

A DISCIPLINED APPROACH TO TRAINING MANAGEMENT

LTC RICHARD P. TAYLOR

An increasingly interconnected world has forced our military forces to prepare for the unknown. Evolving and adaptive threats jeopardize the security of America, its allies, and its partners — forcing the Army to expect more of its forces, often with less resources and less time for preparation. As GEN (Retired) Raymond Odierno once stated, “I can’t tell you if we’re going to be fighting on the Korean peninsula... can’t tell you if we’re going to be in Iraq or Syria fighting a war... can’t tell you if we’re going to be in Eastern Europe deterring Russia... I don’t know.”¹ One means to help mitigate such unpredictability is training management. Reinvesting in doctrinally sound training management practices will help to ensure readiness despite rapidly changing demands and financial shortfalls. U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN Mark Milley identified readiness as a key priority. He stated, “All three Army components must be ready to respond to ‘the entire range of military operations’ in an uncertain, volatile world... our number one task is readiness.”² Given this context, the Army, as the nation’s strategic land-power component and backbone of the joint force, must be disciplined and prepared. The cornerstone of this will be enabling field grade officers to train their formations to the highest standard in accordance with brigade combat team and division mission essential task lists (METL).

Unfortunately, it’s not clear that junior field grade officers possess the requisite competencies and experience to train their units at lower costs with reduced resources and under curtailed planning horizons. In a recent *Military Review* article, MAJs Paul Lushenko and David Hammerschmidt stated that it’s unclear “whether company and field grade officers, having served in regular deployments since 2001, can effectively plan, prepare, execute, and assess realistic training...”³

This article suggests that junior field grade officers and captains need to reinvest in doctrinally sound training management practices in order to better sequence and synchronize resources and units in time, space, and purpose. This can be done using three distinct methods — perfect discipline, long-range training, and short-range training. “Perfect” discipline is the means by which emerging field grade officers can enhance unit readiness with limited resources and time. A long-range training calendar helps to align intent visually and spatially. It is a doctrinally grounded framework that is refined through best practices garnered from all service components. Division and brigade-level leaders can demonstrate greater oversight and focus when determining what tasks subordinate units should train against. Finally, the incorporation of a short-range training calendar can help training managers at the battalion level determine how to conduct and resource training across a spectrum of operations.

Perfect Discipline

Perfect discipline is understanding and maintaining the highest ethical and moral standard at all times — no matter the circumstances, no matter the environment, no matter who is (or who isn’t) observing. Perfect discipline is fair, honest, just, and uncompromising. In this sense, perfect discipline is related to integrity and strength of character. These values or traits are integral to the U.S. Army ethic and are — or at least should be — as much a component of unit training management as mission-essential tasks.⁴

Leaders must employ discipline when developing their training path, regardless of whether it is preparing for an upcoming combat deployment or a Combat Training Center (CTC) rotation. Discipline is particularly important when following and understanding the company or battalion METL, developing key collective tasks (KCT), or adequately resourcing training events.⁵ These three factors frame a doctrinally sound unit-training plan.

Procedurally, strict adherence to a long-range training calendar enables commanders to clearly articulate what critical tasks subordinate units should train against. It represents a necessary but all-too-often-relegated training management tool. It also helps set the conditions for a broader impact. According to Arthur S. Collins in his book *Common Sense Training*, “the senior commander sets the tone on training in an Army organization. The training

CURRENT PLAN FOR 15-01																			
	14-03						14-04										15-01		
	Week 32	Week 33	Week 34	Week 35	Week 36	Week 37	Week 38	Week 39	Week 40	Week 41	Week 42	Week 43	Week 44	Week 45	Week 46	Week 47	Week 48	Week 49	Week 50
	05-11 MAY	12-18 MAY	19-25 MAY	26 MAY - 1 JUN	02-08 JUN	09-15 JUN	16-22 JUN	23-29 JUN	30 JUN - 06 JUL	07-13 JUL	14-20 JUL	21-27 JUL	28 JUL - 03 AUG	04-10 AUG	11-17 AUG	18-24 AUG	25-31 AUG	01-07 SEP	08-14 SEP
3rd BCT																			
CTBs																			
Land																			
Ammo																			

Intent: Provide additional predictability to the company (CO)/battalion (BN) in regards to training management specific to cycle training briefs (CTBs) at the BN/BCT levels, ammunition forecasts, and land requests.

