

# The Training and Evaluation Plan

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How do you plan training at platoon and company level? Do you give your subordinates guidance on which collective, leader, and individual tasks they're to train on? Do you limit them to one or two critical "high-payoff" tasks, or let them choose tasks to train on from the unit's mission essential task list (METL)? Do you have a focus and an evaluation plan for your training? Are the noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and the executive officer (XO) involved in the planning process?

If you have trouble answering these questions, a planning aid is available to help you plan all of your collective training. The Training and Evaluation Plan (TEP) provides a process for planning collective training from platoon through battalion level. Beginning with leader training (which should be done before any collective training), the TEP is a formal, operation-order type of document designed to give you a training focus (the terminal training objective). It also includes and identifies the evaluation, concept of support, and after-action review (AAR) plans for the training.

It is imperative that we properly plan all of our training. Given today's limited resources, shrinking budgets, and force structure, we must prepare ourselves and our soldiers to meet numerous contingencies around the globe. Normally, an infantry battalion working within the routine of a training, mission, and support cycle is given only six weeks each quarter to accomplish the task of preparing for combat operations. The way we use this precious time is critical to our combat readiness.

The TEP is derived from the old Battalion Training Management System. Today's newer training doctrine (Field Manual 25-101, *Battle-Focused Training*) does not outline a process for plan-

ning collective training, but it does outline a system of "pre-execution checks" to be conducted during the six weeks before the training.

The process of preparing a training and evaluation plan begins upon receipt of the quarterly training guidance. First, the dates available for collective task training are identified. Then the training officers and noncommissioned officers develop training concepts during platoon and company training meetings. This should be done at T - 7 or T - 8 ("T" being the current training week). At T - 6, the TEP is in its final draft ready for approval by the company and battalion commanders.

The TEP is a great planning aid and also an excellent way to train subordinate leaders on the fundamentals of training management. Before teaching your leaders how to prepare a TEP, have them read Chapter 3 (Mission Outlines) of ARTEP 7-8, *Mission Training Plan for the Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*, or 7-10 MTP, *Mission Training Plan for the Infantry Rifle Company*. The mission "trees" in this chapter

outline the relationship between METL, collective, and individual tasks and the way these tasks support one another. Additionally, leaders should become familiar with the concept of "high-payoff" tasks; these are the collective tasks found in numerous mission trees. (The collective task *Move Tactically*, for example, is found under every tested task in Chapter 3 of ARTEP 7-10 MTP.)

## The TEP Diagram

The TEP begins with identifying the task you plan to accomplish, the *conditions* under which the task will be trained (day, night, blank fire, live fire), and the measurable *standards* that are to be achieved. The *terminal training objective* identifies the one or two tasks a unit will focus on and complete during the training period. If you are trying to achieve trained status on a specific task or event, the terminal training objective should outline it. Looking at this objective in a different perspective, it is the desired "end state" upon completion of training. Identifying the terminal training objective is the most difficult and time-consuming step in developing the TEP. But it assigns a definite focus, forcing a unit to do less, but do it better.

The next step is to determine which collective, leader, and individual tasks to train on. Once this is done, identify which of these tasks will be or can be trained on before the training. For example, because of time constraints, the leader may not have enough time to train on all the tasks he would like to include, and it is imperative to determine which tasks are critical to unit success during the upcoming training exercise. If leader training is to work, it must be planned, resourced, and put on the training schedule. Assign a subordinate

### SQUAD LEVEL TEP OUTLINE

- I. Terminal training objective (TTO)
  - A. Fire team TTO
  - B. Individual soldier TTO
- II. Intermediate training objectives
  - A. Collective tasks
  - B. Leader tasks
  - C. Individual tasks
- III. Tasks to be trained before collective training
  - A. Hand grenade skills
  - B. MOUT and team level skills
  - C. Leader evaluation
- IV. Tasks to be evaluated during training
- V. Time schedule
- VI. Plan for retraining
- VII. After-action review plan
- VIII. Opportunity training
- IX. Concept of support
- X. OPFOR plan
- XI. Safety

leader to teach it, make it performance-oriented, and put the name of the leader assigned to teach each class on the training schedule. Assigning "ownership" of this process helps ensure that the class will be taught professionally.

