The Jungle:

Thinking about the Division's Role in UTM at the 25th Infantry Division

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Photo by SGT Valencia McNeal

Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division conduct jungle penetrator hoist training.

As the Army's premier jungle experts and America's Pacific Division, it is only appropriate that the 25th Infantry Division might think about training management using the jungle itself as a metaphor. The jungles of Hawaii and those that inhabit the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR) are broken down into four structural layers, which we might use a temporal construct to think about training management, readiness, and even leader development. The four layers are: the **emergent** layer (division), the **canopy** (brigade), the **understory** (battalion/squadron), and the **forest floor** (company/battery/troop and below).

The Jungle Metaphor

The emergent layer of the jungle reaches up and out from the canopy in direct contact with the sun's harshest rays, soaking up water with the jungle's most resilient foliage to help the vegetation below survive periods of drought. The trees that extend to the emergent layer are some of the jungle's oldest and strongest, as they are constantly exposed to strong winds and rainfalls. The animals that live in the emergent layer must be agile, able to survive with limited protection from the elements, and able to traverse the jungle's most treacherous heights.

In the canopy, we find a dense network of vegetation that creates a protective layer over the understory and forest floor. The canopy protects the lower two levels from wind, rain, and harsh sunlight, creating the humid and stable environment that allows life to flourish below. The leaves at this layer have adapted to repel water to the lower levels. And while the emergent layer relies on the wind to spread seeds, the canopy level plants rely on fruit to be dropped and ingested by the animals below to regenerate organic matter. These ideal conditions in the canopy create a thriving ecosystem of life across countless species.

In the understory, we find conditions that are even more dark, still, and humid. Plants here are much shorter and larger to help soak up the sunlight and rainfall that has passed through the canopy. Here, food and life are ample; animals enjoy safety from the elements and camouflage from predators.

And finally, on the forest floor, we find the most dynamic conditions in what would appear to be the quietest layer of the jungle. The forest floor is the darkest part of the jungle, making it the most challenging for plants to grow. But the floor is also where a great degree of activities occur that sustain life in the jungle. The foliage that falls to the floor decomposes and regenerates to provide nutrients to the rest of the jungle. Countless species rely on the regenerative processes that occur here to survive and thrive. Here, we see a vast network of interconnected root systems that allows the many plant and fungi species to communicate, adapt to changing conditions, and share resources in a massive symbiotic symphony of regeneration and growth.

Unit Training Management (UTM)

UTM is a universal part of the U.S. Army lexicon. And although the term is frequently used and generally understood, what exactly is training management, and for the

purposes of this article, what exactly do we mean when we talk about training management at the division level? Although the discrete components are explained in detail, you will be hard-pressed to find a concise Army definition of the term in any of the current or former 7-0 series doctrine. *The Leader's Guide to Unit Training Management* published by the Combined Arms Center in February 2014 defines UTM as "the process commanders, leaders, and staffs use to plan unit training and identify the resources needed to plan-prepare-execute-assess training."

At the brigade and below levels, UTM is most often described through explaining its primary component systems and processes: the 8-Step Training Model, the T-week construct, unit training plan (UTP) development, etc. UTM is also described as a parallel planning process that aligns with troop leading procedures (TLPs) at the company and below levels and the military decision-making process (MDMP) at the battalion and above levels. Further, UTM is often, and should be, described as an interconnected system that aligns with both the "plan-prepare-execute-assess" operations framework as well as the commander's activities in the operations process (understand-visualize-describe-direct-lead-assess).

Thinking about Training Management at the Division Level

While this largely scientific approach to understanding UTM is critical and serves our brigade and below echelons well, we must ask if this approach is applicable at the division level. Like the emergent layer of the jungle, we might think about the division's role in UTM as more than just the managers of another planning process.

