

force is “a mobile force with appropriate fire support designated, usually by the area commander, to deal with Level II threats in the rear area.” QRFs are therefore designated in stability and COIN situations but not usually in conventional situations. The level of threat is not pertinent to QRFs since such “level” threats are not normally designated in stability or COIN operations by doctrine.<sup>1</sup> This may, however, change in emerging doctrine that addresses “hybrid” forces with both unconventional and conventional capabilities.

Figure 1 sorts the types of forces, their commitment for planning, size of forces used, the type of enemy faced, and the type of operation in which the forces are employed. It is an attempt to classify types of forces used and planning considerations affecting their employment.

### In Closing

What kind of force to designate and whom to call can be confusing if the units involved do not understand the doctrine along with the second and third order effects. The support requirements, the size and composition of the elements involved, and the receipt of priorities of fires and support to the units involved are especially important to unit planners and commanders.

Doctors Stantz and Venkman might rest assured that whatever force they need to use, after familiarizing themselves with the current doctrine, they will pick the correct one.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Stability and COIN operations generally fall under the auspices of “irregular war” which, by definition, is the conduct of operations against irregular combat forces. These forces are likely to be those that would constitute Level I or II forces in a conventional scenario. With advent of “hybrid” threats, e.g.; non-state, terrorists with conventional capabilities, the consideration for the use of the threat levels might be considered appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Reserve forces are designated and given priorities for planning and commitment. However, until they are ordered into action, they are “uncommitted.” Once they have been ordered into action, they become committed forces and another reserve should be constituted.

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# HHC/BDE ... SEPARATE COMPANY?

COL BLACE C. ALBERT

Since our Army began transforming to brigade combat teams (BCTs), brigades have created different business rules for their headquarters and headquarters company (HHC/BDE). The question has never been about whether or not the Soldiers in this company require leadership, resourcing, and supervision; rather, the question is which organization should provide these things for the company?

Some believe that this company should remain as a completely separate subordinate organization in the BCT. On the other end of the spectrum, some would argue that the company should be attached to the brigade special troops battalion (BSTB) with the BSTB assuming complete ownership as they do for their other companies. The compromise is that an operations order or memorandum of agreement (MOA) outlines what the BSTB is responsible for and what authorities over the company they do not have. As the Army undergoes another transformation from BSTBs to brigade engineer battalions (BEBs), the question of how to exercise mission command with respect to the brigade HHC remains relevant. This article will make the case for the course of action in which the company is attached to the BEB, and that battalion should assume 100 percent responsibility for the organization. Why? Because this increases the BCT's ability to accomplish its mission, and that is what we are all trying to achieve.

HHC/BDE requires supervision like every other company in the Army. There are numerous tasks that Soldiers must complete each week. Some of these are directed, such as annual information assurance training. Some of the tasks are created at battalion level based on the experience of the commander and staff. For example, a few months into our deployment we made everyone update their DD Form 93, *Record of Emergency Data*. The opponents of attachment to the BEB say that this is what the company commander and first sergeant (1SG) are for — partially true, but all companies need things to be reinforced or prioritized, and a company commander and 1SG do not have the same depth of experience as a battalion commander and command sergeant major. Figure 1 shows numerous things that the BEB can ensure that the Soldiers of HHC/BDE accomplish. Many of these things require mature proof-reading, guidance, and input to the content — all things that a battalion commander and a battalion staff can provide.

The company has resourcing requirements just like the other 29-37 companies in the brigade. Soldiers in HHC/BDE are required to qualify on their weapons, complete driver's training to receive a valid military driver's license, do annual drown-proofing, train on Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, attend numerous schools, and many other things. Resourcing the ammo, ranges, pool, vehicles, field rations, training areas, etc., is the responsibility of a battalion staff, and the BEB can do this

