

Making a training vision real

Following from the findings of the U.S. Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review published early this year, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness issued a revised training transformation strategic plan that focuses on joint training and broadening training so that it supports integrated operations with coalition partners and nongovernmental organizations (NGO). Training transformation's new vision is to provide dynamic, capabilities-based training across all integrated operations. "Train as you fight" has been revised to "train as you operate." Dan Gardner, the man in charge of realizing that training vision, spells out what it means and how U.S. forces will get there.

Q What is the main goal of the revised training transformation plan?

A What we are trying to do with training transformation is ensure that our folks are properly trained ahead of time so that when they are in theater they are not being exposed to things for the first time. This is particularly important in the joint sense, be-

cause the services are doing quite a good job in preparing their individuals and units for the service-unique tasks, but what we are trying to focus on with training transformation and joint programs is the training integration effort.

We have just finished the [Quadrennial Defense Review] process and were told that training transformation is moving in the right direction and we should continue our efforts there. But we want to broaden our overview, or overarching umbrella of training transformation, to include civilians and contractors. We want to make sure we are taking on new challenges and, in particular, joint urban ops, joint information operations and asymmetric operations. We now have what we refer to as TIM2, or the training, transformation, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational mission. With our training transformation new strategy, one of the major changes in the vision is to include the interagency operation, the NGOs, industry — anyone who contributes to the operation.

We used to say that we should train the way we fight, but it's now about training the way we operate. It's a big and complex team

and we all have to be connected at the training stage.

Q What are the main challenges of the new training strategy?

A There are budgets, of course, and only so many things we can have. We were told by our leadership that joint training overall would be a risk neutral category, meaning that they would not become a bill payer for other service initiatives. That's not bad to hear, but it means we have to figure out how to do all those new challenges within our existing portfolio, so that's the challenge that's on the table.

We have two major tasks. One is to put out a new training transformation strategy, which we did in May, and then the other tasking is to conduct a joint training program review.

The whole idea behind this review was to look at potentially expanding the training transformation business model so that it is open, collaborative, cooperative, transparent and incentivized where feasible. The challenge there is to find other joint programs that are out there and where it makes sense to bring them into the training transformation envelope.

We are looking at bringing the combat commanders into a greater participation in the training transformation process so they have more input and more say. And finally, we need to look at how we modify the way we use our resources so we can capture these new training challenges.

Q Does it mean giving some things up?

A Conceivably, yes it does. In fact, one of the things we are doing with the joint training program review is looking at the areas where we believe we can increase risk — that means moving money and resources out where we need to; and what are the areas where we need to decrease

risk, where we need to move resources in. And then, of course, there is risk neutral, where we pretty much leave it as it is, although we will look for efficiencies.

Speaking of efficiencies, one of the primary generators of that would be to use more virtual and constructive capability, as opposed to live, and we are doing a very excellent job of that already. A good example is the JNTC [Joint National Training Center], which I prefer to call a joint global training capability, because we are now in the western Pacific and in Europe, and we are connecting down to Australia, and I think there is tremendous potential to expand to NATO and the NATO Education and Training Network that's being developed.

What it really does is move electrons instead of people, so instead of you and I talking to each other here in person, we might do this via videoconferencing or, conceivably, we might have an eyeball camera powered by a computer. Does that mean you can do away with person-to-person contact or live training? Absolutely not. There obviously has to be some face-to-face, in-the-dirt, in-the-air, on-the-sea training.

Q But you anticipate greater use of virtual and constructive simulation?

A In flight training in particular, a simulator allows you to do things and train for emergencies where that's the only way you can do these things. It also allows you to save on flying-hour costs, to reduce wear and tear on aircraft, to train without consideration of the weather, for example. The Air Force's Distributed Mission Operations is a great example where you can bring all these aircraft up into a virtual airspace and they can fly together and you can put in aggressor aircraft or bogies. We don't have the resources to do all that live. And one of the greatest benefits is the team training. You train

More on Gardner

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Gardner leads the Defense Department's training transformation initiative and its three major components — Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution, Joint National Training and Joint Assessment and Enabling.

