

Shaping the Army Of 2020

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As we reduce our presence in Iraq and begin to draw down our forces in Afghanistan, the Army is approaching a critical transition point. We must now shift focus from the singular idea of winning the current fights to simultaneously staffing, training and equipping as a readiness-focused force. Although we must prepare for the future, we cannot shortchange our soldiers or the nation with respect to ongoing combat operations. Today's soldiers must still have what they need when they need it, and we must accomplish the missions the nation has already assigned us.

The same idea holds true for tomorrow's soldiers and missions as well. The real strategic art is finding the right balance that allows the Army to succeed in



U.S. Air Force/SSgt. Brian Ferguson

Soldiers from the 19th Engineer Battalion react to a simulated rocket-propelled grenade attack at Zussman Urban Combat Training Center, Fort Knox, Ky., during a platoon certification exercise in June.

The training exercised troop leader procedures in different environments.

the current fight while simultaneously preparing for the future.

As the commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), I am honored to continue to serve and to play an important role in addressing the challenges our Army faces in this time of transition. I would like to summarize some of the essential thinking that drives our approach to developing the Army of 2020 and then identify several of the major initiatives under way to make that vision a reality. Much of this work began nearly two years ago under my predecessor, GEN Martin E. Dempsey. My intent is to use these ongoing efforts while continuously adapting the vision to the realities of an increasingly complex and resource-constrained future security environment.

The Army of 2020

The *Army Capstone Concept*, published in December 2009, described the vision for the Army of 2020 by identifying the required capabilities of the future force. At TRADOC, we have taken these required capabilities and begun to develop potential force structure options for this force across all aspects of doctrine, organization, training, materiel and personnel.

Though some of the seeds of the Army of 2020 are already mature, others we plant today. For example, our enduring professional ethic is deeply rooted in our sacred responsibility and bond of trust with the American people; this will never change. Since we do not get to choose the



next type of war we will fight, however, all leaders must become experts in a mix of offensive, defensive and stability operations across a full spectrum of combat operations.

To better grow and develop the seedling of full spectrum operations, we have developed the concept of core competencies—combined arms maneuver and wide area security. These two salient ideas are established in our new operations field manual and capture the lessons of our recent past and blend them with the broader precepts of warfighting across all domains. Leaders and units employ combined arms maneuver to achieve a position of physical, temporal or psychological advantage over the enemy. Artful execution of combined arms maneuver surprises the enemy by attacking from an unexpected direction and time or by employing combat power in unforeseen ways. We use wide area security to consolidate and maintain advantage over an enemy or to deny the enemy a position of advantage.

For the Army of 2020, some of the more traditional aspects of warfare will continue. In any operation, the transition from one phase to another is vital to achieving ultimate success. Thus managing transitions along the spectrum is a critical skill that requires leaders to pay close attention to the initial indicators of change, recognize the new reality early and act accordingly. This requirement calls for an Army that is physically and psychologically prepared to change course quickly.

Whenever we envision the future, we should recognize the difficulty of accurate prediction and the likelihood of getting it wrong. We have learned that adopting an iterative “learn, adapt, learn, adapt” approach to modernizing the force is the best means to shape the Army of 2020. Moving away from processes dominated by long-term sequential planning, the Army can become more adaptable and flexible. We can do better by modernizing in a measured manner through continuous and incremental reevaluation of con-



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cepts to determine relevant requirements, potential threats and opportunities. The uncertainties of conflict require us to be flexible in our development and acquisition activities so that we can adjust quickly if those assumptions turn out to be wrong. Acquisition efficiency and flexibility must become a routine part of how the Army does business.

Although this sounds incredibly difficult, the good news is that we have already come a long way in organizing and preparing ourselves for greater flexibility. Over the last 10 years, our Army has met every challenge—thanks to the remarkable creativity, strength and agility of our combat-experienced soldiers. We need to capitalize on the knowledge, experience and momentum we have achieved on the battlefield as we transform our Army to address the challenges of the future.

