# Fighting for Time at JRTC

**LTC REX A. HOWRY
MAJ CALEB J. GOBLE
MAJ MATTHEW S. LEWIS**

Most Combat Training Center (CTC) struggles tie back to "time" and "stuff." The military decision-making process (MDMP) typically takes too much time, and the brigade combat team (BCT) has more enablers than it can effectively leverage. Three methods to buy back time during MDMP are: "fighting products," good commander's guidance, and efficient wargaming. To effectively manage span of control, commanders must empower field grades, operationalize the headquarters and headquarters company (HHC) commander, and leverage specialty platoon leaders (PLs) and enabler leadership.

Over the span of nine months, the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division, had the opportunity to execute two Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) deployments. In October 2019, the "Triple Deuce" deployed to defeat the Arianan aggressors after just freeing Atropia in February of the same year. Although we performed admirably during JRTC rotation 20-01, Geronimo gave us a fight around every corner and challenged us each battle period. Our battalion's performance improved dramatically since our last experience during JRTC 19-04, and this article will share what we changed.

CTCs' Operations Groups and observer-controller-trainers (OCTs) consolidate and distribute trend slides to highlight the challenges faced by brigades and battalions during their rotations. Common examples include failing to conduct effective reconnaissance, not following the one-third/two-thirds rule, and failing to conduct rehearsals — all basic concepts that seem easy to conduct in theory. Yet, despite being heavily publicized across the force, these trends tend to remain constant rotation after rotation and with little variance across multiple years of data and dozens of separate BCTs. The authors have a combined total of 17 CTC rotations and can unequivocally state that the trends slide portrayed in preparation for our October 2019 deployment varied little from previous rotations.

If almost every BCT is experiencing the same glaring issues rotation after rotation, this can only mean one of two things. Either:

(a) We are identifying problems but are failing repeatedly as an Army to fix them, or

(b) We are merely identifying symptoms of the problem and not the core issues.

We believe the latter is correct; the trends CTCs observe

every month are symptoms of a deeper problem. Instead of identifying and rectifying the root cause of the problem, battalions and BCTs are playing "whack-a-mole" on fighting symptoms.

The CTCs have done a superb job identifying these symptoms; however, the question we must now ask is: What are the root causes of these poor performances? To do this, we must look at the constants that every BCT/battalion shares every rotation. We believe the two constants are the MDMP framework and the overwhelming number of enablers given to both a BCT and a battalion. Plainly speaking, almost all of the symptoms reported by the CTC tie back to "time" and "stuff" — full MDMP typically takes too much time, and the BCT simply has gained too many additional assets for the fight.

Consequently, when commanders and their staffs try to execute a complicated, time-intensive process while managing too many things in a time-constrained environment, there tends to be imbalance in the growth of the importance of stuff that should not matter relative to the stuff that should. This growth typically manifests itself in getting overwhelmed by random enablers and on producing the data, products, and presentations tied to MDMP rather than focusing on the "so what" (deductions) that actually help the commander make a decision. While well intentioned, the staff tends to focus on the wrong things thereby handicapping the commander's decision making. This is when things such as effective reconnaissance, the one-third/two-thirds rule, and rehearsals are sacrificed in the name of products.

### Time (Never Enough)

A complicated issue is one in which the components can be separated and dealt with in a systematic and logical way that relies on a set of static rules. It may be hard to see at first, but there's a fixed order that is merely complicated and allows you to deal with it. Once you figure out how to do these things, you can keep doing them at will.[1] An automobile assembly line is a good example.