The division headquarters, to include the command team and staff, has a significant responsibility to shape the training environment for the "canopy" below. The division exercises several critical duties in this model. First, the division shapes the training environment that creates the conditions for mission-essential task (MET) proficiency growth and the overall growth of training readiness. The division is the conduit between the executors of training and the operational environment, which includes higher headquarters' (HHQ) guidance and intent, the physical terrain, the enemy, the information domain, and resources availability, which may include land, ammo, money, facilities, transportation, fuel, and most importantly, time.

As it would in a tactical operation, the division performs as the shaping mission command node, providing guidance and intent, controlling the deep fight, defining the battle space, providing enabling assets, managing operating tempo (OPTEMPO), weighting efforts, and synchronizing activities. The division leverages its whole-of-staff capacity and its relationships with both HHQs and adjacent units to create the conditions in which UTM can be conducted efficiently. Further, the division is responsible for change management, finite resource prioritization, and clearly defining and communicating requisite training end states in order to build and sustain training readiness. The division protects the lower echelons from the naturally occurring known and unknown changes in the environment.

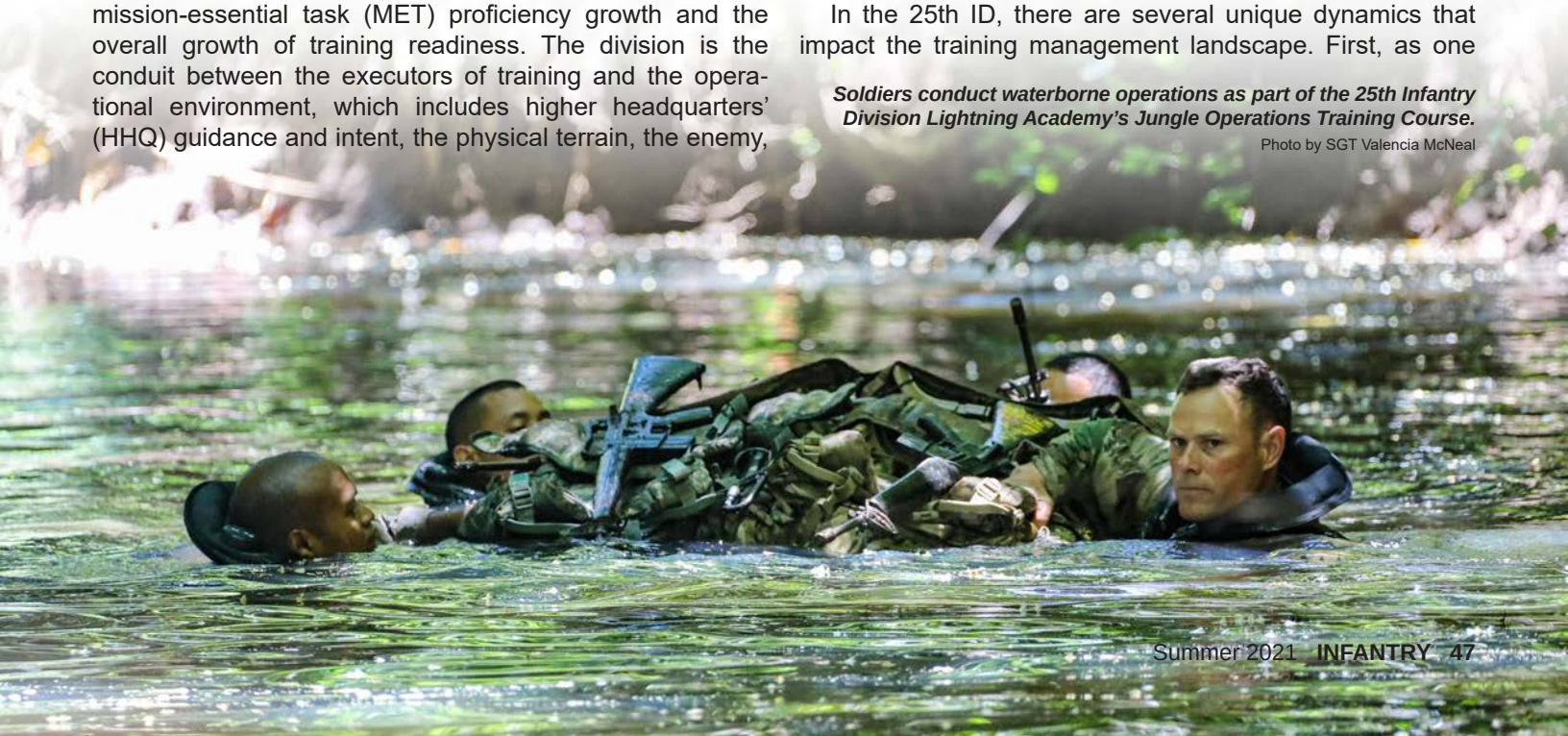
While the division shapes the training atmosphere through annual training guidance, policy, and long-range synchronization, the brigades — or the canopy layer — are focused on multi-echelon and multi-formation prioritization, resourcing, and deliberate planning. The brigade fits within the division's vision and guidance to provide direction and an explicit description of the desired capability end states for each subordinate element within each of the relative event horizons that drive their UTP. Battalions — or the understory layer — take this framework and provide specific focus and direction for each of the companies' unique requirements. Where the brigade generally plans and allocates resources, the battalion prioritizes and delivers those resources, including time, to the companies. The company and below — or the forest floor layer — forecasts, requests, and consumes those allocated resources in order to meet unit training objectives under the direct supervision of company-level leaders.

