

COLLECTIVE TRAINING & READINESS FOR THE FIGHT

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The decisive action (DA) construct is characterized by offense, defense, stability, and defense support to civilian authorities (DSCA). The Army core competencies in DA are wide area security (WAS) and combined arms maneuver (CAM). The WAS mission subset of counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan has occupied the attention of the Army for the last 14 years. For aviation formations, these missions are conducted at the team and occasionally platoon level with at least battalion level mission command. However, Army doctrine demands the capability to operate against a peer enemy and win. Such a competent

and capable opponent is not only deterred and shaped but ultimately defeated in the CAM mission sets.

Combined arms maneuver is a significant departure from the majority of the operations of the last 14 years. Combined arms maneuver demands that leaders know how to simultaneously synchronize fires with maneuver while operating across the battlefield. Leaders can anticipate the possibility of performing both WAS and CAM in a single mission. This is characterized by platoon, company, and battalion maneuver with brigade mission command. Units gain CAM and

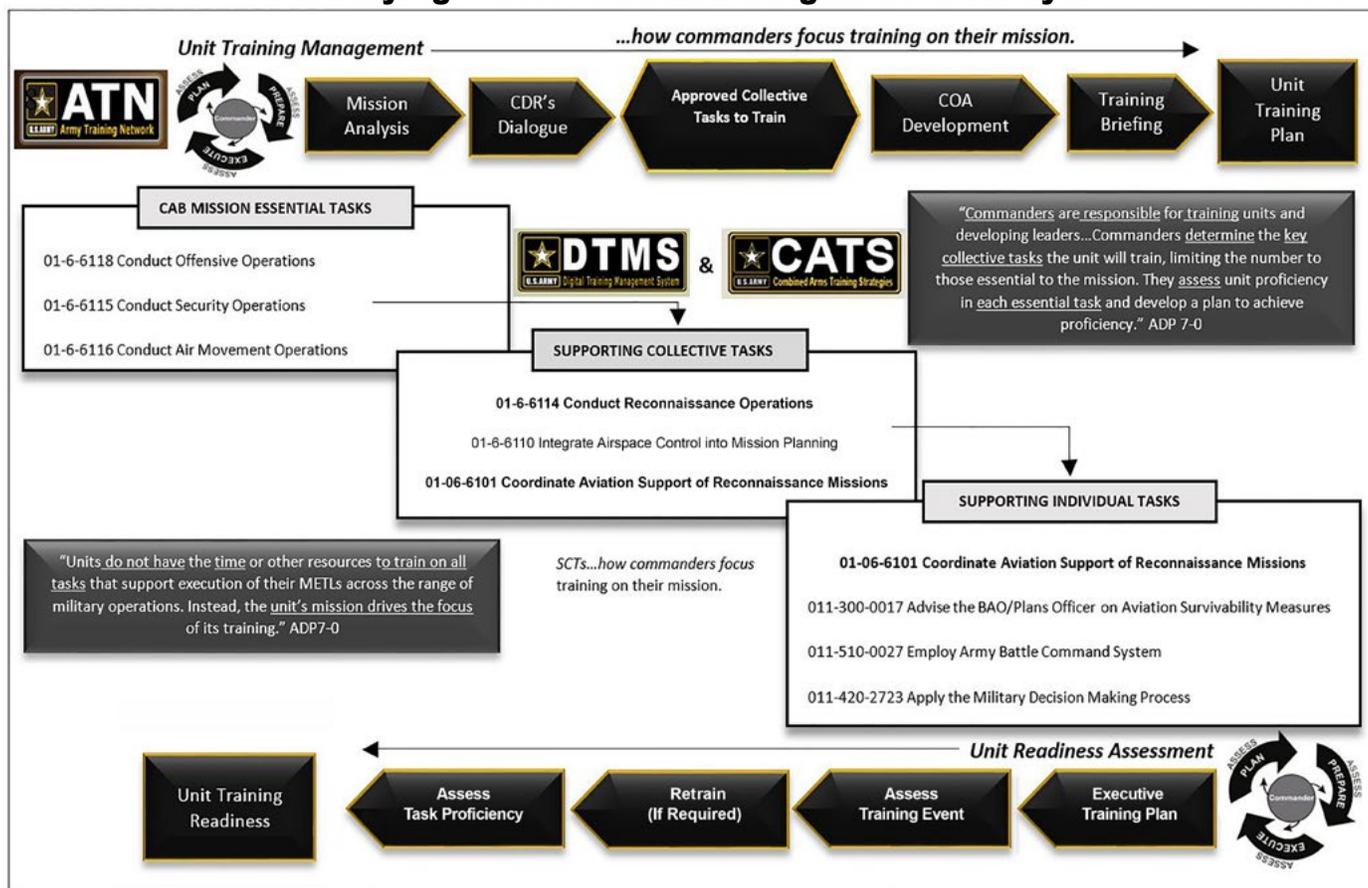
WAS core competencies through precise, tough, and realistic collective training.

