



TRAINING ADAPTIVE LEADERS FOR FULL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS: ***AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH***

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“The operational environment, threat, and Army operational concepts have changed. The Army must be a full spectrum capable force. Therefore, Soldiers and leaders need to adapt to new concepts and think about how the Army can train more wisely, efficiently, and effectively.”

— Draft FM 7-0, June 2008

The Army links its operational concept to its training doctrine by applying the tenets of battle and mission command to the training process. Employing these tenets to develop and execute training as we would combat or support operations allows us to train as we fight. This training methodology develops Soldiers, leaders and units to conduct full spectrum operations in an era of persistent conflict, but requires from trainers a new mindset and training aim point. Fort Benning and others in the Initial Entry Training (IET) community have used the mindset and aim point to develop *outcomes*-based training that provides these adaptive Soldiers and leaders, yet many of our institutional processes continue to impede our efforts and we must reform these processes if we are to optimize our training outcomes.

During the Cold War, we faced a single threat and our mindset focused on developing selected Soldier, leader and unit competencies to defeat it. Our focus was on major combat operations as we believed these task capabilities were easily transferable to achieve success in low intensity combat or peacekeeping missions. In the IET community centralized management valued efficiency and throughput and feared failure at lower levels. This created a virtual assembly line of directed inputs per each program of instruction (POI) designed to produce a

Soldier, tank crewman, or fire team member. As a result, our training methodology became *process* driven vice *outcome* oriented. This stifled initiative among IET leaders, stagnated the POI and instructional techniques, limited resource changes and empowered managers who have no training responsibilities.

Today, the threats and requirements are different. Those same Soldiers and crews are now required to think on their own and cannot rely on detailed staff planning or continuous leader supervision at multiple levels during task execution. The old process discouraged Soldiers and leaders from thinking and precluded them from demonstrating initiative, but to triangulate the requirements of today’s full spectrum operations they must know *how* to think, and not *what* to think, and they must learn to demonstrate initiative at every level. This must occur in training or we cannot sustain it in combat where they are no longer just tank crewmen or fire team members, but also ambassadors on patrol each day charged with making instant life or death decisions, some with strategic consequences.

Our mindset has to change to empower subordinates to take appropriate actions in this environment, and our aim point must shift commensurately so that we prepare them for the proper tasks and transitions they face as they conduct full spectrum operations during this era of persistent conflict. Battle and mission command provide the means to achieve this by requiring commanders to understand what outcome the training needs to accomplish before visualizing, describing or directing how to conduct it. They must know and be responsible for the outcome and need the flexibility to determine how to best achieve it.

Our combat-experienced leaders at Fort Benning are well aware of the requirement to think and act independently using battle and mission command in combat, so we have empowered them to develop and conduct training using these tools. The basic combat training proponent recognized the value of this approach and developed a holistic set of outcomes every Soldier must possess upon graduation. These outcomes, along with specific performance measures, help leaders plan, prepare, execute, and assess training and have been approved for use across the U.S. Army Accessions Command.

IET Outcomes

Every Soldier:

- * Is a proud member of the team possessing the character and commitment to live the Army Values and Warrior Ethos.
- * Is confident, adaptable, mentally agile, and accountable for own actions.
- * Is physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally ready to fight as a ground combatant.
- * Is a master of critical combat skills and proficient in basic Soldier skills in all environments.
- * Is self-disciplined, willing, and an adaptive thinker, capable of solving problems commensurate with position and experience.

These characteristics and critical combat skills are what Soldiers require to succeed in combat. These outcomes guide commanders, empowered by the tenets of battle and mission command authority, in developing and executing training. They understand, visualize and then describe the outcome they seek in accordance with battle command. They direct, lead and assess using the authority and flexibility provided



Photos by Cheryl Rodewig, *The Bayonet*

Basic trainees at Fort Benning, Ga., move from compound to compound during a field exercise known as the Final 48.

by mission command. Our training structures must support this or we cannot provide the Army with the Soldiers and leaders required in this era of persistent conflict.

