

Training the Operational Intelligence Force: On Target for Military Intelligence Readiness in 2022

by Colonel Timothy J. Parker

U.S. Army photo by SGT Melissa N. Lessard



A Soldier with 163rd Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion, 504th MI Brigade, pulls security while conducting a certification exercise for their MI platforms, March 20, 2019, at Camp Bullis, TX.

As I've listened to commanders talk about readiness, there's concern we haven't spent enough time truly mastering the basics. It's not fair to compare our Army against any other, so I compare us against ourselves...I don't want us to move on to a higher level of training until we have completely mastered the previous one...If we can't win at the point of contact, we're probably not going to win at all. Mastering the fundamentals is critical and a top priority.

—GEN Michael X. Garrett
Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Command

Introduction

The U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) Commanding General, GEN Michael X. Garrett, directed his active and reserve component commanders to focus on winning at the point of contact. He recognized a mismatch between training strategy, our readiness models, and readiness metrics.¹ Further, GEN Garrett proffers “mastering the fundamentals” as the way to address the mismatch, making it critical and a top priority.²

In this article, I discuss three key concerns for the operational intelligence force—organization, maintenance, and training—and how we are addressing each concern. We, as members of the intelligence warfighting function, must take personal and professional responsibility for fixing ourselves. Embedded are concrete actions that we can take to master the fundamentals and achieve readiness in the operational intelligence force.

GEN Garrett's “Freedom Six” Priorities³

1. **Maximize Unit Readiness:** Focus leadership, training, and resources on improving unit combat readiness to meet Combatant Command demand and contingency requirements.
2. **Operationalize Army Total Force Policy:** Take actions to advance and instill one standard of manning, equipping, and training to build decisive action readiness across the Total Force.
3. **Master the Fundamentals:** At all echelons, codify and enforce standards and warfighting doctrine to ensure every Soldier, leader, and unit is resourced and ready to win in combat.
4. **Strengthen Leader Development:** Develop agile, adaptive leaders of character through Army development programs and tough/realistic training.
5. **Care for Soldiers, Civilians, and Families:** Enhance individual performance and resilience foundational to building unit readiness by improving unit, community, and institutional focus upon the health of the force and families.
6. **Inform the Future Force:** Leverage our role as the Secretary of the Army's conventional Service Force Provider and largest operating force command to shape development of the future force.

Historical Context

It was clear to me when I assumed the role of corps G-2 in 2015 that the intelligence warfighting function was having a tough time transitioning from counterinsurgency to large-scale ground combat operations. Within the first couple of months after arriving at I Corps, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, I had to replace one of my brigade combat team (BCT) S-2s who had lost the confidence of his commander. I selected a strong, capable major to backfill him, and he deployed with the BCT to the National Training Center less than 90 days later.

The rotation was a disaster for the intelligence warfighting function. The post-mortem exposed three enterprise-level faults: *systemic organizational dysfunction, foundational maintenance flaws, and a lack of intelligence Soldier experience and training to meet the needs of large-scale ground combat operations.* We needed a concerted, synchronized, and sustained effort to get well. Army military intelligence (MI) leaders became aware of the issues, and efforts were underway to correct them. More importantly, key innovators in our warrant officer and noncommissioned officer corps also recognized these faults, were not satisfied with the status quo, and were motivated to elevate the skills within the operational intelligence force. FORSCOM partnered with the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) and the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE) to form a unified effort. The triad leveraged Foundry program resources and leader empowerment at the lowest level to achieve readiness. As a result, the operational intelligence force is on track to master the fundamentals by the end of fiscal year (FY) 2022; however, we must remain ever vigilant and unrelenting in the pursuit of readiness or risk a loss of momentum.

Organization

Some may still remember the transformation from the Army of Excellence to the modular Army in 2003, when the MI force design transitioned from fighting divisions and corps to a BCT-centric modular force designed for success in counterinsurgency. With the counterinsurgency requirements diminished, we are returning to a design that can meet the threats from peer competitors in *large-scale ground combat operations.* An approved force design update will take effect in FY 2022; it will transition the BCT MI company from counterinsurgency to large-scale ground combat operations. The update will integrate signals intelligence (SIGINT) with electronic warfare military occupational specialties (MOSs) to create a new intelligence cell. These changes will enhance and codify an improved BCT

collection management capability needed for transition to large-scale ground combat operations. In addition to force design updates for the BCT, new intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW) battalions will be activated to provide direct support to division and corps operations. These redesign efforts optimize information collection resources to maximize fires, effects, and decision making for commanders. We have proven the concepts behind the new design in exercises and codified the design in the new organization with a forward look at future multi-domain operations support requirements. Although designing these organizations has been challenging, the energetic efforts of personnel at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, both USAICoE and Army Futures Command, have brought a critical capability to the operational intelligence warfighting function.