The next step involves picking the most critical individual, leader, or collective tasks you will evaluate. The evaluators will normally be the platoon leaders and sergeants, the first sergeant, or the company commander. Time is usually tight during exercises once you consider planning for AARs and retraining. Use caution in determining how many tasks you choose to evaluate.

### **The TEP and Company Leaders**

Using the TEP properly allows a unit to synchronize the efforts of all company leaders. If he desires, the company commander can develop the company TEP for all company training. During the company training meeting, the TEP is put together. At T - 7 or T - 8, the commander gathers input from his platoon and section leaders on what collective tasks they have identified as needing training. From this input, the commander determines the collective tasks that are critical to accomplish during the upcoming training. Next, the commander and first sergeant outline which critical individual tasks will be trained on.

**The First Sergeant and NCOs.** The first sergeant determines the individual tasks that support the collective tasks on which the commander chooses to focus. The first sergeant's decision is based upon the recommendations from his platoon and section sergeants who gather their input from their NCOs during platoon training meetings.

If this interaction between the platoon sergeants and their NCOs is to work, all NCOs must be familiar with the basics of the mission trees in ARTEPs 7-8 and 7-10, the common task training manual, the Soldier's Manual, and FM 25-101. This familiarization can be accomplished by having the first sergeant and the senior NCOs in the company use their expertise and knowledge to teach NCO professional development classes on the various in-

dividual and collective tasks. This will help the NCOs determine the tasks in which they are deficient. In addition, the first sergeant, with advice from his platoon sergeants, outlines which tasks are to be evaluated during training, and this should be his focus when he is out checking training.

**The Platoon Leaders.** The platoon leaders normally develop most of the TEPs with the assistance of their platoon sergeants and squad leaders. Although some training management is taught during the Infantry Officer Basic Course, many lieutenants arrive in their units unprepared to plan and execute a sound training plan. This lack of knowledge could be the reason some platoons drop below the "band of excellence" between collective training periods. The platoon leader is often confused about what the training should include and how to go about preparing to execute the training. This problem is compounded if he does not receive quarterly training guidance from the company commander. A platoon leader who can plan training and communicate how he wants it executed will be much more successful early in his tenure.

Preparing a TEP will force a platoon leader to read and understand the manuals of his trade. Additionally, he will begin to learn how important planning is and how much time it can actually take. Some lieutenants may already understand the relationship they are supposed to foster with their NCOs, but if not, working and designing a TEP will require them to seek the advice of their platoon sergeants and squad leaders. This interchange will produce informed squad and team leaders, and ownership of training is accomplished; once leaders have written input into any training, they feel obligated to execute it to a higher degree.

**The Executive Officer.** The most under-rated person to play a part in the company training plan is the XO. If all of this planned training is not resourced properly, the plan will fail and the process of the TEP will not function.

A general rule to follow is never to

plan training that is not resourced. Once T - 6 arrives and the company commander submits his training schedules to the battalion commander and S-3 for signatures, all training for T - 6 should have been resourced.

The TEP helps the resourcing process by having the platoon leaders identify which assets they need to accomplish their training. The company XO participates in the training process by recommending amounts and types of resources. Completing the TEP and giving it to the XO prepares him to request these resources. These requests are normally turned in at the weekly battalion resource meetings.

Why do you need to plan training in such detail? Many leaders may choose to sidestep this process, considering planning too awkward or too rigid, or a waste of time, because "things change." But planning is the most important part of the cyclic training process, next to conducting proper AARs. If the TEP process is too formal for you, then tailor it to fit the needs of your unit. For example, I recommend that you at least publish the task, conditions, and standards. It's okay to give subordinate leaders autonomy, but you must still provide clear guidance and the standards to be attained.

The Training and Evaluation Plan is one of many tools company-level leaders can use to plan and execute training. Once leaders learn the process of formulating a TEP, the process becomes almost a habit. The payoff is twofold: Leaders actually learn to apply training management doctrine, and they prepare and execute excellent training for their soldiers.

Today, every hour of training counts. We must be ready to execute our missions across the globe, sometimes with limited notice, and the TEP is a tool that can help us accomplish this task.

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