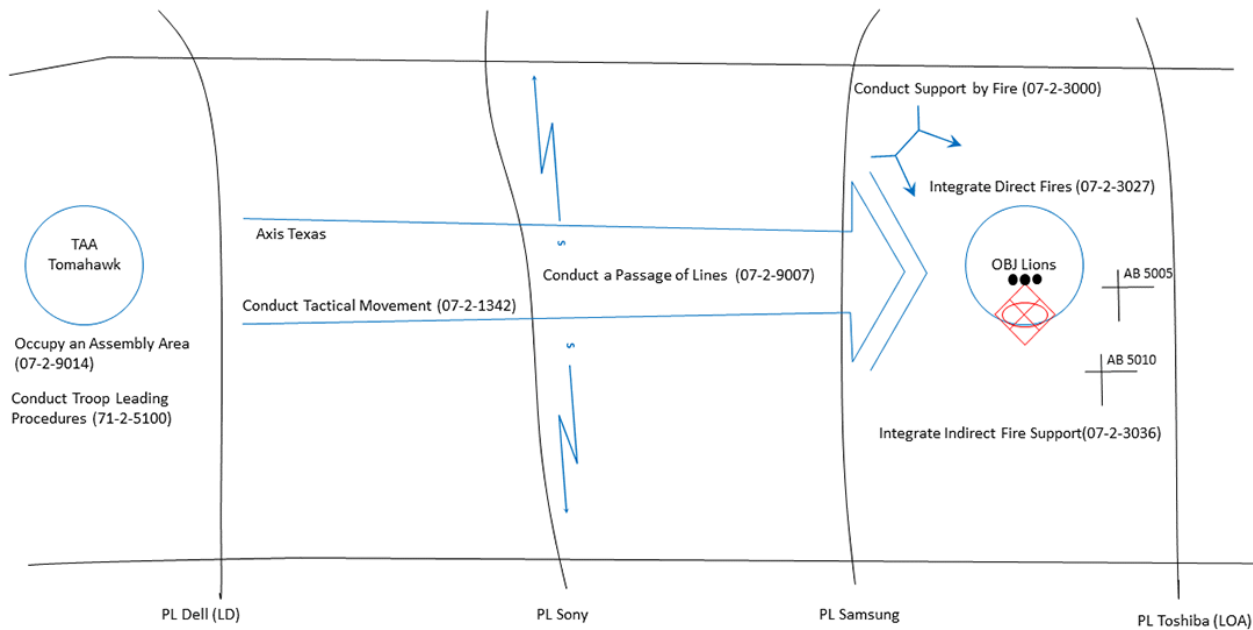
Figure 1. A sketch identifying implied tasks when conducting an attack (07-2-9001).

Creating sketches of tasks as they would a set of graphics forces leaders to think of all the tasks tied to each graphical control measure or operational graphic. This method also helps to apply some practicality to the process. A database might identify "plan for an improvised explosive device threat" as a supporting task to "conduct zone reconnaissance" but, by drawing out the specified task, a commander may find it unnecessary to train that implied task. As a result, this task could be prioritized lower than other supporting tasks or disregarded as an implied task altogether.

Implied tasks can also be added based on the commander's analysis. "React to indirect fire" or "treat a casualty" are potential implied tasks for "conduct an attack." This same concept can then be applied to each implied task identified to further break them down to lower echelons. Through this process, commanders are able to clearly identify and prioritize their specified and implied tasks.

Once specified and implied tasks are identified and leaders within the organization have an understanding behind the purpose for accomplishing each task, essential tasks are identified. Essential tasks are determined based on what tasks must be executed to accomplish the overall mission.[5] These tasks are unique to individual units and should determine the training focus and allocation of training time. In some cases, these tasks are directed from a higher headquarters.

For example, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd ABCT, 1st Infantry Division, received specific guidance from the brigade commander on what tasks he wanted the squadron to be able to execute proficiently: "conduct a guard" and "conduct a reconnaissance-in-force." These two tasks became the squadron's essential tasks, serving as a focal point of training and assisting in how the squadron manages its time and resources.