Unique Training Management Dynamics in the 25th Infantry Division

In the 25th ID, there are several unique dynamics that impact the training management landscape. First, as one

Soldiers conduct waterborne operations as part of the 25th Infantry Division Lightning Academy's Jungle Operations Training Course.

Photo by SGT Valencia McNeal



of the Army's outside the continental United States (OCONUS) divisions, we are task organized with two infantry brigade combat teams (IBCTs), each with two infantry battalions and a cavalry squadron, as opposed to a continental United States (CONUS) infantry division (ID) which is typically organized with three IBCTs, each with three infantry battalions and a cavalry squadron. In addition, in the last several years, the 25th redesigned its two Stryker brigade combat teams (SBCTs) to IBCTs. With the loss of the Strykers also came changes to our security cooperation partnerships in the Pacific. Some of our primary partners were in the process of fielding Stryker variants in their own armies, making other Stryker-capable formations a more preferred partner to those nations. When this change in the security cooperation landscape occurred, the 25th's role in major annual exercises like Pacific Pathways also changed. These strategic-level shifts had several down-trace impacts on how our two-IBCT division could maintain training readiness in a given fiscal year.

Photo courtesy of the 25th Infantry Division

Soldiers from the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade conduct a mission.

In one training year, the 25th ID conducts a collective training exercise (CTE) called Lightning Forge that serves as a brigade external evaluation (EXEVAL) in preparation for an annual Combat Training Center (CTC) rotation to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, LA. The division also supports a several-month rotation to the Pacific in support of Pacific Pathways in which a large part of one IBCT as well as a portion of the division staff, the combat aviation brigade (CAB), the division artillery brigade (DIVARTY), and the division support brigade (DSB) all deploy to multiple Pacific countries to conduct partnered training. This means that every year one IBCT conducts three back-to-back major events (the CTE, the CTC rotation, and the Pathways rotation) in order to allow the other IBCT to build training readiness through home-station collective training in preparation for the following year, where it becomes the primary training audience for the next iteration of those same three events. Regardless of which IBCT is the focal unit, the CAB, DIVARTY, and DSB continuously support these events in addition to their routine unit training requirements like aerial gunnery, sustainment gunnery, and artillery gunnery tables. Many of these events occur in parallel with and simultaneously to Pacific Pathways in order to ensure the division continues to build readiness across all metrics versus atrophying during our major engagements in the Pacific.