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Assessment Tool (GAT)</li> <li>• FORSCOM Risk Assessment Tool</li> <li>• Information Assurance (IA) training</li> <li>• Update DD93s</li> <li>• Timely award submissions</li> <li>• Timely NCO/officer evaluation report (NCOER/OER) processing</li> <li>• Proper 4187 routing</li> <li>• Serious incident reporting</li> <li>• Accident reporting</li> <li>• Incident/accident review boards</li> <li>• Congressionals</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigations</li> <li>• Field-grade Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)</li> <li>• Distribution of command information</li> <li>• Family readiness group account audits</li> <li>• Unit status reports (USRs)</li> <li>• Financial liability investigations of property loss (FLIPLs)</li> <li>• Security clearances</li> <li>• Flags/Bars to reenlistment</li> <li>• POV inspections</li> </ul> |
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**Figure 1 — Company Tasks Supervised by a Battalion**

for HHC/BDE. Who will do this if the company does not work for the battalion? The company commander is not staffed to accomplish this on his own, and the brigade staff is busy enough. Why would they want to have the responsibility of taking care of an extra company on top of the six to seven battalions? HHC/BDE should attend the BEB training meetings, resource conferences, and executive officer (XO) meetings. The battalion commander can approve the company training schedules. These are all things that any extremely busy brigade XO or brigade S3 would gladly let someone else do so they can continue to focus on responsibilities across the battalions vice managing an individual company.

The company leadership of HHC/BDE requires battalion mentorship just like any other company commander, XO, or 1SG would. Perhaps 10 years ago, one could argue that these company leaders were the best in the brigade — many having commanded another company already. My recent experience, however, shows that the HHC/BDE is not usually a second command anymore (zero times in the two brigades I was in between 2005 and 2012), and many times it is filled by an officer who is not combat arms. These company-level leaders need just as much mentorship as the other company command teams in the BCT. This mentorship can come from the BEB commander, and it involves a lot more than just signing things like Army Achievement Medals (AAMs) and 4187s in an administrative control (ADCON) relationship. Again, the senior brigade staff officers are too busy to put *sufficient* effort into the mentorship of a young captain. And frankly, some business needs to remain in a “green-tab” chain of command because it is the business of commanders, not staff officers. Examples would include execution or supervision of the Command Supply Discipline Program, risk assessments, leader professional development programs, command maintenance, promotions, unit commander financial reports, unit status report (USR) submissions, and many other things. Every other company commander has a battalion commander conduct his change of command ceremony and then gets rated by a battalion commander; why would this company commander be different? But if the BEB commander is going to rate the HHC/BDE company commander, that captain should be attached and completely accountable to the battalion. Only with complete supervisory

and mentorship responsibilities can the BEB commander provide the HHC/BDE commander an honest, justified officer evaluation report (OER).

*Why can't it be a separate company; that's how we used to do it?* Those who disagree with attaching HHC/BDE to the BEB will frequently make this statement. This isn't very sound logic for the argument, however. The Army transformed. It is constantly adapting, and we require our leaders to be agile and willing to accept that things change. Based on Stryker brigade after

action reviews (AARs), transformed BCTs were given a BSTB commander and staff to assume all of the leadership responsibilities for what used to be the brigade's separate companies. The Army is again transforming so that even the Stryker brigades will receive a new BEB. If the BEB performs the function of “unique company” integrator for the BCT's military intelligence company, the BCT's signal company, and numerous other attachments, why couldn't it perform the function for the BCT's headquarters company? The response: “Because we are brigade, we don't belong to a battalion. **We** tell the **battalions** what to do.”

It seems that often the biggest heartache that opponents of this task organization have is that the brigade staff can be tasked by the battalion (BSTB or BEB). For example, the brigade can tell the BEB to provide six people for the post police-call detail, and the BEB can turn around and tell HHC/BDE they need one person for this detail. There are two important points to make here. First, HHC/BDE has 175 Soldiers that can, and should, help accomplish our missions (which is really what a “tasking” is) — the other six-seven HHCs in the BCT operate this way. Are the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) pilots or Joint Network Node (JNN) operators less valuable than the brigade S3's schools NCO? We are all on the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) for a reason, and it is not to pick up trash on post. We must ALL assume a fair share of taskings, which leads to the second point — why would we not trust the BEB S3, a major with 12-15 years of experience, to determine what HHC/BDE's fair share is? Usually, this major has already served on a BDE staff and has a very good idea of what HHC/BDE can take on without being to the detriment of the BCT. It is common for key and essential personnel to be exempted from duty. This technique may be applied to assist the BEB S3 from tasking the brigade inappropriately. Coupled with communication between the majors working on the BEB and brigade staffs, very few issues will arise in this unique relationship.

