Training Readiness In The British Army

Designing, managing and evaluating objective based training

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Evidence based decision making

In responding to the challenges of preparing Force Elements (FEs) for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the British Army's preparatory training progression was becoming increasingly complex. A series of exercises were designed to incrementally prepare Force Elements and reflect the nature of the multi-faceted threat spectrum and numbers and diversity of actors in the battlespace. At the same time, increasing government and public scrutiny was driving an ever greater requirement for audit and assurance.

The responsibility for managing the delivery of the training lay with the Army's Collective Training Group based in Warminster, now the Training Branch Field Army. Training Branch have a number of Collective Training Establishments (CTEs), utilising Constructive, Virtual and Live simulations in the UK, Germany, Canada and Kenya. The 1* Commander Collective Training was charged with delivering the training on behalf of the Field Army, generating training progression data, articulating training risk and providing assurance to the Chain of Command the Force Elements were suitably trained to the defined Theatre Entry Standard.

Historically, whilst the CTEs were well established and units followed a progression through Command and Staff Training utilising a constructive simulation, through exercises in a virtual simulation in the Combined Arms Tactics Trainer, or a bespoke combination of the two, and on to Live Training on a maneuver training area, such exercises were frequently templated and disconnected from each other. Similarly, the reporting mechanism did not facilitate the passage of training data from one CTE to the next to allow intelligent exercise design or progression, nor were the controlling Headquarters – CTG / Training Branch able to efficiently track training risk.

More recently, and as the British Army has transitioned to the challenges of Contingent Operations, the focus has shifted to a broader based Foundation Training. Objective based, the progression increases in both difficulty and complexity over time. Training is evaluated, assessed and assured and is designed to deliver FEs at Readiness. Training continues throughout the readiness period as does the assurance process. Specific training designed to meet the Theatre Entry Requirements can be delivered to meet any training readiness gaps prior to operational deployment. In order to be a viable model, central control and management, transparency and evidence based decision making are needed to respond adaptively to training risk.
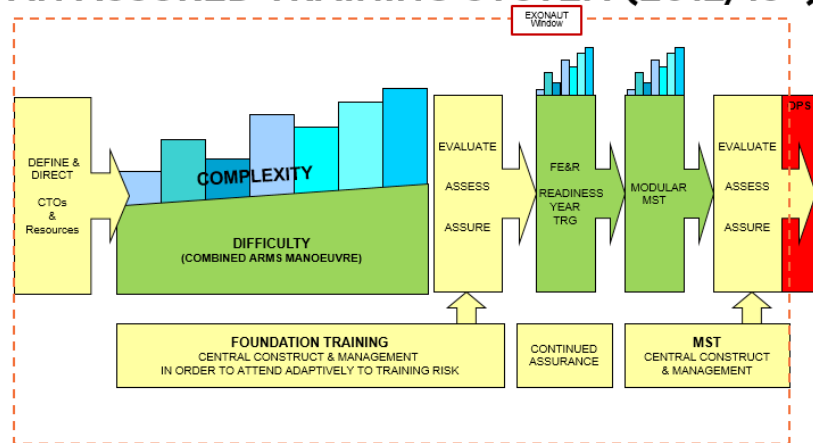

Figure 1. British Army Training and CTEMS

4C Strategies' Solutions

4C Support to the British Army

4C Strategies were initially contracted to provide a software solution to address the requirement to manage the delivery of the increasingly complex exercises require to prepare FEs for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. As Training Branch's requirement matured, particularly with the need to better manage training progression and provide audit and assurance, we developed our software and our support evolved to make Exonaut® the clear

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solution for providing the current Collective Training Exercise Management System (CTEMS). Together with 4C Strategies' integrated software suite our expert, largely ex military, training consultants including an embedded project manager, deliver the detailed support providing the backbone of the British Army's objective based collective training management system.
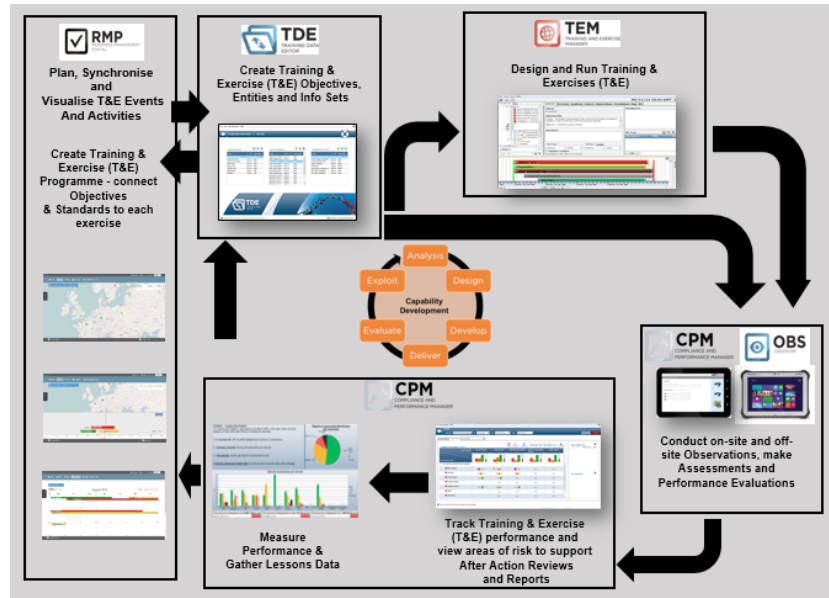