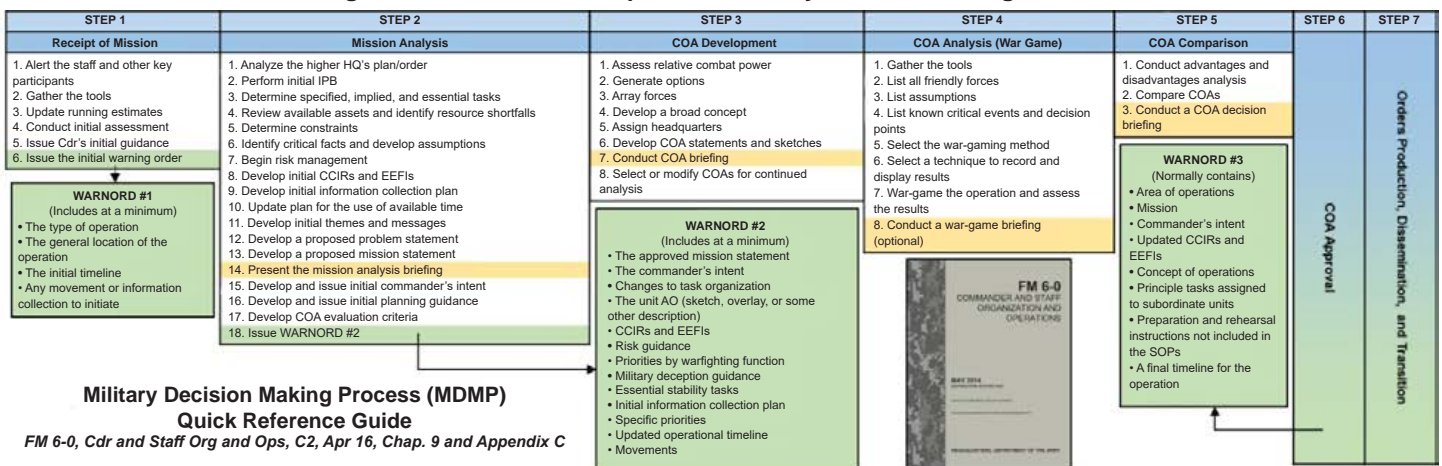A complex issue is one in which you cannot get a firm handle on the parts and there are no rules, algorithms, or natural laws. Things that are complex have no such degree of order, control, or predictability.[2] A complex thing is much more challenging — and different — than the complicated one.

That being said, MDMP is a framework that facilitates analysis, with commander input throughout, that results in a plan. It comprises seven steps (with 43 total sub-steps), thereby making it a complicated process versus a complex one (see Figure 1). Army doctrine includes MDMP because it is a defined process to address virtually any tactical problem; it ensures a consideration of factors bearing on the problem and resources available to develop a feasible plan. In a perfect world, the staff is practiced and proficient; and all staff members know the sub-steps they are responsible for and are motivated to produce those outputs.

The reality, however, is far from this ideal. There are two problems at the battalion level: experience and manning. Typically, the only individuals on the staff with MDMP experience are the battalion commander, command sergeant major (CSM), executive officer (XO), operations (OPS) sergeant major (SGM), and S3. The rest are typically lieutenants, pre-command captains, and junior NCOs who have little experience and passing interest. Compounding the problem is the manning churn within the unit. No matter how many tactical operations center exercises (TOCEXs) and staff exercises (STAFFEXs) are completed prior to a CTC rotation, it is unlikely that the team members executing MDMP at the CTC are the same individuals who got the prior "reps and sets."

While MDMP has its challenges, it is not to say that we should throw it out the window. Seasoned managers of MDMP know which sub-steps are critical, which briefs are necessary, and are ruthless at keeping planning timelines on track. MDMP's limiting factors are that it is inherently time consuming and requires experienced practitioners to actually drive rapid decision making in hyper time-constrained environments. Since you cannot produce more time, you can only become more efficient by knowing what to prioritize.

