

Information-Collection Rehearsals in the Brigade Combat Team

by MAJ Michael J. Childs

Rehearsals are critical for mission accomplishment because they enhance situational understanding for the brigade combat team and enable units to synchronize complex tasks at the right time and place. Our Army doctrine highlights the importance of conducting rehearsals, outlining “mission success depends on preparation as much as on planning. Rehearsals help staffs, units and Soldiers to better understand their roles in upcoming operations, practice complicated tasks and ensure equipment and weapons function properly,” according to Paragraph 6-15, Field Manual 3-0.

Because commanders recognize the importance of rehearsals, this critical event is often a prioritized training task at the National Training Center, specifically the brigade combined-arms rehearsal, which is conducted on average two to three times per rotation. Leaders and key staff throughout the brigade, like the fires and sustainment community, also take the opportunity to conduct support rehearsals, synchronizing their respective warfighting functions so units can accomplish their missions. However, observations from the last 15 rotations (January 2011-June 2012), reveal that BCTs routinely deploy to the NTC without practicing effective information-collection rehearsals to synchronize the brigade’s reconnaissance and surveillance plan inside the intelligence warfighting function.

This article is for brigade staff planners who are preparing for a rotation to the NTC or a follow-on combat operation. It describes why the IWfF must execute support rehearsals in preparation for R&S missions and how they can synchronize the plan with the BCT’s overall maneuver operations. Most of all, through observations and lessons-learned at the NTC, this article provides a technique for conducting a successful IC rehearsal based on recent trends and lessons learned at the NTC.

Each proponent should rehearse

Because our rehearsals “assist the commander, staff and subordinates to fully understand the plan” (Paragraph 4-4, FM 5-0), it is critical for staff proponents in each warfighting function to execute a support rehearsal, helping units synchronize details of the plan and key friction points, and to later set the conditions for a successful CAR. A good established model of this is the brigade fire-support rehearsal and the fires technical rehearsal.

Both set conditions for the fires warfighting function to demonstrate the details of their fire-support tasks and discuss how artillery missions relate to the

brigade’s overall maneuver plan. These rehearsals are “within the framework of a single or limited number of warfighting functions [fires], involving coordination and procedure drills.” (I-10, FM 5-0). It is led by an experienced brigade staff officer, the fire-support officer, and is chaired by the artillery battalion commander or brigade fire-support coordinator, who leads the fires warfighting function.

Why is it then that the brigade’s IWfF habitually does not conduct effective support rehearsals, namely an IC rehearsal? One argument is that every other warfighting function’s support rehearsal includes input from the IWfF. For example, a fire-support or sustainment rehearsal includes an S-2 who presents terrain and weather effects, the threat as it relates to the plan and induced enemy friction points throughout the event. While this is true, these independent support rehearsals do not capture all the key R&S tasks that lead to situational understanding for the brigade.

Another argument is that the reconnaissance squadron conducts the rehearsal responsible for IC operations, making it unnecessary for the brigade S-2 to serve as the proponent for this rehearsal. While the reconnaissance squadron certainly does rehearse key R&S tasks for key phases of the operation, it does not incorporate enduring reconnaissance tasks accomplished by the brigade’s organic collection assets or the reconnaissance tasks executed by other subordinate battalions. This rehearsal requires a centralized proponent to holistically tie the IC plan together.