Concept of Operation:

- Land:** currently the division training resources integration conference (TRIC) and the Hawaii Round Robin (HI RR) are 11 weeks from the next cycle beginning. The subsequent step would be to have the battalions brief their CTBs to the BCT for approval during the 2-3 weeks which would only give 8-9 weeks prior to execution. This is not optimal based of companies' briefing concept approval at T+5.
- Recommended course of action (COA):** Land conferences are conducted 13-15 weeks out or NLT 90 days prior to the upcoming cycle.
- Ammunition:** The current ammunition forecast timeline is too short and does not allow the BNs and companies to properly resource training events:

Recommended COA: The ammunition forecast should be conducted at the conclusion of the HI RR week; that is approximately 12 weeks prior to the next cycle beginning. CTBs: BN CTBs should be executed at the beginning of the cycle for the upcoming cycle brief. The BCT should remain at least one cycle in front of the battalions.

RECOMMENDED COA FOR 15-01																			
	14-03						14-04										15-01		
	Week 32	Week 33	Week 34	Week 35	Week 36	Week 37	Week 38	Week 39	Week 40	Week 41	Week 42	Week 43	Week 44	Week 45	Week 46	Week 47	Week 48	Week 49	Week 50
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3rd BCT																			
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Land																			
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Figure 1 —Example Brigade Resource Calendar

atmosphere the commander creates prevails over all the efforts of his subordinates.”⁶

Long-Range Training Management

Training management begins at the division level. Division commanders and staff must enable subordinates to prioritize competing training requirements in order for them to sufficiently meet the intent. It is also necessary to allocate adequate time for subordinate units to conduct critical tasks such as requesting materiel and resources (ammunition and land) and conducting training briefs (where the subordinate unit’s training path is approved by the brigade and division commander). Figure 1 depicts a rubric for ensuring units submit information within the properly allocated time. This is tracked and monitored through a “T-Week” concept.

The T-Week concept is a temporal framework and planning tool that outlines necessary milestones for training events. It helps ensure all significant actions necessary to execute training events are “considered and completed in a timely manner.”⁷ Figure 1 is an example brigade resource calendar that displays key milestones throughout a training cycle (quarter). The top of the figure displays a method that provides limited planning and preparation time for battalions and companies.

On the bottom of Figure 1, the chart has the brigade and division land conference convening T-18 (seven weeks prior to battalion commanders providing guidance at T-11 to company/battery/troop commanders). This also displays ammunition forecasts due to the brigade and division T-18 (nine weeks prior to the T-9 window). These dates and specific milestones are published in *The Leader’s Guide to Unit Training Management*. Company grade and field grade officers must be cognizant of these planning factors when developing company to brigade-level training events. The last important aspect on this chart is the command training brief window. Once ammunition and land are requested, the training plan must be approved by the brigade or division commander. This will enable troop leading procedures (TLPs) in accordance with the eight-step training model (Figure 2), and will provide

subordinate units and leaders predictability.⁸ As a result, leaders can properly and accurately develop a training path that is nested with their higher headquarters.

Enabling Predictability – The Long-Range Training Calendar

It is imperative that divisions and brigades plan 18-24 months in advance of current training. This will enable predictability to trickle down to the battalion and company levels — where predictability is needed most. This will allow battalions and companies to efficiently plan 12-18 months out. Similarly, a key to the planning process is obtaining and understanding the commander's intent. The commander needs to be at the center of the planning process and clearly enumerate guidance. Staff members must know the commander's key tasks and the desired end-state before they can effectively begin the planning process. The operations officer synchronizes this information on the long-range calendar. This calendar is subsequently shared with subordinate, adjacent, and higher units for additional planning considerations. A brigade long-range calendar displays higher headquarters (one and two levels up), adjacent units, land, schools, and subordinate battalions.