After identifying specified, implied and essential tasks, commanders execute a commander's dialogue with their higher headquarters. The commander's dialogue, described in Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 7-0 as a critical step in completing MA,[6] allows commanders to discuss the tasks they have identified with their leadership to confirm or adjust results prior to moving forward with their crosswalk. This dialogue serves as a conditions check and ensures subordinate commanders are nested within their higher commander's intent. The results of this dialogue and the rest of MA are then applied in course-of-action (CoA) development.

Step 3 of the MDMP is CoA development. During this step, commanders nest their tasks vertically with their higher headquarters and laterally with adjacent units, developing potential CoAs to be applied given certain missions.

Figure 2 depicts what tasks would be executed at echelon if the brigade was conducting a movement-to-contact. With the application of the specified, implied and essential tasks identified through MA, this commander outlined what mission his unit would be expected to perform. In this particular example, the troop commander has determined that when the squadron is executing a reconnaissance-in-force, his troop would more than likely be conducting a zone reconnaissance. With the squadron's task organization, the tank troop would typically be assigned route reconnaissance as a specified task.
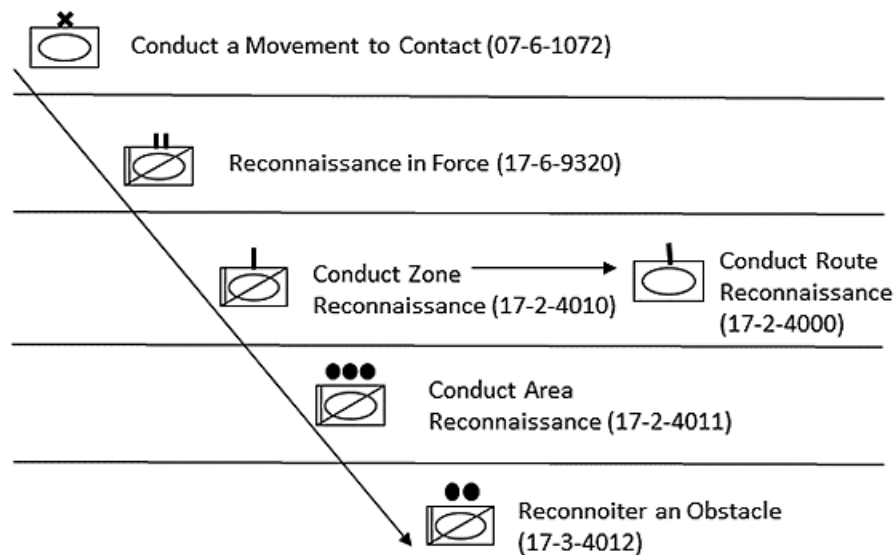
Figure 2. METL nesting diagram.

This level of analysis helps commanders anticipate requirements and better prepare to meet them. The tank-troop commander knows that if the brigade is doing a movement-to-contact, he needs to plan for the possible employment of engineer reconnaissance teams and mount mine plows on his wing tanks. Using the MDMP drives this preparation.[7] This also, again, increases the applicability of the METL crosswalk and makes the time spent developing it worthwhile. Developing these CoAs translates almost directly into the creation and refinement of the METL crosswalk, as tasks are broken down from the highest echelon to the lowest.

MDMP's last steps; TLPs

The remaining steps of the MDMP guide the commander through the refinement and production of the METL crosswalk. In CoA analysis and CoA comparison, commanders and other leaders compare their crosswalks with like units, widening perspectives and highlighting differences to trigger discussion. This is a critical step in the crosswalk's development, as it allows the crosswalk to be looked at by leaders external to the unit who hold similar positions. Comparing crosswalks gives commanders an outside, unbiased look at their crosswalk that could potentially identify something that was missed.

CoA approval and orders production are the final two steps. It is during these steps that the METL crosswalk is approved by the higher commander, finalized and published. The final product does not look much different from what was developed during the "inform" step in terms of format, but the content has been refined and ultimately built through the analysis of the commander and other leaders within the organization.