Collective training is the bedrock of producing readiness to fight in DA. Collective training is first and foremost about a unit's ability to close with and destroy enemy formations as part of a larger operation. The ability to train at the collective level is built on a solid base of individual skills and tasks. While collective training follows individual training, it is not the natural result of trained individuals. Readiness builds from individual to the collective levels at the platoon, company, and battalion.

The Military Decision Making Process in Unit Training Management

Key Inputs	Steps	Key Outputs
Mission from higher commander	Step 1 Receipt of Mission	Commander's initial guidance for training
Commander's initial training guidance	Step 2 Mission Analysis	Warning Order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed key collective tasks (KCT) and assessments Unique/scarcely resources Training risk Training readiness issues
Concurrence for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved (KCT) Unique/scarcely resources Training risk Training readiness issues 	Step 3 Course of Action (COA) Development	Commander's Dialogue Training events that train the KCT
Several viable COAs	Step 4 COA Analysis	Narrow viable COAs to those 2-3 that most effectively train the unit in the time and with the resources available
2-3 viable COAs	Step 5 COA Comparison	Unit commander selects most viable, supportable COA to brief higher commander
Unit commander selected COA	Step 6 COA Approval (Training Briefing)	Warning order COA approved by higher commander
COA becomes Unit Training Plan (UTP)	Step 7 Orders Production, Dissemination and Transition	UTP operations order (OPORD) communicated to higher and subordinate UTP OPORD

Identifying Tasks to Train During Mission Analysis



Conversely this same readiness or competency erodes from "the" collective to "the" individual, hence leaders must never stop training their units on the basics of combat.

Leaders must take the step beyond individual level proficiency and train collective tasks using a deliberate training plan. The training process mirrors the military decisionmaking process.

Critical to developing a collective training plan is the commander's ability to visualize, describe, direct, and assess the training. Without a crystal clear picture of training objectives and exercise design, subordinate leaders will not be able to efficiently use resources (flying hours, fuel, range availability, ammunition, time, etc.) to create readiness. The result will be expenditure of resources with minimal training value and negative habit transfer to Soldiers and leaders.

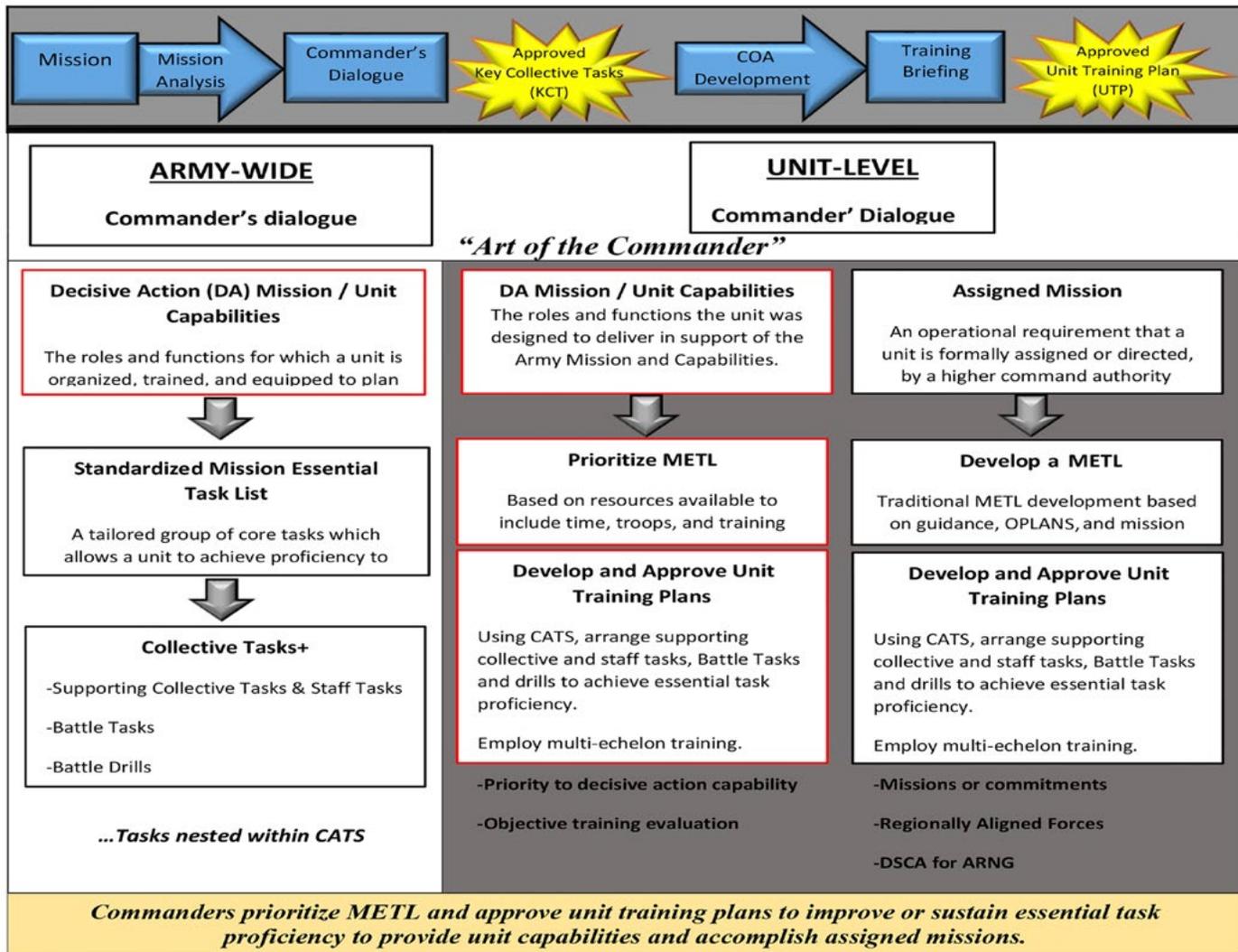
Collective training requires mission command from the next higher unit level. Platoons conducting collective training require company commanders to not only