When planning 18-24 months out, what should a staff plan? First, the staff must be nested with its higher headquarters. The staff must identify division-level training events to include the organizational inspection program (OIP), warfighter exercises, red-cycle tasks, etc. Secondly, the staff must identify critical training events such as platoon and company live-fire exercises, Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) training/testing, leader development programs, team-building events, medical proficiency training, etc. When building and identifying these events, the staff must clearly articulate and display how the subordinates will become proficient. For example, prior to conducting a company combined arms live-fire exercise (CALFEX), each platoon will have executed a day and night live-fire exercise (LFX); or prior to a battalion 25-mile foot movement, each week would reflect the progression of mileage for each company.

Bringing it Together — Commander's Conference

A method to resolve concerns is to conduct a commander's conference where leaders develop the long-range calendar — forecasting for the next 18-24 months. If this conference was conducted at the brigade level, all battalion command teams, battalion field grade officers, brigade primary staff, aviation brigade representation, sustainment brigade representation, and division staff representation would receive guidance from the brigade commander and then begin backwards planning to develop a detailed long-range calendar.

The key for this conference is to develop the plan and allow the staff to develop the plan and then gain approval from the brigade and battalion command teams (keeping the brigade commander updated on progress). The next step is to gain approval from the assistant division commander for operations or maneuver (ADC-O/M). The ADC-O/M is overall responsible for any aspect within the division related to operations, to include training. Once the ADC-O/M approves the concept, subordinate units can begin planning. Once this training plan is approved, it is codified. It would take the battalion commander (or the brigade commander depending the type of training event) to cancel or adjust the training event. Once a unit is within the six-week window, there are no changes to the battalion short-range training calendar; however, units and leaders must remain flexible in the event of changes at the higher echelons of the Army. However, subordinate units would have a minimum of four cycles to base their planning.

Short-Range Training Management

With limited resources, any training we conduct should be "tough, realistic, and intellectually and physically challenging."⁹ This will ensure that units are adequately prepared for the rigors of combat. When establishing training events — whether field training exercises (FTXs), situational training exercises (STXs), or LFXs — they must be realistic, demanding, and challenging. If training events do not meet these criteria, our Soldiers and leaders will not develop and improve. Improvement is a constant goal — and the end state of any training should be to ensure that all leaders and Soldiers continue to enhance their skills, confidence, and capabilities.

Furthermore, when training is being executed, it is essential for leaders at all levels to be in attendance. "Commanders are responsible for training that occurs in their units. Commanders must be present, visible, engaged and fulfilling their role at training."¹⁰ Disciplined leaders ensure the training is being executed to standard: "there is no activity at any level that does not require supervision and inspection."¹¹ This adds credibility to the leader with his or her Soldiers and enhances professional development.