Using the MDMP is the most effective way to develop an accurate METL crosswalk that can be easily integrated into a unit's training-management process. Developing a crosswalk by first "informing" and then "conducting" creates a product that has several applications. First, the crosswalk facilitates TLPs at the company/troop/battery level and below. It equips units at lower echelons with the tools necessary to conduct parallel planning. It can also be used as a doctrinal template (doctemp), which can be turned into a situational template (sittemp) upon designation of a mission. Finally, an accurate METL crosswalk can be integrated into training meetings and other everyday operations. The MDMP is capable of producing a crosswalk with several applications.

One of the greatest applications is how a METL crosswalk can facilitate TLPs and enable parallel planning at lower echelons. With a carefully developed METL crosswalk, Steps 1 and 2 of the TLPs can be completed simply by knowing the essential task of one's higher unit. As stated earlier when discussing CoA development, referencing the unit's crosswalk will enable the commander to receive the mission, or at least a piece of it, and issue a warning order (warno) based on the task his higher headquarters must execute.

Following a brief warno, commanders can move immediately into Steps 3 and 4: "make a tentative plan" and "initiate movement." A crosswalk done from MET down to individual task outlines what must be done at each echelon to successfully accomplish the mission. For example, if a cavalry squadron is tasked with a guard mission, the tank-troop commander knows it is likely the troop will be tasked with an area defense.

Following the crosswalk for that MET, platoons know they will have to integrate indirect-fire support so they can begin planning indirect-fire targets with the troop fire-support officer. Sections know they will have to establish fighting positions, so they can begin rehearsing the identification and occupation of fighting positions. Individual crewmen can begin preparing camouflage to use on the tanks and range-card templates to expedite the development of sector sketches once in position.

Units typically do not receive a lot of time to plan, especially at lower levels. This expedites TLPs at the company / troop / battery level and triggers almost immediate movement.

Doctemp, sittemp

Another practical use of a METL crosswalk is maintaining it as a doctemp. A doctemp is a model depicting how an element, typically a threat, operates when unconstrained by the effects of the battlefield environment.[8] When environmental effects like terrain are placed over the doctemp, it changes into a sittemp, which depicts how the element will operate under those specific effects.

In this case, the METL crosswalk serves as a doctemp, a model that depicts how a unit will fight void of any external factors. Once a factor is implemented – a designation of mission, for example – the doctemp turns into a sittemp, serving as a blueprint for what specifically needs to happen for that unit to be successful. This application makes the crosswalk a living document, capable of taking on several shapes given the condition under which the unit is placed.

Training meetings

The final major application of a METL crosswalk is its integration into training meetings and other daily operations. To ensure a unit's crosswalk plays an integral role in training management, it must be tied into the one weekly meeting purely dedicated to training. This ensures the tasks identified as high importance are being allocated the proper time in the training schedule. It also creates a shared understanding among the leadership on what specifically the unit needs to focus training on for that week.