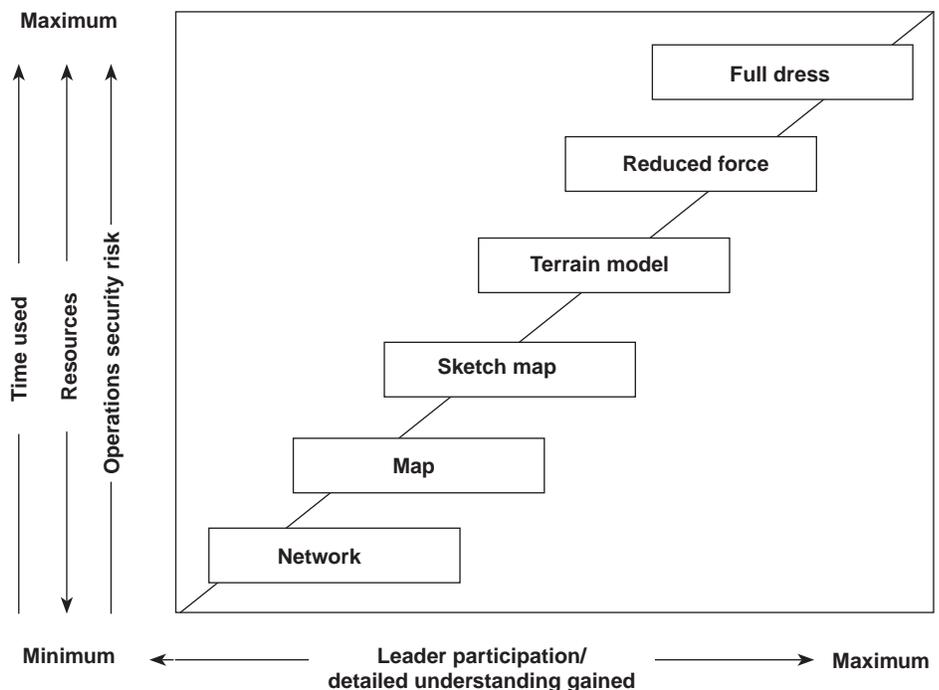


Figure 1. Rehearsal techniques.

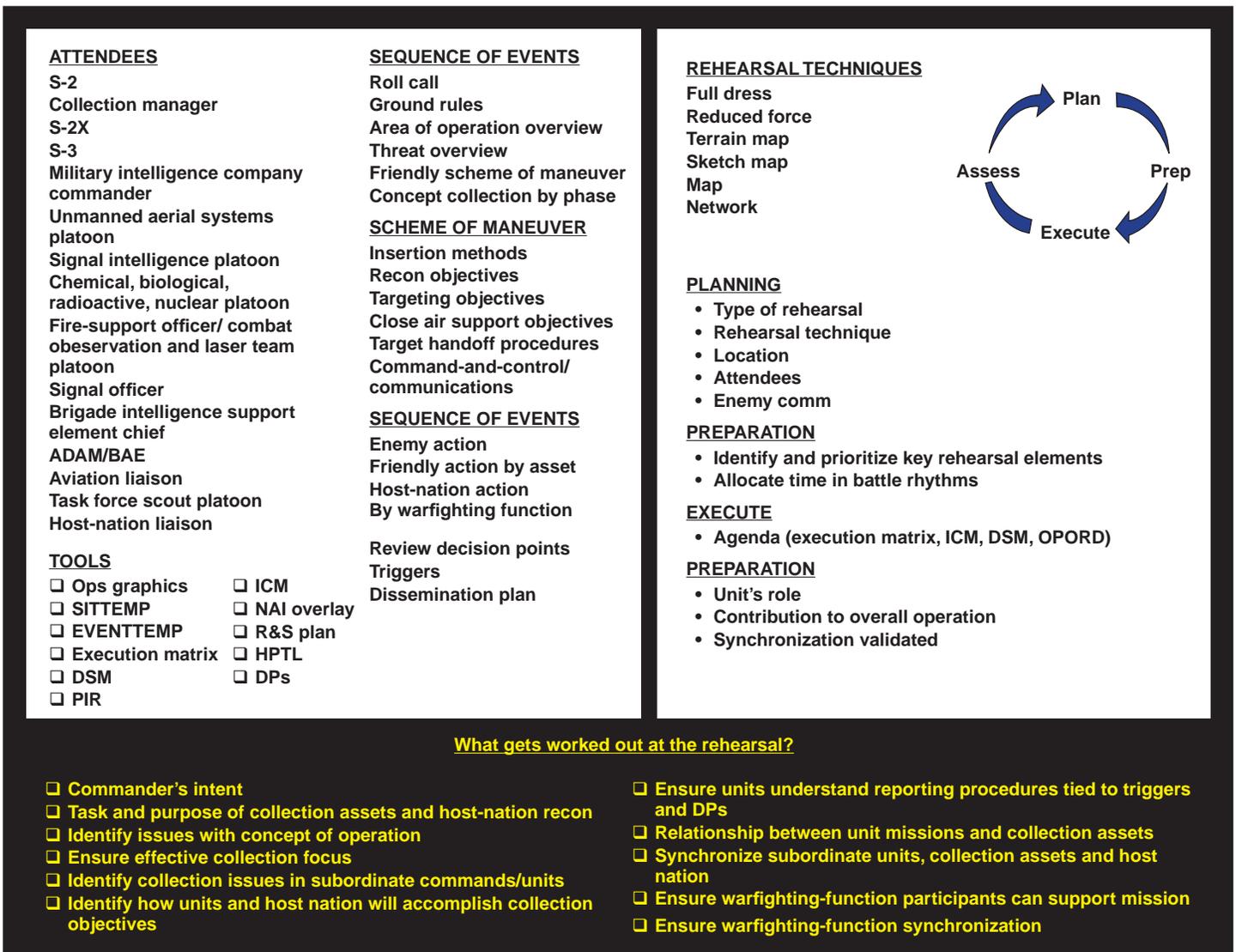


Figure 2. Information-collection rehearsal checklist.

