

CATS

—combined arms training strategy

By Michael Sheheane

The Army has always been big on acronyms. Sometimes it seems that we go to great lengths to develop a name for something just so we can make a catch acronym. In the weapons area we have LAWs and TOWs. In the equipment area we have HMMWVs

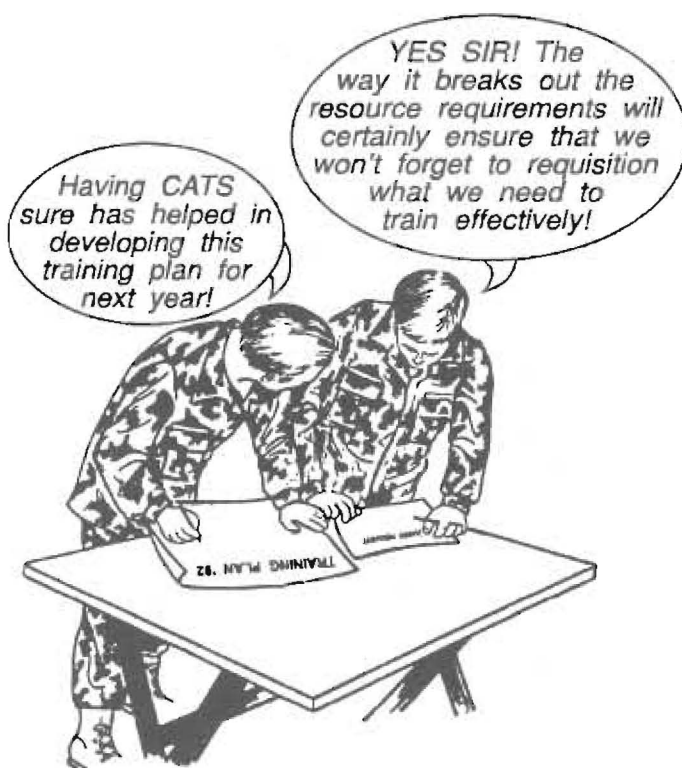
and RATT Rigs. Trainers and training managers deal with METLs and AMTPs. Now there's a new acronym that, when finalized, will have a considerable impact on all aspects of training and training management.

CATS

When fully implemented, CATS, or if you prefer, the Combined Arms Training Strategy, will accomplish two objectives. First, it will serve as a tool for assisting trainers and training managers in planning and conducting training. Secondly, it will provide a tool to assist Army decision makers in the identification, acquisition, and management of resources to support future training. In other words, it is envisioned that CATS will serve as the "driving force" for training resource procurement, development, and management.

Unit Strategy

CATS has two parts, or sub-strategies, that complement each other: the unit strategy and the institutional strategy. The unit strategy is a descriptive or recommended strategy for developing and sustaining proficiency in both active and reserve units. The maneuver training section of the unit strategy identifies specific training events to be executed in a training year and the recommended frequency of training. The resources needed to support the training are documented to include ammunition, OPTEMPO miles, and training aids,



devices, and simulations. The soldier training sub-section of the unit strategy describes training events and frequencies of training to sustain the proficiency of individual soldiers in their units. Trainers will be able to use this section to plan individual training for all MOSs found in their unit. The unit strategy also includes a gunnery training section that describes weapons training to enable individuals and crews to sustain proficiency with all assigned weapons.

Institutional Strategy

The institutional strategy is prescriptive in that it provides the trainer with information on resident training requirements and how they qualify students. The trainer will have access to the programs of instruction for all professional development courses, MOS-producing courses, additional skill-identifier-producing courses, and functional courses taught at the branch school. This information will allow the trainer to link the training that takes place in the branch school to the training that takes place in the unit. The unit trainer will be able to see the tasks on which his soldiers were trained and what training aids, devices, simulations, and simulators (TADSS) the student used during the resident course. The unit trainer can then build on this resident training experience to improve training in the unit.

Resource Management

An additional aspect of CATS will be the ability for trainers and resource managers to more readily capture

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resource requirements. As previously mentioned, CATS documents all resources needed to accomplish the training event described in the strategy from numbers of rounds of blank ammunition to the miles traveled or hours of operation for a piece of equipment during a specific training event. Having this information will ensure that resource managers from the installation level to DA have a good grasp of "what" and "how much" is needed for a unit to train. It will also allow the trainer to more readily forecast requirements and make appropriate adjustments to his training plan when adequate resources are not available to accomplish a certain event. For example, the training schedule calls for a battalion FTX in a certain month. By consulting CATS, the S3 has a good estimate of what resources are needed to perform the FTX. If those resources are not available, the S3 will be able to make adjustments to the training schedule to incorporate a less resource-intensive training event,

such as a CPX.

This brief discussion will certainly not make anyone an expert on CATS, and there are many questions that TRADOC and the branch schools will have to resolve before CATS is implemented. Hopefully, it has provided some information that will alert the training managers in the field as to what will be coming their way when CATS is finalized and fully implemented.

Mr. Michael W. Sheheane is chief, Unit Training Branch, Individual and Unit Training Course Development Division, Directorate of Training and Doctrine, USACMLS. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in education from the University of Alabama and a master's degree in criminal justice from Auburn University. He is a member of the Alabama Army National Guard and presently serves as executive officer, 156th Military Police Battalion. He has completed the resident military police officer basic and military police officer advance courses and is currently enrolled in the nonresident command and general staff college.