Figure 3 depicts a slide from the training meeting in 5-4 Cav. Each week, a squadron MET is identified as the training focus for that period. In turn, troops identify troop METs that are nested within the squadron MET as their training focus. The same thing is done during troop training meetings, ensuring the individual tasks being trained each week during Sergeants' Time training are vertically nested with the squadron's MET. This also serves as a system of record, documenting when and how often each MET was addressed through training.
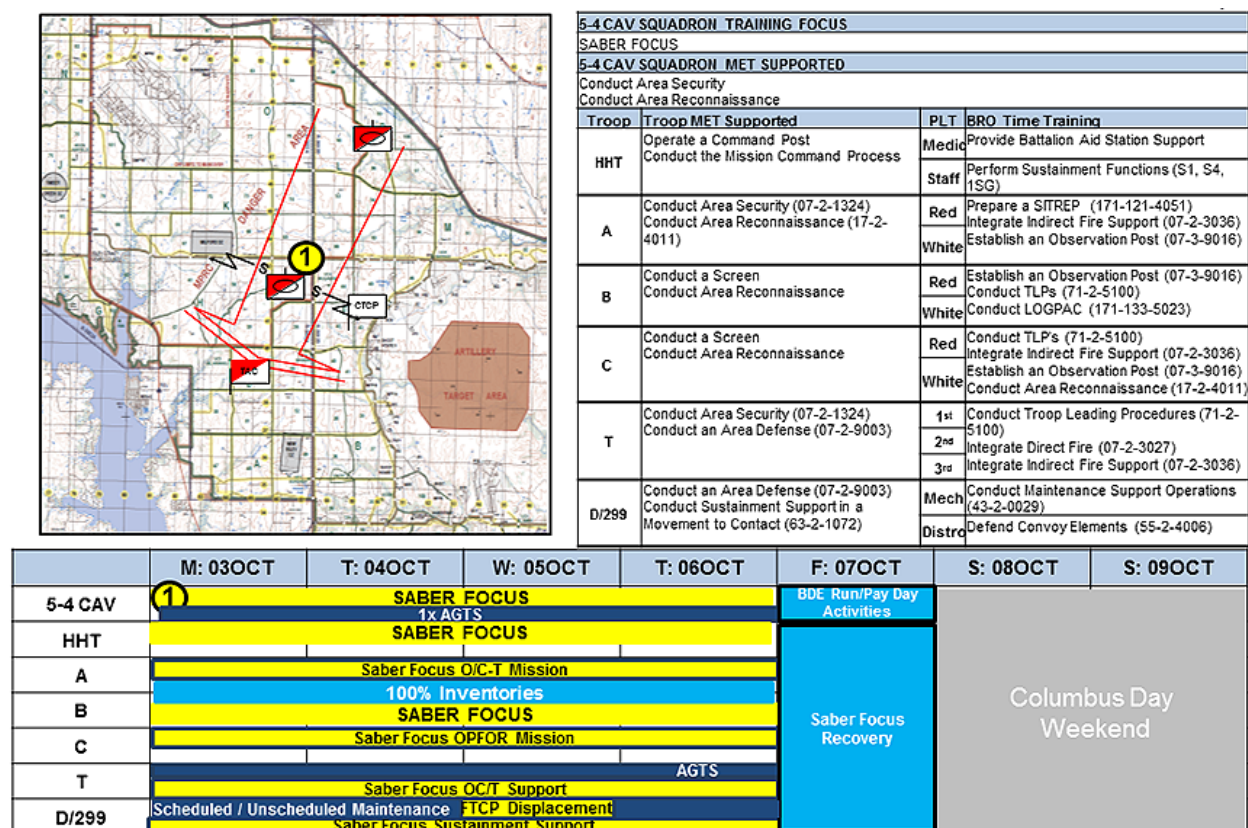
5-4 CAV SQUADRON TRAINING FOCUS
SABER FOCUS

5-4 CAV SQUADRON MET SUPPORTED
Conduct Area Security
Conduct Area Reconnaissance

Troop	Troop MET Supported	PLT	BRO Time Training
HHT	Operate a Command Post; Conduct the Mission Command Process	Medic	Provide Battalion Aid Station Support
		Staff	Perform Sustainment Functions (S1, S4, 1SG)
A	Conduct Area Security (07-2-1324); Conduct Area Reconnaissance (17-2-4011)	Red	Prepare a SITREP (171-121-4051); Integrate Indirect Fire Support (07-2-3036)
		White	Establish an Observation Post (07-3-9016)
B	Conduct a Screen; Conduct Area Reconnaissance	Red	Establish an Observation Post (07-3-9016); Conduct TLPs (71-2-5100)
		White	Conduct LOGPAC (171-133-5023)
C	Conduct a Screen; Conduct Area Reconnaissance	Red	Conduct TLP's (71-2-5100); Integrate Indirect Fire Support (07-2-3036)
		White	Establish an Observation Post (07-3-9016); Conduct Area Reconnaissance (17-2-4011)
T	Conduct Area Security (07-2-1324); Conduct an Area Defense (07-2-9003)	1st	Conduct Troop Leading Procedures (71-2-5100)
		2nd	Integrate Direct Fire (07-2-3027)
		3rd	Integrate Indirect Fire Support (07-2-3036)
D/299	Conduct an Area Defense (07-2-9003); Conduct Sustainment Support in a Movement to Contact (63-2-1072)	Mech	Conduct Maintenance Support Operations (43-2-0029)
		Distro	Defend Convoy Elements (55-2-4006)

