CATS:

The Army's Unit Training Strategy

By Captain Todd R. Ruggles

What is CATS? Ninety percent of the Army's leaders who were surveyed answered this question in one of the following three ways:

- "I don't know."
- "It's another Army acronym."
- "It's a small, furry, four-legged mammal that chases mice."

CATS ***is*** another Army acronym; it stands for "Combined Arms Training Strategy." And CATS should be an instrumental component in the professional toolbox of every Army leader and trainer. This article serves as an introduction to CATS and explains how leaders can use CATS to simplify the development of unit training plans.

Types of CATSs

There are two types of CATSs:

- **Unit CATS.** A unit CATS, which is based on tables of organization and equipment, is unique to unit type.
- **Function CATS.** A function CATS addresses functional capabilities common to multiple units and echelons.

The development of a unit CATS takes several items (doctrine, the unit organizational structure, the specific unit task list of the higher headquarters, and the mission-essential task list [METL]) into account to organize the unit's collective tasks in an Army forces generation-supporting strategy that provides a crawl-walk-run training path for achieving task proficiency. A unit CATS contains a menu of task selections that provide unit commanders with a base strategy for the preparation of training plans. Functions required for readiness reporting are integrated, and resources required to support event-driven training and provide commanders with a methodology to train all tasks are estimated. A unit CATS provides commanders with the tools necessary to plan, prepare for, and evaluate unit training.

A function CATS, which supplements a unit CATS, may support functions that are not unique to a specific unit type—or it may support the training of warfighting functions or missions that support operational themes. It contains most of the same data elements as a unit CATS. Sustainment and protection CATSs are examples of function CATSs. A group of collective tasks that are trained together in one or more events constitute a task selection; a number of task selections, in turn, constitute the training strategy for a particular unit.

Importance of CATS

CATSs are proponent-developed, Army-approved strategies that effectively describe the ends, ways, and means of achieving and sustaining unit warfighting readiness. Commanders and trainers are provided with a task-based, event-driven training template designed to train the unit to execute its core capabilities and table of organization and equipment missions. Every CATS contains a menu of doctrinal events and recommendations for—

- Tasks to be trained.
- The training audience.
- Training gates.
- Training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations.
- Frequencies of events.
- Durations of events.
- Multiechelon training.
- The purpose.
- The outcome.
- Execution guidance.
- Resource requirements.

CATSs serve as comprehensive, single-source training strategies. They act as training templates that provide a starting point for the development of the unit training plan. CATSs contain unit-specific training strategies that can be easily modified to meet training requirements based on the unit mission and the commander's assessment. They effectively support the Army forces generation training model and METL-based training and readiness reporting. Unlike the old mission training plans which, once printed, were difficult and impractical to change, the digital CATS provides

units with the most current tasks in real time. The digital nature of the CATS offers tremendous flexibility, allowing units the ability to work with the Collective Training Division; Directorate of Training and Leader Development; U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, to update tasks as new equipment or tactics, techniques, and procedures modify or invalidate existing CATSs. Furthermore, Headquarters, Department of the Army, has directed the use of CATSs and the Digital Training Management System (DTMS) via Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development*. According to AR 350-1, "In the absence of a directed mission, the commander will use [full spectrum operations,] METL-based CATS . . . to prepare the unit to perform those core missions for which the unit was doctrinally designed to execute across the spectrum of operations." [1]

Development of CATS

The first stage in the development of a CATS involves the verification of the unit table of organization and equipment, an analysis of the doctrinal mission, a determination of unit capabilities by warfighting function, and the establishment of a standardized METL for brigade level and above. Task selections are then made, and tasks that would logically be trained together are grouped. The resulting unit task list serves as the foundation of CATS construction. Upon completion of this stage, a front-end analysis is sent to field units for input.

Upon the conclusion of the front-end analysis, a coordinating draft is developed. The draft outlines progressive training events for each task selected. The audience, frequency, and duration for these training events is determined and then synchronized with the Army forces generation training cycle. The unique requirements, resources, conditions, proficiency goals, and execution guidance are determined for each event. Information for all events is applied to a template training calendar that identifies the multiechelon training and critical

Legend:

AAR - after action review
CATS - Combined Arms Training Strategy
CB - chemical/biological
CBRN - chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear
CBRNE - chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives
CRT - chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives response team
DOD - Department of Defense
FP - force protection
IED - improvised explosive device
LIN - line item number
LMTV - light–medium tactical vehicle
LTX - lane training exercise
MILES - Multiple, Integrated, Laser Engagement System
MTRS - Man-Transportable Robotic System
PDS - personal decontamination site
STT - sergeant's training time
TADDS - training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations
TE - technical escort

Task selection: The title for the task selection. This title best identifies the group of supporting tasks. Task selections include a number of supporting tasks.

