



A 21st Century Campus for Battle Command Training

I personally think what will be dramatically new and different about training in 2015 is that we will be able to replicate nearly everything we need to replicate at home station.

General Martin E. Dempsey, Commanding General
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command¹

Introduction

The opening decade of the 21st century indicates that the United States will confront a complex and dynamic security environment in the years ahead. In response, the U.S. Army is transforming to a versatile, adaptable, networked force, trained and ready for full-spectrum operations, operating on a predictable and sustainable rotational cycle. The Army is taking an enterprise approach to building readiness, bringing the many pieces together into a comprehensive, interlocking whole. Training is a vital piece of the readiness cycle, and one in which the Army is moving rapidly to take advantage of the latest research and technology.

In his FY 2010–11 Training and Leader Development Guidance, General George W. Casey, Jr., Chief of Staff, Army (CSA) calls on the Army to “[u]se field time judiciously; use virtual, and constructive, and gaming capabilities wherever possible.” The *2009 Army Posture Statement* lists as a goal: “Develop the tools and technologies that enable more effective and efficient training through live, immersive and adaptable venues that prepare Soldiers and leaders to excel in the complex and challenging operational environment.”²

Nearly every major Army installation has a Battle Command Training Center (BCTC) that provides those tools and technologies, and the venues in which to use them. The BCTC at Fort Lewis, Washington, is an example of the tremendous value a BCTC can contribute to home station training efforts. Its inno-



vative programs are on the leading edge of forward thinking about training and leader development in today’s Army.

Training for Battle Command

The Fort Lewis BCTC is a 21st century campus for training in battle command. Army Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, defines battle command as “the art and science of understanding, visualizing, describing, directing, leading, and assessing forces to impose the commander’s will on a hostile, thinking, and adaptive enemy.”³ The BCTC teaches and trains the skills necessary for successful battle command and helps to foster the knowledge and attributes needed for effective leadership. It trains individuals, leadership teams, units and staff groups at all levels using live, virtual and constructive environments, as well as the latest in gaming technology.

¹ From remarks to the 2009 Armor Warfighting Conference, Fort Knox, Kentucky, 13 May 2009, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/pao/Speeches/Gen%20Dempsey%202008-09/ArmorConferenceSpeech051309.html>.

² See http://www.army.mil/aps/09/2009_army_posture_statement_web.pdf, p. 8.

³ FM 3-0, *Operations*, Headquarters, Department of the Army, February 2008, p. 5-2, para. 5-8, <http://www.army.mil/fm3-0/fm3-0.pdf>.

The Fort Lewis BCTC is government owned but contractor operated. A small group of Army officers, noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and civilians provides oversight, but most of the staff consists of retired military officers and NCOs with extensive leadership experience. Many have recent combat experience in Iraq and/or Afghanistan; all are dedicated to doing everything they can as trainers and mentors to help prepare Soldiers, leaders and units for upcoming deployments.

The BCTC is a powerful training resource for commanders and NCO leaders, and the value of this capability to the NCO corps at Fort Lewis is difficult to overstate. Approximately 60 percent of training and leader development conducted is focused on NCOs, who are able to conduct a wide variety of training activities with their Soldiers using the BCTC's facilities. Battle Command trainers can realistically simulate battlefield conditions for small unit operations, mounted and dismounted patrols and combat logistics patrols using advanced technologies such as Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation (JCATS) constructive simulation and Virtual Battlespace 2 (VBS2). Integrating virtual, constructive and gaming technologies with live field training, the Fort Lewis BCTC produces powerful training events, sometimes distributed across hundreds of miles, such as the exercise conducted by the 3d Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division.

Training Exercise Arrowhead Shock

Arrowhead Shock was an interstate and inter-service exercise that teamed an Army Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) and a U.S. Marine Corps task force in locations ranging from Washington State to Southern California. The exercise was planned, coordinated and executed by the commander and staff of 3/2 SBCT and the staff of the Fort Lewis BCTC. The exercise used a universal training scenario developed by the BCTC.

Three of the brigade's battalions conducted live and constructive training at Fort Lewis, while two others



trained at the satellite training center near Yakima, Washington, and a sixth trained at three locations in Southern California: Camp Pendleton, Twenty-Nine Palms and Southern California Logistics Airport. All of the training was done simultaneously, with overall command and control exercised by the brigade headquarters at Fort Lewis. In addition to live and constructive training at all locations, VBS2 (a gaming simulation) was employed at Camp Pendleton. Fort Lewis BCTC staff members were present to establish a JCATS constructive environment at Twenty-Nine Palms and the VBS2 gaming instance at Camp Pendleton. Both simulations were networked into the Army Battle Command System architecture and fully integrated into the brigade's overall operating picture.

