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TRAINING THE TRAINER IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS: REFLECTIONS ON ARMY COMMAND DOCTRINE

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Exercise *Solo Flight*

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Training the Trainer in the Hall of Mirrors:
Reflections on Army Command Doctrine

Yet many times these difficulties have been seen to be conquered by good captains with the highest prudence… who with new armies conquered armies that were very much trained. The modes they kept to were to train them for several months in mock battles and to accustom them to obedience and order; then, after those, they put them to work with the greatest confidence in true fighting. Thus one ought not to lack confidence that any military man can make good armies if men are not lacking him; for that prince who has plenty of men and lacks soldiers ought to complain not of the cowardice of the men but only of his [own] laziness and lack of prudence.

- Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*

INTRODUCTION

The recent expression of Government of Canada Defence Policy reinforces the need to embrace the complex environment, anticipate, adapt and act and invest more resources in command, control and communication systems.[1] If Defence as a whole wishes to anticipate, adapt and act, it follows that its leadership training continuum must be re-examined to improve command doctrine and individual characteristics, skills, and knowledge that will ensure success. This paper focuses on Army Command doctrine in light of new Army initiatives such as the Canadian Army Integrated Performance Strategy (CAIPS)[2] and leading behavioural and applied leadership tools in the literature.

Strong, Secure, Engaged notes the direct link between training and readiness: "Canadian soldiers train to maintain readiness and develop their high-end war-fighting skills. Experience shows that highly trained, versatile and well-equipped combat forces can rapidly adapt to

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[1] Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017) 36.
[2] CAIPS was developed in 2015 as the Army's comprehensive "readiness and resilience" strategy and is available for public viewing at www.strongproudready.ca.

humanitarian assistance, disaster relief or peace operations."[3] The new Defence Policy also re-iterates Canada's longstanding commitment to multilateral operations and the need for military interoperability.

This essay begins by examining CF leadership doctrine and its leadership development framework. Next, it introduces recent tools and behavioural models. These recent models are compared with existing doctrine and means of integrating them are discussed. Finally, the essay makes the case for a practical approach to training commanders as trainers of teams: coaches and mentors.

Army command doctrine, based upon CF Leadership doctrine, clearly enunciates the commander's role as a trainer: "A commander directs, trains and prepares his command… He should also concern himself with the professional development of individuals to fit them for positions of increased responsibility."[4] Likewise, one of the principles of training elaborated in *Training for Land Operations* is that "Training is Command-Driven".[5]

With the industrial revolution came the assembly line and concepts of specialization. Armies that had once considered training to be integral to their formations eventually professionalized and developed specialized training wings. Despite the fact that command and training are inextricably linked, the Army has stove-piped its command and training doctrines in separate publications while also stove-piping its training force from its operational forces since 1989. This paper examines common areas and proposes a wholistic integration and approach

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[3] *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 36.
[4] Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-003/FP-001, *Command in Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2007), 2-19.
[5] Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-008/FP-001, *Training for Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2007).

towards command and training doctrines while emphasizing behavioural approaches, clear performance standards and greater linking of leadership tools.

This paper will demonstrate that Army readiness is dependent on command skills, specifically the ability of commanders to train their teams, using a behavioural approach consistent with recent developments in human performance science.

CANADIAN FORCES AND ARMY LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE

Army command and training doctrine agree that "training is ultimately a function of leadership, executed through personal involvement by commanders."[6] Despite this, certain gaps remain in the Common Officer Requirements. For example, in the officer general specifications Sub-Duty Area "Prepare for Military Operations", all collective training and readiness tasks are learned through experience and/or self-development, with no formal training.[7]

Canadian Forces leadership doctrine established the conceptual foundations, theory, principles and framework for Canadian Forces leadership. It defines military leadership as "directing, motivating, and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically, while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success."[8] Despite the many improvements, the series of manuals proved to be high in guiding principles and low in practical tools for leaders. The values-based model must be embedded in "policies

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[6] *Training for Land Operations*, 1-6-1.
[7] Department of National Defence, A-PD-055-002/PP-003, *Canadian Forces Officer General Specification*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017), 2C-1.
[8] Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-004, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1995), i.

and practices, and [leaders] must reinforce them through their actions."[9] For training leaders, this question of "how" to embody values in "what" actions is of critical importance.