	M: 03OCT	T: 04OCT	W: 05OCT	T: 06OCT	F: 07OCT	S: 08OCT	S: 09OCT
5-4 CAV	SABER FOCUS / 1x AGTS				BDE Run/Pay Day Activities	Columbus Day Weekend	
HHT	SABER FOCUS				Saber Focus Recovery		
A	Saber Focus O/C-T Mission						
B	100% Inventories / SABER FOCUS						
C	Saber Focus OPFOR Mission						
T	AGTS / Saber Focus OC/T Support						
D/299	Scheduled / Unscheduled Maintenance FTCP Displacement / Saber Focus Sustainment Support						

Figure 3. A slide from the weekly training meeting in 5-4 Cav. It depicts T+1 squadron concept of operations for Week 1 of a training cycle.

A unit tying their crosswalk into their training meetings helps operationalize the process, which facilitates a smoother transition from garrison to a field environment. A unit that constantly discusses, plans and trains around their METs will be familiar with everything from terminology to specific requirements for each task when employed in a tactical scenario.

'Yellow space' management

Another way the crosswalk can be integrated into everyday training management is by using it as a tool to manage "yellow space." Yellow space refers to windows of time where units can train tasks concurrent to other operations that are not part of the primary training focus. This is not to be confused with white space, which is extremely rare if not non-existent in most units.

Being able to capitalize on yellow space and manage it effectively is what elevates units to the next level. Having a well-developed METL crosswalk can assist with managing yellow space, providing pre-prioritized tasks at echelon to reference when the opportunity arises.

