

The Tactical Engagement Team Concept: Operational Employment of DCGS-A in Support of Mission Command

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Introduction

As the Army faces the challenges of the new operating concept “Win in a Complex World,” Intelligence Warfighting Function (IWFF) training will increasingly focus on how we fight our primary weapons system to support expeditionary operations with light and lethal formations capable of deploying quickly. This new environment will be increasingly dominated by the proliferation of technology and rapid information exchange. Now more than ever, intelligence Soldiers are realizing that attaining and maintaining proficiency in the use of key mission command systems is essential for success. The challenge is that individual Soldier skills have atrophied, and leader knowledge has not kept pace to fully employ the Distributed Common Ground System-Army (DCGS-A).

We must teach and understand our weapons system from an operational employment perspective that focuses on interoperability and seamless intelligence in new operating environments. For the IWFF, this means our ability to fight DCGS-A has never been more important. To that end, we at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE) have engaged in a deliberate effort with Forces Command (FORSCOM) and the Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) in establishing a tactical engagement team whose purpose is to enable intelligence Soldiers to fully employ their weapons system, DCGS-A, within the context of executing their core intelligence tasks. This IWFF training model will close the gap between “schoolhouse” and unit collective training responsibilities to alleviate the lack of knowledge and confidence to operationally utilize DCGS-A.

The Tactical Engagement Team Concept

The tactical engagement team concept incorporates a team of subject matter experts (SMEs) from across the Intelligence Corps that plans, coordinates, and executes training to specifically enable leaders and Soldiers to go beyond simply understanding functionality of the system tools.

The concept is operationally focused on the system of systems that makes DCGS-A a key enabler in the overarching umbrella of the Army Battle Command System (ABCS). A team training event begins by focusing the intelligence professional on the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) of employing DCGS-A tools that specifically support the commander’s decision-making cycle and processes.

Rather than focusing on basic “buttonology” or training with our junior Soldiers, the unit is engaged as a whole — from the division commander and his key staff through battalion NCOs and junior analysts. To accomplish this goal, the tactical engagement team concept is designed around the following principles:

- Train intelligence leaders on how to employ the system
- Train intelligence leaders and Soldiers how DCGS-A enables mission command
- Show intelligence leaders how to establish the brigade combat team intelligence team on the network 24/7
- Show intelligence leaders and senior trainers “a way” to train the team to support the commander

- Tailor the tactical engagement team to the unit's needs then organize, plan, and execute based on unit objectives

Though each engagement is uniquely tailored and based on unit objectives, the tactical engagement team concept focuses on a broader understanding of the system as it pertains to the unit's mission and its place in the overall architecture.

Proof of Concept

In April 2014, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Capability Manager-Sensor Processing (TCM-SP) determined there was a gap in understanding the employment and use of the system of systems that gives DCGS-A its true power. The system, not unlike other complex technology, requires up-front proficiency from an individual perspective, but also an understanding by leaders of how the system should be employed and what tools it brings to the intelligence community in support of planning for operations, executing current operations, and preparing for future operations — essentially the intelligence cycle during combat operations.

The idea of tactical engagement teams was to teach intelligence professionals how to operationally tie-in DCSG-A to the ABCS network and use its tools to conduct intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) in support of the commander's military decision-making process, a foundational requirement of battle command. Additionally, the team trains the importance of collaboration and near-real time sharing of intelligence with operational partners as staffs attain and maintain a common operational picture that provides the unit a holistic and common understanding of the situation.

Realizing the span of this problem set, tactical engagement teams were scoped to focus initial efforts on the 11 active-duty divisions, their intelligence, operations, and communications teams (G2, G3, G6), and specifically the senior intelligence officer of each formation. After initial concept development, TCM-SP proposed the idea to the Army's divisional G2s and asked for a unit to step forward and help provide a proof-of-concept training event.

With command emphasis/focus and history with DCGS-A, the 1st Infantry Division G2, LTC Marc Spinuzzi, volunteered to provide the venue for the proof of concept with his entire division IWfF.

"Our DCGS-A demonstration was not intended to 'sugar coat' the system — we talked about what it does well and what it doesn't do so well. The two biggest problems we discussed were training and the DCGS-A interface. While there are plenty of training opportunities available for DCGS-A, we had found that most of them focused on a narrow set of tools. There were several great tools in DCGS-A that simply weren't being trained anywhere — tools like the Threat Characteristics Workcenter (TCW) and the ISR Synchronization Tool (IST).

