



Doing it **Jointly**

In my part of the world, the days and evenings rapidly begin to cool off in September. In northern climes, the refreshing seasonal change always seems to trigger primordial urges to reflect, take stock and to lay in plans for the upcoming months.

Throughout the summer, MS&T editorial staff have also been reflecting and taking stock. It is clear that we are entering into a new golden age for the application of simulation and training to some of the most pressing of our national and international security challenges. There's simply no question that training technology is advancing at increasingly dizzying rates.

In the US, the political and military support for the Joint National Training Capability (JNTC), with its "integrated, live, virtual and constructive training," is part of the "Training Transformation." Engineers know that the needed technologies are in fact available now. The use of that technology to achieve standard, steady state integrated training events, across all services, is a goal that will dominate the industry for the rest of the decade.

The JNTC term itself is somewhat of a misnomer. Clearly the goal is a global capability, not a national one. Forces thrown together at the last minute as a result of security emergencies will immediately demonstrate the capability to seamlessly interoperate, having rehearsed the task through standard joint training. In fact, JNTC personnel have been quoted as saying that if any

mission is being done for the first time under fire, it will be deemed a failure of training.

Of fundamental importance is the goal to be inter-agency, inter-governmental, multi-national, and coalition-capable. Allied forces represent a critical component given the increasing requirements for "Coalitions on the Fly." A steady-state JNTC must be ready for any and all coalition partnering.

The training combinations and permutations across all services, the instrumentation of training ranges, the further development of embedded and deployable training, and the reduction of as much service-specific training as possible, are certainly formidable challenges. Clearly, major institutional cultural shifts will be required as the mindset evolves towards "what the combat commanders need, not what the service chiefs need."

And it may very well be that the biggest challenge to moving forward with the JNTC concepts quickly and cleanly will be those issues presented by the various service cultures - and also (and perhaps particularly), those within civilian governmental agencies and coalition partners.

If all individual service training is to be examined for its potential for "jointness," even basic training, it may follow that the fundamental definition of what it means to be a soldier, sailor or airman will require updating. And how will these institutions handle the change? With an aggressive timeline that has a goal of a full

steady state operational capability by 2009, the "challenge" would appear sobering.

Just a few weeks ago the final report on the space shuttle Columbia was released. One of the conclusions drawn was that despite the urgent institutional change that NASA was supposed to have embraced as a result of the earlier Challenger incident, little apparently changed. An inadequate institutional safety culture contributed to a second catastrophe, and represents a stark illustration that even repeated tragedy couldn't jolt an otherwise fine national organisation to implement necessary cultural change. It's difficult to change mindsets, and even more difficult to change them quickly.

Those who regularly read the scribbles on this page know that MS&T takes the position that the technology itself is, perhaps, the "easy part." MS&T explores that technology unwaveringly in each and every issue. As ever, it's the human dimension that is the real challenge.

MS&T will continue to follow the critical JNTC program as it builds momentum. A full discussion will appear in the next - IITSEC - issue of MS&T. See you in Orlando.

Chris Lehman
MS&T Editor in Chief

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