One of the HHC/BDE 1SGs I knew would periodically suggest that things would work better if HHC/BDE was not attached to the BSTB. I was always surprised by this due to the many things the battalion did for the company — things like providing resources and briefing the HHC/BDE USR so the company commander and 1SG didn't have to. What I

found extremely ironic, however, was that the 1SG was unknowingly asking to become less empowered. He didn't realize what it would be like as a separate company because he had never operated that way. If the brigade XO or S3 was tasking HHC/BDE directly, they would almost certainly say, "Use SFC Smith for the funeral detail," for example. However, if the brigade tasks the BEB for a SFC for funeral detail, the battalion will task HHC/BDE for a SFC. Now the 1SG is empowered because he will go to his meeting with the brigade section NCOICs and discuss which SFC they should use.

Finally, attaching HHC/BDE to the BEB is good for the morale of the Soldiers. Whoa! That's a bold statement, but one that is absolutely true. All leaders should provide inspiration, keep their subordinates informed and motivated, and create an environment where Soldiers want to come to work and are proud of what they accomplish. We all want to feel like we are a part of something bigger than ourselves. But how many brigade staffs accomplish this? Most of the leaders I've known within multiple HHC/BDEs are merely "rowing to serve the ship"... working as hard as they can so they can be home by 1900 or not have to come in on the weekend. Figure 2 is a list of events that Soldiers in HHC/BDE participated in when they were attached to the BSTB.

The majors and senior NCOs on the brigade staff may not care much about these events, but Soldiers do. Getting to participate in a day of sports or hanging out with your Family at an Organizational Day is good for Soldier morale. Being included in combat patch ceremonies or having your own company pictures in a yearbook that documented your deployment make Soldiers proud. Staying informed by hearing your senior leaders speak at various formations or lunches increases your level of job satisfaction. The bottom line is that functions run by battalions are important for Soldier morale and provide one more reason why HHC/BDE should be attached to the BEB.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best company competitions</li> <li>• Company commander lunches</li> <li>• Officer PT</li> <li>• Organizational day</li> <li>• Receipt of birthday cards from battalion commander</li> <li>• Command maintenance formations</li> <li>• Combat patch ceremony</li> <li>• Safety awards</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRG leader recognition</li> <li>• Battalion runs</li> <li>• 1SG lunches</li> <li>• Battalion sports day</li> <li>• Deployment yearbooks</li> <li>• BN closeout formation</li> <li>• Payday awards formations</li> <li>• Leader breakfasts</li> <li>• BN CDR congratulatory notes</li> <li>• Participation in graduation events</li> </ul> |
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**Figure 2 — Morale-Building Events**

The intent of this article is to convince Army leaders that the best relationship for HHC/BDE is attached to the BEB. No battalion commander wants to receive a mission ("take care of this company"), and then be told that he doesn't have full authority to do so — as in merely an ADCON role. Our centrally selected battalion commanders and experienced iron majors within a BEB are smart enough to appropriately task HHC/BDE while taking care of the company and the Soldiers. The brigade and battalion XOs and S3s are certainly mature enough to maintain good communications as they refine roles and responsibilities in this unique relationship. When the company works for the battalion, the workload of the company command team is greatly reduced and the very busy senior brigade staff officers are not burdened with managing a separate company (much less providing command oversight which is not their responsibility), and this means that the BCT has increased its ability to accomplish the mission. For those brigade commanders, BEB commanders, HHC/BDE company commanders and 1SGs, operations sergeants major, or anyone else who is still not convinced of this, try it. I'm sure you will discover that the benefits gained from a pure attachment far outweigh having the BEB task the brigade staff for someone to be on the post-police detail every once in awhile!



Photo courtesy of author

**Soldiers from a HHC/4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Division celebrate after receiving the trophy for winning the quarterly Best Company Competition.**

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COL Albert has a unique perspective on this subject having served 34 months as a battalion commander of the 4th BSTB, 10th Mountain Division and also 16 months as the S3 for 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. He viewed the HHC/BDE relationship from both sides of the fence and never saw it work as well as it did when the company was attached to his BSTB, allowing him to assume 100-percent responsibility for the unit — good and bad.