



By Jeremiah Gipson

Introduction

Our Army's senior leaders have made it clear that putting People First is our number one priority. Independent studies, congressional oversight, and feedback also make it clear that not all Soldiers trust their chain of command to the degree necessary to build cohesive, disciplined, fit, and lethal teams. Acts of sexual assault, sexual harassment, racism, extremism, and instances of self-harm break the trust within units and with the American people. These preventable events obscure our Soldiers truly remarkable daily accomplishments.

“People are always my #1 priority. Our Army’s people are our greatest strength and our most important weapon system.” -General James McConville, CSA

OPPORTUNITY

Years of continuous deployments have resulted in inadequate training for leaders to meet the needs of the current generation. Junior leaders continue to struggle to provide empathetic leadership to meet the challenges of sexual harassment and assault, suicide, and inclusion. Over time, we have broken the bonds of trust within our ranks and degraded our ability to develop cohesive teams. We must overcome these challenges and prioritize time and resources to change our mission focus to put People First.

People First is a commitment to improve culture and rebuild trust with Soldiers, Families, and the American people.

It empowers leaders to know their Soldiers and provide a new level of comprehensive care and understanding.

It allows leaders to take bold action to intervene and enforce standards.

It holds leaders accountable for the climate within their organization and for what their unit does or fails to do.

RECOMMENDATION

To meet these challenges, U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM) directed units to schedule monthly Foundational Readiness Days—time focused solely on building trust and cohesive teams across the formation. But leaders can and should do more. I recommend units develop a **Mission Essential Task Zero (MET Zero): Implement People First**, as a framework for commanders to objectively measure progress and hold ourselves accountable. MET Zero establishes our Army culture as the mission critical priority task, and it can be adopted and approved separately within brigade commander authorities.

The Army’s winning culture is the decisive advantage regardless of environment - installation or deployed theater. Therefore, the development of MET Zero, nested with

existing doctrine, AR 600-20 policy, AR 350-1 requirements, and unit Mission Essential Tasks Lists (METL) better aligns Unit Training Management systems. The MET Zero concept integrates into training meetings, quarterly training briefs, and installation resourcing boards. It can be tailored at the brigade level to operationalize the assessments of People First and the Army People Strategy within existing authorities and budgetary resources.

MET Zero: Implement People First
<p><u>Task Set 1: Build Trust and Discipline Across the Army Formation</u> SCT 1: Execute the Total Army Sponsorship Program IAW AR 600-8-8 SCT 2: Execute the Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program SCT 3: Execute the Army Equal Opportunity (EO) Program to build inclusive teams SCT 4: Execute the Army Suicide Prevention Program to build ready and resilient Soldiers SCT 5: Execute timely legal actions/investigations and administrative actions SCT 6: Develop and execute command information plans to disseminate information</p>
<p><u>Task Set 2: Develop Empathetic Leaders who Enable Mission Command</u> SCT 1: Train leaders to know our Soldiers, take action, and establish accountability for results SCT 2: Train command teams to be engaged leaders who establish predictability and set expectations SCT 3: Certify leaders at echelon to build competence, character, and commitment SCT 4: Execute the Army Safety Program IAW AR 385-10</p>
<p><u>Task Set 3: Internalize the Army Ethic and Army Values</u> SCT 1: Conduct leader development activities to instill the Army Ethic at the unit level SCT 2: Conduct Army Values training to earn mutual trust and strengthen teamwork SCT 3: Inspire the Warrior Ethos in every Soldier via Unit Training Management IAW FM 7-0 SCT 4: Recruit, Manage Talent, and Retain Soldiers of Character</p>
<p><u>Task Set 4: Build Ready Soldiers and Resilient Family Support Groups</u> SCT 1: Execute the Army H2F program to increase lethality IAW FM 7-22 SCT 2: Execute the Soldier and Family Readiness Group program to inform the chain of concern SCT 3: Execute the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (B.O.S.S.) program to increase readiness SCT 4: Operationalize the Golden Triangle to develop resilient Soldier support networks</p>
<p><u>Task Set 5: Advance Army Family Quality of Life Programs</u> SCT 1: Ensure the safety and quality of on post housing, barracks, workspaces, and DFACs SCT 2: Promote knowledge of, and access to Army Community Service programs and childcare in Soldiers, leaders, and families SCT 3: Promote knowledge of employment opportunities for family members and separating Soldiers</p>

The MET Zero framework empowers commander dialogue to direct, lead, and assess a winning command climate and culture by training and certifying leaders within our doctrinal training philosophy.