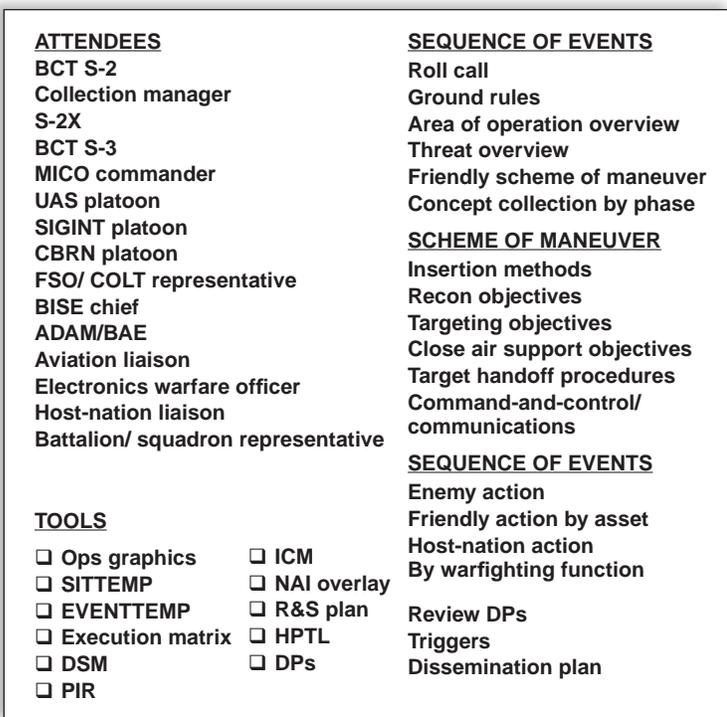


Figure 3. Rehearsal agenda and script.

A final argument is that the R&S plan is discussed and reviewed during the brigade's CAR, negating the need for the brigade S-2 to conduct an independent support rehearsal. While key R&S tasks are discussed during the CAR, they seldom get into the rigorous details of enemy indicators, sensor-to-shooter links and the dissemination plan. This is mainly because the brigade CAR is more focused (rightfully so) on synchronizing subordinate unit plans with one another, ensuring that each battalion achieves the BCT commander's intent. (I-9, FM 5-0)

Like the fires and sustainment counterparts on the brigade staff, the brigade S-2 section must own its respective support rehearsal. It must execute the IC rehearsal, serving as the proponent who synchronizes the brigade's R&S plan. Ideally, this rehearsal is conducted prior to the brigade CAR, with follow-on refinements or adjustments afterward.

Like the fire-support rehearsal, the IC rehearsal should be led by an experienced brigade staff officer and chaired by the officer who will ultimately publish the R&S tasking order. Therefore, this rehearsal, led by the brigade collection manager and chaired by the chief of reconnaissance (if assigned) or BCT S-3, serves as a "coordination event, not an analysis" and "does not replace wargaming."

Conducting the rehearsal

The endstate is to "help the BCT commander make only those changes essential to mission success and risk mitigation." (I-5,

FM 5-0) The first step is deciding which rehearsal technique the brigade should use. This is determined by the proximity of subordinate units, resources available and allotted time. When executing missions decentralized over a vast area of operation, a network rehearsal over the Army Battle Command System works well. When centralized and given time, a terrain model is a better alternative. When time and resources are limited, this rehearsal can be accomplished effectively with a map and some key overlays.

After choosing the right technique, the most important element of the IC rehearsal is to have an agenda or script. Next, the collection manager must gather the following decision-making tools: friendly-operations graphics, threat situational template, threat event template, execution matrix, decision-support matrix, priority intelligence requirements, information-collection matrix, named-area-of-interest overlay, the high-payoff target list, current R&S plan and the commander's decision points. With these tools in hand, the rehearsal becomes a much more effective event, ultimately helping battalions identify collection issues, synchronize assets and efficiently disseminate information.