Previously POIs had us measuring how many hours of land navigation a Soldier received instead of measuring how well he navigates. Using the outcomes-based approach to training, we focus on the latter until the Soldier knows and understands the why behind the task so he can execute without supervision. He must know why to employ the individual *low crawl* movement technique on his own in certain combat situations vice having to be told to do so. Outcomes-based training achieves this and fosters initiative in our leaders who develop and execute the training. The outcomes and leader initiatives have revolutionized our training.

Areas of Innovation in the IET Community

The IET community implemented this outcomes-based approach last year led by Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort

Benning. It soon spread to our other IET brigades due to its success and the mission command philosophy at Fort Benning. By empowering leaders to be responsible for training outcomes, they revamped POIs, instructional venues and techniques, and support structures. This improved training realism and support on the one hand and training instruction and leader development on the other. Applying battle and mission command to develop the proper outcomes in training has fostered the following key initiatives.

Range Realism — Over 90 percent of our drill sergeants have combat experience and wanted our training and ranges to replicate the environment the Soldiers would face in combat. We improved our buddy team live-fire ranges, convoy live-fire ranges and military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) facilities to meet their expectations. To add realism we replaced the sandbag “moguls” with realistic battlefield clutter like cars, barricades, rubble and walls. We added gated courtyards and shoot houses to make the simulation even more real for the Soldiers.

Drill sergeants no longer directed the individual and buddy team movements on live-fire exercises (LFXs), but allowed Soldiers the opportunity to select and demonstrate the proper movement techniques and firing positions as they advanced through the battlefield. Soldiers on the convoy LFX were required to react to an improvised explosive device (IED) and assault an objective. They had to select appropriate cover and move properly in the urban environment. MOUT and field training exercises (FTXs) matched the complex environments they would face in combat, including an IED lane that featured the latest array of enemy tactics and friendly avoidance and defeat mechanisms.

Tactical Realism — We further enhanced IET training by linking range improvements to the tactical processes we employ on the battlefield. All training events became opportunities to operate in a simulated combat environment. At the inception of basic combat training, company commanders provided the Soldiers a five-paragraph operations order that described the skills they would need to defeat the enemy on the realistic ranges we had created. Subsequently we issued the Soldiers their individual weapons and began making them accountable for the weapon and their actions.

During training we provided them regular intelligence updates as they transitioned from phase to phase. The training intensity and complexities increased as the notional enemy grew closer to our forward operating base. Training events became combat missions that began with an operations order and required pre-combat checks and inspections, subordinate operations orders and back briefs, rehearsals, execution, and a quality after action review (AAR). We conducted each event with as much tactical focus as possible to increase the realism of the simulation and the retention of the material. Finally, we deployed to a tactical training base to counter the enemy’s advance into our area and conducted full spectrum operations to defeat him.

Cultural Awareness Training — In addition to the tactical training, we instituted cultural awareness training using battle labs with computer work stations designed to immerse Soldiers rapidly into the environment they will face in combat. The training consists of threat and cultural awareness, situational awareness, actionable intelligence, IED training, and combat patrolling.

The computers run software modules that place the Soldiers in a

virtual environment where they learn to identify commander's critical information requirements (CCIR), report and react to threats including IEDs, conduct greetings or tactical questioning, and take other appropriate action. Each Soldier and leader gains a foundation of knowledge regarding Middle Eastern history and culture and language. Soldiers learn 20 common phrases and greetings and recognition of Arabic numerals to detect suspicious license plates. They refine their reporting and patrolling techniques during FTXs. All of this training enhances their skills and improves their ability to act, react, and respond appropriately in the operating environment.