Figure 2. Exonaut® Software Suite

Planning and Scheduling

Exonaut® assists those responsible for planning and scheduling training and those training organisations responsible for training delivery by providing an integrated system that actively manages training inputs (such as Task Lists, Training Objectives, the entities undergoing training and associated training resources). It matches training requirements and inputs to activities best suited to the achievement of the specified objectives and provides a mechanism for collaboratively planning and visualising training activity.
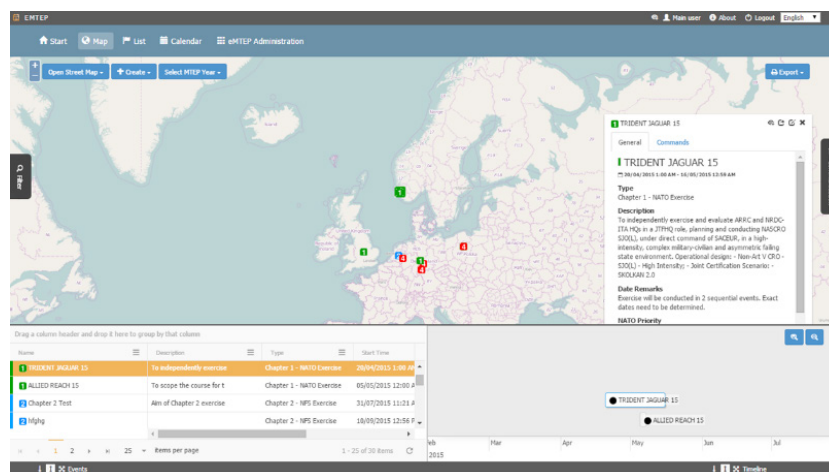

Figure 3. Exonaut® Exercise Planning Tool

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Exercise Delivery

At an exercise level, Exonaut® facilitates the simple planning and management of training events. Training timelines can be visualised with Training Audiences aligned to specified objectives within precise parts of each exercises. Training Resources can be allocated and tracked. Training performance within exercises can be monitored, allowing for rapid identification of weakness and dynamic adjustment of training activity to address them. Exonaut® is a powerful tool giving exercise controllers a single, yet detailed, overview of exercise planning and delivery through the ability to draw together multiple exercise inputs. Both PC and tablet based versions of Exonaut® facilitate exercise visualisation and provide a powerful, intuitive mechanism for reporting on performance and making assessments based on objective evidence against Training Objectives and Key Learning Points. An appropriately enabled Tablet facilitates the gathering of photographic, video and sound recordings; all of which can be embedded into the Training Analysis for future exploitation.
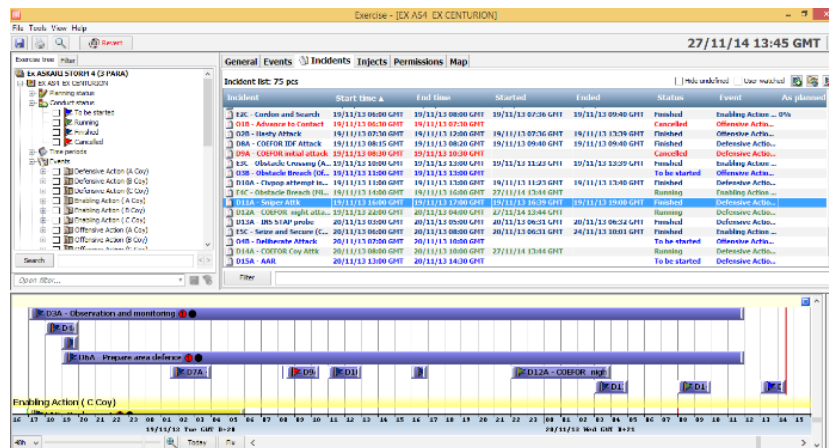