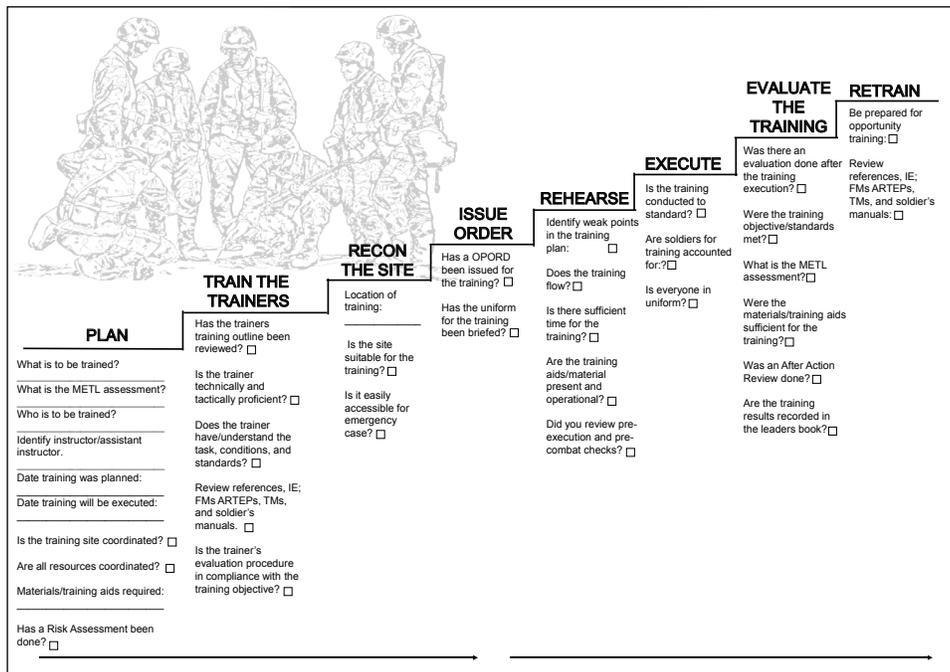


Figure 2 —Eight-Step Training Model

Critical to training initiatives is a comprehensive long-range calendar that seamlessly transitions into the short-range calendar and training schedule. The short-range calendar and training schedule is essential for battalion and company leaders; this provides predictability and is a contract between company commander and the battalion commander. *The Leader's Guide to Unit Training Management* effectively lays out guidelines for company grade and field grade officers to follow:

- Week T-8:** Execute reconnaissance and lock in resources
- Week T-7:** Publish operation order (OPORD) for training event
- Week T-6:** Lock in training; publish training schedules
- Week T-5:** Complete tactical plan and supporting products
- Week T-4:** Conduct certifications and complete prerequisite training
- Week T-3:** Conduct rehearsals
- Week T-2:** Finalize administrative support requirements and conduct opposing force (OPFOR) rehearsal
- Week T-1:** Draw equipment and supplies and execute subordinate rehearsals and checks
- T-Week:** Execute training
- Week T+1:** Recover, conduct final after action reviews (AARs), and assess training¹²

Commanders must properly resource their training events. At the battalion and equivalent levels, along with the weekly battalion training meeting, they will run a weekly battalion training resource meeting chaired by the battalion executive officer (XO) and operations officer. This meeting ensures that training events are properly resourced in all classes of supply and reviews the logistics plan; it is also an excellent opportunity to develop junior officers. Figure 3 is an example slide from a battalion resource meeting. This meeting consists of the company XO, battalion land NCO, battalion ammunition NCO, S3 Air, battalion calendar officer, medical platoon leader, battalion maintenance officer (BMO), and distribution platoon leader. The key outputs of this meeting are identifying and synchronizing when vehicles are dropping off ammunition, fuel, or personnel; when is the range going live; what is the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) plan; and so forth. These are all imperative when executing training management and all require discipline and stern leadership when planning.

Providing Balance — The P-Week Battle Rhythm

Integral to short and long-range training management is balance — ensuring that subordinate echelons are not training too much, not adequately preparing for training events, or are not recovering properly. A technique to help provide such balance is the P-Week Battle Rhythm. The P-Week Battle Rhythm allows commanders and

							
TW 39	MON - 24 JUN	TUE - 25 JUN	WED - 26 JUN	THU - 27 JUN	FRI - 28 JUN	SAT - 29 JUN	SUN - 30 JUN
EVENT	Qualification EIB	Qualification EIB		AASLT/ Land Navigation			
LAND	CTF Z/Q (EIB)	CTF Z/Q (EIB)		MAF PZ (1000-1015) ER 3A/3B Lightening LZ	FSE SAVT		
	QTR2 MRF (WT)	QTR2 MRF (WT)					
	*CFFT	*CFFT	*CFFT				
CLI Water Food Latrines	MRE	MRE		MRE			
CL V (DODIC/ AMT)	A059: 5,170						
	A059: 5,170						
CL V Drop-off Pickup	DROP: 0630 (0745)						
	DROP: 0700 (0800)						
TRANS Drop-off Pickup	1x HMMWV	1x HMMWV		1x HMMWV			
MED	2x FLA	2x FLA		1x FLA			