The Marine Corps task force staff participated in the exercise from Twenty-Nine Palms, while some of its platoons conducted joint live-fires with members of one of the SBCT's infantry battalions. Meanwhile, other platoons from that infantry battalion trained in the Marine Corps' Infantry Immersion Trainer located at Camp Pendleton. **Exercise Arrowhead Shock provided the SBCT experience in command and control of large formations over great distances and in a joint environment.** The brigade commander noted that the training exercise was invaluable in helping the brigade reap the maximum benefit from its subsequent mission rehearsal exercise at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, and contributed directly to making the brigade better prepared for its deployment to combat.

Fostering Leader Development

The Fort Lewis BCTC's staff includes a former brigade commander, ten former battalion or deputy brigade commanders, seven former sergeants major and ten former first sergeants. Thirty-seven of the staffers have recent combat experience from Iraq or Afghanistan, ranging from operations officer for a joint task force, through Stryker brigade command sergeant major, to company commander. This seasoned staff provides leader mentorship as part of the BCTC's Leader Development Program.

The BCTC assists commanders in training and developing leaders in concert with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC's) leader development imperatives as described in the CSA-approved "Leader Development Strategy for a 21st Century Army." The program employs the full range of live, virtual and constructive training tools available, often using gaming and simulations; most elements of the program are available online via Fort Lewis's BCTCNet.

- **Training modules** provide self-directed internet-based leadership instruction for individuals, small groups and leader-teams.
- **Training support packages** offer downloadable instructional materials for use by units conducting leadership classes and leader-team training.
- **Decisionmaking exercises** present individuals and leader-teams with realistic situations that demand rapid decisionmaking. They are designed to increase leader experience in combat-relevant situations, improve decisionmaking competence, give practice in exercising initiative within commander's intent and hone intuitive decisionmaking abilities. Decisionmaking exercises normally incorporate a vignette with pauses at critical points for dialog and formulating decisions that can then be discussed and critiqued.
- **S.L.A. Marshall Combat Leader Video Interviews**, in the tradition of Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall's battlefield interviews, provide candid observations and advice from those who have experienced the rigors of combat and the associated leadership challenges. Viewable online and downloadable, the more than 1,100 videos include insights from returning Fort Lewis units and SBCTs across the Army.
- **The Post-Rotation Interviews and Data Capture Events (PRIDE) program**, growing out of the S.L.A. Marshall interview project, captures observations, insights and lessons learned from a representative sample of unit leadership upon their return from combat deployments. In addition to the taped individual interviews, PRIDE includes peer group interviews, computer-based data capture, focused process group interviews and documentary accounts of key engagements during the deployment. The results assist commanders in reviewing, assessing and validating their units' pre-deployment training; and they serve as a tool for planning collective training during the unit's time in the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) Train-Ready Pool.⁴ PRIDE has become a valued resource for a variety of training and leader development activities and products, as well as an effective way to share knowledge and experience across formations.
- **Leader-team battle exercises** allow commanders to fight a virtual battle and exercise mission command using computer simulation and gaming technology such as JCATS and VBS2.



- **Leader professional development events** provide a variety of activities such as facilitated seminar discussions, staff-led simulations and other events tailored to a commander's needs.
- **The BCTC's Jacobsen Mission Support Operations Center's Area of Operation Immersion Program (AOIP)**, including Virtual Right Seat Ride (vRSR), puts Fort Lewis Soldiers in close, ongoing contact with counterparts in the area to which they are to be deployed. This allows units to "hit the ground running" when they deploy and also helps the BCTC to continuously refresh training activities with the latest information and experience from ongoing operations.
- **Virtual Staff Ride** offers all the elements of a standard Army staff ride in a virtual format for select battlefields of Operation Iraqi Freedom, available online through BCTCNet.
- **Individual digital systems training** provides leader-oriented training courses on the Army Battle Command System and Digital Training Management System.
- **Leadership mentoring** provided by the Fort Lewis BCTC supplements the counseling, coaching and mentoring capabilities that reside in unit chains of command. BCTC mentors are available to present officer and NCO professional development activities, work with leader-teams and consult with individual commanders and other leaders regarding leader development.