Figure 4. Exonaut® Exercise Synchronisation Matrix

Training Progression Management

The Exonaut® capability allows Training Branch to assess and attend incrementally to training risk as FEs move through the planned training events ensuring coherence between CTEs and training evolutions. Those in training can understand where weaknesses lie and address them before the next training event. In parallel, the same evidence drawn from CTEMS and other systems, such as simulations, forms the basis for the delivery of After Action Review (AAR) and standardised formal Training Analysis reports which appear consistent and coherent to the training audience and the Chain of Command. Data can be analysed as the training progresses, lessons can be captured and the evidence provided by objective observations and assessments used to populate observations from training thus informing a wider audience of best practice.
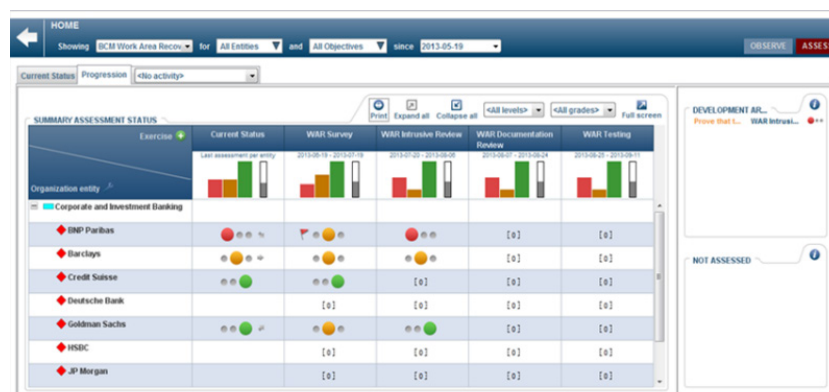

Figure 5. Exonaut® Progression Management Visualisation

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Analysis and Exploitation

Exonaut® provides a clear, concise audit trail of training conducted and, crucially, that which has not been conducted. Risks can be readily identified by the Training Deliverers, the Chain of Command and Training Audiences allowing full understanding of the risks carried within the organisation as well as providing evidence to support re-allocation of resources to mitigate risk or re-train a force. In response to a recent Training Branch requirement to more quickly exploit training data and to provide a better visualisation of training risk and analysis, Exonaut® has been developed to include the ability to conduct near real time analysis of training data allowing a transparent view of training readiness across the force and facilitating evidence-based decision making.
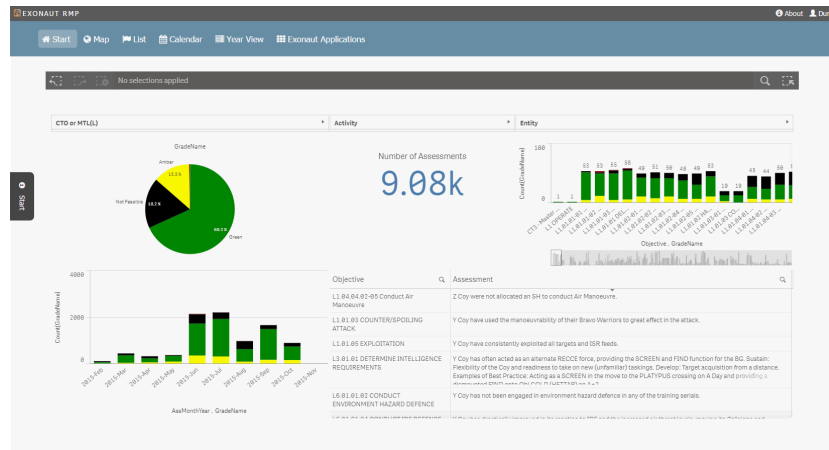

Figure 6. Exonaut® Dashboard Visualisation

Key Benefits

As the British Army's CTEMS, Exonaut® has provided the capability to deliver more effective training plans, more agile delivery and the ability to better understand and exploit training outputs. This is manifest in a detailed understanding of training risk which informs future training requirements and savings in time and costs in planning and delivery. Exonaut® has provided a repository and log of the Army's collective training data allowing the exploitation of trends, evidence for concept and doctrine development, provision of learning material such as Observations from Training, Lessons Learned and support to experimentation. Equally, by providing Trainers and Observers with the tools, in the form of electronic Battle boxes, Tactical Doctrine Notes etc, they are more effective in their role as both coaches and observers.

4C Strategies' Development Cycle, Customer Development Academies and User Fora, in addition to our very close working relationship with Training Branch, ensures that we have early visibility of their requirements and are able to be appropriately agile in meeting them so our solutions and support remain cutting edge and relevant.