Frequency: The recommended number of times the task selection should be trained during one training year.

Event: The title of the event for the short-range unit training strategy.

Training audience: All units, elements, and individuals necessary to perform the task selection and ensure that training achieves the commander's desired end state and proficiency.

TADSS: Information about one of the events selected as appropriate for training this task selection. This identifies the name of the event, relevant TADSS, and the recommended number of iterations for the event in a given year. (The absence of a number indicates that there is not a recommended number of iterations.)

Multiechelon training: Other task selections recommended to be performed by subordinate elements during this training.

Training gates: Training gates that should be achieved before training the task selection.

Action gates: Suggested prerequisites.

Facilities: The recommended type of facility to be used.

Purpose: Explanation of why this particular event was selected to train this task selection.

Outcome: The end state of training by the unit as a result of training the task selection in the specified event.

Execution guidance: Information to assist the commander in determining the appropriate event for training a task selection. This also includes information to assist in the execution of the training.

Resources: Approximate resource requirements to support the event. The commander may adjust the levels based on specific training objectives and local training conditions.

This is a sample task selection from a CBRNE battalion (TE) CATS. A task selection is defined as a grouping of collective tasks trained together in one or more events. A number of task selections constitute a training strategy for a particular unit.

Following are key points regarding task selections and event data:

- Task selections are used in CATS to identify a group of collective tasks normally trained together in an event.
- Task selections that encompass a unit's requirements to sustain training readiness are collected in the CATS for that type of unit.
- Event data identifies who to train, the training methods, the duration of training, the conditions, and the resources required.
- Event data also identifies recommended multiechelon training and training gates and provides the purpose, intended outcome, and information about conducting the event.

CATS

Task Selection: Conduct Chemical/Biological (CB) Analytical Missions (CRT) (03-TS-9003)

Active frequency: Quarterly (4.0)
Reserve frequency: None
Collective task(s):

03-5-0013	Conduct a CB analytical mission	09-2-2000	React to unexploded ordnance (UXO)
03-5-0018	Establish a PDS	63-2-4017	Maintain communications
03-5-0021	Conduct a transload mission	63-2-4040	Provide communications
07-2-5081	Conduct troop leading procedures (platoon–company)	63-2-4326	Perform composite risk management procedures
08-2-0003	Treat casualties		

Types of events: Class, LTX, STT, and STX

Event: STX for Conduct CB Analytical Missions (CRT)
Condition: Run
Training audience: Company headquarters (03537RA00); CRT (03537RB00)
TADSS: 71-TD-1903: TADSS to support live/hands-on FP training; MILES; required ammunition (live/blank); IED simulations; CBRN training aids.
Multiechelon training:
Training gates:
Action gates: STT for Conduct CB Analytical Missions (CRT)
Facilities: Local training area
Purpose: To gain and maintain TE battalion team proficiency in the tasks associated with conducting CB analytical operations under "walk" conditions.
Outcome: The TE battalion team/analytical section personnel can plan, prepare for, and conduct day/night CB analytical operations in tactical and nontactical environments.
Execution guidance: This exercise trains TE battalion team/analytical section personnel to a "walk" level of proficiency in the tasks associated with conducting CB analytical operations in tactical or nontactical environments. The team leader provides and/or coordinates for necessary external resources, including observers/trainers. The estimated duration for this STX includes time to prepare, execute, perform an AAR, and repeat training as necessary. (Planning can be done in garrison before movement to the STX site). This is not intended to be a separate exercise conducted solely to train these tasks and should be incorporated with other tasks (STXs) to form a more complex and challenging exercise. This training should focus on team and section operations; MILES equipment could be introduced during this training if it takes place under tactical conditions. The company commander and/or observers/trainers will conduct AARs at the appropriate intervals.
Resources:

Company Headquarters (03537RAOO)

LIN	Quantity	Nomenclature	Operational tempo	Class 3 – Petroleum, oil, and lubricants	Class 5 – Ammunition		
			Distance	Gallons	DOD Identification Code	Quantity	Nomenclature
L44595	1	Launcher, grenade, 40-millimeter: single-shot rifle, mounted, detachable, with equipment					
M09009	1	Machine gun, 5.56-millimeter: M249			A075	200	CTG, 5.56-millimeter, blank with M27 links (SAWS)
P98152	1	Pistol, 9-millimeter automatic: M9					
R95035	5	Rifle, 5.56-millimeter: M16A2			A080	200	5.56-millimeter blank F M16A1/A2
T60081	1	Truck cargo: 4x4 LMTV with equipment	20 miles	4.0			
T61494	2	Truck utility: cargo/troop carrier 1 1/4-ton, 4x4 with equipment (Humvee)	20 miles	4.0			

CBRNE Response Team (03537RBOO)

