

NEWS FROM THE CTC

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When Do We ENDEX?: Maximizing Home Station Training



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Executive Summary

This article is intended for all units conducting home station training to prepare themselves for a combat training center (CTC) rotation. The author discusses a recurring trend at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) that units struggle to synchronize warfighting functions (WfF) during decisive action and joint forcible entry during the rotation. CPT Ketterer surmises that this is due to the way units train while at home station. He goes on to explain a simple way to include other WfFs while training, by not concluding the training event once the unit has consolidated and reorganized, but to continue until accomplishing other tasks, such as, requesting for MEDEVAC and evacuating all casualties, receiving replacement personnel, and resupply. Other WfFs could easily be added if a little more thought was placed on the training event.

“When do we ENDEX?” is the most popular question asked of an Observer, Coach Trainer (OC/T) while training at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). There is even a local bar called the ENDEX Bar. While meant as a joke, this simple question is the key to success when training our leaders and Soldiers.

A recurring trend observed at JRTC in Fort Polk, LA is the lack of synchronization between war fighting functions (WfF) during decisive action and joint forcible entry simulated combat operations. When explaining why frictions occur during the after action review (AAR) process, the majority of the unit’s responses center around the fact that they do not train or integrate all WfFs at home station. When asked how the unit plans to fix these integration issues, the typical answer is to train harder on or devote additional training time to the specific WfF. This training construct is the cause of the lack of integration rather than the solution. Soldiers and leaders must integrate all of the WfFs while planning and training to ensure success.

Consider this common scenario utilized to train our maneuver Soldiers. In a situational training exercise (STX) lane, the maneuver squad conducts the battle drill that is required to seize an objective. Once the limit of advance is reached the squad leader calls the enemy prisoners of war (EPW), demolitions, and aid and litter teams. They consolidate the LACE (liquid, ammunition, casualty and equipment) report and begin movement off of the objective. At this time ENDEX is called and the AAR process begins.

Is this really the appropriate time to call ENDEX? What did these junior leaders and Soldiers just learn? This scenario demonstrates a missed opportunity to exercise a synchronized operation. The unit had the opportunity to integrate elements of multiple WfFs in this scenario: sustainment, mission command, protection, fires, and intelligence.

Take the same scenario and add just one additional WfF. When adding the sustainment WfF, do not call ENDEX as the squad begins movement off of the objective. We should force the squad to move their wounded Soldiers to a casualty collection point (CCP), secure the area and begin the 9 line process. The platoon sergeant (PSG) moves to the CCP and collects the casualties with the platoon medic and other required sustainment assets. They use a CASEVAC vehicle to distribute the replacement personnel, water, ammunition and equipment necessary to bring the squad back to strength and continue the mission. The PSG then utilizes the CASEVAC vehicle to move the casualties to a company CCP. The 1SG and the company senior medic with a CASEVAC or MEDEVAC platform, take control of the casualties and submit the 9 line MEDEVAC to the battalion. The PSG then submits the consolidated platoon ammunition, water, and food consumption reports to the 1SG to enable resupply at the Company level. This scenario demonstrates how much better prepared this unit is to execute follow on missions.

The above is an example of adding just one additional WfF into our training environment. Each training scenario must be developed through each WfF lens to ensure maximum integration. This applies to every type of unit in both tactical and garrison environments, whether we are training on a range or conducting garrison sick call operations. At every echelon the question “When do we ENDEX?” must be asked to ensure that we do not focus on a singular WfF and miss training opportunities. Training our Leaders and Soldiers to exercise enterprise level integration of the WfFs is vital to the success of our units and the Army. By asking the question “When do we ENDEX?” before the training begins; we ensure that all WfFs are planned for, synchronized and executed.

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