In addition to these three major events, the division also conducts Expert Infantryman Badge, Expert Soldier Badge, and Expert Field Medical Badge training/testing; participates in multiple joint and multinational command post exercises (CPXs); and conducts multiple additional partnership engagements that fall outside of the Pacific Pathways umbrella. All of this occurred on top of normal steady state home-station training requirements like mandatory Army Regulation (AR) 350-1 training; marksmanship qualification densities in accordance with the Integrated Weapons Training Strategy; individual warrior skills training; and collective training like situational training exercises (STXs), field training exercises (FTXs), and live-fire exercises (LFXs) at the team-through-battalion echelons. All the while, units are tasked to modernize, conducting multiple new equipment training and fielding events. And if that were not enough, at all times multiple units in the division are on standby to support crisis response requirements in the AOR, requiring a host of emergency readiness deployment exercise drills.

The second unique dynamic is derived from our command relationships to our HHQs. The 25th ID is the only non-Forces Command (FORSCOM) division in the Army. We have a Combatant Command relationship to USINDOPACOM, are assigned to the U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC — which is the Army Service Component Command to USINDOPACOM), and have an operational control relationship to I Corps. This command relationship dynamic is unique to the 25th ID and expands our support requirements to multiple stakeholders.

The third dynamic unique to the 25th is a function of our role as the U.S. Army Hawaii (USARHAW) command as well as our physical geographic location. The commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division simultaneously serves as the USARHAW commander and is administratively responsible for multiple Army entities located in Hawaii to include U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii, the 9th Mission Support Command, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, 18th Medical Command, 500th Military Intelligence Brigade, 94th Air and Missile Defense, and 311th Signal Command (Theater). Further, the 25th also has habitual relationships and supports external training requirements for adjacent units such as the Hawaii Army National Guard, University of Hawaii Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Special Operations Forces, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Marine Corps. These relationships bring with them a host of additional training support requirements as well as unique training opportunities.

Lastly, the island itself creates unique training management challenges. Transportation to the mainland for CONUS-based training exercises like JRTC typically incurs several additional weeks of movement for rolling stock and equipment. This also requires utilization of limited logistics support vessel capabilities. The relatively small size of Oahu, as well as the high demand for limited range and training facilities, makes land resource forecasting and allocation uniquely cumbersome. Not unlike many other Army training areas, but certainly more so in Hawaii, there are a multitude of environmental, cultural, and community-based considerations that our training planners must also account for. Finally, our largest training area — the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) — resides off-island some 200 kilometers across the Pacific Ocean on the Big Island, again increasing logistical and transportation planning factors for our brigades and battalions.

Approaching Training Management Hurdles

These challenges (and often opportunities) make long-range training planning and synchronization unique in the 25th ID. Without proper forecasting, these factors have the potential to overburden our two IBCTs as well as the limited support capacity of the DIVARTY, CAB, and DSB. As part of the comprehensive effort to prioritize people and to increase the overall readiness of the force, the Army is helping divisions achieve this predictability.

In the past several decades, we have witnessed the Army transition across several readiness models, to include the Army Force Generation Model, Regionally Aligned Forces, Objective Training Assessment, and the Sustainable Readiness Model. Recently, the Army has unveiled the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM) as the marquee readiness model that will guide the Army into the future. The model aims to synchronize training, mission requirements, and modernization efforts while aligning forces to specific geographic combatant commanders in order to maximize readiness and predictability. The model will be driven by the universal implementation of the Army Synchronization Toolset that will serve as the Army-level system of record to input, track, project, and synchronize training, mission, and modernization requirements across the force.

