Legacy of Innovation: Shaping the Future of Cyberspace Defense and Cyberspace Security Critical Task

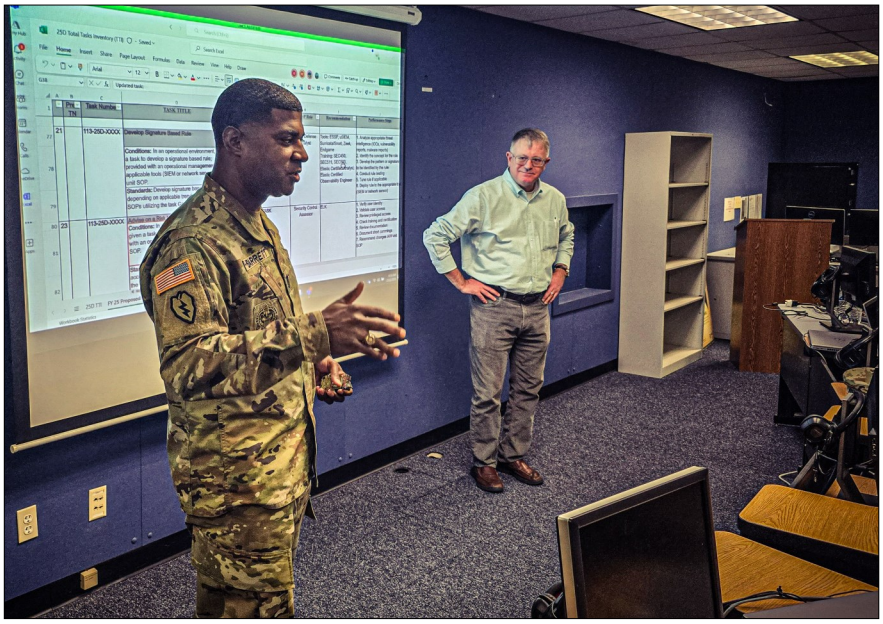
25D CTSBB

Sgt. Maj. Thomas Lee Jr.
U.S. Army Cyber Command

As a subject matter expert (SME) panel member in 2012 for the newly established 25D military occupational specialty (MOS), cyber network defender, I had the opportunity to contribute to the development and establishment of critical tasks to support cyber network defense efforts. More recently, I served as the chairperson for the 25D Critical Task Site Selection Board (CTSSB) as a sergeant major, leading the evolution of tasks that shape cyber space defense and cyber space security efforts.

The goal was to ensure that the tasks remained relevant and impactful by supporting a steadfast mindset to drive relevant and effective changes. With the help of the Training Development staff and the Office Chief of Signal (OCOS) enlisted staff, clear guidance was provided to the panel members. This guidance played a crucial role in shaping, refining, removing, and adding proper tasks for the 25D.

My primary focus was to ensure that our defense capabilities remain robust, adaptive, and forward-looking. As a leader, I have always been dedicated to enhancing our cyber defense posture and ensuring that the tasks we perform are both relevant and impactful. By fostering a positive and fair environment, I encouraged panel members to contribute their expertise and ideas, which significantly contributed to the overall success of the 2025 25D CTSSB.



Regimental Command Sgt. Maj. Linwood Barrett and U.S. Army Signal School Deputy Commandant John Batson express their gratitude to 25D CTSSB members for their dedication to enhancing critical tasks for the 25D. (Photo by Master Sgt. Kimberlyn Burns, U.S. Army Signal School)

Vital Role of CTSSBs

CTSSBs play a crucial role in ensuring effectiveness and relevance of MOSs in response to evolving threats and operational demands. Established to periodically review, refine, and update the critical tasks associated with specific MOSs, these boards ensure that the tasks assigned to military personnel are current, relevant, and in line with the latest strategic objectives.

The history of these boards dates to the early 2000s, when rapid advancements in technology and the dynamic nature of global security threats necessitated a more agile and adaptive approach to task management. By gathering subject matter experts and leveraging their insights, these boards help maintain a robust and forward-looking defense posture, ensuring that military personnel are well-equipped to address contemporary challenges and protect national security. Their work not only enhances operational readiness but also drives continuous improvement within the armed forces.

