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The Mission Essential Task List (METL) Development Process

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Introduction

The U.S. Army stands guard for the American people; there have been substantial changes to the Army military doctrine. The Army has changed from linear fights to the global war on terrorism. This is a different type of fight than the one the Army has previously prepared itself to fight in. The Army is required to fight alongside its sister services, secure the homeland, and integrate the Reserves and National Guard into the total Army war doctrine like never before. The Army now has to ask if the way they do business is still appropriate for today's new challenges. One area it needs to address is the Mission Essential Task List (METL). Is the METL still an appropriate tool for commanders to use in preparing their Soldiers for today's battlefield and matrix of additional duties that come with homeland security and the GWOT? The METL is still needed in today's Army as a tool for commanders to prepare the Army for today's multi-task missions. As the Army goes through transformation the METL development process is just as relevant in today's operational environment as it was prior to the global war on terrorism.

METL Development Process

The METL development process links the organizations wartime mission with the training it is required to do. This process allows the unit to narrow and focus on training the important collective tasks to accomplish the required mission. The development process keeps the organization alert, ready for war and current operational needs.

All active, Reserve, and National Guard units are required to have and validate their METL as needed. This process focuses and guides them to accomplish their wartime mission.

Identify and Select Mission Essential Task

The Commander uses five tools to identify and select the mission essential task required to accomplish their mission. These five are war operational plans, enduring combat capabilities, operational environment, directed mission, and any external guidance the organization receives. These tools are essential to make sure the commander selects the appropriate METL tasks they have to accomplish to be successful.

Key Points in METL Development

The METL development process is not affected by the availability of resources. These resources are used in the training and execution of the organizations mission. The CSM and Senior NCO's must understand the organizations METL to ensure the Soldier tasks are implemented. The next higher commander will be briefed and responsible to approve these METL tasks. The mission and the commander will not set priorities on which task will be trained and how they are trained. The team approach should be used when a unit creates METL to develop subordinate leaders. The unit commander is responsible for ensuring the unit is proficient on all of them. The lowest level that has an approved METL is a company, battery, or troop. The METL must be applied to the entire organization. The METL will and can vary from different organizations because of location or different wartime missions. The organization commander must approve their staffs, slice, and companies METL to ensure they properly support each other. The Battalion Commander is responsible for approving the Battalions staffs METL. The

higher organizations commander must ensure the lower organizations METL compliments and supports their METL. This is also done for combat service and combat service and support. That organizations task may depend and vary to meet specific mission requirements. A unit must ensure they train as they fight. An organization cannot be proficient on all tasks this is the driving force to ensure the unit proficiency. This process narrows the commanders' focus, which allows them to meet their training requirements. The wartime mission is based on an organization METL.

Sequence for an Organizations METL development

The organization receives the next higher unit mission and METL. They then have to examine it for all implied and specified tasks. They do this by looking at the wartime mission and any outside directives. The commander then has to choose the task essential to accomplish this mission. These tasks then become organizations METL. The commander submits to the next higher headquarters for review. The METL has to be approved at two higher levels.

Relationship between Mission, METL, and Battle Tasks

The relationship between the mission, METL and battle tasks are simple. Once the organization has evaluated and approved the staffs and lower organizations METL they can set their METL. The next higher commander selects those tasks that are critical to the success of each task. These tasks then become the organizations battle tasks. A battle task that must be completed by the lower organization to accommodate and ensure the next higher headquarters is to be successful at the METL tasks. The commander will select these battle tasks from the lower unit METL. Upon the selection of these tasks, the commander can then allocate the resources needed to train these tasks.

These resources might include ammunition, fuel, parts, and land. These tasks will be the focus for the commander to use during all training and might be used for an evaluation. The organizations commander will provide their organizations a direction in which they will set their training objectives. The commander uses this and will continue to evaluate as necessary. This will allow them and their organization to continue to adjust their priorities where it needs to be focused.

Select Collective, Leader and Soldier Tasks that support METL

The leadership must ensure they select collective, leader and Soldier tasks that support the METL. The CSM and other senior NCO's will be responsible for ensuring the junior Soldiers are trained on these tasks. The tasks are a small part of a collective task. If these tasks fail, the unit may not be able to accomplish a METL task. The tasks are performed several times and become second nature to a Soldier. The importance of these tasks may mean life or death to that organization and a mission.

Seven Battlefield Operating Systems

The commander has several tactical force multipliers to their advantage. These combat multipliers are intelligence, maneuver, fire support, mobility/counter mobility/survivability, air defense, combat service support, and command and control. The commander at a TF level will use these to help their organization fight and be productive. The intelligence cell will collect, process, and disseminate all intelligence for that task force. The intelligence will also play a key role in the intelligence preparation of the battlefield. The maneuver piece involves moving around the battlefield to gain an advantage over the enemy. This is critical to gain the upper hand and to shape the battlefield for success. The fire support cell coordinates all aspects of fire support. These

include synchronizing all fires and effects whether lethal or not. The air defense protects and alerts the organization of any air or missile threat. Due to the enemy using long-range missiles the roles of the air defense has become more relevant. The freedom of maneuver allow commanders to have unlimited mobility and execution in their area of operations. The counter-mobility denies the enemy any mobility in the area of operations. The survivable issue is used to protect friendly forces from the effects the enemy might impose. This is also important in NBC defense to ensure units are protected from the affects of the contamination. The combat service and support piece allows the means in which the unit operates. This comes from replacement parts or even a local infrastructure from a host nation. These services are critical for the mission to continue. The last portion of the BOS is the command and control. This allows the commander to be in control. The key point of the command and control piece is communication. This allows the staff of a unit to utilize the BOS to accomplish a common goal. This goal is mission accomplishment.

Integrate Collective, Leader, and Soldier Tasks

The commanders, sergeant majors, and unit first sergeant must be sure to integrate these tasks. These tasks can be found in MTP's and STP's. The leadership uses these to cross-reference what tasks need to be trained. The brigade uses the divisions METL. The battalions use the brigade METL. The battalions use the company METL. The companies use the platoons collective tasks. The platoon uses the squad collective tasks. The squad uses the leader tasks and the Soldier tasks. This chain links everything together making it a solid chain. All leaders must ensure that all Soldiers train and be proficient at their tasks to make a solid METL.

Training Objective

The military uses three key points in relationship to the training objective. These three points are the task, condition, and the standard. The task is defined as to what an organization is supposed to do. The condition defines how the task will be done and in what environment. The standard is the expected outcome that should result. These three provide a clear statement and goal.

Conclusion

The METL development process continues to be useful today. As the Army continues to fight the war on terrorism, these tasks will remain relevant and useful for us to win this war. The U.S. Army must continue to train and use this process to select the tasks to train and be proficient. As leaders, our Soldiers must be able to transform and ready to fight this war. The MELT development process provides them with the task they need to be trained to survive.

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