The Canadian Forces acknowledges that "Officers must develop as leaders as they progress in rank and responsibility."[10]:

Table 1 – The Leadership Development Framework[11]

	Expertise	Cognitive Capacities	Social Capacities	Change Capacities	Professional Ideology
DP 5	Strategic	Creative Abstract	Inter-Institutional	Paradigm Shifting	Stewardship
DP 4	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
DP 3					
DP 2					
DP 1	Tactical	Analytical	Inter-Personal	Open	Internalized

These meta-competencies have the advantage of showing key areas for development and a concept of progression in time for officer development. However, they lack some practical applicability for a behavioural approach. Many of the common officer requirements involve

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[9] Ibid.

[10] *Canadian Forces Officer General Specification*, 3.

[11] "The Leadership Development Framework (LDF) describes the changing leadership requirements as officers progress in their careers. Table 1 shows how a leader's growth in each meta-competency, from DP 1 to DP 5, involves a change in leadership focus from leading individuals to leading the organization. These meta-competencies within the LDF will be used for the development and assessment of officers' performance throughout their careers."

Canadian Forces Officer General Specification, 3.

three or more meta-competencies, making this difficult to actually analyze which skills are actually required to meet which requirement.[12]

PRACTICAL TOOLS AND THE EMERGENT BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH

The *Military Leadership Handbook* attempts to bridge the gap from leadership theory to practice. It contains a broad compendium on such diverse topics as "how to instill discipline," the "self-development assessment," and other practical tools for leaders. [13] While *Leadership in the CF* provides an adequate framework, the *Military Leadership Handbook* is the tool that leaders should use and refer to regularly.

Around the same time as the *Handbook*, "The Road to Mental Readiness" (R2MR) was a project which initiated within the Tactics School of the Combat Training Centre and eventually was adopted CAF-wide and beyond. The goal of the project was to train skills and knowledge necessary to improve resilience in the face of operational stress, improving short-term performance and long-term mental health outcomes.[14] In 2015, the Canadian Army moved to institutionalize the R2MR as part of the Canadian Army Integrated Performance Strategy (CAIPS).

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[12] Army command doctrine identifies four meta-competencies which correspond loosely with the Leadership Development Framework: "[D]epending on the level of command, commanders must possess the physical competency (e.g. physical fitness, soldier skills), intellectual competency (e.g. planning, reasoning, visualizing and decision-making), emotional competency (e.g. resiliency, hardiness and ability to cope under stress) and interpersonal competency (e.g. ability to develop trust, respect and effective teamwork) to varying degrees in order to effectively command and achieve mission success."
Command in Land Operations, 1-15.
[13] Bernd Horn and Robert W. Walker, eds., *The Military Leadership Handbook* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008).
[14] Department of National Defence, Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR), 2015-08-13, http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr/index.page

Among these skills were the employment of four critical skills: goal setting, visualization, self-talk and arousal/stress management.[15] While taught as individual skills in the R2MR context, these skills have further implications for leaders, teams, and collective performance. A complete understanding of Army command doctrine will show that three of these skills are directly incorporated into battle procedure, one of the meta-competencies of tactical command. The fourth, arousal management, can be incorporated into battle procedure using various methods, for example supervising forced rest and commander's inspections. Since operational readiness is defined as the combination of personnel, equipment and training it follows that all pre-operational inspections must examine these three areas.[16] *Command in Land Operations* states that:

> Leaders at all levels are responsible for ensuring that all personnel and equipment
> are prepared for battle before they are committed. Given normal time constraints,
> inspections must focus on those elements that pose the greatest risk to mission
> success.[17]

Inspections must look to answer the question: Is each soldier as ready as possible? Are there any signs of problems which can be addressed? Colonel Dandridge M. Malone argues that to inspect is to evaluate against a standard, analyze and plan and implement corrective behaviours to meet the standard.[18] Dandridge's "how-to" approach fits the behavioural approach, is consistent with the CAIPS, and ought to be incorporated where possible into Army Command doctrine.