Figure 4 illustrates how a unit used its METL crosswalk to identify tasks from 10-level to platoon-collective that they could train concurrently while executing a platoon situational-training exercise (STX). Having these tasks clearly broken down equips commanders with the tools necessary to make an informed decision on what tasks should be the focus of concurrent training. The early identification of these tasks – battle drills in this particular example – then enables subordinate leaders to plan ahead to ensure the training is valuable and not poorly prepared. A thoroughly developed METL crosswalk serves as a tool that can be integrated into training management.
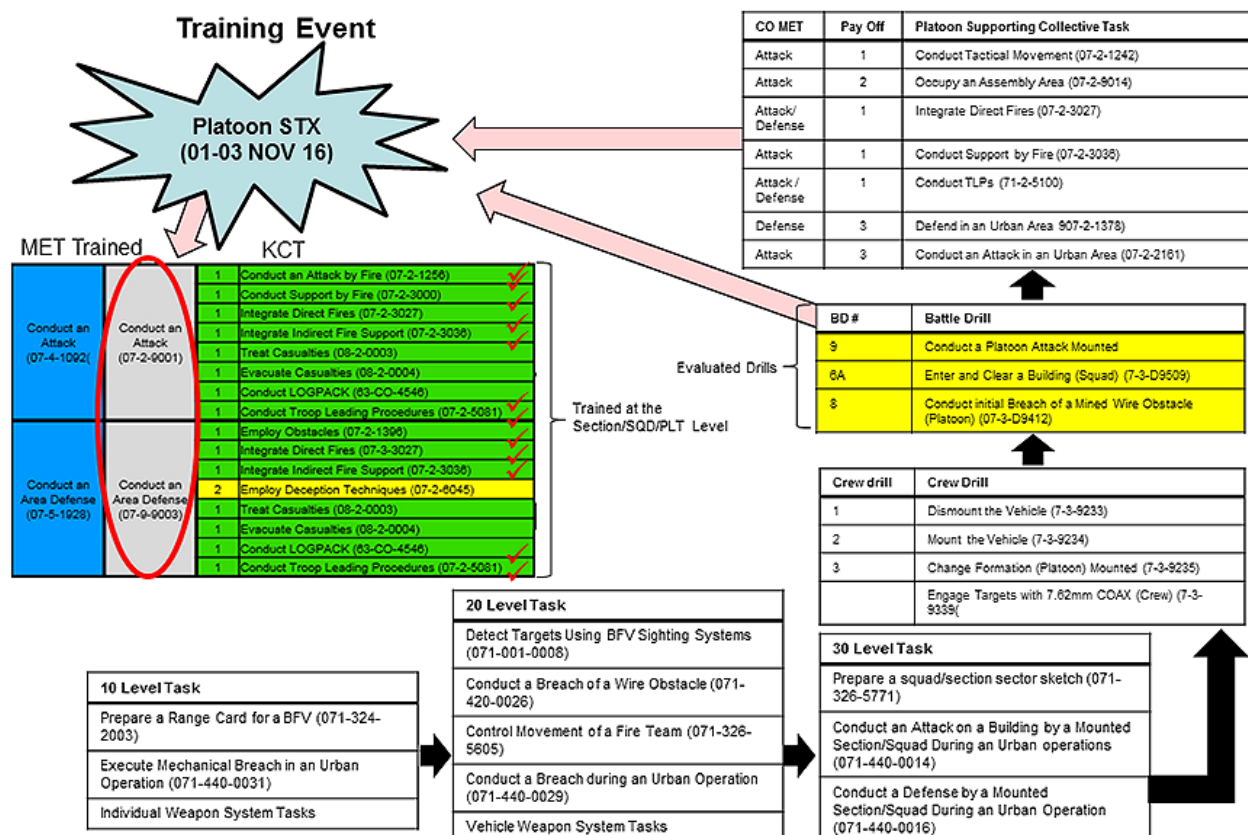
Figure 4. An illustration of how one unit plans to manage yellow space (briefed at a quarterly training brief to the 2nd ABCT, 1st Infantry Division, commander).

There are several resources that assist leaders in creating a METL crosswalk. These resources – which include CATS, TCs, DTMS and other databases – are fantastic tools that help identify and clearly define supporting tasks and how they are associated with collective tasks. These tools, however, cannot replace a commander's involvement or subjective analysis. To do this, commanders and other leaders do not have to look any further than the nearest Army publications library.

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CPT Hawkins notes that Troop D, 5-4 Cav, is a tank company that transitioned from combined-arms battalion to cavalry squadron while he was in command. The transition gave him "phenomenal insight" into the challenges a tank unit serving in a cavalry organization may face and the effect the Army-directed METL has on a unit's training plan.

Notes

[1] ADP 6-0, **Mission Command**, May 2012.
[2] Troop D, 5-4 Cav METL crosswalk (platoon CCT), June 2016.
[3] ADP 6-0.
[4] ADRP 7-0, **Training Units and Developing Leaders**, August 2012.

[5] Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *Army Planning and Orders Production*, January 2005.
[6] ADRP 7-0.
[7] ADRP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, May 2012.
[8] FM 34-130, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*, July 1994.

Acronym Quick-Scan

ABCT – armored brigade combat team
ADP – Army doctrinal publication
ADRP – Army doctrinal reference publication
BD – battle drill
BFV – Bradley Fighting Vehicle
CATS – Combined-Arms Training Strategies
CCT – critical collective task
CoA – course of action
Doctemp – doctrinal template
DTMS – Digital Training Management System
FM – field manual
FSC – forward-support company
HHC – headquarters and headquarters company
KCT – key collective tasks
LD – line of departure
LoA – line of advance
Logpac(k) – logistics package
MA – mission analysis
MDMP – military decision-making process
MET – mission-essential task
METL – mission-essential task list
PLT – platoon
SCT – supporting collective task
Sitrep – situation report
Sittemp – situational template
STX – situational-training exercise
TAA – tactical assembly area
TC – training circular
TLP – troop-leading procedure
Warno – warning order