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until it becomes second nature, so when you are up in the aircraft flying real hours, you are making the most from the teamwork that was learned in the virtual world.

Q Do you also see more distance or e-learning?

A The capability to get knowledge around the world anytime, anyplace, anywhere is a phenomenal capability and one that we are just beginning to capture. There's a lot of potential there. It's not the panacea for all people and all things at all times, obviously, so I don't ever want to imply or give the impression that it's an all-or-nothing. In most cases, there's a blend or balance that has to be struck. But technology gives us the ability to segregate right down to the individual and find out the individual needs and to tailor training specifically.

One of the capabilities in training transformation is the Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability, or JKDDC, which is the distributed learning piece for the individual. JKDDC is not just about course content, although that has been the primary focus to date and we have about 20 courses that have been developed through the JKDDC program, but it's also about the portals

and connections that have been established that link individuals to other knowledge bases. You take all this knowledge potential and bring it to the fingertips of the individual service or user.

Ideally, in the end game you will have a single sign-on to access the entire library and to go beyond courseware so that JKDDC links us to other databases and, for example, subject-matter experts. There is a significant opportunity there.

And there's potential to find synergy across JKDDC and JNTC now that JKDDC has moved to Joint Forces Command, so we can leverage their tools and processes.

Q What about increasing training globally?

A Internationally, there's also a lot of potential, such as in counterterrorism training with our allies. JTEN, the Joint Training and Experimentation Network backbone architecture, is at 32 sites now, two or more in Europe, and it's bringing different audiences together. We're bringing it all together in an aligned battlefield so you can have Army helicopter simulators at Fort Rucker flying at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, and in the future Germany and other sites will be plugged in.

With JNTC and JTEN, as we continue growing their networks, you bring persistent capability to the audience here in the United States and overseas. We are looking forward to a NATO persistent network.

At IITSEC this year, you will see a continued drive to expand the effort that's been ongoing the past few years, to expand the networking. I expect to see some thrusts in the multinational and interagency areas.

Q What about technical issues such as common standards, security and bandwidth?

A At one time, there were 36 databases for Baghdad/Iraq terrain, and we need to figure that out. We are working with the [U.S. Defense Modeling and Simulation Office] on that. But we have to do this as partners because if we do it on our own, we will end up with something that won't mesh, and if industry does it alone, there will be the same problem. What we want is interoperability, and it misses the mark if it's not interoperable. Everyone must comply.

Bandwidth is not raised as much today as a stumbling block as it used to be. With bandwidth, the more you have, the more you want to do.

Multilevel security remains an issue, both from a technical and a policy perspective. With multilevel security, we can sometimes solve the technical but sometimes still have policy issues. But it's important to address this issue because we need to build partner capacity, build partnerships, and one of the key ways to do that is through training. That's the initial icebreaker. It's much better to learn together in the training world than in the operational world.

One of our challenges is to stay open to creativity and to get out of the rice bowl of existing technology that's comfortable. We need to stay open to something that leapfrogs us higher, and we must recognize that opportunity.

Q What are the next steps and what's the timescale?

A Fiscal year 2008 will be when it will kick in most. The whole idea is to move the department forward with training transformation with joint training programs and in an integrated fashion. Joint Forces Command is a large component, but the combatant commanders will also be greater participants. They will tell us what we need to do more, what we can do less of. It's their requirements that will generate those changes. We also have significant numbers of Iraqis training in the field and here, and also coalition partners. There's a constructive effort to bring that together and replicate the operational environment prior to stepping into theater.

Q Are you optimistic that change will happen and it address the requirements?

A We are moving in the right direction; the QDR validated that effort. We are not there yet, but they told us to continue and to take on these new challenges. We've had tremendous response from the services. Transparency is key; everything needs to be done in an open environment. We are trying to learn from mistakes and move out accordingly. We are gathering lessons learned from recent operational experience.

I am optimistic; it's a glass half full. ■