TRADOC's approach to shaping the Army of 2020 is comprehensive and far too lengthy to address in detail in this article. I would like to highlight, however, four essential initiatives that are the foundation of the emerging concept of the Army of 2020. These are the Army profession, the squad, mission command and our support to the joint fight.

The Army Profession

As we begin shaping the Army of 2020, it makes sense to reflect on the impact of 10 years of war on our profession. Last year, the Secretary of the Army directed us to conduct formal introspection in the year-long Profession of Arms campaign. Now in the tenth month of this process of examination and reflection, we have developed our understanding of the Army profession significantly. More important, we have been involved in an Army-wide discussion about who we are and what we want our profession to be in the future. We are using this information to help us fortify our profession today and to ensure that the campaign becomes an essential feature of the Army of 2020.

We have learned that our Army profession will be viewed as such only as long as we continue to earn that title. Professionals produce uniquely expert work, require

years of study and practice, and earn the trust of their clients through an ethic. They are personally motivated by the intrinsic aspects of their service, and their lives of service require extraordinary commitment—far beyond that of a job. Our shared responsibility to develop as Army professionals is organizational and individual. In earning that title of Army professional, we must cultivate five characteristics: trust, military expertise, *esprit de corps*, honorable service and stewardship.

Trust is the lifeblood of the Army profession; without trust it is merely an occupation. Trust requires inspired leadership and extends in every direction to secure our most valuable resource: our soldiers and leaders. How we train, what we teach and who we mentor determine how successful the Army will become. Trust is earned each day through strength of character, individual and unit discipline, and accountability.

We have learned that we possess expert knowledge that is unique to the Army profession and that we have an obligation to continue to expand on that body of expert knowledge for the benefit of the profession. As Army professionals, our expertise is the ethical and effective application of expert knowledge by certified professionals.

Our commitment to our profession is represented by an *esprit de corps* that guides us to realize that, for a professional, the Army is more than a job: It is a commitment to a set of values and ideals that are bigger than the sum of our personal sacrifices. This sacrifice manifests itself over time in a history of honorable service to our Army and our nation.

Finally, we know that in order to maintain respect, our Army profession must self-regulate. Army professionals are stewards of our profession, its body of expert knowledge and its standards of certification for membership.

The Squad

Our Army has accomplished many amazing things using advanced weapons systems, digitization and technology in the last 10 years of war. Despite significant improvements in capabilities at almost every higher echelon of command, we have yet to fully use the power of technology in the squad, our fundamental building block for the Army of 2020. Despite their tactical significance, squads are committed to the fight with the least amount of experience, training, firepower, mobility, protection and access to information.



Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, return fire during a firefight with Taliban forces in Barawala Kalay Valley, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, in March.

SSG James Allen, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, conducts a dismounted patrol alongside his platoon's Afghan uniformed police partners in Paktika Province, Afghanistan.



We will focus more resources and attention to enable the squad, ensuring that it achieves and retains a tactical overmatch capability. Our focus will be on extending the network, reducing power and energy requirements, and increasing lethality, mobility, and force protection. Most importantly, we must recognize that in order to achieve any of this, we must redouble our efforts in leader development and home-station training for the team and squad leader.

By 2020, tactical small units will have immersive squad-level trainers, 360-degree leader assessments, and longer, more rigorous squad- and team-leader courses with much higher certification requirements. Also, there are many advanced training capabilities that could greatly enable the squad, such as the expanded use of blended live, virtual,

constructive, gaming and simulation training using digital soldiers as well as avatar-embedded training capabilities.

Seeking technological advances, we want to improve access to precision targeting and fires and continue to find more battlefield uses for digital applications. The squad will need an enhanced mine-clearing capability and more robotic and unmanned aerial systems. To improve lethality, it will need the best carbine available and a precision sniper rifle as well as nonlethal capabilities and more effective yet lighter-weight ammunition. We must also fill a critical gap in our individual soldier protection by developing better, lighter body armor enhanced with biomonitoring, reporting, and combat identification and location capabilities. The squad of 2020 will also require connectivity to all supporting platforms with integrated sensor-to-shooter linkages. This enhanced squad capability is the first step toward providing improvements to all tactical small units as we move forward.