AASLT - air assault; CFFT - call-for-fire trainer; CTF - collective training facility; EIB - Expert Infantryman Badge; FLA - front-line ambulance; FSE - fire support element; HMMWV - high mobility, multipurpose wheeled vehicle; MRE - Meal, Ready to Eat; MRF - modified record fire; SAVT - supporting arms virtual trainer

Figure 3 —Example Slide from Battalion Resource Meeting

subordinates to execute training requirements under the crawl-walk-run methodology. This helps to identify field or range preparation weeks, field or training density weeks, and field recovery weeks. The P-Week Battle Rhythm follows:

- P1:** Training density — LFX, FTX, STX, CTC rotations, overnight training
- P2:** Recovery — consists of Soldier, vehicle, and equipment recovery
- P3:** Preparation, leader development, marksmanship training, no overnight training
- P4:** Block leave

The benefit of the P-Week Battle Rhythm is not only predictability for the Soldiers, but it also allows families to know when their spouses will be training. In addition, a commander can conduct detailed analysis verifying the extent to which units are training, recovering, and preparing for training. This analysis ties into the overall readiness of the unit.

End State

Long-range and short-range training management are key to ensuring the success and readiness of our Army. We must build training plans that are nested with our higher headquarters, which follow current doctrine, and that challenge our leaders and Soldiers. As an Army, we have the necessary tools and experience to maintain and completely master training management. To ensure this happens, leaders must properly train, mentor, and develop captains on training management. Concomitantly, senior leaders must ensure that field grade officers are doctrinally proficient in training management.

“Traditionally, field grade officers have been expected to maintain the quality of training. Lieutenant colonels and colonels are the training managers and teachers at battalion, brigade, or group levels. They set the standards and manage the resources and facilities. They supervise and guide the efforts of the company, troop, and battery commanders. Above all, they teach lieutenants and captains how to train. Field grade officers must lead the way in establishing the high training standards required in peacetime so that the Army is ready for any national crisis.”¹³

Leaders can ensure this by conducting leader professional development forums and following doctrine at all levels.

As training events are being reduced due to cost restrictions, it is ever more apparent that long-range and short-range training management are critical to our formations. Once units are identified for a CTC rotation, an exportable combat training center (XCTC), or multi-echelon integrated brigade training (MIBT), the staff officers and NCOs must be able to build a comprehensive training path within the commander's intent that fully prepares the unit for the culminating event and ultimately mission success.

Notes

¹ GEN Raymond Odierno quoted in J.D. Leipold's "Uncertainty Means Army must be Prepared for Multiple Threats," U.S. Army website (23 January 2015), http://www.army.mil/article/141620/Uncertainty_means_Army_must_be_prepared_for_multiple_threats.

² GEN Mark Milley quoted in Michelle Tan's "Milley: Readiness Helps Army Face Uncertain Future," *Army Times* (13 October 2014), <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2014/10/13/milley-readiness-helps-army-face-uncertain-future/17221505/>.

³ CPT Paul Lushenko and MAJ David Hammerschmidt, "Back to the Future: Managing Training to Win in a Complex World," *Military Review* (January-February 2015): 52.

⁴ Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-0, *The Army Profession* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 2015) 2-2.

⁵ *The Leader's Guide to Unit Training Management*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 2013) 24.

⁶ Arthur S. Collins, *Common Sense Training* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1977), 38.

⁷ *Ibid*, 67.

⁸ The eight-step training model provides a guide for leaders at the brigade-level or lower to align resources to requirements as well as to sequence and synchronize training. The steps consist of plan the training, train/certify leaders, conduct a reconnaissance, issue an order, rehearse, execute, conduct an after action review, and retrain.

⁹ *The Leader's Guide to Unit Training Management*, 131.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 128.

¹¹ Collins, 153.

¹² *The Leader's Guide to Unit Training Management*, 68.

¹³ Collins, 156.

LTC Richard P. Taylor is currently serving as the executive officer to the commanding general of the NATO Special Operations Component Command - Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force - Afghanistan (NSOCC-A/SOJTF-A).

Editor's Note: The author included a few additional example training calendars which we were unable to include. If you are interested in viewing the additional calendars, email us at usarmy.benning.tradoc.mbx.infantry-magazine@mail.mil.