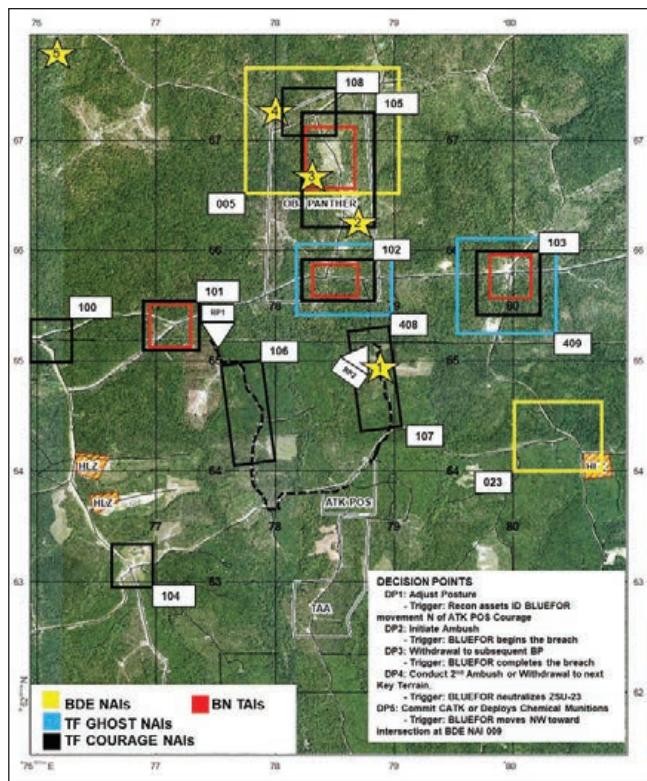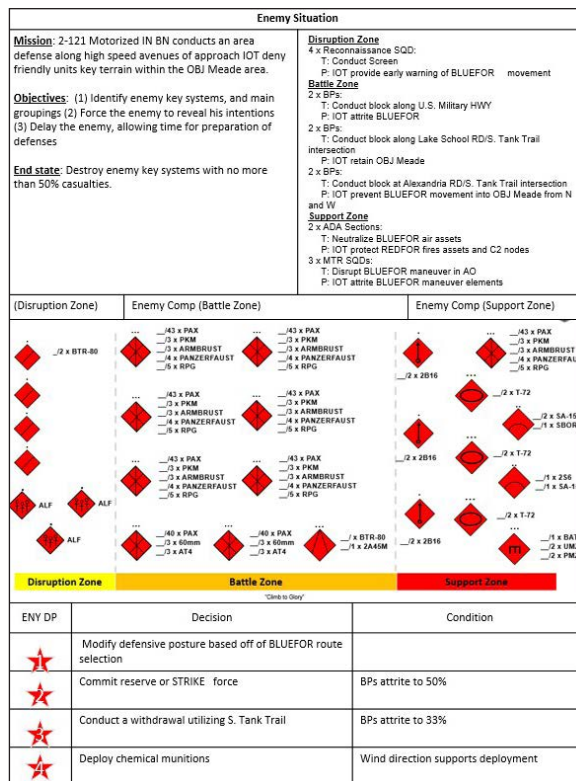**Figure 1 — The 43 Sub-Steps of the Military Decision-Making Process**

| STEP 1 | STEP 2 | STEP 3 | STEP 4 | STEP 5 | STEP 6 | STEP 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Receipt of Mission | Mission Analysis | COA Development | COA Analysis (War Game) | COA Comparison | | |
| 1. Alert the staff and other key participants<br>2. Gather the tools<br>3. Update running estimates<br>4. Conduct initial assessment<br>5. Issue Cdr's initial guidance<br>6. Issue the initial warning order | 1. Analyze the higher HQ's plan/order<br>2. Perform initial IPB<br>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks<br>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls<br>5. Determine constraints<br>6. Identify critical facts and develop assumptions<br>7. Begin risk management<br>8. Develop initial CCIRs and EEFIs<br>9. Develop initial information collection plan<br>10. Update plan for the use of available time<br>11. Develop initial themes and messages<br>12. Develop a proposed problem statement<br>13. Develop a proposed mission statement<br>14. Present the mission analysis briefing<br>15. Develop and issue initial commander's intent<br>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance<br>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria<br>18. Issue WARNORD #2 | 1. Assess relative combat power<br>2. Generate options<br>3. Array forces<br>4. Develop a broad concept<br>5. Assign headquarters<br>6. Develop COA statements and sketches<br>7. Conduct COA briefing<br>8. Select or modify COAs for continued analysis | 1. Gather the tools<br>2. List all friendly forces<br>3. List assumptions<br>4. List known critical events and decision points<br>5. Select the war-gaming method<br>6. Select a technique to record and display results<br>7. War-game the operation and assess the results<br>8. Conduct a war-game briefing (optional) | 1. Conduct advantages and disadvantages analysis<br>2. Compare COAs<br>3. Conduct a COA decision briefing | COA Approval | Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition |
| | **WARNORD #1**<br>(Includes at a minimum)<br>• The type of operation<br>• The general location of the operation<br>• The initial timeline<br>• Any movement or information collection to initiate | **WARNORD #2**<br>(Includes at a minimum)<br>• The approved mission statement<br>• The commander's intent<br>• Changes to task organization<br>• The unit AO (sketch, overlay, or some other description)<br>• CCIRs and EEFIs<br>• Risk guidance<br>• Priorities by warfighting function<br>• Military deception guidance<br>• Essential stability tasks<br>• Initial information collection plan<br>• Specific priorities<br>• Updated operational timeline<br>• Movements | FM 6-0<br>COMMANDER AND STAFF ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS | **WARNORD #3**<br>(Normally contains)<br>• Area of operations<br>• Mission<br>• Commander's intent<br>• Updated CCIRs and EEFIs<br>• Concept of operations<br>• Principle tasks assigned to subordinate units<br>• Preparation and rehearsal instructions not included in the SOPs<br>• A final timeline for the operation | | |

**Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) Quick Reference Guide**
*FM 6-0, Cdr and Staff Org and Ops, C2, Apr 16, Chap. 9 and Appendix C*

Figure 2 — Matrix OPORD

Figure 3 — Example Operations Graphics

## Buying Back Time through Efficient MDMP

*"Most staff officers dislike MDMP for one of two reasons: They've either seen it applied inefficiently, or they do not understand it."*

**– COL (Retired) Michael Kershaw**

The Leader Training Program (LTP) ensures units have the opportunity to conduct MDMP gaining reps and sets prior to attending a CTC. It is a time to learn both the "book" answer as well as "street-smart" techniques from former brigade commanders who have experienced MDMP from enough perspectives to assist new field grades and young commanders. Our LTP coach shifted our thinking by focusing us on "fighting products" and weighting our efforts on certain steps of MDMP.[3]

Typically at LTP, battalion staff members will lock themselves in a room for 48-72 hours — fueling themselves on caffeine and nicotine as they churn through their previously unopened battle staff smart books, furiously checking off the myriad of situation templates (SITEMPS), running estimates, and decision briefs that must be produced along the way. Predictably, the grand result is a lengthy operation order (OPORD) — bloated by dozens of annexes, appendices, and tabs that no one will ever read — which is produced too late to be of any value to subordinate headquarters.

However, our LTP coach helped maximize our efforts through assisting the commander to boil down the most important questions he wanted MDMP to answer. The commander focused the staff on the following questions:
- What does the enemy look like?
- How will he fight?
- What do we have to fight with?
- How can we most effectively leverage what we have to fight with, in conjunction with the terrain, to beat our enemy?

Rather than creating every annex that the staff MDMP manual says to produce, we focused on simply producing a mission type order, accompanied by the appropriate "fighting products." This allowed us to focus our efforts on what the commander needed from the staff (battalion commander — see the problem holistically and leverage tactical experience through specific guidance, and company commanders receive products that both communicate the plan as well as provide value during execution).

## Fighting Products

After much deliberation, our staff narrowed our list down to eight products that could be created and maintained in both a digital and an analog environment:

### Matrix OPORD — All (Figure 2)
This format combines the strengths of a concept of operation (CONOP) (easily digestible) with the strengths of the five-paragraph OPORD (detailed information). Additionally, this format is easily be converted from digital to analog with some laminate and map markers.

### Operations Graphics — S3 (Figure 3)
Operations graphics are critical to helping commanders visualize the operation while also providing left and right limits and coordination measures. Again, these can be digital (PowerPoint/Google Earth) or analog (overlays/map).

### Event Template — S2 (Figure 4)
One of the most misunderstood and incorrectly utilized intelligence tools, the event template allows the commander to visualize where the enemy will be located down to the squad level on the battlefield at any given time. Visually depicting the enemy down to the squad level vice company- and platoon-sized diamonds enhances a subordinate commander's ability to plan. Additionally, establishing the enemy's timetable and decision points provides the commander the ability to effect the enemy commander's decision cycle. It also helps determine the location of named

Figure 4 — Example Event Template



Figure 5 — Example Kill Card

areas of interest (NAIs) which then drives your intelligence collection plan. Again, these can be digital or analog on a map board.

### Kill Card — S2 (Figure 5)

The kill card helps create shared understanding for all unit commanders to visualize what exactly they will face on the battlefield, determine if they have enough resources to defeat it, and reallocate resources as needed. When overlayed with the event temp, it then gives them an idea of when they will face that threat. A kill card broken down to the squad level is the easiest way to answer simple questions such as, "Do I have enough anti-tank (AT) weapon systems to destroy the number of BMPs I am likely to face?"

### Synchronization Matrix — S3 (Figure 6)

Synch matrixes often become bloated, colored messes attempting to depict every moving piece on the battlefield down to the minute and end up resembling Russell Crowe's office wall in *A Beautiful Mind*.

Rather than "time" based, we utilized a "phase"-based matrix which simply listed when each phase begins and ends, task and purpose for each maneuver unit and critical enabler by phase, and priority of fires/support by phase.