UNIT TRAINING MANAGEMENT

For years, commanders have discussed the mathematical problem between the training requirement and the available time. In many instances, commanders took risk in programs that did not directly generate readiness. In those conversations, commanders talked about

accepting risk, prioritizing training, doing less, or executing concurrent training. But yet, we have not found the training balance to protect our culture. MET Zero addresses this issue and places culture in the same Quarterly Training Brief and Unit Status Reporting conversations because it aligns culture with training.

MET	Task Title	Assessment
Zero	Implement People First	T / P / U
1	Conduct Area Security	T / P / U
2	Conduct an Area Defense	T / P / U
3	Conduct a Movement to Contact	T / P / U
4	Conduct an Attack	T / P / U
5	Conduct Expeditionary Development Operations	T / P / U

IMPROVED ASSESSMENT

Commanders understand how to train METLs; we are familiar with this foundational training framework. The incorporation of MET Zero into this existing framework empowers commanders to better direct, lead, and assess training while integrating activities to build trust and cohesive teams. This alignment enhances commander dialogue during training meetings, monitors the health of unit climates, and balances Risk to Mission and Risk to Force discussions.

The Army’s Unit Training Management system outlines ways to evaluate training and provides objective Task and Evaluation Outlines (T&EO) to measure performance. The development and broad acceptance of [MET Zero T&EOs](#) could eventually integrate them into the Combined Arms Training Strategy (CATS) database. This would empower junior leaders with a single repository to resource training and external evaluation criteria to objectively measure task proficiency. Until then, locally developed T&EOs can empower leaders to validate the efficacy of People First activities through increased presence and

inspections.

Plan and Prepare				Execute					Assess		
PEOPLE FIRST Environment				Training Environment and frequency	% of Leaders present at training event	% Present at training authorized	Family Engagement	Leader Certification	Critical Performance Measures	Leader Books Validated	Task Assessment
SQD and PLT	CO and BN	BDE and Above	PEOPLE FIRST								
TIMS (SQD LDR facilitated training)	Advance ≥ 3 Army Pillars	Address ≥ 3 Army Priorities	PEOPLE FIRST	Proponent establishes MET 0 training environment	$\geq 85\%$	$\geq 80\%$	Yes	$\geq 90\%$ GO	ALL	$\geq 90\%$ GO	T
		75-84%			80-90% GO			T-			
Static Classroom Instruction	Advance 1 to 2 Pillars	Address < 3 Army priorities			65-74%	75-79%	NO	65-74% GO		80-89%	P
		60-64%			60-74%	60-64% GO		P-			
	Fail to Address the Army Pillars	Fail to address the Army Priorities			$\leq 60\%$	$\leq 60\%$		$\leq 51\%$ NO GO	$< 80\%$	U	
BDE and Above <i>(Army People Strategy Near Term Priorities)</i>				CO and BN <i>(Army Foundational Pillars)</i>							
1) Housing and Barracks 2) Healthcare 3) Childcare 4) Spouse Employment 5) Permanent Change of Station (PCS)				1) Build Cohesive Teams to stop SHARP, EO and Suicides 2) Trained: Develop and Certify Empathetic Leaders 3) Disciplined: Army Safety, Barracks/Home Visits, Counseling 4) Maintained: Army Safety, Fitness, and Health 5) Balanced: BOSS, SFRG, Esprit De Corps							

THE IMPACTS OF MET ZERO

The implementation of MET Zero within the battalion has increased the pace of our operation to prioritize People First. This common framework has been a catalyst to create

positive inertia throughout the formation. It has empowered our leaders to get to know their Soldiers, take bold action to eliminate the three corrosives, and hold each other accountable. Soon, the MET Zero framework will allow us to measure our performance and assess the impacts on our climate.

CONCLUSION

The culture of the Army is our most important and enduring mission. This MET Zero recommendation leverages the doctrinal processes of ADP 7-0 and FM 7-0 to assess cultural training proficiency based on objective reviews of performance measures. These assessments increase leader dialogue, monitor unit culture, and establish command climate accountability. MET Zero operationalizes the Army People Strategy by investing and prioritizing time, balancing resources, and training leaders across the formation to protect our culture.

Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah Gipson is the Commander of the 4th Engineer Battalion located at Fort Carson, Colorado and Ft. Riley, Kansas. Thanks to all of the leaders within the 36th Engineer Brigade and 4th Infantry Division for shaping the MET Zero Concept.

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