The DCGS-A interface was also a common complaint. The system simply does not come across as "user friendly." It isn't intuitive, so Soldiers often struggle to find the tools they are looking for or to quickly make use of the ones they know. We thought we had a good solution to these problems. We needed to get our Soldiers to talk to someone who could listen to their thoughts and opinions and help adjust the training and the interface." — **LTC Marc Spinuzzi**

TCM-SP saw an opportunity to implement the new vision of "unleashing the full potential of DCGS-A, one tactical formation at a time" to provide the resident knowledge to build confidence and competence in the system. Rather than simply respond by sending a few trainers as LTC Spinuzzi anticipated, TCM-SP requested a complete list of 1ID's training objectives. They then put together a team of SMEs, drawn from not only TCM-SP but the entire DCGS-A enterprise, for a multi-day event at Fort Riley, Kan.

Over a 60-day period, the DCGS-A tactical engagement team facilitated a series of collaborative and interactive planning sessions with the 1ID chain of command and LTC Spinuzzi's intelligence teams. TCM-SP and 1ID staff linked each training event to training objectives and coordinated with numerous other organizations to provide SMEs for the team and support for the concept. Figure 1 depicts the glide path the two organizations followed to execution.

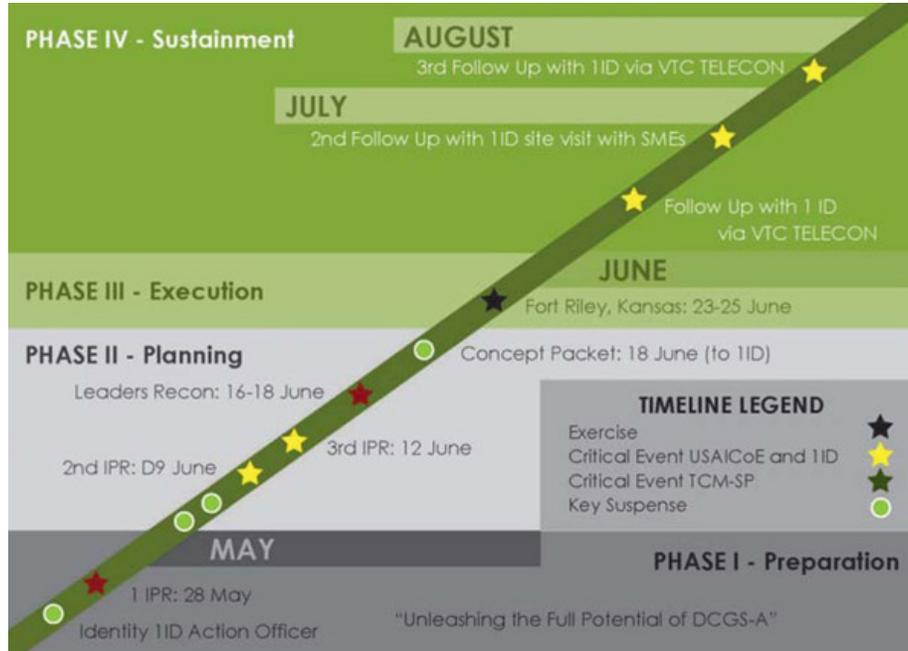


Figure 1 – Timeline Glide Path

The June 2014 engagement at 1ID started in the joint operations center. The 1ID G2, through the division G3, cut orders to all subordinate units within the division that required the division's IWFF personnel to attend training. This was critical and is now a standard for future tactical engagement team forums as seats were filled with commanders, S2s, and intelligence personnel from the outset. The event began with an introduction brief focused on educating commanders and staffs on DCGS-A capabilities. The assembled team of almost 30 SMEs was made up of individuals from the TCM-SP, Program Manager DCGS-A; USAICoE NCO Academy; Training, Doctrine, and Support; New System Training and Integration Directorate, and the DA G2. SMEs from all over the country came together with one clear objective —build leader and Soldier confidence, understanding, and competence of how to successfully employ DCGS-A.

