



# THE AIR UNIVERSITY



## AIRMEN UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR ROLE IN THE JOINT FIGHT

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# Problem Clarification



**Prompt:** How do we teach Airmen to fully understand their role in the joint fight, and how to use education, experience and networking to accomplish that task?

## Two distinct goals

1. Interoperability interpretation (traditional joint education focus):  
How do we learn to execute joint operations with our joint partners?

2. Culture interpretation:



How do we create a USAF culture in which we focus on and understand downrange, joint effects across all AFSCs?





# Problem Clarification



Frequent question when trying to teach “Joint”:

- How do we teach to joint effects and still maintain USAF culture?

This is the WRONG question

- Current USAF culture struggles with a fragmented, job-specific lens  
**BECAUSE**  
we don't emphasize or understand our role in the joint fight
- Better joint understanding will reinforce our USAF culture and our pride in the effects that airpower brings to the fight



# Thesis



In order to create a joint understanding at all ranks, joint education and discussion cannot be left as a subject taught and understood only at the senior officer level, but instead taught and discussed at *all* levels – right down to an Airman Basic.



# The Joint Need



*The 2010 HASC report provided a detailed assessment of the state of JPME, and concluded that while the overall PME system was basically sound, some areas needed improvement, such as an increased emphasis on joint [...] operations [and] suggested that responsibilities for junior officers will increase and that joint education should be expanded at lower levels.*

US Government Accountability Office, October 2013  
Report to Congress on Joint Military Education

*"Soldiers and Sailors today have different expectations. They demand connectivity. For them and for the next generation, we need to leverage all the resources and innovation that the joint services ... bring to the fight."*

Rear Admiral Christian Becker, February 2015  
Speaking to a panel at the West 2015 Defense and Technology Exhibition

*"Service identity is important. But in the end, we all know we fight as a joint force. So the earlier we can expose men and women to operate in a joint force ... the better off they're going to be."*

Army Command Sergeant Major John Troxell, August 2016  
Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



# Step 1: Joint Emphasis



## Implement a 'months of joint experience' metric

- Similar in concept to an SEI
- For all grades/AFSCs
- For assignments that involve joint interaction, not just "joint billets"
- Include flag on SURF that IDs whether person has >6 months of joint interaction

**Expand opportunities, emphasis, and rewards for joint courses, tours, and deployments**

## Expand Joint Individual Skills Training (JIST)

- Currently utilized for EOD, linguistics, etc
- Evaluate additional opportunities for shared training
- Creates joint interaction and understanding with minimal adding training time
- Increases terminology transfer across branches

**If you want something to be valued... make the system value it.**



# Step 2: Networking/Conferences



## Create joint experience mentoring interface

- In order to receive joint experience credit and/or as part of post-deployment duties:
  - Airman with joint experience must mentor/answer questions through established forum over a 3 month period
- Airmen (including those about to deploy or serve in a joint environment) are able to find mentors to answer questions on joint effects, culture, etc

USAF Implementation

## Create joint colleague interface

- Create an online exchange of information between newly operational members of each service (i.e. E-3 to E-3, O-1 to O-1)
- Example group:
  - 2 Soldiers
  - 1 Airman
  - 1 Marine
  - 2 Sailors

Joint Implementation

**Expanded focus on joint conferences relevant to experience level**

**Networking options are the most sensitive to being executed correctly, but also yield high return for their level of demand on our Airmen's time**



# Step 3: Mid-Tier Joint Learning



## Establish joint education emphasis/capstone for NCO Academy

(easily scalable to CGO/FGO PME)

- Phase 1: Current NCOA with USAF-specific educational requirements and expanded joint focus
  - Short visit from either speakers or sister servicemembers
- Phase 2: Post-Graduation Capstone Exercise
  - Members take what they've learned about joint role back to the squadron
  - Teach their joint role to the junior Airmen that they are now responsible for leading

USAF Implementation

## Establish joint education follow on and capstone for NCO Academy

(easily scalable to CGO/FGO PME)

- Phase 1: Current NCOA with USAF-specific educational requirements
- Phase 2: 2 week joint education follow-on with members of other services
- Phase 3: Post-Graduation Capstone Exercise
  - Members take what they've learned about joint role back to the squadron
  - Teach their joint role to the junior Airmen that they are now responsible for leading

Joint Implementation

**If you want understanding at the squadron level, the NCOs must be driving the conversation.**

**The most effective way to learn is to teach.**

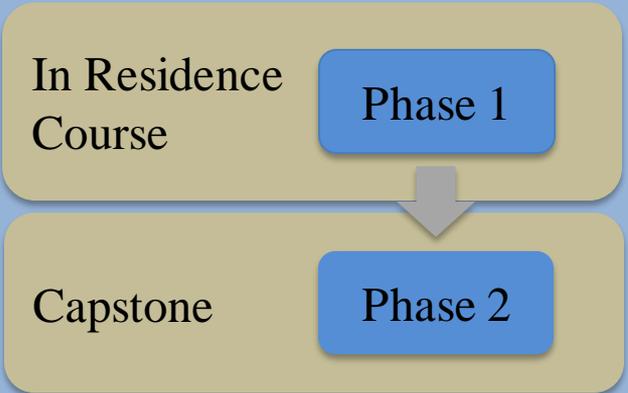


# Step 3: Mid-Tier Joint Learning



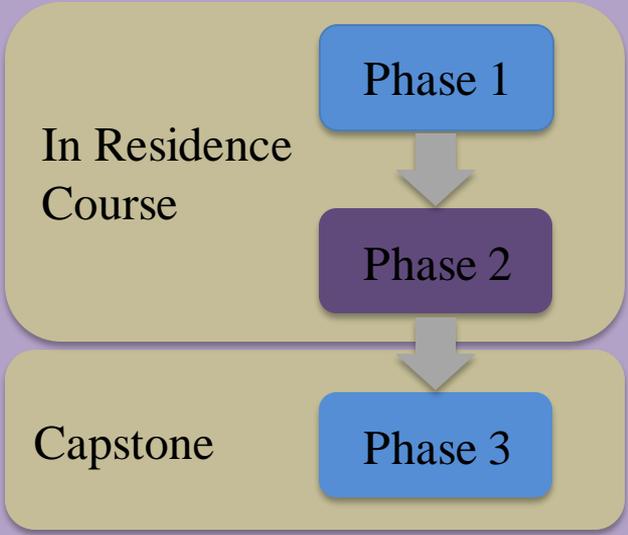
**Establish joint education emphasis/capstone for NCO Academy**

USAF Implementation



**Establish joint education follow on and capstone for NCO Academy**

Joint Implementation



**If you want understanding at the squadron level, the NCOs must be driving the conversation.**

**The most effective way to learn is to teach.**



# Summary



A full spectrum solution with a number of approaches is necessary to create understanding of our role in the joint fight at *all* levels of the USAF.