Organization: What You Can Do Now to Prepare

- ◆ Know when your unit is scheduled to transition or receive new formations.
- ◆ Know the space, equipment, doctrine, and training requirements for that formation, and request the required additional resources as soon as possible.
- ◆ Lean forward—begin the transition to new force design updates 12 months before activation.
- ◆ Schedule progressive training and certification for the new organization.
- ◆ Coordinate support from division and your local Foundry site.

Maintenance

Over the past 15 years, our Army created the most effective counterinsurgency intelligence operation that ever existed—bar none. However, rapid innovation and fielding led to a reliance on contract maintenance and an overall atrophy of maintenance systems and processes at all levels. The Army IEW maintenance system is regaining its health thanks to a herculean effort by the Program Executive Office—Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors; system program managers; FORSCOM G-4; and IEW maintenance professionals throughout the Army. By the end of calendar year 2020, FORSCOM intelligence systems should all be fully integrated into the Global Combat Support System—Army, which will enable the execution of standard maintenance practices. We must implement and maintain rigorous training and inspection programs to ensure maintenance standards across the operational intelligence force. Maintenance is a fundamental that we must master to enable success in operations.

Maintenance: What You Can Do Now to Get Your Equipment Ready

- ◆ Ensure your systems are in the Global Combat Support System–Army, and review weekly for proper preventive maintenance checks and services. No faults? No parts on order? It is either a miracle or poor maintenance. PROBABLY NOT A MIRACLE.
- ◆ Ensure your systems have scheduled services that synchronize with the brigade engineer battalion or IEW battalion maintenance program.
- ◆ Ensure your unit has a command maintenance discipline program. Get copies of inspection checklists, and conduct an internal command maintenance inspection!
- ◆ Ensure your units have adequate IEW maintenance facilities.

Training

The three pillars of the FORSCOM intelligence training effort are nested in the *Army Intelligence Training Strategy 2020* to achieve the FORSCOM Commanding General’s mastering the fundamentals objective by the end of FY 2022.⁴

- ◆ The first pillar is the Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS), which is the process to certify the operational intelligence force and sets the training bar for units.
- ◆ The second pillar is the Comprehensive Operational Training Support to MITS program, which is a series of courses that drive us toward mastery of each intelligence discipline, with the Digital Intelligence Systems Master Gunner (DISMG) course as the culminating achievement.
- ◆ The third pillar is the FORSCOM Intelligence Warfighting Program, which focuses on enabling corps and division G-2s and expeditionary-military intelligence brigade (E–MIB) commanders to achieve mastery of intelligence support to large-scale ground combat operations.

Essential to all facets of FORSCOM MI training is the Foundry program, the engine of FORSCOM’s intelligence training and readiness, which provides top secret and National Security Agency network access and infrastructure, access to training and instructors, and funding to execute collective and specialized intelligence training.

Military Intelligence Training Strategy

MITS is modeled on the maneuver training system of four tiers, each with multiple tables. The tiers progress from Tier 4 (individual) to Tier 3 (crew) through systems certification in Tier 2. An example of Tier 2 is scenario-driven collection and analysis tasks for the BCT SIGINT collectors working with

the SIGINT analysis node to demonstrate collective SIGINT proficiency. The Army caps MITS at Tier 1, which is an integrated evaluation with the BCT field training exercise. This is usually a BCT’s pre-combat training center or deployment exercise. USAICoE published the final BCT MITS training circular in 2019 after testing and refinement using a series of training pilots.⁵

Four BCTs conducted a MITS Tier 2 and Tier 1 pilot program in FY 2019. The results were immediate and tangible as certified crews arrived at the combat training center with operational equipment and were able to fight their systems. Although this might not seem like a high bar to achieve, it signified the turning of a training proficiency corner. In FY 2020, FORSCOM Operations Order 151221 required units to complete all four MITS tiers: for 31 FORSCOM active component BCTs, annually; and for 27 component 2 BCTs, every 5 years. While deployments and the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic significantly reduced the number of Tier 1 (BCT collective) events in FY 2020, most units found a way to train the other tiers with positive results. The three major challenges identified that—

- ◆ BCT and brigade engineer battalion commanders lacked an understanding of MITS and therefore failed to fully support it.
- ◆ Insufficient skilled observer, coach/trainers were available because of the operational tempo.
- ◆ There was a need to further enrich the MITS scenarios.

