CHAPTER 5
Assessment

*The best form of "welfare" for the troops is first class training,
for this saves unnecessary casualties.*

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

Evaluation of Training

*E*valuation of training measures the demonstrated ability of individuals, leaders, and units against specified training standards. Evaluation is integral to training.

EVALUATIONS

Evaluations can be informal, formal, internal, and external, or any combination of these. *Informal* evaluations take place whenever a leader visits ongoing training. This type of evaluation provides real time feedback on the training environment and the proficiency resulting from training. *Formal* evaluations are resourced with dedicated evaluators and are generally scheduled in the long-range or short-range plans. Formal evaluations are normally highlighted during short-range training briefings.

Internal evaluations are planned, resourced, and conducted by the organization undergoing the evaluation. *External* evaluations are planned, resourced, and conducted by a headquarters at an echelon higher in the chain of command than the organization undergoing the evaluation.

Evaluations for individual and small-unit training normally include every soldier and leader involved in the training. For large-scale training events, evaluators sample a number of individuals and subordinate organizations to determine the likelihood of the entire organization performing specific mission essential tasks to standard.

During and after the evaluation, evaluators prepare their findings and recommendations. They provide these reports to the evaluated unit commander and higher commanders as required by the headquarters directing the evaluation. Evaluation documentation can range from an annotated T&EO for an internal training evaluation to a comprehensive report on Reserve Component units during AT periods. Another example of detailed evaluation reports are CTC take home packages. These packages consist of videotapes and written documentation of after-action reviews (AARs), a report of unit strengths and weaknesses as noted by the observer-controllers, and recommendations for future home station training.

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

The after-action review provides feedback for all training. An AAR is a structured review process that allows training participants to discover for themselves what happened, why it happened, and how it can be done better. The AAR is a professional discussion that requires the active participation of those being trained. An AAR is not a critique and has the following advantages over a critique:

- Focuses directly on key METL-derived training objectives.

- Emphasizes meeting Army standards rather than pronouncing judgment of success or failure.

- Uses "leading questions" to encourage participants to self-discover important lessons from the training event.

- Allows a large number of individuals and leaders to participate so that more of the training can be recalled and more lessons learned can be shared.

   The after-action review (AAR) consists of four parts:

- ***Establish what happened.*** The evaluator and the participants determine what actually happened during performance of the training task. For force-on-force training, OPFOR members assist in describing the flow of the training event and discuss training outcomes from their points of view.

- ***Determine what was right or wrong with what happened.*** The participants establish the strong and weak points of their performance. The evaluator plays a critical role in guiding the discussions so that conclusions reached by participants are doctrinally sound, consistent with Army standards, and relevant to the wartime mission.

- ***Determine how the task should be done differently the next time.*** The evaluator leads the group in determining exactly how participants will perform differently the next time the task is performed. This results in organizational and individual motivation to conduct future sustainment training at desired levels of proficiency.

- ***Perform the task again.*** This is done as soon as possible to translate observation and evaluation into corrective action. Additional training allows the participants to apply the lessons learned during the AAR. Leaders understand that all tasks will not be performed to standard. Therefore, during the short-range and near-term planning process, they provide

flexibility in training events and schedules which allow for additional training immediately following the AAR.

   The AAR is often "tiered" as a multi-echelon leader development technique. Following an after-action review with all participants, senior trainers may use the AAR for an extended professional discussion with selected leaders. These discussions usually include a more specific AAR of leader contributions to the observed training results. More important, these sessions are also excellent forums for discussing more advanced topics that should flow from the training just completed, such as emerging doctrine or implications for future force integration actions.

EVALUATORS

   Evaluators must be trained as facilitators to conduct after-action reviews that elicit maximum participation from those being trained. In addition to being able to plan, prepare, and conduct AARs, effective evaluators must also—

- Be familiar with the evaluated organization's METL.

- Be tactically and technically proficient in the tasks evaluated.

- Know the evaluation standards.

- Follow the tactical and field SOPs for the organization being evaluated.

- Apply relevant information about the evaluated unit, such as wartime missions, personnel turbulence, leader fill, and equipment status.

   Experience has shown that providing qualified individuals to evaluate others is well justified. Not only do the individuals and units receiving the training learn from the evaluator, but the evaluator learns by observing the evaluated unit.

Senior Leaders' Role

Senior leaders ensure that evaluations take place at each level in the organization. They ensure that every training event is evaluated as part of training execution and that every trainer conducts evaluation. Senior leaders use evaluations to focus command attention by requiring evaluation of specific mission essential and battle tasks. They also take advantage of evaluation information to develop appropriate lessons learned for distribution throughout their commands.

The use of evaluation data can have a strong effect on the command climate of the organization. Therefore, senior leaders make on the spot corrections, underwrite honest mistakes, and demand aggressive action to correct training deficiencies.

TRAINING FEEDBACK

Senior leaders use evaluation information as one component of a feedback system. To keep the training system dynamic, senior leaders use feedback to determine the effectiveness of the planning, execution, and assessment portions of the training management cycle. These feedback systems allow the senior leader to make changes which lead to superior training results. To be effective, this feedback flows between senior and subordinate headquarters, within each command echelon, and among a network of trainers that may cross several command lines.

Some sources of training feedback available to senior leaders are—

- Training planning assessments.

- Senior, lateral, and subordinate headquarters training plans.

- Quarterly training briefings (AC).

- Yearly training briefings (RC).

- Resource allocation forums such as PBACs or range scheduling conferences,

- Personal observations.

- Leader development discussions.

- Staff visits.

- Evaluation data.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Evaluation reports provide the chain of command with feedback on the demonstrated training proficiency of individuals, leaders, and units relating to specific training events and objectives. However, senior leaders must also be concerned with broader concepts. Therefore, they perform organizational assessments that aggregate a large number of evaluations.

Assessments are neither limited to the training planning cycle nor strictly related to training issues. Assessment is the key feedback mechanism that causes continuity among many systems. At all echelons of command, it links such diverse systems as training, force integration, logistics, and personnel. The feedback that occurs during organizational assessment allows synchronization of all functions and echelons of an organization.

The senior leader establishes a command assessment program that—

- Fixes responsibility within the staff and subordinate headquarters for gathering and analyzing evaluation data and preparing recommendations.

- Concentrates on the output of training— individuals, leaders, and organizations prepared to fight and win on the battlefield.

- Allows the senior leader to monitor outcomes and take action to reshape priorities, policies, or *plans* to overcome assessed weaknesses and to sustain demonstrated strengths.

Important sources of evaluation data for the senior leader's assessment of his organization's ability to accomplish wartime missions are listed at Figure 5-1.

SOURCES OF EVALUATION DATA FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

- Personal observations of training
- Assessment and feedback from higher headquarters
- Staff visit reports
- Unit status reports
- Training briefings
- Local ARTEP evaluations and CTC take home packages
- After-action reviews from FTXs, ODTs, gunnery periods, or other major training exercises
- AT reports
- SQT, CTT, and CE results (components of ITEP)
- UCOFT/MCOFT results
- AAR-generated reports from training activities
- EDRE reports
- Maintenance and logistical evaluations and technical inspection results
- Nuclear weapons technical inspections such as technical validation and nuclear surety inspections
- IG special inspections or command readiness inspection results
- Commander's inspection program
- Force integration reports and feedback
- Army Audit Agency reports
- APFT scores
- Weapons qualification records
- Readiness group assistance input
- Annual service practice results

Figure 5-1.

The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in war.

Chinese proverb