LIN	Quantity	Nomenclature	Operational tempo	Class 3 – Petroleum, oil, and lubricants	Class 5 – Ammunition		
			Distance	Gallons	DOD Identification Code	Quantity	Nomenclature
L44595	1	Launcher, grenade, 40-millimeter: single-shot rifle, mounted, detachable, with equipment					
M09009	1	Machine gun, 5.56-millimeter: M249			A075	200	CTG, 5.56-millimeter, blank with M27 links (SAWS)
M74226	3	Mine-resistant vehicle:	20 miles	24.0			
P98152	15	Pistol, 9-millimeter automatic: M9					
R45351	1	Rifle, sniper, .50-caliber: M107					
R95035	14	Rifle, 5.56-millimeter: M16A2			A080	560	5.56-millimeter blank F M16A1/A2
T6149	3	Truck utility: cargo/troop carrier 1 1/4- ton, 4x4, with equipment (Humvee)	20 miles	6.0			
ZOO45	1	MTRS: MK I					

Sample task selection from a CBRNE battalion (TE) CATS

training gates required and the application of strategy based on the Regular Army or Reserve Component Army forces generation cycle.

The final stage before delivering the CATS to the field via the DTMS and the Army Training Network (ATN) involves vetting the coordinating draft with the units and obtaining approval from the proponent.

Locations of CATSs and Tasks

CATSs can be found in two locations—the DTMS and the ATN. Task selections from the unit task list—the major component of a CATS—can be found at the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Knowledge Network (CKN).

DTMS

DTMS, which can be accessed at <*https://dtms.army.mil*>, is a Web-based, commercial, off-the-shelf software product tied to a relational database and customized according to Field Manual (FM) 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders for Full Spectrum Operations*. Optimized for use at brigade level and below, DTMS allows for the planning, resourcing, and management of unit and individual training at all levels. Collective and individual tasks, weapons qualification information, Army physical fitness test results, and AR 350-1 mandatory training and deployment tasks from "enlistment to retirement" are complied within the DTMS. Relevant training products are available through DTMS due to frequent updates of approved collective and individual tasks, CATSs, the Army Universal Task List, and the Universal Joint Task List. The primary advantage of accessing CATSs through DTMS is that it allows the user to perform evaluations. However, users must have a DTMS account to access CATSs in this manner.

ATN

The ATN, which can be accessed at <*https://atn.army.mil*>, is a single, Web-based portal for Army training resources. It is securely located behind Army Knowledge Online (AKO) single, sign-on protocols. The ATN contains many unique tools that provide users with an easy, intuitive means to comment on any of its features. Some of the major features of the ATN include—

- **FM 7-0.** This data-based version of FM 7-0 contains links to additional resources that can be used to clarify and expand the content of the manual in an easy-to-navigate format. Future versions will contain direct links to the Training Management feature, which is also available through the ATN.
- **Training Management.** Training Management is the successor to FM 7-1, *Battle Focused Training*. It provides step-by-step guidance on how to plan, prepare, execute, and assess Army training. The content of Training Management and FM 7-0 are inextricably linked.
- **Training Enablers.** Training enablers include a METL viewer, CATSs, the DTMS, the Training Event Planning Tool, Army Warrior Tasks, and FM 7-15, *The Army Universal Task List*.
- **Collaboration.** There are many collaborative tools built into the ATN site, providing Soldiers with a quick and easy way to supply input to the ATN team and share ideas across Army training communities of practice.
- **Army Training Network to go (ATN2GO).** ATN2GO is a downloadable iPhone/iPad and Android application (app) that transfers useful Training Management features from the ATN to Soldiers' mobile devices. It supplies Training Management to Soldiers when and where they need it.

An advantage of the ATN over the DTMS is that an individual account is not necessary; all Soldiers can access ATN using their common access cards (CACs) or AKO logins and passwords. A disadvantage of the ATN is the user's inability to perform evaluations of training events.

CKN

Although CATSs cannot be accessed via the CKN, the CKN—which can be accessed at <*https://www.us.army.mil/suite/designer*>—provides chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) leaders with the ability to easily select and print unit task lists, which are the building blocks of CATSs. The CKN Web site requires a CAC login or AKO login and password.

CATSs are living documents that are capable of quickly and readily adapting as the needs of the Army and the unit change. All Army leaders and trainers should be knowledgeable about CATSs and their value to a unit's Training Management. CATS assist unit training managers with the development, conduct, and evaluation of training, thus reducing planning time and assisting warfighters in achieving their missions.

Endnote:

[1]AR 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development*, 18 December 2009.

References:

FM 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders for Full Spectrum Operations*, 23 February 2011.

FM 7-1, *Battle Focused Training*, 15 September 2003 (rescinded 1 October 2009).

FM 7-15, *The Army Universal Task List*, 27 February 2009.

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