Figure 6 — Example Synch Matrix

## Synch Matrix by Phase/Execution Timeline

| PHASE | I (Recon) | IIa (Breach OBJ SIG) | IIb (Breach OBJ GLOCK) | IIc (Destroy OBJ HK) | IId (Clear OBJ TAURUS) | III (Transition to Defense) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BEGINS | SCTS SP ATK POS BEAR | A CO SP ASLT POS ALBANY | OBJ SIG breach lanes secure | OBJ GLOCK breach lane secure | Far side security set on OBJ HK | On order |
| ENDS | COs established in ASLT POS | OBJ SIG breach lanes secure | OBJ GLOCK breach lanes secure | Far side security set on OBJ HK | OBJ TAURUS clear | BPs established |
| A CO | T: Occupy ASLT POS ALBANY | PHIIa ME<br>T: Conduct FPOL w/ scouts IVO PL ALASKA<br>P: Enable attack on OBJ PANTHER<br>T: Breach OBJ SIG<br>P: Allow B CO (DO) to attack OBJ GLOCK | LOA PL CALIFORNIA<br>T: Pass B CO through OBJ SIG | | | T: Establish hasty defense IVO OBJ GLOCK oriented north<br>P: Prevent counterattack from the north |
| B CO | T: Occupy ASLT POS BOSTON | T: Stage at PL ALABAMA | PHIIb ME<br>T: Conduct FPOL w/ A CO<br>P: Enable attack on OBJ GLOCK<br>T: Breach OBJ GLOCK<br>P: Allow D CO to attack OBJ HK | LOA PL COLORADO<br>T: Pass D CO through OBJ GLOCK | | T: Establish hasty defense IVO OJB SIG oriented west<br>P: Prevent counterattack from the west |
| C CO | T: Occupy ASLT POS COLUMBUS | ASLT POS CHARLOTTE | T: Stage at PL ALABAMA | T: Stage at PL ALASKA | PH11d ME<br>T: Conduct FPOL w/ D CO<br>P: Enable attack on OBJ TAURUS<br>T: Clear OBJ TAURUS<br>P: Prevent envelopment of DO | T: Establish hasty defense IVO PL ALASKA oriented east<br>P: Prevent counterattack from the east |
| D CO | T: Occupy ASLT POS DETROIT | T: Block ASR COPPER<br>P: Allow DO FOM | T: Stage at PL ALASKA | PH11c ME<br>T: Conduct FPOL w/ B CO<br>P: Enable attack on OBJ HK<br>T: Destroy EN on OBJ HK<br>P: Allow C CO (SO4) to clear OBJ TAURUS | LOA PL KANSAS<br>T: Pass C CO through OBJ GLOCK | T: Establish hasty defense IVO PL ALABAMA oriented south<br>P: Prevent counterattack from the south |
| HHC | TOC in TAA PANTHER<br>TAC in TAA PANTHER | TOC in TAA PANTHER<br>TAC in ASLT POS DETROIT | TOC in TAA COURAGE<br>TAC at KT 2 | TOC in TAA PANTHER<br>TAC at KT 2 | TOC in TAA PANTHER<br>TAC at KT 2 | TOC in TAA PANTHER<br>TAC at KT 2 |
| G CO | T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA PANTHER | T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA PANTHER | T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA COURAGE | T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA COURAGE | Lift package staged at ASLT DETROIT | Transport C CO from OBJ TAURUS to PL ALASKA |
| SCTS | PHI ME<br>T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER<br>P: Provide early warning<br>T: Conduct area recon of OBJ PANTHER (LOA PL ALASKA)<br>P: ID disposition, composition, and location of obstacles and T-80s. | T: Conduct FPOL w/ A CO<br>P: Allow A CO to attack OBJ SIG | T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER<br>P: Provide early warning | T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER<br>P: Provide early warning | T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER<br>P: Provide early warning | T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER<br>P: Provide early warning |
| MTRS | Mortars in MFP 1 and MFP 2 | Fire: AP1000<br>Suppress dismounts | Fire: AP2000<br>Suppress dismounts | Fire: AP3000<br>Suppress dismounts | | |
| CAS | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| FIRES | | Fire: AP1100, AP1101<br>Suppress; obscure OBJ SIG | Fire: AP2100, AP2101<br>Neutralize EN ADA on OBJ HK<br>Obscure OBJ GLOCK | Fire: AP3100<br>Suppress OBJ HK | Fire: AP3101<br>Obscure OBJ TAURUS | |

### Execution Checklist (Excheck) — S3 (Figure 7)

The excheck helps flatten communication higher, lower, and laterally while breaking complex operations into a generally linear tracker which aids the commander in identifying when conditions are set or if the fight is progressing as planned.