MITS: What You Can Do Now

- ◆ Noncommissioned officers must constantly train on MITS Tier 4 (individual) skills with their Soldiers. Seize every opportunity to master the fundamentals!
- ◆ Once certified, commanders must stabilize crews so that they continue to increase in proficiency, especially before employment at a combat training center or operation.
- ◆ Ensure your MITS training synchronizes with your brigade engineer battalion and BCT training schedule, and coordinate through your division G-2 and Foundry program director. BCT and division training calendars should reflect MITS Tier 2 and 1 at a minimum.
- ◆ Every Foundry site has a MITS planner called the collective training exercise integrator; find that person and leverage their expertise to help plan your training!
- ◆ Volunteer to be an observer, coach/trainer for another unit’s MITS training. It is a great way to learn.
- ◆ Get to the combat training center for an opposing force or observer, coach/trainer ride along. See how MITS is applied in the fight.

USAICoE is committed to continuously improving MITS, and the INSCOM Foundry program manager is committed to supporting MITS execution with exercise control capabilities, Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Tactical Proficiency Trainer integration, and IEW range facilitation. In FY 2021, you can expect the Army to publish training circulars for battalion S-2 MITS; MOS 12Y, Geospatial Engineer; MOS 35L, Counterintelligence Agent; and division and corps-level MITS. We will develop E-MIB MITS alongside the new concept for employment and doctrine for the new IEW battalion Total Army Analysis effort.

Comprehensive Operational Training Support to MITS

MITS has dramatically improved the standard block and tackle tasks of our BCT intelligence warfighting function, arguably achieving a level of competence across the force. Our experience at the dirt combat training centers made it clear that we had lost mastery-level skills needed to apply our craft to large-scale ground combat operations. We had systems that worked and crews that could operate them, but we lacked mastery of the application of the intelligence warfighting function. We looked to the extraordinarily successful FORSCOM DISMG program for a solution. The DISMG program brought together determined intelligence subject matter experts to construct a rigorous course of “cutting-edge” best operational practices. DISMG course graduates return to home station and teach the Gunner Entry Program preparatory course to build more capability at home station and ultimately create more DISMG candidates to continue the cycle. DISMG course graduates can be credited with the initial turnaround in the BCTs. FORSCOM, in coordination with INSCOM and USAICoE, conducts the DISMG course, along with all the Comprehensive Operational Training Support to MITS courses, at the Army Foundry Platform located on Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Using the DISMG course model, we developed advanced operational courses (AOCs) for each intelligence discipline. AOC-Geospatial Intelligence and AOC-Human Intelligence are fully operational, while AOC-SIGINT, AOC-All Source, AOC-Counterintelligence, and AOC-IEW Maintenance are moving through the development cycle toward completion. We intend for every AOC graduate to be capable of returning to home station and teaching the Intermediate Operational Course; in some disciplines, reach-back to the Army Foundry Platform or the intelligence warfighting function enterprise may be necessary. Units can gain expertise very quickly using the Intermediate Operational Course/AOC process, and over time, FORSCOM could build train-

ing depth and expertise while normalizing best practices. We develop the AOCs in concert with both the institutional training base at USAICoE and the functional intelligence base in INSCOM. Lastly, the DISMG courses and AOCs maintain a block of time to engage the related program managers, Army capability managers, and Army Futures Command to give feedback, or to provide thoughts, on new systems, capabilities, and modernization of the force. Once again, the Foundry program, supported by INSCOM Soldiers and Civilians, serves as the foundation for the Comprehensive Operational Training Support to MITS program.

Comprehensive Operational Training Support to MITS/AOCs: What You Can Do Now to Enhance Your Skills Capability

- ◆ Plan your training to get DISMG course and AOC graduates before your MITS and combat training center/employment execution. This is even more important for Reserve and National Guard units!
- ◆ Use your DISMG course and AOC graduates to train the rest of your force at the discipline-appropriate Intermediate Operational Course and Gunner Entry Program sessions at home station. Uplift your entire force!
- ◆ Require your MI professionals to complete the “Digital Intelligence Systems Foundational Course.” This online training course teaches what we should know as professionals and sets the stage for follow-on learning. It can be found at https://elc.learn.army.mil/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1.