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[15] Ibid.

[16] *Training for Land Operations*, 2-2-3.

[17] *Command in Land Operations*, 4-10.

[18] Dandridge M. Malone, *Small Unit Leadership: A Commonsense Approach* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983), 129.

Aligning R2MR with Command Doctrine

The R2MR is consistent with current Army command doctrine, and its behavioural expression: battle procedure. Command doctrine considers goal setting as one of the first steps of the rational-decision-making process. Mission analysis derives the commander's goal, expressed in a concise mission statement. Mental Rehearsal or Visualization is also contained throughout: "Mental rehearsal is used to rehearse situations and strategy, and to prepare for the challenge ahead."[19] In command doctrine, this is done through a variety of means including reconnaissance, orders and rehearsals. Visualization is a skill particular to the commander and emphasized in command doctrine:

> Battlefield visualization is a commander's clear understanding of the current state with relation to the enemy and the environment, from which the commander envisions an end-state and the sequence of activities to achieve that end-state. Visualization is the core mental process that supports the commander in decision-making.[20]

Moreover, it is how effectively the commander communicates this visualization, through Commander's Intent, to the team that is critical to their success or failure.

Emotional Intelligence, Positive Self-Talk and Stress Management

The concept of self-talk links behaviour with emotional awareness and fitness: "We continuously talk to ourselves. If these words are negative rather than positive, this greatly undermines our ability to be successful. The key to self-talk is to make the messages positive

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[19] R2MR, Big Four.
[20] *Command in Land Ops*, 2-16.

rather than negative."[21] Positive self-talk is a command skill, both a result of successful

command training and a process by which successful commanders motivate themselves and their

teams. This culminates in the preparation and delivery of back briefs and orders, as well as

routine communications outside the orders process. A search of *Training for Land Operations*

reveals zero mentions of self-talk, and the manual only uses the term "positive" once throughout

the manual. Training doctrine needs to evolve to include the role of positive thinking and

behaviours in the achievement of successful outcomes, especially as it relates to coaching and

the conduct phase of individual training. The concepts of positive self-talk apply as much within

the team as within the individual.

The R2MR's fourth behaviour is arousal/stress management through tactical breathing.

This behaviour trains soldiers to use breath control to calm the nervous system in periods of high

stress. *Command in Land Operations* mentions stress as both an environmental factor for the

commander and stress and fear a result of the violence inherent in land combat.[22] However, it

only prescribes "leadership" to overcome the emotional, psychological and physical stresses of

combat. At a minimum, Army command doctrine needs to be updated to make some reference to

the "how": the behaviours and tools available, including assessing and assisting subordinates for

stress levels. Although stress exposure training[23] is a feature of the R2MR, it is not mentioned at

all in *Training for Land Operations*.

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[21] R2MR.

[22] *Command in Land Operations*, 1-5.

[23] "Stress Exposure Training (SET) is a concept that is introduced at the Advanced Leadership level to an audience that has an impact on developing training programs and strategic decision making in order to better provide a psychological framework that sets the candidates up for success. Processes and concepts are introduced to provide evidence based skill building models that can be applicable to training in any element. SET is based on stress inoculation principles and provides guidelines for leaders for training against stress. The primary purpose of stress training is to prepare CAF personnel to maintain effective performance in high-stress environments. This is done through a three phased training approach developed by Driskell and colleagues (1998) and includes:

Overall, a review of extant doctrine concludes that while CAIPS and specifically R2MR are relatively consistent with Canadian Army doctrine, manuals have not been updated to reflect new terminologies and concepts. Specifically, *Command in Land Operations* integrates fairly well the goal-setting and visualization concepts, while needing further development in specifying command behaviours and tools related to emotional intelligence and achieving performance standards.