Soldiers and leaders of multiple intelligence military occupational specialties (MOS) were trained in a myriad of system tools during a three-day event that focused on intelligence production and ABCS system interoperability. The tailored training is depicted in Figure 2.

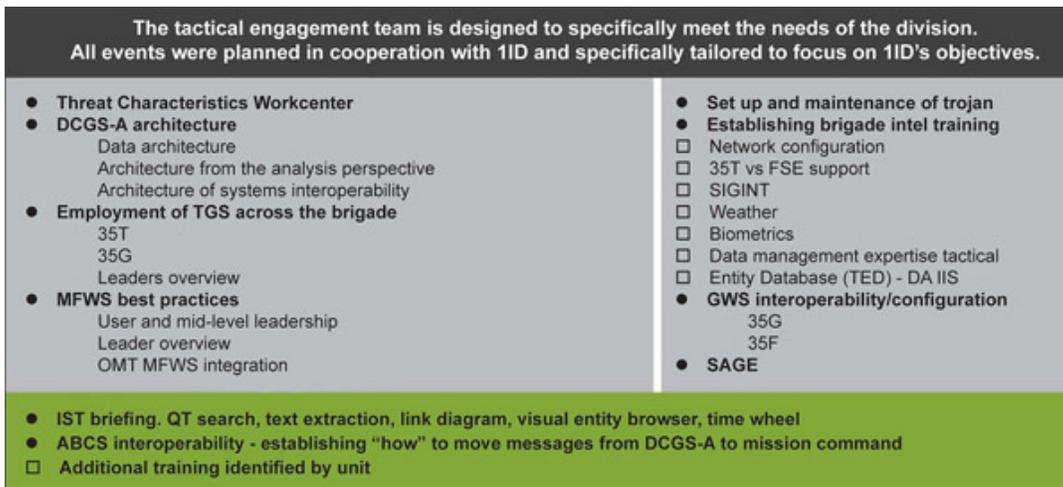


Figure 2 – Tailored Training

Issues identified were corrected on the spot. Tactical engagement team members were able to make on-the-spot adjustments to the Intelligence Fusion Server (IFS) configuration. During the event, they identified that the division would benefit from a "fixed site" configuration rather than their current deployable setup. This adjustment allowed users to have access to all data sources around the world rather than continuously changing to different areas of responsibility with specific data source sets. This minor change alleviated the burden of updating the end-point for the IFS for data mining and simplified their data management. The organic Field Service Engineers (FSEs) assigned to 1ID also gained direct lines of communication with key personnel from the team which enabled their ability to provide continued service once the event concluded. Figure 3 depicts the 1ID's overall training objectives and how TCM-SP resourced each to meet their requirements.

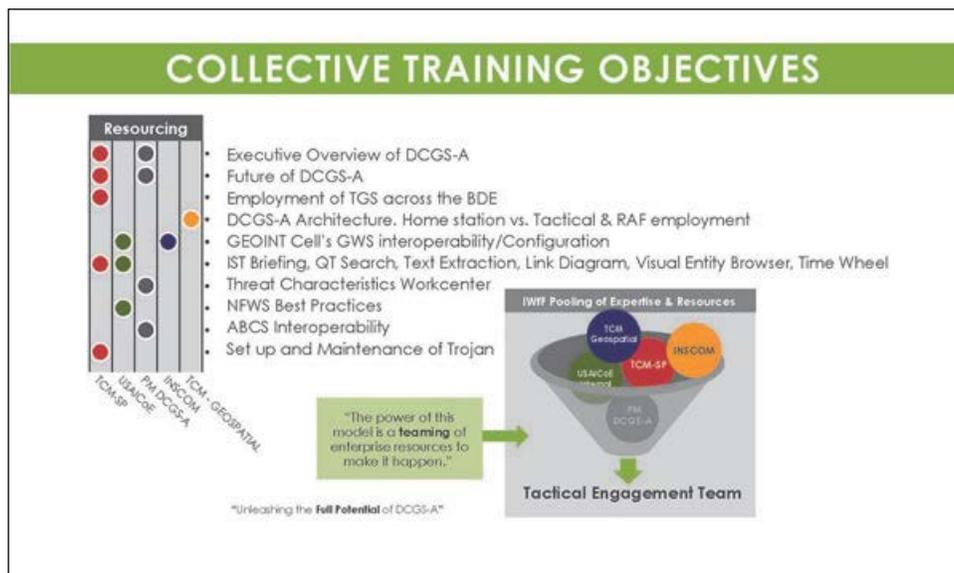


Figure 3 – Collective Training Objectives

Soldiers and leaders alike were directly connected to experts for each facet of the system and were encouraged to use those connections to further educate themselves and train their Soldiers. Overall, the engagement laid to rest some of the false perceptions of DCGS-A and demonstrated it provides a robust

capability that when understood, trained, and employed properly, will satisfy the commander's intelligence requirements.