### Target List Worksheet — Fire Support Officer (FSO)

The target list worksheet is a must for battalion and company FSOs to facilitate fires planning and execution during the operation. It can be easily used in an analog format.

### Fire Support Execution Matrix (FSEM) — FSO (Figure 8)

The FSEM is a concise, easy planning tool to visually portray the many factors of a complicated fire support plan. It identifies priority of fires, final protective fires, priority targets, specific targets, and groups for mortars, howitzers, and attack aviation.

During our actual rotation, we strove to produce physical copies of these eight products for each operation, preceded by warning orders (WARNORDs) sent either over the Joint Battle Command-Platform (JBC-P) or FM. E-mail was only used for communication with brigade, keeping our upper tactical internet (TI) footprint extremely low. To produce and distribute the orders, the S3 shop had two cheap, stand-alone "all-in-one" printers, and each staff section had a stand-alone computer that was not hooked up to a network. If time allowed, each staff section would produce its section of the order/fighting product on its computer, print via USB hook-up, and the plans officer would compile the order into waterproof document protectors. If time was severely constrained, each staff section would hand-jam their inputs onto blank, laminated templates of the fighting products, and the plans officer would make copies of the filled-out products and compile into an order. Depending on the environment, the orders were then distributed via runner or with the logistic packages (LOGPACs) to the companies.

### Which Steps of MDMP to Prioritize

The staff concentrated our efforts on three steps of MDMP: mission analysis, course of action (COA) development, and the wargame. Intel drives fires... fires drives maneuver... and sustainment enables the realm of possibilities within fires and maneuver. Therefore, a deliberate mission analysis is absolutely critical to framing the problem and answering the first three questions above:
1) What does the enemy look like?
2) How will he fight?
3) What do we have to fight with?

The kill card and event template answer questions one and two, and the staff running estimates answer question three.

| OPERATIONS COURAGE ASCENT EXCHECK | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LINE # | TIME | | NET | TO | FROM | PROWORD |
| | | MORTARS EST MFP 1 AND MFP 2 | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | WOLFPACK 6 | AMBER |
| | | SCOUTS LD FROM TAA COURAGE | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | WATCHDOG 6 | ASHLEY |
| | | SCOUTS SET IN SCREEN IVO ASR COPPER | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | WATCHDOG 6 | ANNA |
| | | ANVIL SPs ATK PSN BEAR | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | ANVIL 6 | ARLENE |
| | | BUSHMASTER SPs ATK PSN BEAR | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | BEVERLY |
| | | DESTROYER SPs ATK PSN BEAR | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | DESTROYER 6 | BONNIE |
| | | CHAOS SPs ATK PSN BEAR AND CONDUCTS FOLLOW AND ASSUME WITH B CO | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | CHAOS 6 | BRITTNEY |
| | | ANVIL OCCUPYS ASLT PSN ALBANY | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | ANVIL 6 | CAROLINE |
| | | BUSHMASTER OCCUPYS ASLT PSN BOSTON | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | CHARLENE |
| | | DESTROYER OCCUPYS ASLT PSN DETROIT | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | DESTROYER 6 | CHRISTINA |
| | | DESTROYER ESTABLISHES BLOCKING PSNS ALONG ASR COPPER | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | DESTROYER 6 | CLARISSA |
| | | ANVIL SPS ASLT PSN ALBANY | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | ANVIL 6 | CHEY |
| | | BUSHMASTER SPS ASLT PSN BOSTON | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | DIANNE |
| | | ANVIL/BUSHMASTER COMPLETES FPOL WITH WATCHDOG | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | WATCHDOG 6 | DANA |
| | | ANVIL INITIATES BREACH ON OBJ SIG | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | ANVIL 6 | DEBORAH |
| | | BUSHMASTER INITIATES BREACH ON OBJ GLOCK | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | DESTINY |
| | | DESTROYER STAGES ALONG PL ALABAMA | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | DESTROYER 6 | |
| | | ANVIL COMPLETES BREACH ON OBJ SIG | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | ANVIL 6 | |
| | | BUSHMASTER COMPLETES BREACH ON OBJ GLOCK | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | |
| | | BUSHMASTER ESTABLISHES LANE SKOAL | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | |
| | | ANVIL ESTABLISHES HASTY SECURITY ALONG PL CONNETICUT | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | ANVIL 6 | EMILY |
| | | BUSHMASTER ESTABLISHES HASTY SECURITY ALONG PL CONNETICUT | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | BUSHMASTER 6 | EVELYN |
| | | DESTROYER CROSSES PL ALABAMA | BN CMD | COURAGE TAC | DESTROYER 6 | FELCIA |