Organizational Goal Setting: Professional Standards as Behavioural Benchmarks and Chunks for Repetition and Re-Ordering, Mastery and Creativity

The CAF command and leadership framework must not only expound values, beliefs and models, but also define behaviours centred around clear expectations and standards. One of the key tools for organizational goal-setting in the Army are task standards.[24] Army training doctrine reflects the accountability towards clear standards.[25] Standards must reflect goals and be measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound.[26] As we have shown, commanders are the primary training authority for their organization.

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1   Phase 1: Information provision
2   Phase 2: Skills acquisition
3   Phase 3: Application and practice"
National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, "Road to Mental Readiness," last modified 2015-08-13, http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-career/stress-management-stress-exposure-trng.page

[24] "Strength at the tactical level is possible through tough and realistic training coupled with the provision of reasonably modern and effective equipment. This training, ruthless application of standards and insistence on skilled and principled leaders lead directly to unit cohesion and a strong sense of 'family'—the keys to tactical success." *Command in Land Operations*, 1-15.

[25] "All PME and training is to be conducted in accordance with these standards, and all training instructions must identify which standards are to be achieved, with an expected outcome, defined measures of success and replicable conditions under which they are to be achieved." *Training for Land Operations*, 1-6-5.

[26] Dandridge, 128.

> Battle Task Standards [BTS] are primarily derived from doctrine. They define (by training level) the knowledge, skills and conditions required to conduct specific tactical tasks and provide an operational measure against which the effectiveness and efficiency of training can be gauged.[27]

In the context of organizational goal-setting, BTS assist commanders and teams in "visualization" and mental rehearsal, as they contain the clear benchmarks that teams are expected to achieve along the way to mission success. They also represent a form of "chunking" by breaking larger tasks into manageable pieces.[28] Each team requires a playbook. These are drills which allows the team to function as one unit, each part knowing in advance what the others will do and how discrete actions contribute to the task completion.

Two criticism of the BTS need to be addressed. The use of BTS may create a "checklist" mentality, where success is decided upon by simply following a rote process with no adaptation to the environment. Overly long and prescriptive BTS may be simplified. Necessary criteria must be developed based on not just techniques, but leadership, command and training doctrine as well. The trend away from specifying tactics within the BTS is based on a reaction to the above criticism. Yet the baby ought to be retained without the bathwater. Where BTS do not provide this or simply make reference to other manuals (using the famous "in accordance with Ref" clause), they must be re-written.[29] No task standard will replace the judgement of leaders in complex situations. Rather, proper judgement is built on the experience of repetition of simple

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[27] *Training for Land Operations*, 6-3-2.

[28] Chunking is described as: "First, the participants look at the task as a whole - as one big chunk, the mega-circuit. Second, the divide it into its smallest possible chunks. Third, they play with time, slowing the action down, then speeding it up, to learn its inner architecture." Daniel Coyle, *The Talent Code : Greatness isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How, (New York: Bantham Books, 2009),* 80.

[29] The Canadian Army reviews and publishes its BTS separately from its TTP manuals. This practice should be reviewed: task standards should be an annex to the appropriate TTP manual, favouring users and training designers. Far from offering a cookie cutter template for all operations, BTS should be designed to offer building blocks upon which mastery is built.

yet essential tasks: "Nothing you can do-talking, thinking, reading, imagining-is more effective in building skill than executing the action, firing the impulse down the nerve fiber, fixing errors, honing the circuit."[30]

A third criticism of the use of BTS exists. Current qualification standards for sub-unit command courses in the Canadian Army use BTS as the course task standards.[31] Yet some argue that an individual training course cannot or should not use the collective BTS as the guiding standard for qualification. There are three problems with this argument. First, as we have shown previously, the nature of command is inextricably linked to the collective performance of the team. This applies equally to role-playing in the training environment. This does not mean that failures should mean that individuals fail their course. Rather, through the appropriate exercise of command, including planning, preparation, and execution, students must show their skill in orchestrating the team's performance and their reaction to failures in ways consistent with CF leadership theory, Army command and training doctrine. As both the Army Systems Approach to Training and the CAIPS initiative state, performance-orientation is key. Task standards must reflect the desired performance. Anything less is a failure to visualize "what right looks like."