Students at Fort Lewis's Henry H. Lind Noncommissioned Officer Academy have benefited from the support of the BCTC and its leader development capabilities. Simulation activities have been integrated into leadership training events, and the S.L.A. Marshall Combat Leader

⁴ ARFORGEN is the Army's force generation model used to progressively ready forces for employment by Combatant Commanders. After returning from a deployment, a unit is "reset" with personnel and equipment (Reset Pool), then enters the Train-Ready Pool and begins collective training for a future mission.



Video Interviews have exposed young NCOs to the experience and knowledge of seasoned veterans.

The Power of Synergy

The Fort Lewis BCTC shares its campus with three other organizations: the Army Center for Enhanced Performance, the Stryker Brigade Combat Team Warfighters' Forum and the Asymmetric Warfare/Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (AW/C-IED) Team. Together, the four organizations provide complementary and interlocking capabilities that combine to further enhance home station training and leader development.

The Army Center for Enhanced Performance (ACEP) was pioneered at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and has since expanded to nine other sites, including Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Hood, Texas, as well as Fort Lewis. The ACEP offers training, derived from performance and sports psychology, that focuses on developing mental and emotional skills to help the trainees improve overall performance and “be their best when it matters most.” The staff uses techniques such as goal setting, stress and energy management, biofeedback and neuro-feedback training, visualization and imagery, positive-effective thinking and attention control to encourage mastery of peak performance.

The Stryker Brigade Combat Team Warfighters' Forum (SWfF) was the first of several small organizations established by the Army to foster a more networked and collaborative environment within the “communities of purpose” they serve. Each Warfighters' Forum seeks to promote the sharing of knowledge and experience, and to solve common problems affecting its type of formation. It leverages network technologies such as online portals, discussion forums, web conferencing and secure video teleconferencing, and it integrates subject matter expertise from throughout its community. The SWfF serves the Army's seven Stryker Brigade Combat Teams and the organizations that support them, connecting the institutional Army and Combat Training Centers with operational units across the Army. It collects and shares observations, insights, lessons and innovations from SBCTs that are conducting operations, training and exercises. It works in concert with the TRADOC Capabilities Manager for SBCTs, serving as a problem-solving catalyst,

disseminating SBCT experience and expediting the production and incorporation of new knowledge. The SWfF enhances the Army's ability to “get it right quickly” by focusing a wide range of expertise within the Stryker community of purpose.⁵

Finally, the AW/C-IED Team provides Fort Lewis units with a first-class training resource for AW/C-IED information, resources and capabilities. The team facilitates the training of collective counter-IED capabilities incorporating the latest technologies, helps to integrate live IED-defeat training into the virtual, constructive and gaming capabilities of the Fort Lewis BCTC, and develops and manages the Fort Lewis and Yakima Training Center counter-IED training infrastructure. The AW/C-IED Team helps to integrate “attack the network” training into universal home-station training scenarios and conducts individual and collective training to “defeat the device.” It trains and certifies a core group of master trainers from Fort Lewis brigades and other major subordinate commands. These subject matter experts assist unit commanders in the conduct of AW/C-IED training and provide other mission area expertise. The team also works with other external courses and programs, such as the mobile training teams dispatched to Fort Lewis by the DoD-wide Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO).

The Way Ahead

This quartet—the BCTC, the ACEP, the SWfF and AW/C-IED—is unique to Fort Lewis and gives NCOs and other leaders access to an extraordinary set of training tools. These organizations operate at the cutting edge of new, ground-breaking technologies and methodologies across the range of live, virtual, constructive and gaming environments. The innovative capabilities they offer, and the synergy they produce, offer powerful training enablers, applicable to operations all along the spectrum of conflict.

This installation serves as an example of how to enhance home station unit training and leader development. It shows how to empower the noncommissioned officer corps and other leaders with an integrated kitbag of available, proven and effective tools—tools that are continually updated with system improvements and new insights from the field. The Fort Lewis model offers a way ahead for the future of training in the Army.

⁵ For a fuller discussion of the SWfF, see AUSA's Torchbearer Issue Paper “Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) Warfighters' Forum: A New Army Paradigm for Home Station Unit Training,” October 2007, http://www.USA.org/programs/torchbearer/issuepapers/Issue%20Papers/TBIP_101907SBCT.pdf.