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Training Strategy in the Pacific Theater

By ROBERT B. BROWN

A/OA-10 Thunderbolt II in live-fire exercise at
Pacific Alaska Range Complex

354th Communications Squadron (Robert Wieland)

Today's security environment demands immense versatility and flexibility from our military. The Armed Forces must be able to meet the needs of the President and Secretary of Defense to respond across the full spectrum of operations—from major combat operations, to disaster relief, to humanitarian assistance. Additionally, our forces must be capable of operating in the joint and combined environments across the full spectrum of operations. The imperative to “train the way we operate” is as clear today as ever.

In the war on terror, which is characterized by the enemy's use of asymmetric tactics, it is paramount to have credible forces capable of fighting jointly and multinationally to deter aggression, respond to crises, and, above

all, win. The U.S. military must continue to develop, mature, and integrate training that enables prompt and effective response to any and all contingencies that may confront the Nation. It is essential to train to new missions and technologies, train with new partners such as India and Indonesia, and provide world-class training venues and facilities. In order to keep pace with our enemies' rapidly evolving tactics, we are obliged to ensure that all training maximizes return on investment, especially in terms of time and money.

Asia-Pacific Challenges

The individual Services are responsible for training their respective forces, while sustaining a capacity to operate jointly falls upon the geographic combatant commander.

U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) is thus responsible for ensuring that the Nation's military forces in the Asia-Pacific region remain a trained and ready agent for stability.

The Pacific theater offers many unique challenges to USPACOM forces. Unlike Europe, with its modern, high-tech armed forces linked by the world's largest alliance structure, the Asia-Pacific is characterized by developing nations, an extensive maritime environment, and a tradition of nonalignment. Stability is threatened by geopolitical and socioeconomic realities, as well as unresolved territorial claims, historic animosities, and lingering mistrust between countries. Many nations lack the capabilities to address their security challenges effectively.

Vast distances and high operational tempo also present challenges to military forces in the region. Although USPACOM has more troops assigned than any other

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combatant command, they are responsible for engaging in an area that covers more than half of the planet. Additionally, the Pacific theater is home to five of the seven nations with which the United States has mutual defense treaties (Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand), and the command is responsible for ensuring that our nation is prepared to meet these treaty obligations.

Additional challenges arise from population growth and increased environmental awareness, which continue to reduce the land and water spaces available for realistic military training. Most of USPACOM's forward-deployed forces are stationed in areas with relatively little room for exercising, such as Korea, Japan, Guam, and Hawaii. Furthermore, the funding environment for joint training is austere. This demands that we ensure the highest possible productivity in our training programs at all levels. Finally, while not interfering with the Services' Title 10 unit training responsibilities, USPACOM must pave the way in maximizing the synergy of inter-Service training by developing a strategy that clearly articulates the benefits of training together.

Joint Training Strategy

To ensure that U.S. forces remain pre-eminent and that the many challenges in the Asia-Pacific do not strain the ability of our military to train, USPACOM has refocused on improving joint and combined training. Underpinning this effort is the recent development of the Pacific Joint Training Strategy (PJTS). The PJTS vision is "a joint and combined training and exercise program that enhances, demonstrates, and certifies the readiness of USPACOM forces in challenging events combining live, virtual, and constructive environments."

Over the last several months, the Training and Exercises Directorate (J7) has codified the numerous processes that integrate and synchronize all joint training capabilities available to USPACOM forces. The result is a strategy that guides the command's training and readiness through a window of opportunity—which is narrowing, owing to factors such as declining training budgets, the need for environmental impact statements, and a host of other requirements that support upcoming joint and combined operational force milestones. Thus, getting it right now is of the utmost importance.

To optimize hitting the window of opportunity, USPACOM uses three lines of operation to define the PJTS: strategic communication, infrastructure, and training. Strategic communication seeks to educate opinion leaders and the public on the importance of military training. It must be proactive and communicate to both friends and prospective adversaries the capabilities of U.S. forces while simultaneously avoiding perceptions of provocation. This line of operation builds public trust and support of military

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training activities by emphasizing environmental stewardship as a key component of our training approach. Though not led by J7, strategic communication has an important role in protecting the training opportunities and venues for our forces.

The thrust of the infrastructure line of operation is resolution of issues relating to facilities, logistics, transportation, and munitions storage that hamper joint training by seeking joint solutions to traditionally Title 10 issues. The infrastructure line is exemplified best on the island of Guam, where building and range plans are in the making to support thousands of Marines who will relocate from Okinawa by 2014. The data to support this massive design process come from a joint

master training requirements document, developed after several months of collaboration among USPACOM Service components. This collaboration was a great example of how the combatant commander can facilitate the direction of joint training within his area of responsibility.