BTS are critical tools for interoperability. The comparison of BTS offer the simplest and most rudimentary manner of comparing notes on how tasks are completed between allied armies. This can be useful down to lowest tactical level for which inter-operability is possible. Recently published, *Brigade Tactics* makes the point: "Critical to successful task organization is interoperability. Interoperability is based on commonality of doctrine, training and equipment.

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[30] *Talent Code*, 87.
[31] Department of National Defence, A-P8-004-SCT/PC-B01, *Combat Team Commander Qualification Standard*, 2006.

Well-practised, common SOPs are also a valuable means to ensure smooth and rapid transitions."[32]

Despite this need for standardization, there is also a need for leaders and soldiers to "think outside the box." The playbook for the execution of non-standard tasks is the execution of "battle procedure"[33] at the tactical level. Battle procedure is a flexible procedure which incorporates the "anticipate - act - adapt" of principle. It permits concurrent planning at various levels of command through the issuance of warning orders. Battle procedure itself can be modified by the commander to fit the situation. While battle procedure is designed to fit with the rational decision-making model, it can be modified to suit alternative models such as group-decision-making models or recognition-primed decision-making model (RPD).[34] Army command doctrine must explicitly state alternative means of decision-making within the framework of its battle procedure drill. Finally, BTS should continue to be used as foundational standards for the individual training of commanders, for three reasons: commanders learn specific task proficiency, the generalized application of standards themselves in the training environment, and use the task standards as a goal-setting and visualization tool which maximizes their chances for success in command. A virtuous dependency and linkage arises from the fact that commanders must be trained and that training must be command-driven. A commander who cannot or does not properly train is not practicing effective command. Furthermore, training has measurable outputs in terms of task and competencies.

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[32] Department of National Defence, B-GL-321-003/FP-001, *Brigade Tactics,* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017). See also Kathleen McInnis, "Lessons in coalition warfare: Past, present and implications for the future," *International Politics Reviews*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, Dec 2013.
[33] *Command in Land Operations*, 4-1-4-25.
[34] Bill Bentley, "Decision-Making," in *The Military Leadership Handbook*, 215-227.

THE MASTER SKILL OF COMMANDERS: DEVELOPING OTHERS

From a systems perspective, the training of one commander is a form of regeneration or transmission which occurs from the training environment back into the sub-units which receive the trained commanders. These "patient 0" bring back and regenerate or copy whatever has been impressed upon them, in both positive and negative, obvious and subtle ways. A commander who is evaluated against measurable performance criteria such as task standards are likely to replicate this behaviour:

> CT is the mechanism by which commander's shape and influence the character and competence of their commands, instilling mutual confidence, cohesion and collective discipline. Challenging and imaginative CT is one of the clearest methods to measure the effect of a commander and is the greatest single factor in achieving operational success.[35]

Army training doctrine states that "to maximize the learning value of training, discovery by doing, followed by self-assessment, feedback and exposure to multiple solutions are all necessary."[36] While task standards can be used as self-assessment tools, Army doctrine manuals should make explicit reference to a diversity of self-assessment tools and include the best ones within the manuals themselves.

Many self-assessment tools exist for leaders to evaluate their own leadership and use that understanding to modify their behaviour and set new goals. For example, Once such approach is contained in *The 5 Levels of Leadership* by John C. Maxwell.[37] Similar to the CF's development period system, Maxwell expresses leadership along a development from one to five: Position,

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[35] *Training for Land Operations*, 1-6-2.
[36] *Training for Land Operations*, 1-6-10.
[37] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, (Boston: Thomas Nelson, 2011).