At the division level, we have also begun to transform, refine, and improve our systems and processes to execute the division-level training management philosophy previously outlined and set the conditions for a transition to ReARMM. The first step was defining what we wanted our two-year training model to look like for the division. Given the two-IBCT set and the multitude of requirements defined above, we created a predictable doctrinal template that uniformly laid out in time and space when major events should occur in order to give subordinate units maximum planning predictability.

Secondly, we developed annual direction of attack plans that pre-identified and forecasted known friction periods in order to allow the staff to begin shaping and mitigating risk much earlier in the planning cycle. Using event-based planning horizons and critical mission drivers (like CPXs, CTEs, CTC rotations, warfighting exercises, force modernization windows, and crisis response missions), we were better able to account for recurring high-risk periods, especially those centered around periods of transition. Further, it was clear that as a division planning efforts were generally stove-piped both within the operations enterprise as well as across the staff. We implemented a routine operations synchronization event and a semi-annual division-level resourcing conference aimed at synchronizing efforts across the organization.

These events have been designed to nest and feed into a routine division-level training management process like our annual training guidance publication, semi-annual training briefs, and training resources integration conferences. In addition, they nest and feed into the Army Synchronization and Resourcing Process, which most notably includes the semi-annual Army Synchronization and Resourcing Conference and Army Modernization and Equipping

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conduct training at Kahuku Training Area on Oahu on 13 March 2020.

Photo by SPC Jessica Scott

Photo by SPC Jessica Scott

Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment fire an M777 Howitzer during training at Schofield Barracks, HI, on 19 October 2020.

Conference. These efforts, as well as our endeavors to reform our orders process and develop a company-battery-troop training meeting handbook and division digital training guide, have significantly assisted the division in performing more as the "emergent" layer in service to the canopy and below layers. They have better allowed us to shape the future training environment by substantially improving predictability, prioritizing and synchronizing efforts, and allocating precious resources efficiently and effectively. All of this is in the pursuit of improving the lethality of the force through building and sustaining readiness.

As we look to the future of the division under both ReARMM and the new "People First" strategy, we are also beginning to ask some hard questions about what the future of our JRTC rotations may look like for the 25th Infantry Division. First and foremost, in line with the Army Senior Leader Message to the Force, we are thinking about the cost benefit of sending an IBCT from 25th ID to JRTC at all. Our primary mission is to conduct persistent engagement with regional partners to shape the environment and prevent conflict across the USINDOPACOM region. Thus, we must consider the extent to which we can build training readiness during collective training at home station with Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC) support and during Pacific Pathways. This allows for the potential to train and certify units in a jungle environment; gives us more flexibility to conduct force modernization; and significantly reduces the financial cost, equipment readiness risk, and high OPTEMPO effects to our Soldiers and Families associated with conducting a JRTC rotation, CTE, and Pathways deployment in the same year. If FORSCOM looks to reduce the echelon at which it focuses training at JRTC, it may be possible to accomplish many of training objectives here in the Pacific that we would otherwise accomplish at JRTC, all the while saving a lot of time, resources, and stress on Soldiers, Families, and equipment.

However, given the assumption that the 25th ID will continue to execute JRTC rotations as planned, there is the potential to allow brigades to conduct platoon LFXs and company combined arms live-fire exercises (CALFEXs) at home station, whereas LFX days at JRTC could be used as force-on-force contingency training. FTXs are where organizations build multi-echelon mission command and tactical proficiency. Training proficiency (to include live-fire confidence) can and should be focused on squad and platoons, culminating at most with company STX and CALFEX prior to attending a CTC rotation. Battalion and brigade-centric proficiency can be exercised and assessed using home-station CTEs, virtual or constructed mission command exercises, Pacific engagements, and mobile external evaluation (i.e., JPMRC). Brigade EXEVALs do not necessarily need to be JRTC prerequisites, although that training time should still be used to train and certify at least to the company level prior to any given JRTC rotation. In the potential absence of a JRTC rotation, that CTE window should be used to build repetition at the appropriate echelon in accordance with upcoming Pacific Pathways requirements and as nested with the annual training guidance.

