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Picking the Best Team For the Army of Tomorrow

"Our military forces are one team — in the game to win regardless of who carries the ball. This is no time for 'fancy Dans' who won't hit the line with all they have on every play, unless they can call the signals. Each player on the team — whether he shines in the spotlight of the backfield or eats dirt in the line — must be All-American."

— General of the Army Omar N. Bradley
19 October 1949

When I was young, all the kids in the neighborhood would gather around to pick teams for a game. The exact game to be played depended on the season, but the process was the same: the two captains, usually the guys with the equipment, would vie to select the best talent in the neighborhood. On some days, a relative of one of the guys, or some kid from another neighborhood would wander in and the selection process really heated up — especially if we knew the new guy had talent. Today, the Army is choosing up a great team that is going to help field the force that will carry us onto the battlefields of the 21st century. We, the Army, are going to do the development work for the Objective Force Unit of Action and the Future Combat System (FCS) and our Army's leaders are picking the best guys from the best neighborhoods to do it. Recently, Fort Knox was tapped by TRADOC to lead this effort in concert with the other proponent schools, the Objective Force Task Force, and the Lead Systems Integrator (LSI).

The FCS, as each of you probably knows, will be totally revolutionary. From its inception, it is more than just

a new platform; it is a *system of systems*. FCS will be a collection of holistically integrated systems designed to function together seamlessly. It will serve as the core building block within all Units of Action, encompassing the brigade and below echelons in the Objective Force. The Units of Action will be manned by soldiers both mounted and dismounted, empowered to operate with information superiority gained from military and interagency resources. It will fight as a team of teams — tailored to dominate ground combat and to be overwhelmingly lethal at the point of contact against the threats on today's battlefield and in the operational environment we expect to encounter in the future. In order to design, develop, and field this kind of revolutionary force, the Army needed a revolutionary new process. Many of us from across the Army are now implementing this process.

The first step is the rechartering of our Maneuver Battle Lab by TRADOC to serve as a center for collaboration for the developmental work required to make the Units of Action a reality. The Battle Lab will be linked, in a "hub and spoke" manner, with other TRADOC Battle Labs, the proponents and their schools, and with needed expertise wherever it exists. The Battle Lab "hub" will maintain continuous contact with all of the designated "spokes" by using facilities designed to support intellectual sharing, personnel exchanges, and collaborative communications. This design represents an earnest effort to focus all of our collective skills and knowledge on developing a "product" that is integrated across all

branches and functional areas. Rather than producing a simple piece of equipment, this process will develop and deliver a system of systems in unit sets with the fighting doctrine, the force organizations, the training packages and devices, and the logistical support. Soldiers will remain at the very heart of process so that every fighter, supporter, and sustainer will have their needs and capabilities factored into the fielded force.

At Fort Knox, and at every other organization included in this process, the "team picking" has begun for the effort. Together, all of the teams will work to produce the requirements documents for each aspect of the Units of Action and the FCS. While Fort Knox, as the proponent for FCS and the Units of Action, may in some ways represent a "home court," it is never the playing field but rather the players that determine the quality of the game. We offered up the best and the brightest of the mounted force to provide expertise to this team process, and my fellow commandants at the schools and agencies are doing the same. The result, we believe, will be the capturing of great ideas and insights from across the Army rather than focusing on any single piece of it. Additionally, as various systems begin to emerge from our efforts, these soldiers will represent the soldiers of their branches and organizations as end system users during this development process. Collaboration and joint effort will mark every step from the initial ideas of today to the force fielding of tomorrow.

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The Battle Labs and Army teams will have the support of two other key players: the Lead System Integrator (LSI) and a Project Manager (PM).

The LSI will serve as the Army's key industrial partner in developing and integrating the FCS. Responsible for the traditional job of turning thoughts and requirements into products, they have the additional missions of lending scientific and technological support to the concept design process and helping us with the experimentation and analysis process. The LSI possesses the needed corporate horsepower to work with other members of industry and technology in order to find innovative solutions for military problems. From the beginning of the process, right down to force fielding, the LSI is partnered with the Army to give the Unit of Action the required integrated systems they need.

The Program Manager will be the final partner in the process, responsible

for insuring compliance with cost/performance measures and schedules. The PM will help develop, produce, field, and sustain the full range of systems envisioned for the Units of Action. The PM will be in charge of developing the acquisition and program management framework as we transform the Army to the Objective Force. This will be an immense process when you consider the numbers of systems to be fielded and the synchronization that will be required to field them together. Obviously, very close coordination will be a necessity between the PM, the LSI, and the coordinating Battle Labs.

We are involved in a whole new ball game. The process of designing, developing, building, testing, and fielding an entire force in less than a decade is a task of amazing enormity and complexity. We are moving into uncharted territory and writing history with every step in this process. Just as GEN Brad-

ley stated in the opening quote, we will need everyone hitting the line with all they have on every play. Fortunately, we have a great team of schools, Battle Labs, and organizations involved in this effort. Your Armor Branch and the Armor Center will be involved hand-in-hand alongside the other members of the combined arms team to bring Units of Action and the FCS to the field. We have an important role to play in the creation of the force that will one day soon bear the responsibility for our Nation's security, and we will gladly play our position to the best of our ability. We are honored to host the "new" Maneuver Battle Lab at Fort Knox that will have such a key impact on Objective Force design. But, we are equally honored that Armor Branch is a member of the overall effort to bring FCS enabled Units of Action to the field.

FORGE THE THUNDERBOLT!