**Figure 7 — Example Execution Checklist**



**Figure 8 — Example Fire Support Execution Matrix Template**

While the staff focused on those three steps, the commander focused on writing his commander's guidance in such a way that the specificity would ensure that the concept produced in COA development would meet his intent. COA development is the area where experienced and self-aware commanders can save a substantial amount of time. By clearly communicating their guidance prior to starting COA development (especially when developing multiple COAs), there is less time wasted preparing a COA brief that does not achieve the commander's intent and ends with the dreaded phrases "blended COA" or "go back to the drawing board." A common critique of staffs is that they fail to take plans from conceptual form and translate them into sufficient detail. Clear commander's guidance is where you buy the time to get to that level of detail — especially if it's day 13 in the "box" and your battalion just got ordered to attack Sangari in 12 hours. In this situation, you do not have the time or staff experience to execute an iterative COA development process; you need commanders who clearly outline their guidance and make a decision. Only then can you execute the important things like reconnaissance, subordinate planning, and rehearsals. A decent plan rehearsed multiple times is superior to a perfect plan not rehearsed at all. Time gives you that opportunity.

During LTP we did multiple COAs; however, at JRTC 20-01 we generally only focused on one COA; this is where the commander's judgement comes into play and the art of command outweighs the science of control. Commanders use their experience, education, and intuition to weigh risk and make a decision. This is literally the most important thing commanders get paid to do: exercise good judgement, weigh risks, and make decisions. The combination of clear commander's guidance and one directed COA allowed us to issue a detailed mission order within the one-third time frame allowing for subordinate planning, rehearsals, and refinement.

Once the staff completed mission analysis, the battalion commander, S2, S3, and FSO gathered around the map and the event template to discuss options, and then the commander issued his COA guidance. This allowed us to get our reconnaissance out early with refined NAIs and priority information requirements (PIRs), allowed the commander to get out on the ground with company commanders to receive bottom-up refinement and appraise the situation with his own eyes, and most importantly allowed the staff to execute a thorough wargame.

The wargame is where you identify gaps, false assumptions, and ensure that the requisite detail is added to the COA. It is where you turn a 75-percent COA into a 90-percent executable plan. For example, after completing mission analysis for our defense of Geronimo Drop Zone, the commander directed the staff to develop a mobile defense COA along three likely enemy avenues of approach (AoAs). However, during the wargame — using our kill cards in conjunction with the event template — we identified that our company battle positions did not have enough AT weapons to fix the enemy long enough for our striking force to destroy the enemy.

This led the commander to make the decision to accept risk on the enemy's least likely AoA (west) by reallocating the vast majority of combat power to the center and the east. To mitigate the risk, we emplaced a blocking obstacle overwatched with scouts and fires, which would buy time to shift combat power should the enemy execute the unexpected. This decision proved critical in stopping the enemy attack. Had we skipped the wargame, we would have never identified this critical gap and would likely have lost the battle.

### Stuff (Too Much of it)

*"The average human brain finds its effective scope in handling three to six other brains."*

— **General Sir Ian Hamilton**

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, states that "generally, commanders can effectively command and control two to five subordinate headquarters."[4] An infantry rifle battalion already exceeds this limit with a modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) of six companies. Add in a civil affairs (CA) team, psychological operations (PSYOP) team, low-level voice intercept (LLVI) team, Avenger section, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team, sapper squad, Q-50 radar, military police (MP) platoon, and the chaplain — who reminds you every 10 minutes that he needs to conduct a religious support rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill — and you have vastly exceeded the number of units you can effectively command and control. "There is a balance to be struck between how much an attachment adds value because of the corresponding loss of freedom of action" to the gaining unit.[5]

Since you cannot control every element, you must find a way to command it. We accomplished through this through three ways.

### Let the XO and S3 Run the Planning Process

As tempting as it was for the commander to get in the weeds on every planning effort, we saw greater success when he took the time to write clear commander's intent and then let the XO and S3 run with it. This allowed the staff to "make the sausage" without being interrupted every five minutes and allowed the commander to circulate the battlefield and receive firsthand input from his company commanders.