Permission, Production, People Development and The Pinnacle. However, unlike the CF

Leadership Development Framework, he uses a behavioural approach. Starting with self-

assessment and follower assessment, the model forces the leader to identify their level of

leadership. Maxwell's model then offers behaviours and beliefs that can help leaders advance

from one level to the next. Unlike the CAF model, leaders do not leave lower levels behind but

rather continue operating on each successive level using the best behaviours of each level. The

advantage to Maxwell's approach is the clear focus on behaviours which lend themselves to

training, self-development and expression as organizational standards. Throughout Maxwell's

model is the idea that leaders at each level help other leaders move up along the leadership

continuum.

Developing commanders as developers of other leaders to give them the tools. Initiatives

such as CAIPS must institutionalize a move towards building coaching and mentoring, not in a

stand-alone Strategy document but integrated into the current Army governance framework,

especially its doctrine and training. To do this, they must give commanders the tools. Those

tools include self-assessment tools, and "how-to" resources for mentoring, such as the CF

mentoring handbook.[38]

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[38] Department of National Defence, Daniel Lagace-Roy and Janine Knackstedt, *The Mentoring Handbook*, 2007, http://cda.mil.ca/pcld/doc/mentoringbook-eng.pdf.

Implications for Training the Trainers: Practical Command[39] Skills

Commanders must train their teams. But how should we train commanders? First, Army command doctrine must be integrated with training doctrine and the CAIPS, specifically integrating and adapting the concepts of the R2MR. Next, the focus on decision-making must be expanded to include tools and techniques for training effective and cohesive teams, using a behavioural approach. Third, we must recognize that the commitment of the individual towards the learning objectives and goals are the number one predictor of success and take steps to measure commitment where possible.[40] Fourth, the self-assessment drills and skills, relative to a set-standard, must be demonstrated and confirmed during individual training of commanders. Organizational learning is mandated in both command and training doctrine. A critical tool is the after action review, and it is led by the commander. This review is a form of self-assessment in the team context. A key aspect to the review is to identify gaps in existing standards and procedures, what CF leadership doctrine refers to as indirect leadership.

CONCLUSION

Army readiness is dependent on command skills, specifically the ability of commanders to train their teams, using a behavioural approach consistent with recent developments in human performance science.

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[39] "Military command encompasses the art of leading, decision-making, motivating and directing all ranks into action to accomplish missions. It requires a vision of the desired end-state, an understanding of military science (doctrine), military art (the profession of arms), concepts, missions, priorities and the allocation of resources. It requires an ability to assess people and risks, and involves a continual process of re-evaluating the situation. A commander must have a clear understanding of the dynamics that take place within and outside his command. Above all, he must possess the ability to decide on a course of action and inspire his command to carry out that action."
Command in Land Operations, B-GL-300-003/FP-001, 1-15.
[40] *Talent Code*, 82.

Training for Land Operations should be re-named "Readiness for Land Operations", since its scope exceeds the narrow definition of training contained in the manual itself and recent Army initiatives have emphasized the purpose of training to be the readiness of land forces to meet the strategic needs of Canada. It should be reviewed and re-issued in light of recent Army initiatives such as the CAIPS.

Command in Land Operations must be expanded to include the critical tools and processes commanders need to set training goals (goal setting), visualize training outcomes and rehearse military tasks (chunking and setting micro-objectives/standards and expectations), communicate (self-talk) and manage arousal, linked to skills associated with emotional fitness and intelligence.

Finally, the integration of command and training doctrine in the individual training of commanders in the CF IT&E system is the best means to promote the key concepts of performance-orientation and continuous improvement, integrating the Army Systems Approach to Training with the goals of CAIPS and Army readiness in support of the defence of Canada and other Defence policy goals.

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