The script or agenda must be both simple and logical to make the IC rehearsal a worthwhile event. List all attendees on the script for roll call. A list of minimum tools helps the collection manager adapt this script for any type of rehearsal technique he chooses given the time, proximity of subordinate units and resources available.

Figure 3 presents an example agenda, which provides a simple and logical outline for conducting this rehearsal. Note the attendees listed in the left-hand side with the minimum tools list-

ed at the bottom. To make this event successful, representatives from the military intelligence company, S-3, air-defense airspace management/brigade aviation element, electronic warfare officer and battalions (at a minimum) must participate. Together, each member contributes to the rehearsal by identifying their specific reconnaissance or surveillance task throughout each sequence or "turn" of events.

Another critical component of the IC rehearsal is the list of commander's priority intelligence requirements. Ideally, during mission planning, these information requirements are approved by the commander and nested with his decision points. As the brigade R&S plan was developed, each PIR should have been broken down into essential elements of information indicators and specific information requirements. This crosswalk or breakdown is precisely what drives each collection task, and the collection plan must be on hand to synchronize the following:

- PIR, a question to answer;
- NAI, a place to answer that question;
- Observation window or latest time intelligence is of value, a start and stop time to answer that question; and
- Tasked observer, an asset or unit assigned to go out and get the answer.

Figure 4 displays an ICM, which a BCT collection manager could use to tie each asset to PIRs, NAIs and start/stop times. With this tool in hand, each participant in the rehearsal understands exactly what question they must answer and where. The EEIs, indicators and SIRs translate into taskings; as the rehearsal works through the collection scheme-of-manuever and se-

| PIR | EEI | Indicators | SIR | NAI | START TIME | END TIME | XX - Primary R- Request | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|-----------|------------|----------|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------|-----|---------|------------------|-----|-----|--------|-------------------|-----|-----|--------------------------|---|----|----|----|
| | | | | | | | BCT | | | | | | Division/ Higher | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 3-21 CAV | 4-77 IN | 2-30 IN | 2-608 FA | BSB | PROPHET | SHADOW | SWT | HCT | SIGINT | Full-motion video | FMV | FMV | Measures & Signal Intel. | | | | |
| Where are enemy battle positions? | Where are wheeled or tracked vehicles (BMP-2M, BRDM, T-80) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMP-2M • T-80 • BRDM • Track marks • Fighting positions | Report presence of BMP, BRDM, T-80 vehicles or track marks | 305003051 | 01000 | 1000 | | XX | XX | | | | | XX | | | | | | | | | XX | |
| | Where are the enemy obstacles emplaced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-wire • Mines • Ditches • Enemy artillery (overwatch) | Report presence of mine, wire, ditches Report grid of enemy IDF | 305113052 | 091300 | 2100 | | | XX | | | XX | XX | | | | | | | | | XX | | R |
| | Where are enemy fighting positions in relation to engagement areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles tied into natural chokepoints • Enemy LP/OPs • Disturbed earth IVO FA | Report 2 or more individuals Identify/ report disturbed earth | 30573058 | 1200 | 1800 | | | | | | | | XX | | XX | | | | R | R | | R | XX |

Figure 4. Information-collection matrix.