Mission Command

In recent years, we have expanded the concept of battle command to a broader, more inclusive concept of mission command. Mission command represents the reality of our experience in leading highly dynamic and decentralized combat operations in an extremely complex, joint, multinational, interagency and intergovernmental environment. Mission command provides the broader intellectual framework for us to build and shape the Army of 2020.

The revised concept of mission command emphasizes the centrality and expanded role of the commander on the battlefield. It reinforces the human dimension in understanding links between the network and the commander in the art of command and the science of control. Integrating the network through mission command is important to the commander who shoulders responsibilities, which include understanding, visualizing, describing, directing, leading and assessing. It also includes developing teams among military units as



U.S. Air Force/CMSgt. Richard Simonsen

SGT Arturo Leal, Company C, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, directs troops at a mounted patrol base in the Alingar district of Nuristan Province in eastern Afghanistan. The commandos were investigating a fire at a girl's school.



SGT Michael Magnuson (right) and U.S. Army SGT David Sterin (left), members of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team security force, lead members of the PRT through the Shur Andam Industrial Park in Kandahar City in June. The PRT met with business leaders to assess the use of, and need for, electricity in the area.

well as our joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational partners; leading information and influence activities; establishing themes and messages; and personally engaging key players. The art of command drives the science of control, which includes planning, preparing, executing and assessing operations and conducting information and influence, cyber, and electromagnetic activities.

Mission command enables operational adaptability through understanding the operational environment, building adaptive teams that anticipate transitions, accepting risk to create opportunities, and conducting information and influence activities to set conditions for action.

Mission command also supports the requirement for greater decentralization both in organization design and in operational decision making. The complexity and short decision cycles characteristic of operations at the tactical edge limit the accuracy and utility of a common operating view for centralized decision making and command and control of formations or individuals. Although centralized command may work well for strategic initiatives, too much centralized decision making and execution in the tactical fight slow action and could surrender the initiative. Thus we can expect to see additional decentralization and empowering of the tactical edge.

The Army in the Joint Fight

Our combat experience tells us that our Army is most successful when we fight as an effective partner on the joint team. The next 25 years will continue to challenge joint forces in both familiar and unexpected ways, which is why the Army of 2020 as part of a joint team must be prepared to build partner capacity, support civil authorities,

and deter and defeat potential adversaries. The design of our forces will provide corps, divisions and brigades with the maneuver and enabler assets they need to be effective in an emerging operational environment.

As part of the joint force, the Army might provide more regionally aligned headquarters in support of combatant commanders with habitual relationships with identified foreign governmental and military partners. Our units would possess the resident cultural, linguistic and political understanding necessary to analyze, assess and act rapidly to prevail in any emerging national strategy tasks. Such units would be responsive to the combatant commanders and provide a broad array of options spanning all phases of potential operations.

Also, we need to ensure that the Army is part of a joint force that is trained, organized and resourced to perform the critical tasks contained in

the Joint Operational Access concept, which includes elements of the AirSea (Battle) concept focus along with the Army/Marine Access concept. Finally, and most critically, we must ensure that sustained land operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational environment are not forgotten, as we will see this again at a place and time not of our choosing.

Army Strong

Our Army is strong. For more than 236 years, we have answered the call to defend our nation's people and interests. During the last 10 years of war, our all-volunteer Army has performed superbly while also producing the most capable and professional group of leaders we have known in generations. We have persevered and overcome every challenge and every obstacle. As a result, we now have an incredibly competent and battle-tested Army. I stand in awe of our soldiers, Army civilians and families.

Today, we are in a strategic transition. Looking forward, we can expect to face even more complex and uncertain environments and threats from across the spectrum of conflict. To meet these demands, I see TRADOC helping shape the Army along the glide path to 2020 through a number of means, from our introspective work in the Profession of Arms campaign to our new focus on empowering the squad to increasing adaptability through mission command. Also, providing viable strategic options in the joint fight will require more effective, efficient, flexible and dynamic Army capabilities. Finally, to fight and win our nation's wars today, tomorrow and in 2020, our Army must continue to earn the unwavering trust and confidence of the American people. ★