Marksmanship Training — We implemented new marksmanship instruction to better prepare Soldiers to effectively operate their weapons in combat. Battlefield conditions require confident, competent, and accountable Soldiers and leaders who can think and solve problems, but we found most of our NCOs and officers themselves were not confident or competent with the weapons. To improve their skills, the Asymmetric Warfare Group provided instructors who taught us to focus on why the system worked a particular way and how to master it. The new program now rests on leaders who truly know the material, operate with fewer

restrictions, and want to teach their Soldiers.

Soldiers learn why things work and how to apply the fundamentals to different situations. Training incorporates conditions and lessons from current combat operations, begins in a relaxed environment and consists of guided discovery so Soldiers work things out for themselves. We increase the difficulty and stress as they progress and require Soldiers to combine thinking and decision making with shooting. The marksmanship instruction now builds individual accountability, discipline, safety, and problem solving; and the methodology has been applied to other training tasks to improve them.

New Combat Qualification Tables — We are also developing new combat qualification tables to better replicate the actions Soldiers are required to perform in combat. The new standards require Soldiers to engage targets in series and some targets will not "die" unless hit multiple times. Which targets require multiple hits will vary per iteration, so Soldiers can no longer memorize the sequencing of the qualification tables. The test will also require multiple firing positions, magazine changes, forced malfunctions, distances that match combat conditions, and decision making by the Soldiers.

Pilot tests of the new qualification table

have only increased scores slightly, but less tangible gains are significant. These include increased confidence with weapons applications in tactical scenarios, more precision in every engagement, very few engagements of "don't shoot" targets such as civilians on the battlefield, and widespread use of initiative and judgment in positioning and movement. Our safety record has improved significantly with Soldiers committing far fewer dangerous actions involving fratricide or negligent discharges.

Training Resources — To resource our commanders we funded the range improvements, placed night observation devices and close combat optics in the hands of the Soldiers, and exposed them to realistic conditions while wearing the Camelbak hydration system and Interceptor body armor. We also increased realism by using quality simunitions such as the Close Combat Mission Capability Kit (CCMCK). This unit training munitions system provides Soldiers a realistic simulation in close quarters battle and blank fire situations to reduce stoppage and malfunctions. We introduced simulations like the laser marksmanship training system and VICE trainers to rapidly improve their shooting and patrolling capabilities.

Nutrition — If you want Soldiers to train like professionals and perform like champions, then you have to fuel them so they can perform at their best. At Fort Benning we treat every Soldier like an athlete and feed him appropriately. This enables them to lose weight properly and increase strength regularly. In an agreement with the Army Nutrition Center, Fort Benning attached the military nutritionist from the post hospital to the IET reception battalion. This allowed us to proactively impact all Soldiers by providing them nutrition training, revising menus in the dining facilities (DFACs), and providing sustainment training.

This instruction provided basic education on the food groups and proper nutrition techniques required to maximize fitness. In our DFACs we removed fried foods, replaced white with wheat bread, replaced pork-sausage and pork-bacon with turkey, and cut up the fruit to make it more accessible to Soldiers who are rushed. We also added dark greens to our salads to



A basic trainee at Fort Benning scans the area before exiting a building.

increase iron consumption, replaced soft drinks with sports drinks and calcium-enriched fruit juices, and eliminated whole milk by serving skim. A marking system warned Soldiers on which foods were high in fats and guided them to those high in protein and complex carbohydrates. We provided an evening snack and another prior to morning physical training to improve rest and performance. Soldiers lost more weight and waistline, increased their energy levels and PT scores by nearly 100 percent, and reduced illnesses while improving their lifestyle habits.

Training Instruction — These initiatives have developed our drill sergeants to be more effective trainers and leaders. This is critical as most are going back to combat soon and must be fully prepared to assume leadership duties upon arrival. We conducted cadre training and certification to prepare them by covering administrative tasks such as range and rappel tower certification and tactical tasks like battle drills, combat lifesaver, combatives, and marksmanship training. This made the leaders more prepared to provide appropriate instruction to the Soldiers, made the instruction more relevant, and better prepared the Soldiers and leaders for combat.