FORSCOM Intelligence Warfighting Program

With most Army officers only experienced in intelligence support to counterinsurgency, the G-2 sections slashed in manning by 35 percent in FY 2016, and the current E-MIB designed for counterinsurgency, we needed to put a concerted effort to rapidly build competency leading to mastery in our G-2 sections and E-MIBs. This need became the genesis of the FORSCOM Intelligence Warfighting Program. The cornerstone of the program is the FORSCOM intelligence warfighting forum, a 1-week academic forum focused on professional education and discussions with corps and division G-2s and E-MIB commanders, ending in Mission Command Training Program wargame vignettes. FORSCOM conducts two sessions of the forum per year, and based on captured best practices and experience, we are constantly updating and improving the forum. The feedback following the first two forum events has been very positive. The FORSCOM intelligence warfighting forum is only one part of the larger intelligence warfighting program. A newly created FORSCOM G-2 position, the division/corps intelligence program manager, focuses on enabling the division and corps intelligence

warfighting function as they prepare for warfighter exercises and other exercises and operations. The division/corps intelligence program manager is linked into planning conferences in order to synchronize support and orchestrate architectural and training requirements. Another addition is the INSCOM Foundry senior intelligence advisor, who is the most crucial element of the program. A seasoned former G-2, the senior intelligence advisor focuses on coaching and mentoring division-level intelligence warfighting function leaders on their path toward a warfighter exercise or deployment. Lastly, the synchronization with, and support from, Mission Command Training Program ensures we move forward with consistency and relevancy.


**FORSCOM Intelligence Warfighting Program:
What You Can Do Now to Master
Intelligence Warfighting**

- ◆ All G-2/E–MIB commanders should attend an intelligence warfighting forum; follow-on participation can help inform new selectees and keep you up to date on latest tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- ◆ Ensure you are lined in with the FORSCOM G-2 division/corps intelligence program manager and the Foundry senior intelligence advisor.
- ◆ Ride along with the Mission Command Training Program world class opposing force!
- ◆ Be a guest observer, coach/trainer with Mission Command Training Program for another unit warfighter exercise.
- ◆ Round out gaps in division and corps exercises to gain experience in your unit.

Conclusion

GEN Garrett highlighted the need for intelligence professionals to master the fundamentals. We will use all of FORSCOM’s intelligence warfighting function capability, partnered with INSCOM and USAICoE, to master the fun-

damental skills needed to win against a peer threat. By addressing the three major concerns for the operational intelligence force—organization, maintenance, and training—intelligence leaders can address these challenges in the context of their operational environment.

We, as leaders, cannot let known obstacles (for example, distractions in garrison and the grind of daily Army life) or “black swan events” (such as pandemics and hostile actions by state/non-state actors) distract us from achieving mastery of our intelligence skills. We cannot falter in our drive for, and personal responsibility to achieve, comprehensive readiness. Readiness and mastery will not only win wars but will also deter them, and in doing so prevent the unbearable cost inherent in large-scale wars. 

Epigraph

Arpi Dilanian and Matthew Howard, “Mastering Fundamentals: An interview with Gen. Michael Garrett,” *Army Sustainment* 52, no. 1 (January–March 2020): 58.

Endnotes

1. Michael X. Garrett, “Winning at the Point of Contact,” U.S. Army Worldwide News, August 13, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/article/238107>.
2. U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), *FORSCOM Campaign Plan* (26 October 2017).
3. Paul Boyce, “FORSCOM Commander’s Forum highlights people, Army readiness, modernization, reform,” U.S. Army Worldwide News, November 13, 2019, https://www.army.mil/article/229766/forscom_commanders_forum_highlights_people_army_readiness_modernization_reform.
4. U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence, *Army Intelligence Training Strategy 2020* (May 2020).
5. Units should review TC 2-19.400, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy*, for further information on the Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS). The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command published training circulars for the brigade combat team MITS tiers in TC 2-19.401 through TC 2-29.404.

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In December 1946, the 430th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment in Salzburg, Austria, uncovered a black-market smuggling operation involving the artificial sweetener saccharine. A worldwide sugar shortage during the war and postwar period put saccharine in high demand. Dubbed “Operation Sugar,” the investigation netted a number of prominent Nazis involved in underground operations.