The last paradox we are trying to reconcile is the tension between the Army's transition to preparing for large-scale combat operations (LSCO) against potential near-peer competitors and the Army's shift toward focusing on the company level and below lethality while assuming risk at the battalion and above levels. In the LSCO environment, as well as in ReARMM, the division is the central maneuver unit. Thus, it could be argued that from an operational perspective we should be focusing on brigades and division across all warfighting functions (WfFs) and mission-command competencies.

Further, it could be posited under this paradigm that divisions should also be the central focal point as the rotational unit (RTU) at JRTC. This position, however, does not meet the intent of the current "People First" strategy that aims to simultaneously increase small unit lethality while decreasing OPTEMPO and reducing stress on Soldiers and Families. Because of this seemingly competing dynamic, as a division, it is becoming even more important that we are able to do both well. Our ability to understand this new operating and training environment, shape guidance accordingly, and synchronize activities in time and space have become all the more critical. We need to find creative ways to build and retain strategic overmatch, both in our technological capabilities as well as in our tactical and operational proficiency, while simultaneously meeting the Army's guidance to build readiness by truly putting our people first.

Readiness

Depending on the venue, reference, or discussion topic, we all tend to think and talk about readiness in very different ways. In AR 525-30, *Army Strategic and Operational Readiness*, readiness is defined as the ability of U.S. military forces to fight and meet the demands of the National Mission Strategy (NMS), with unit readiness being defined as the ability of a unit to perform as designed. In the 25th ID, we are thinking and talking about readiness as an essential component of the commanding general's operational approach, which is comprised of four primary lines of effort (LOEs): people, partnerships, readiness, and innovation/ modernization.

The readiness LOE is defined as the ability to sustain an agile and ready force capable of maintaining persistent engagement with regional partners to enable a free and open INDOPACIFIC that is prepared to rapidly deploy, fight, and win LSCO anywhere in the world. The LOE is divided into four sub-LOEs:

1) Operational readiness: Assigned forces are capable of deploying regionally and worldwide with little notice.

2) Training readiness: Units are trained, certified, and ready to execute their mission-essential task list (METL) tasks.

3) Manning readiness: Units are sourced to meet training and deployment readiness objectives.

4) Equipment readiness: Our equipment, property, supply stocks, and management processes enable units to maintain constant operational readiness.

The ultimate end state of this line of effort is that every Light Fighter in the 25th ID is physically fit, mentally tough, and highly trained as jungle operations experts to deploy, fight, and win in LSCO anywhere in the world. This framework has served as an essential primer to assist the division in thinking about readiness, but it is also clear that these definitions do not completely encapsulate the intangible essence of readiness that we are also aiming to improve upon.

We believe that readiness is more than just projected P,S,R,T ratings. Although these projections may serve as reliable indicators of readiness, true readiness resides in our organization's ability to perform as a cohesive team in austere conditions, resting firmly upon a foundation of trust as the fundamental bedrock of the Profession of Arms. In practice, we are talking about putting a Soldier and his or her fire team onto a faraway objective in all conditions on short notice with the maximum opportunity for success.

This means that both Soldiers and their parent organizations must be "ready" across a host of domains. And those readiness conditions must exist prior to those Soldiers stepping onto that hypothetical objective because it will be far too late to build readiness once their boots hit the mud. Those Soldiers must be physically and mentally prepared for the rigors of the operational environment; they must be emotionally and spiritually healthy, resilient, and capable of overcoming the challenges of combat; and they must be personally ready, to include their personal finances, awards, records, evaluations, and personal affairs. They cannot have anything hanging over their heads when they step onto that objective. They must know that their Families are safe, taken care of, and happy. Their equipment must be in top-notch condition; they must have faith in their equipment — not only knowing how to use it but that it works and they can rely on it when it counts. They must be trained and proficient in all of the skills and expertise they will need when they encounter the enemy. And perhaps most importantly, they must have faith in each other. This leads us to the critical discussion on the most important component of readiness that the division, as well as the Army, has been aggressively focused on — trust.