We now have Soldiers and leaders who have experienced the realism they will face in combat. They are more familiar with the culture and language, can effectively operate their weapons with confidence and accountability, have demonstrated competence against a realistic combat qualification standard, are resourced better, and eat properly. We also have leaders who know how to train. These program revisions have been a huge success, yet institutional inertia hinders our efforts.

Institutional Responses

Fort Benning empowered its leaders with battle and mission command authority to train Soldiers who will perform more effectively upon deployment. Regrettably, many of TRADOC's training processes have not kept pace with their needs and instead rely on outmoded POIs and training support packages (TSPs) written years ago. These told our leaders what and how long to train using specific resources, believing that would still produce a well-trained Soldier for today's conflict. Many of the tasks do not match combat requirements as our leaders perceive them today; but deviations from this script remain centrally managed by those who lack responsibility for the outcome but retain the authority to direct training of less than optimal relevance. Our processes for changing this are slow and cumbersome, often making it more tempting to ignore them than to address the problem.

This out-of-touch system is deeply entrenched among mid-level training and resource managers, some still fighting and training for the last war. The processes still in place provide them the set metrics they need to direct and budget training. This enables them to allocate resources efficiently and plan and program effectively. These resource managers are comfortable and find difficulty in planning, programming, or resourcing the outcomes-based initiatives, as they vary too dramatically among commanders and units.

Fort Benning battled these processes and succeeded in neutralizing many of them by removing POI and range constraints on leaders. We provided commanders license to modify POIs that are inconsistent with our required outcomes. We rewrote those

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requiring change and substituted lesson plans for the cumbersome TSPs. We submitted these changes last year, but are still awaiting their approval. Likewise, just over a year ago our range regulations still required drill sergeants to use cleaning rods to clear Soldiers' weapons coming on and off our ranges. These same regulations required Soldiers to carry weapons oriented up and down range, yet in combat they had no such procedures or constraints. It is curious we would use them in training, especially since the average advanced individual training (AIT) graduate sees combat less than three months after graduation.

When we tried to change these we were initially admonished to not confuse training with combat, but combat is exactly what training must replicate to achieve the outcomes we require. We cannot allow rules developed in a different era to continue to impede the development our Soldiers and leaders require now during the global war on terrorism. Our warriors must face complex situations in training and be made accountable for their actions now.

The same holds true for our leaders, yet many of our processes prevent them from achieving the same level of confidence and accountability. For example, the IET marksmanship POI calls for set amounts of ammunition per Soldier per period of instruction. If a leader wants to vary the amount, the institution is not afforded the flexibility to accommodate that. These types of impediments prevent us from properly developing our leaders to manage training and training resources, limit their initiative, and will erode the quality of our leaders and Soldier skills if not corrected. The battlefield requires well-trained and properly prepared Soldiers and leaders, and our training processes and rule-laden procedures are failing both.

Recommended Changes

We need to follow our new doctrine and shift our mindset and training aim point by fully implementing the outcomes-based approach to develop the Soldiers and leaders we require in conducting full spectrum operations. Commanders and other leaders are accountable for producing in training those outcomes that will yield success in combat, so we must empower them to use their initiative to plan, resource and conduct the training in a decentralized manner. We should do away with structures and processes that impede this by taking the following actions.

Allow Trainers to Exercise Battle and Mission Command — We must empower our leaders to plan and execute outcomes-based training using the tenets of battle and mission command authority. This will improve the training and develop the leaders. Battle command requires leaders to understand the intended outcomes as they visualize training alternatives; mission command empowers them to make choices and direct and lead consistent with the intent. Using these to develop and execute training decentralizes execution consistent with combat conditions and helps develop agile leaders and organizations at every level.