### Operationalize the HHC Commander

Often, there is a tendency to park the HHC commander in the company trains command post (CTCP) and the FSC commander in the brigade support area (BSA) and simply put them in charge of logistics and sustainment. The problem is that when there are two people in charge of sustainment, there is not a clear delineation in responsibility; assumptions get made, and the next thing you know your Charlie Company gets a resupply of toilet paper instead of Javelins prior to an enemy attack. Instead, we used the HHC commander as a fifth "maneuver" commander while making the FSC commander directly responsible and accountable for all sustainment.

This can take many forms; the HHC commander can maneuver the battalion reserve element or LOGPAC security forces, or control a "cross-functional team" of enablers (example: CA, PYSOP, medics, and security) in the consolidation area. Most importantly, he or she is available to command the scout, mortar, and medical platoons. HHC commanders should not only train their specialty platoons in garrison but should also command them in the field, just as rifle company commanders maneuver their rifle platoons. This means assisting the scout platoon leader (PL) in planning the intelligence collection scheme of maneuver, mentoring the mortar PL with establishing survivability move criteria, and guiding the medical officer (MEDO) to use factors such as terrain, time, distance, and security to emplace the battalion aid station. Our HHC commander briefed the applicable schemes of maneuver and concepts of employment for all three specialty platoons and all attached enablers during the COA development brief. This ensured ownership of the plan and enabled him to command and control them during execution.

### Place Enabler LNOs in the TOC

Clearly delineated roles and responsibilities are absolutely critical when controlling and leveraging the myriad of enablers assigned to a battalion. This starts with assigning a commander direct responsibility for each enabler. We took it a step further by requiring a liaison officer (LNO) for each enabler to participate in MDMP as well as the execution of the operation. This flattened communication across the organization, helping us mass the effects of our enablers' capabilities during critical phases of each operation. Additionally, it prevented us from "firing and forgetting" certain enablers and committing common CTC blunders such as leaving behind our Q-50 radar or forgetting to collect our LLVI team after an attack.

### Conclusion

None of what we have said is new. We did not invent fighting products, commander's guidance, or leveraging LNOs in the TOC. However, rather than trying to combat every deficiency trend listed in the LTP after action reviews (AARs), we focused our efforts on buying back time and managing our "stuff." Consequently, by prioritizing the sub-steps of MDMP and consolidating our span of control, we saw a sharp reduction in the aforementioned symptoms between JRTC Rotations 19-04 and 20-01. As a result, we were able to produce good (not perfect) orders sooner, which allowed us to employ effective reconnaissance, give our subordinates more time to plan, and conduct quality rehearsals.

### Notes

[1] Theodore Kinni, "Smart Leaders Know the Difference Between Complex and Complicated," Inc.com, 19 July 2017. Accessed from https://www.inc.com/theodore-kinni/smart-leaders-know-the-difference-between-complex-.html.

[2] Ibid.

[3] COL (Retired) Michael Kershaw, former brigade commander, served as the Leader Training Program coach for 2-22 IN prior to JRTC Rotations 19-04 and 20-01.

[4] The ADRP 6-0 referenced is the May 2012 edition, which was updated in July 2019 and now states: "A commander's span of control should not exceed that commander's capability to command effectively. The optimal number of subordinates is situation-dependent."

[5] COL Kershaw.

**LTC Rex A. Howry** currently commands the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska. During his career, LTC Howry has served with the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Armored Division, 25th Infantry Division, and 10th Mountain Division. He also served as an observer-coach-trainer (OCT) at the National Training Center and had the opportunity to attend three Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotations as a field grade.

**MAJ Caleb J. Goble** currently serves as the commandant of the Northern Warfare Training Center in Black Rapids, AK. He holds a bachelor's degree and a Master Teacher's Certification from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, NY. During his career, MAJ Goble has deployed seven times to Iraq and Afghanistan while serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, and 10th Mountain Division. He also served as a course director and instructor in the Department of Military Science at USMA.

**MAJ Matthew S. Lewis** currently serves as the executive officer of 2-22 IN, 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum. He holds a bachelor's degree from the Citadel and a master's degree from Central Michigan University. Over the past 12 years, MAJ Lewis has conducted eight JRTC rotations, deployed six times (Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan), and served with the 82nd Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, and 75th Ranger Regiment. He also manages www.yourewelcome.blog, a website dedicated to teaching young Soldiers about money, health, and fitness.

*Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, conduct a live-fire exercise on 24 October 2019 at Fort Polk, LA.*