We need to find creative ways to build and retain strategic overmatch both in our technological capabilities as well as in our tactical and operational proficiency while simultaneously meeting the Army's guidance to build readiness by truly putting our people first.

People and Trust

Although the components of readiness described above are certainly essential elements of organizational and Soldier combat readiness, we understand that all of this is meaningless without trust. Trust is the intangible equalizer that makes or breaks organizational effectiveness and readiness. In many ways, our high OPTEMPO and overemphasis on training readiness have allowed a gap in trust to develop across the Army as we seemingly lost sight of a simple truth — that our people are our greatest asset.

In line with the Army's efforts to reestablish people as our first priority, the 25th ID has taken great strides to reconnect with our Soldiers in order to continue to cultivate a culture of trust that will indelibly increase our lethality and operational readiness. If our formations are stricken with corrosive diseases like sexual assault and harassment, racism, and suicide, how can we really be ready to fight tonight, even if our P,S,R,T ratings look good on paper? If we do not have faith in each other, if we do not truly know each other and really care for one another, how can we really perform as a cohesive team when it counts?

In the past several months, leaders at all levels have placed a renewed sense of urgency on tackling this concept. We have directed leaders at all levels to find ways to not only better manage OPTEMPO in pursuit of properly burdening lower echelon leaders in order to reduce stress on Soldiers and Families, but we have also aggressively pursued leader-to-Soldier engagement. This is more than just performing counseling or getting to know our Soldiers; it is

about reestablishing the right culture. A culture where every Soldier, every leader, every family member feels equally accountable to our greatest mission of achieving zero sexual assaults/harassments, zero equal opportunity incidents, and zero suicides.

In line with our HHQs and the Army-wide cultural change effort, we have implemented monthly readiness days and annual readiness weeks. These events aim to provide safe spaces for healthy and open dialogue, guided discussion facilitation, and improved leader-Soldier engagement. The normal stresses of Army life, taken together with the constant bombardment of social crisis in the past few months, have taken a toll on our formations. These events have helped to begin to open up critical dialogue and have had a major impact on our formations. Leaders at all echelons continue to leverage creative solutions to provide quality engagements in their units. And while we recognize that these events alone cannot change the Army culture, they have helped serve as a catalyst for change. Small unit leaders across the division recognized during these events that their Soldiers need more of this type of engagement on a more routine basis; they helped all of us remember in the midst of all of these training requirements that our most important commitment is to each other.

In February, the division also conducted an inaugural Squad Leader Forum. This event spanned several weeks and provided a full day of activities for all of the squad and section leaders from each battalion in the division. During these forums, squad leaders worked together to better understand what putting people first really means. They worked to better understand how we can better care for our Soldiers, how we can build and maintain cohesive teams, and how we can overcome the identified impediments to be successful in those first two endeavors. This event served as a powerful opportunity for the division command team and leaders at echelon to hear the perspectives of our junior NCOs who have the most profound direct impact on our Light Fighters. Moving forward, the division is taking the feedback received during these forums and building a long-term certification process to better assist, educate, and enable squad leaders to better care for their Soldiers.

Photo by 1LT Ryan DeBooy

Soldiers perform a traditional warrior dance during the 25th Infantry Division change of command ceremony on 5 November 2019 at Schofield Barracks.