"Key to our success was establishing command emphasis with brigade commanders to provide three uninterrupted and focused days of training enabling the opportunity to connect our intelligence community across [Fort Riley] and discuss trouble areas, TTPs and lessons learned in a near rankless environment. Senior intelligence leaders had a chance to pass on their lessons learned to junior intelligence Soldiers. Junior intelligence Soldiers provided candid bottom-up feedback. The majority of our after action report comments were requests for 'more,' which was a great sign."— **LTC Spinuzzi**

Capitalizing on the momentum, TCM-SP has begun the process of engaging other senior leaders across the Army in an effort to offer similar training. The DCGS-A tactical engagement team is quickly becoming a "must have" for G2s that shows a tailored, deliberate approach to the system can and will instill confidence in DCGS-A at the unit level.

Throughout the combined planning process with TCM-SP, commanders, S2/G2s, and units drive the composition of the tactical engagement team by identifying training requirements as well as gaps in knowledge and capabilities. As such, each team is organized, planned, and executed based on unit-specified objectives, giving it a tailored feel. TCM-SP, in coordination with the unit, builds a unit specific training strategy that complements existing program manager functionality training associated with new equipment training and doctrine, tactics, and techniques (DTT). Also, post-DTT, collective training strategies are established and are nested with FORSCOM G2 and INSCOM. The entire concept is a series of building blocks using existing systems provided by senior intelligence leadership. It holistically looks like this:

- Program manager provides functionality training when equipment is fielding.
- New Systems Training Division (ICoE) provides a 90-hour, IPB-focused training course to assigned analysts.
- INSCOM, through Foundry, provides DCGS-A advance production training to intelligence leaders.
- Tactical engagement team provides system of systems training, specifically focusing on operational employment and interoperability including focused training on tools or system components.
- Foundry sites provide sustainment training and offer internal collective training venues using the Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Tactical Proficiency Trainer (EWTPT).
- Training centers bring it all together by providing an environment that is truly ABCS centric.

Communicating Best Practices

The DCGS-A tactical engagement team concept facilitates the sharing of lessons learned, TTPs, and best practices throughout the Army. Each engagement provides a unique opportunity to collect and share Army-wide success stories on system employment, Combat Training Center best practices, regionally aligned force best practices, and TTPs for decisive action and counterinsurgency missions. Peer networking is another key benefit. Solid relationships facilitate continued sharing of ideas between formations long after the engagement is over.

As the tactical engagement team continues to engage the force, the collective knowledge will be socialized across formations and documented for use by the entire force. The tactical engagement team also provides leave behind products such as brigade training plans, TTPs, tactical standard operating procedures (TACSOPs), SOPs, and sample products to further enable unit success.

Tactical Engagement End States

The tactical engagement team strategy seeks to address current DCGS-A challenges at both the strategic and tactical levels. The end state is tactical commanders who are confident in their S2's ability to help them with battlefield visualization: *see themselves, see the enemy, and see the terrain*.

The unit's intelligence professionals gain confidence and improve their ability to complete MOS-critical tasks using DCGS-A. They understand the "so what" of producing intelligence products, are able to interface with the Army's ABCS architecture, and are confident and proficient at employing DCGS-A to its full potential in order to meet the commander's requirements. Unit intelligence Soldiers also gain a basic understanding of system troubleshooting skills, thereby reducing the reliance on contract FSE support.

The unit's intelligence leaders understand DCGS-A from a system of systems perspective and learn to ask the "right questions" pertaining to employment and intelligence product development. Additionally, they learn where to turn for assistance when required and how MOS 35T MI Systems Maintainer/Integrators can assist with technical issues. Lastly, confident and competent in its use, they are able to fully leverage the potential the system was designed to provide a tactical commander.