Both strategic communication and infrastructure support the third line of operation: training. At USPACOM, the training line is captured in the joint training plan (JTP). Designed to facilitate the development and maintenance of credible U.S. military forces, the JTP incorporates a requirements-based joint and multinational training program focused on the joint mission essential task list. To improve Service and multinational interoperability, we use the JTP to make training opportunities visible and available to all the components, even if the planned exercise is single-Service oriented. We have found numerous examples where the Services can augment each other's exercises or training events with little additional cost, thereby maximizing the opportunity for, and effectiveness of, joint training.

Key annexes to the JTP include information on the joint training requirements group, Pacific Warfighting Center, and Joint Task Force (JTF) Certification Program. The joint training requirements group is a body of flag officers representing all Service components and dedicated to enhancing the Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) training environment to provide joint context to training. Providing this LVC training conduit will be the charter



Marine AH-1 Cobra prepares to launch from USS Juneau, Exercise Talisman Sabre 2007

U.S. Navy (Michael Gomez)

of the future Pacific Warfighting Center, which is a training and operations facility under construction on Ford Island. It will house and maintain a state-of-the-art capability that synchronizes and leverages planning, collaboration, technology, and knowledge management to enhance exercises, training, crisis support, and security cooperation throughout the Pacific theater. Lastly, the JTF Certification Program provides a holistic approach to reducing both the time it takes to stand up JTFs in the USPACOM area of responsibility and the challenges associated with JTF operations.

Leading the Way

Finding ways for our Service components to improve the quality and efficiency of joint training is a USPACOM priority. An example is found in the Joint Training and Experimentation Network (JTEN). With JTEN connectivity, live (tactical) force feeds can be exported to operational-level training audiences engaged in joint exercises. These feeds can also act as virtual feeds to “adjacent”

forces training at physically disparate locales throughout the world. Conversely, LVC feeds can be imported to training areas within the USPACOM area of responsibility, such as the Pacific Alaska Range Complex, to benefit units training on tactical tasks. Exemplified during Talisman Saber-07, forward air controllers in Australia were able to receive crucial training in support of targeting for an

the Army is including other Service training requirements in the development of the joint master training plan for the Pohakuloa Training Area

A-10, flown via simulation from Eglin Air Force Base. In this scenario, the only thing missing was the visual image of actual bombs on target. The tyranny of distance is *not* insurmountable.

Another great example of recent USPACOM efforts to ensure joint training is

the work at the Army’s strategically important Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the Big Island of Hawaii. The Army is currently investing millions of dollars there to provide realistic training for forces in the region. PTA offers a unique opportunity to conduct a wide variety of live-fire training from weapons familiarization, to close air support, to convoy and helicopter live-fire exercises. Of note, the Army is including other Service training requirements in the development of the joint master training plan for PTA and has established procedures for proper environmental stewardship of the range.

As an example of the joint training at PTA, in March 2007, Army field artillery units conducted close air support operations with Air National Guard F-16 fighters. During the operations, Air Force joint terminal attack controllers provided terminal guidance for inert bomb drops, while Army field artillery units fired suppression of enemy air defenses with the M-777 lightweight howitzer. The Army is also working closely with the Navy and Air Force to expand restricted PTA airspace to provide better training in support of the Air Force’s continuous bomber presence. Last but not least, the Services are collaborating to redesign Bradshaw Army Airfield at PTA to support a wider range of C-17 training. Expanding C-17 operations at Bradshaw would benefit training opportunities not only for the Air Force but also for the other Services. For example, expanded operations would increase throughput of Stryker brigade combat teams between Oahu and PTA and permit increased usage by the Navy’s carrier-based aircraft at an outlying field.

U.S. Pacific Command is leading the way in facilitating joint training for all assigned forces within its area of responsibility. By methodically integrating and synchronizing the three lines of operation (strategic communication, infrastructure, and training), the command has been able to codify its joint training program through its newly developed Pacific Joint Training Strategy. Component commands have embraced the training strategy as a method of maximizing training opportunities and advancing capabilities to fight, when needed, as an effective joint and combined team. The success of the training strategy framework in U.S. Pacific Command makes the model potentially valuable to other Government agencies and nations. **JFQ**



Marines launch combat raiding craft from USS Juneau

Fleet Public Affairs Detachment (Michael D. Kennedy)