command but also provide the necessary logistics support to reach the training objectives and certification. Without the higher commander, subordinate units are left to find the standard for themselves. This is challenging at best and practically impossible due to the inexperience of junior leaders in smaller units or the sheer size of more complex units. The Army's new standardized mission essential task lists (METL) will "level the bubble" with respect to both mission essential tasks (MET) and supporting collective tasks (SCT) down to the company level.

In aviation combat formations, the team and platoon are the basis of maneuver. Platoon leaders must be able to fight their formations as commanded by the company commander. Platoons form the basis of a company's ability to shoot, move, and communicate. Its key trainers are the company commander, platoon sergeant, and instructor pilot. The primary training activity of the platoon is the development of individual readiness. In aviation companies, the platoon leader must be an air mission commander and able to lead his unit within its capabilities

in support of company missions and objectives. Platoon leaders are certified by the primary trainer in the company - the commander.

The company commander must understand how to train his company to fight. Standardization pilots and instructor pilots in the unit are primarily responsible for individual training. It is the commander's job to build on this individual level of readiness with his own training plan focused on the platoon's ability to conduct its MET. Company commanders must be able to balance the competing requirements of the platoons to train individuals with the company requirements to train platoons. Training Circular 3-04.11, *Commander's Aircrew Training Program for Individual, Crew, and Collective Training* dictates leader tasks evaluated in conjunction with his annual proficiency aviation readiness test. This means company commanders will evaluate their platoon leaders as they conduct leader tasks that focus on planning, preparing, executing, and assessing their METL. At the battalion level, battalion commanders are required



Development of the Unit Training Plan/Commander Dialogue

to evaluate company commanders as they execute their leader tasks while leading their formations in collective training scenarios. Standardized METL and objective reporting will drive the Army to measure inputs to outputs across maneuver, logistics, and support units. Moreover, collective training builds on

individual training but is focused on training against those MET that a unit must be able to perform as part of their warfighting mission. This takes planning, preparation, and leader involvement in both execution and assessment. Good collective training does not just occur. Quite the opposite - entropy reigns supreme.

Leaders at all levels must understand the training objectives and train to standard within the resources provided. While this sounds simple, it is important to remember the words of Carl Von Clausewitz: "In War, the simple things are hard."



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Acronym Reference

ADP - Army Doctrine Publication	DA - decisive action	METL - mission essential task list
ATN - Army Training Network	DSCA - defense support to civilian authorities	SCT - supporting collective tasks
CAM - combined arms maneuver	DTMS - Digital Training Management System	WAS - wide area security
CATS - Combined Arms Training Strategy	KCT - key collective task	UTP - unit training plan
COA - course of action	MET - mission essential task	