Leader Development

A significant part of our effort to change culture is leader development strategy. In Field Manual 6-22, the Army defines leader development as "the deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process — founded in Army Values — that grows Soldiers and Army Civilians into competent and confident leaders capable of decisive action. Leader development is achieved through the lifelong synthesis of the knowledge, skills, and experiences gained through the training and educational opportunities in the institutional, operational, and self-development domains." And while this definition certainly captures leader development as a process, we again ask: How can we think about leader development as a mindset? In his article "Leadership Development: A Review in Context," David V. Day separates leader development and leadership development.[1] He describes leader development as an investment in human capitol, teaching-coaching-mentoring subordinates to prepare them for their current and future jobs. But he also takes an interesting approach to thinking about leadership development, in which we might think about the effort in terms of investing in social capitol. Meaning, we focus on establishing a cultural mindset of growth instead of purely focusing on individual skills and attributes. In this model, the organization becomes a leadership factory where subordinates are empowered and intrinsically motivated to add value to the development of their subordinates, peers, and superiors alike without being formally directed to do so. In this model, the community of practice is the central focal point — not the individual. The organization as a whole becomes an environment in which growth and development are core values that supersede routine task accomplishment.

This new leadership development framework requires us to also distinguish between the manager and the leader. Managers are focused on transactional task accomplishment, organization performance, and meeting the routine demands of the job. In contrast, leaders are transformational; they drive their teams to achieve a culture of peak performance through idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. They are true role models of the espoused values of the organization, they stimulate growth in their followers, they deeply empathize and care for their people, and they inspire those around them to achieve excellence. They rely firmly on the referent power earned though trust, strength-of-relationship, and rapport rather than the power granted by their rank, expertise, or ability to reward and punish. These leaders see leadership as a negotiated social contract

between themselves and their followers, rather than a mandate afforded by their position.

As a critical component of our effort to prioritize people in pursuit of attaining true readiness as described above, we again ask: How does the division serve as the "emergent" layer to help shape this culture of leadership development? Like this upper layer of the jungle, the division cultivates the soil for regeneration; it provides the sunlight, water, and nutrients that enable life to flourish, and it creates the ideal conditions for the layers below to do the same.

Photo by SGT Mitchell Ryan

Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conduct operations during Lightning Forge 20 on 15 July 2020.

In the 25th, the division has unequivocally placed people as our number one priority, with leadership development as a significant part of that effort. From the commanding general down, leaders at all echelons have provided enormous command emphasis on their leadership development programs. This shift in culture has manifested itself across the operational, institutional, and self-development domains. Our Light Fighters enjoy countless operational growth opportunities while conducting partnership engagements in the Pacific and in Hawaii. Our multinational training exchanges, training events, and exercises routinely provide our Soldiers with high-impact and unique experiences. In addition to CONUS-based schools and online training, our Hawaii-based Lightning Academy provides our Soldiers with ease of access to a multitude of institutional development opportunities such as the Small Unit Ranger Tactics, Jungle Operations Training Course, and Air Assault School.

Further, staff training programs and leadership professional development series at echelon have significantly improved tactical-level expertise and operational/strategic-level awareness. Leaders are sharing developmental readings, initiating professional dialogues, and teaching-coaching-mentoring their junior leaders. But what is most encouraging is that Soldiers and leaders alike are taking the initiative to do the same through self-development and developing their subordinates without HHQ direction. This infectious culture of leadership development and growth mindset have steadily become a foundational pillar of this division. As a learning organization, we continue to re-think how we are truly prioritizing our people to help our units and the Army remain ready to meet the increasingly complex demands of the future operational environment.

Conclusion

The rapid pace of disruption in the modern era has taught us one critical lesson: You must change to survive. As the Army continues to adapt to the demands of the operational environment, like the jungle continuously evolves, we too must endeavor to deliberately change in order to maintain our operational relevance and capability. We have to change the way we train and fight, the way we think and plan, and the way we act and treat each other. At the 25th Infantry Division, we are inviting new innovative approaches across all formations and practices to help our division remain the premier fighting force in the Pacific theater and the Army's foremost jungle experts.

Notes

[1] David V. Day, "Leadership Development: A Review in Context," *The Leadership Quarterly* 11(4) (December 2000): 581-613.

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