Training time is limited, so conducting multi-echelon training in

this manner makes perfect sense, but we cannot accomplish this using the centrally managed training processes currently in existence. We have seen the vast improvements the outcomes-based approach provides to training and leader development; we must continue to apply it using the tenets of battle and mission command.

Restructure POIs and Approval Processes — We must restructure our POIs to reflect the outcomes-based approach to training. These outcomes will become broad, centralized statements of intent. We must replace the cumbersome, centrally managed bureaucracy that now approves all training changes with more mission-oriented command authority at all levels. This will decentralize the execution of intent and build the initiative and leader skills we require. We must have a POI and lesson plan approval process that is flexible and responsive to the pace and initiative of subordinate commanders. Instead of providing them a rigid set of inputs to follow in training we must foster their development by empowering them to do the same things in training that we expect of them in combat — namely to think on their own and meet the intent within resource constraints.

Each ATC should be empowered to meet outcomes as they determine, and responsible commanders can back brief USAAC to ensure that they remain within the intent. The refined POIs and lesson plans we developed at Fort Benning have more than helped us meet the outcomes we identified as necessary. Without implementing such methods we risk losing a generation of leaders who know what it takes to win in combat. These leaders are now responsible for training the next generation of Soldiers and leaders to be flexible, agile, and fully prepared to meet the conflict requirements of full spectrum operations. If we fail to empower them by using outcomes to guide training, the impact will be irrevocably detrimental to our Army and maybe to our Nation.

Enable Flexible Resourcing — Outcomes-based training requires a more flexible resourcing system. Currently the TRADOC resourcing system is still centrally managed and insufficiently responsive to the decentralized requirements for battle and mission command oriented trainers to



A basic trainee at Fort Benning pulls security from a second floor balcony during an urban operations training exercise.

develop and implement outcomes-based training at all of our training bases. We must train as we will fight, yet our centrally managed resource process hampers our efforts to achieve this. We must train to sustain, yet our equipment needs must be aggregated and validated at higher echelons. We need the resources now, not in six months when our well-intentioned but risk adverse resource managers may finally provide them.

We must enable flexible and responsive resourcing to meet our training initiatives. These begin with resource managers who move away from measuring every hour of training or bullet fired to mission command resource sets that finally afford subordinate commanders the flexibility they require to experiment and innovate. There is risk in this process, but it can be managed through careful application of the reasonable resource training parameters our commanders already employ when conducting combat missions. They can accomplish the outcome by using a lesson plan that has its own resourcing parameters, not those directed by a centralized management that lacks responsibility for the outcome.

Realign Responsibility and Authority to the Commanders — In operational units commanders train their units. They are

responsible for the training and are accountable for the outcome or readiness of the unit. In TRADOC the training is not so complex that we must alter this alignment of responsibility and authority. We do not need committees of experts to develop the plans or train our Soldiers while we hold our drill sergeants accountable for the results at graduation. We must empower our cadre to plan, prepare and execute the training IAW the outcomes-based mindset and aim point set forth in our training doctrine, and they will deliver the results that we — and the Army — need. We have already implemented this change at Fort Benning, and our growing list of initiatives validates its utility.

Conclusion

The Army has made significant strides in improving our operations and training doctrine. The training doctrine is derived from our operations and requires a new mindset and training aim point. Initiatives undertaken at Fort Benning in the IET community achieve the requirements our doctrine requires by using outcomes-based training to provide combatant commanders the Soldiers and leaders they need to win on a battlefield that demands full spectrum capabilities. We must eliminate those institutional processes that limit commanders from exercising battle and mission command in outcomes-based training, or we will fail to produce the confident, competent and accountable Soldiers and leaders that today's full-spectrum operations demand. We must allow trainers to exercise battle and mission command authority, restructure our POIs and the processes that control them, provide more flexible resourcing, and realign responsibility and authority. If we do, we can deliver the outcomes commanders require when conducting full spectrum operations in this era of persistent conflict.

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