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CTC conference discusses future of training

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Combined Arms Center - Training

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. – Future training at the Combat Training Centers and at home stations was a major topic of discussion at this week's CTC Conference.

The conference drew participants from across the Army, the sister services and international partners.

With the recent end of operations in Iraq, and change in mission focus for Soldiers and units in Afghanistan, attendees focused discussions on the adaptation of the Army's training strategy to conduct Decisive Action in Unified Land Operations versus a more specific requirement for counterinsurgency training.

The Army is looking to unit commanders to execute realistic and challenging training at home station culminating in a Decisive Action training event at the CTCs.

Lt. Gen. David Perkins, commanding general of the Combined Arms Center (CAC), said he was pleased with the discussions and presentations.

"You really tackled difficult problems," Perkins said.

Recommendations from this conference will be taken to the Army Chief of Staff's CTC Huddle in July for decision and further guidance on the future of Army training at home stations and the Combat Training Centers.

Col. Michael Barbee, director of the Combat Training Center Directorate, noted the importance of the discussion about future training at home stations and the CTCs.

"My biggest takeaway from the conference is the importance of delineating what collective tasks we'll train at home station versus those that we'll train at the CTCs," he said. "Home station training and the CTCs must be complementary, with both leader development and unit readiness addressed."

Barbee added that the CTC Program is leading the Army's transition to Decisive Action training against a hybrid threat, having conducted three maneuver CTC rotations as well as a Division Warfighter Exercise.

"We're working with CAC to share the observations, insights, and lessons from these initial Decisive Action training events through both the Center for Army Lessons Learned and the Army Training Network," he said.

Conference participants said it was important to chart a new future for Army training while still maintaining the lessons learned from 10 years of war.

Col. Pat White, Deputy Commander of the Combined Arms Center-Training, said, "We're getting after the Army Chief of Staff's vision to create a training environment that enables distributed, linked, scalable and assessable multi-echelon opportunities for commanders and units."

"We recognize that future training events must be consistent across our training environments and when possible incorporate our sister services and special operations forces," White said.

Among the key points, conference attendees raised were:

- The importance of maintaining interagency participation in training exercises.
- The advantages of training with other services and international partners.
- The Army increasingly will use training events that incorporate the live, virtual and constructive training environments and gaming.