Optimizing Cyber Defense Operations

The 25D CTSSB panel took a very deliberate approach in conducting a gap analysis to clarify the roles and responsibilities between the 25D30, 25D40, 25D50, and the 255S warrant officer MOS. The gap analysis involved a thorough review of past and current task lists to identify overlaps and gaps in responsibilities. This careful process ensured that each role was clearly defined and distinct, aligning with Army doctrine, specifically DoDM 8140.3. DoDM 8140.3, the "Cyberspace Workforce Qualification and Management Program," provides a framework for the qualification and management of the DoD cyberspace workforce.

By aligning the roles with DoDM 8140.3, the gap analysis not only defined clear responsibilities for each position but also reduced redundancy, ensuring that tasks flowed seamlessly with minimal overlap. This comprehensive alignment ensured that the delineation and demarcation points between roles were accurately thought through, fostering a

clear and effective separation of work between each 25D rank level and the 255S warrant officer. As a result, each position had a distinct and well-defined scope of work, which aligned to operational cyber space defense requirements.

Challenging Outdated Lexicon

Panel members of the 25D CTSSB pushed the boundaries by challenging the outdated lexicon from the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) approved action verb list, which often fell short of addressing the nuanced demands of contemporary cyberspace defense efforts. The existing action verbs failed to capture the specificity and technicality required for cyber operations, thereby hampering the development of precise and relevant tasks. By providing valid justifications from DA PAM 611-25 and FM 3-12, which emphasize the need for updated and context-specific terminology, panel members successfully argued for the inclusion of new action verbs that better aligned with current cyber defense practices and terminology. This pivotal move not only improved task accuracy and relevance but also set a new precedent for future CTSSBs, paving the way for a more adaptive and forward- looking approach to defining military tasks.

Crosswalk Analysis

The 25D CTSSB panel conducted a detailed crosswalk analysis between the roles of system administration and network administration performed by 25Bs, 255As, and 255Ns. This analysis aimed to ensure that the tasks assigned to the 25D cyberspace defenders correlated more appropriately with cyberspace defense responsibilities rather than the traditional tasks of system and network administration.

By meticulously examining the responsibilities and duties of each MOS, panel members identified and resolved any overlaps, ensuring that cyberspace defense tasks were clearly defined and distinguished from those of system and network administrators. Furthermore, the crosswalk was extended to the 17C MOS to ensure that tasks supporting defensive cyberspace operations (DCO) and DCO-internal defensive measures (DCO-IDM) efforts did not infringe upon the 17C. This careful delineation ensured the right tasks were assigned to where the 17C was not present in U.S. Army Forces Command units and regional cyber centers, maintaining a coherent and efficient division of labor within the cyber defense community.

Sgt. Maj. Thomas Lee Jr. and Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Vidal served together at the Regional Cyber Center-Europe and were recently reunited as members of the 25D CTSSB panel. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Decker, U.S. Army Signal School)

Conclusion:

The 25D CTSSB has greatly impacted the evolution of cyberspace defense and security. The board's emphasis on implementing necessary modifications, conducting gap analysis, and performing crosswalk analysis has resulted in resilient, adaptable, and clearly defined cyberspace defense tasks. Furthermore, advocating for modernized action verb lexicon has enhanced task accuracy and relevance, cultivating a more agile and forward-thinking strategy in cyberspace defense. The board's unwavering commitment to preserving a robust and adaptable defense posture has considerably advanced overall success in cyberspace defense and security endeavors, aligning unified network operations within the Department of Defense Information Network – Army.

Bio

Sgt. Maj. Thomas Lee Jr. is the U.S. Army Cyber Command G3/6 sergeant major. previous assignments include senior enlisted advisor at the Regional Cyber Center-Europe, Wiesbaden, Germany; first sergeant and senior incident responder for 304th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, Camp Humphreys, South Korea; current operations cell NCOIC at Joint Force Headquarters-Cyber Army at Fort Eisenhower, Georgia; and information assurance staff NCOIC for 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.