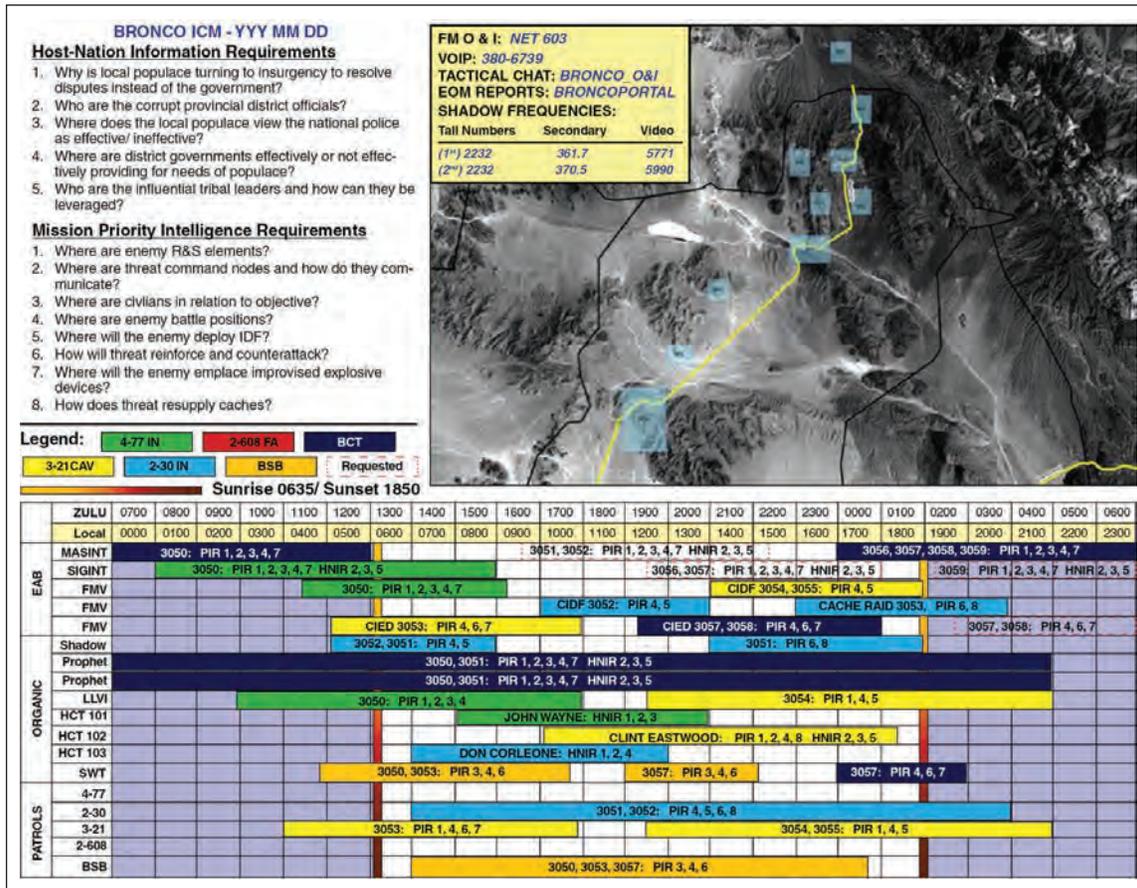


Figure 5. Synchronized collection.

quence of events, these taskings are reviewed in time and space. Simply put, during each turn of the rehearsal, key leaders and asset operators discuss their task and purpose, describing where they are looking (NAI), what indicators they are tasked to look for (EEI/SIR) and what times they are observing (LTIOV).

As the collection manager reviews each critical event, he should refer to the ICM, which graphically displays how assets at different echelons relate to one another across the entire depth of the brigade's operating environment. Figure 5 shows how the ICM can be combined with the information-collection overlay to synchronize collection in time and space. Notice how assets are connected to NAIs, and the color-coding used on this matrix shows which subordinate unit has priority of support (or control) of each asset.

All participants can clearly discuss where they fit into the plan, to include human-intelligence collection teams, who can discuss sources they have, when they plan to meet them and which battalion benefits from their source as they answer PIRs for the brigade. In addition, it shows gaps in coverage and allows the collection manager to highlight areas of friction.

With this matrix in hand, participants in the rehearsal can recommend ways to close the gap, request more assets or mitigate risk when assets are not available to answer PIRs. If members of a host nation participate as part of a combined operation, this graphic can also overlay their collection priorities as they relate to the operation. In short, this combined synch matrix serves as a very powerful briefing tool as the BCT collection manager synchronizes the R&S plan's complexities.

Each critical event of the IC rehearsal concludes with a review of triggers, asset handover criteria and how information will be disseminated throughout the brigade, enhancing situation-

al awareness for each subordinate unit. This is often the most neglected part of the rehearsal, but is a vital element.

Before subordinate units can take control of an asset, they must demonstrate the ability to establish the right dissemination feeds, acquire video (if applicable) and communicate over the right nets. For this reason, the collection manager must review what conditions must be met (handover criteria) and discuss how assets will push information through the primary/alternate/contingency/emergency plan. Finally, the collection manager must discuss how he will disseminate time-sensitive or flash traffic, as well as how he will share the current threat read when assets confirm or deny the brigade's situational template/event template.

Figure 6 displays a sample dissemination plan that addresses what systems must be operational to receive assets, what nets are used to push data, how feeds will be pushed for full-motion video and where final analyzed post-mission products will be archived for follow-on analysis. At the rehearsal, the collection manager should compile all key Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below addresses from battalions to send hourly free-text intel messages coupled with periodic broadcast calls on the brigade operations and intelligence frequency-modulation net.