DCGS-A tactical engagement teams also assist the unit's intelligence team by providing a start point on "how to" train the intelligence discipline as a team versus individual MOS skills acting independently. They learn that working in concert with the other warfighting functions provides a powerful tool for command decisions. Most importantly, through integrating DCGS-A training with the unit's ABCS, the unit understands how to fight using DCGS-A to support mission command.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Lack of command emphasis/understanding of DCGS-A hinders proper implementation and utilization of the DCGS-A as a system of systems.

TASK: TCM-SP Strategic Engagement Team provides an overview to commanders on DCGS-A Intelligence Enterprise system of systems network and capabilities, collective training strategies, and maintainer efficiencies for the employment of DCGS-A.

PURPOSE:

- Discuss commander's production requirements.
- Define intelligence needs.
- Discuss communications architecture requirements.
- Develop awareness of training available to command.
- Discuss how to establish relationships with NEC and other key entities.
- Discuss training strategy.

TACTICAL ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Current DCGS-A system introduction, fielding and training does not build broad understanding within tactical level IWWF/MWWF leaders in the application and establishment of DCGS-A system of systems to provide intelligence support to training and operations.

PURPOSE:

- Establish relationships to enhance DCGS-A utilization, improvement, and user feedback.
- Build unit leadership understanding of the DCGS-A system of systems and its capabilities. Educate commanders and leaders on DCGS-A contributing value to support training, operations to build command emphasis on intelligence training across the Army.
- Train multi-intelligence MOS skill sets to establish requisite knowledge base enabling the unit's IWWF to maintain, sustain, and utilize DCGS-A.

Figure 4 – Strategic and Tactical Engagement Concepts

The Way Ahead

Figure 5 is a snapshot of the way ahead. Units from across the Army are taking advantage of the tactical engagement team concept.

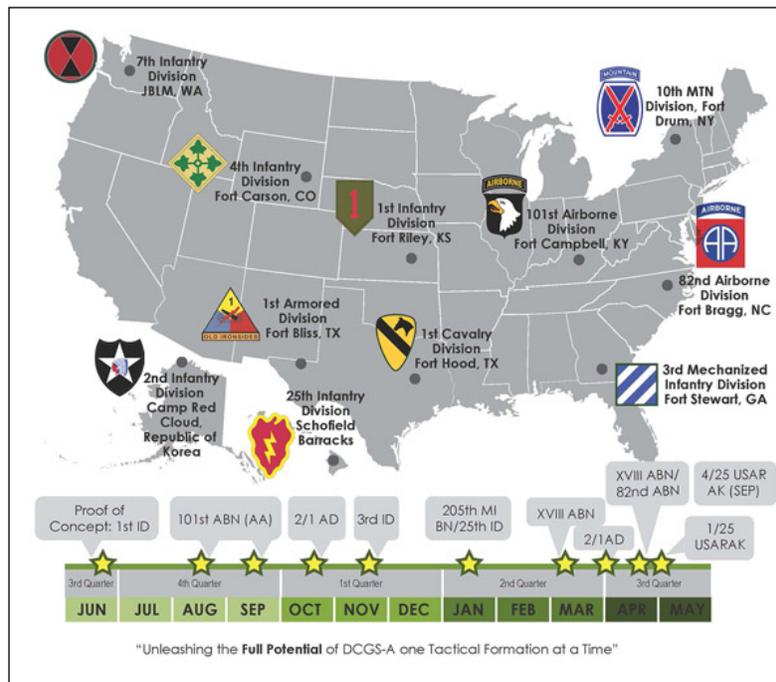


Figure 5 –A Snapshot of Units Taking Advantage of Tactical Engagement Team Concept

Conclusion

The tactical engagement team concept has given the force needed help in an age of complex technical systems. It provides the bridge between institution and collective training responsibilities and helps unit leaders and Soldiers better understand what the system does and how it helps them support their commander’s decision-making process.

DCGS-A by design is expeditionary and tailorable; it takes large amounts of data and provides structure to enable an analyst to clearly see through the fog of war. Tactical engagement unleashes and puts the potential of this system into the hands of our warfighters.

“TCM-SP brought in a world-class team of experts to address everything from DCGS-A best practices to brigade-level training strategies. The tactical engagement was a resounding success.” – LTC Spinuzzi

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