ARMY AND MARINE CORPS TRAINING
Metrics Needed to Assess Initiatives on Training Management Skills

Why GAO Did This Study
Over the past decade, Army and Marine Corps forces have deployed repeatedly with limited time between deployments. At their home stations, combat training centers, and other locations, units have focused their limited training time on training for counterinsurgency operations. Prior to deploying, units also conduct a large-scale exercise referred to as a culminating training event. With the drawdown of forces in Iraq, the services have begun to resume training for a fuller range of offensive, defensive, and stability missions. The House report to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 directed GAO to report on the Army’s and Marine Corps’ abilities to complete training requirements. GAO assessed the extent to which the services’ (1) active component forces are completing training prior to the culminating training event and (2) leaders are positioned to plan and manage training as forces resume training for a fuller range of missions. GAO analyzed training requirements and unit training documentation, and interviewed headquarters and unit personnel during site visits between July 2010 and July 2011.

What GAO Found
Deploying Army and Marine Corps units conduct extensive predeployment training—both individual and collective, to include a large-scale culminating training event—at their home stations, combat training centers, and other locations. Prior to deploying, units also conduct a large-scale exercise referred to as a culminating training event. With the drawdown of forces in Iraq, the services have begun to resume training for a fuller range of offensive, defensive, and stability missions. The House report to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 directed GAO to report on the Army’s and Marine Corps’ abilities to complete training requirements. GAO assessed the extent to which the services’ (1) active component forces are completing training prior to the culminating training event and (2) leaders are positioned to plan and manage training as forces resume training for a fuller range of missions. GAO analyzed training requirements and unit training documentation, and interviewed headquarters and unit personnel during site visits between July 2010 and July 2011.

What GAO Recommends
GAO recommends that the services develop results-oriented performance metrics that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of their training management initiatives and support any adjustments that the services may need to make to these initiatives. DOD concurred with this recommendation.