Summary

In summary, the brigade's IWfF must execute the IC rehearsal before the brigade CAR to synchronize the brigade R&S plan and help units close on intelligence gaps. The IC rehearsal is critical because it helps the brigade work through the complexities of the collection plan.

When the collection manager owns the process, develops a simple and logical agenda, compiles the right tools and gathers the

| ASSET | HANDOVER CRITERIA | PRIMARY NET | ALTERNATE NET | CONTINGENCY NET | EMERGENCY NET | VIDEO FEED | END OF MISSION DEBRIEF |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| MASINT | BCT CGS | JABBER WARRIOR_DIV_O&I | HARRIS PRC-117G | PRC-148 | PRC-152 | | WARRIOR PORTAL |
| SIGINT | JWICS NSAnet | JABBER WARRIOR_DIV_O&I | HARRIS PRC-117G | PRC-148 | PRC-152 | | WARRIOR PORTAL |
| FMV (PREDATOR) | JTAC ROVER | JABBER WARRIOR_UAS | HARRIS PRC-117G | PRC-148 | PRC-152 | FREQ 1 _____ TAIL 1 _____ FREQ 2 _____ TAIL 2 _____ | WARRIOR PORTAL |
| FMV (GREY EAGLE) | JTAC ROVER | JABBER WARRIOR_UAS | HARRIS PRC-117G | PRC-148 | PRC-152 | FREQ 1 _____ TAIL 1 _____ FREQ 2 _____ TAIL 2 _____ | WARRIOR PORTAL |
| PROPHET | T-LITE JWICS NSAnet | JABBER BRONCO O&I | BRIGADE O&I NET 603 | SAT PHONE | SVOIP | | Bronco Shareportal_S2_EOM_S2_GINT |
| LLVI | FM RADIO O&I NET 603 | BDE O&I NET 603 | FBCB2 | TACSAT | SVOIP | | Bronco Shareportal_S2_EOM_S2_GINT |
| HCT | FM RADIO O&I NET 603 | BDE O&I NET 603 | FBCB2 | SAT PHONE | SVOIP | | Bronco Shareportal_S2_EOM_HUMINT |
| SHADOW UAS | JABBER BRONCO_UAS | JABBER BRONCO_UAS | HARRIS PRC-117G | PRC-148 | PRC-152 | FREQ 1 (5771) TAIL 1 (2232) FREQ 2 (5530) TAIL 2 (2234) | Bronco Shareportal_S2_EOM_UAS |
| TASK FORCE SCOUTS/ MANEUVER PLATOON | FM NET JABBER FBCB2 | BDE O&I NET | BDE O&I NET 603 | JABBER BRONCO_OSI | TAC SAT | | Bronco Shareportal_S2_EOM_DEBRIEF |

Figure 6. R&S dissemination plan.

right participants together, he sets the brigade up for success. Using the model in this article, the brigade IWfF will successfully execute an effective IC rehearsal that contributes to shared knowledge for all units in the brigade, ultimately driving maneuver operations towards mission accomplishment.



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ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

ADAM/BAE – air-defense airspace management/brigade aviation element
BCT – brigade combat team
BISE – brigade intelligence-support element
BMP – Boyevaya Mashina Pekhoty (Russian fighting vehicle)
BRDM – Boyevaya Razvedyvatelnaya Dozornaya Mashina (Russian scout vehicle)
C2 – command and control
CAR – combined-arms rehearsal
CAS – close air support
CBRN – chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear
CGS – common ground station
COLT – combat observation and lasing team
DP – decision point
DSM – decision-support matrix
EEI – essential element of information
EVENTTEMP – event template
FM – frequency modulation
FMV – full-motion video
FSO – fire-support officer
HCT – human collection team
HNIR – host-nation information requirements

HPTL – high-payoff target list
IC – information collection
ICM – information-collection matrix
IDF – indirect fire
IVO EA – in vicinity of engagement area
IWfF – intelligence warfighting function
JTAC – Joint terminal attack controller
LP – listening post
LTIOV – latest time intelligence of value
MASINT – measures and signals intelligence
MICO – military-intelligence company
NAI – named area of interest
NSAnet – National Security Agency Network
NTC – National Training Center
OPORD – operations order
PIR – priority information requirement
R&S – reconnaissance and surveillance
SIGINT – signals intelligence
SIR – specific information requirement
SITTEMP – situational template
T-LITE – Trojan Lite
UAS – unmanned aerial system