

1812 . . . we stacked cottonbales on the levee with Andrew Jackson and took the fury of the British square. With spent musket and cannon the British retired from the field that day. They had met some damn fine soldiers . . . Cottonbalers, by God!

I remembered the Alamo . . . traveled south and left my mark and my blood at Monterey, Vera Cruz and Cerro Gordo. I marched triumphantly into Mexico City . . . proudly proclaiming . . . Cottonbalers, by God!

The sound of fury from Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga still rings in my ears, and I witnessed the closing acts of this internal strife at Gettysburg. I had fought my brother, but done my job . . . a Cottonbaler, by God!

I helped win the West . . . met a proud adversary after Little Big Horn and can count my fallen comrades against the Creeks, Seminoles, and Utes. I stormed the slopes of San Juan Hill and Santiago and met triumph in the Philippines. I am a Cottonbaler, by God!

My rest was short . . . I crossed over the sea and marched into France. I fought and died at Chateau Thierry . . . stood like a rock on the Marne . . . and smashed onward into St. Mihiel and Meuse Argonne . . . I left behind a lot of damn fine soldiers . . . all Cottonbalers, by God!

Peace at last . . . and rest . . . but not for long. I assaulted the beaches of Morocco and bloodied my tired feet in Tunisia, Sicily, Naples, Anzio, and Rome. I crossed the Channel and returned to France, beat through the hedgerows and fought into the Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe. I saw the horror of war near Dachau, pushed into Nurenburg and saw a dying Third Reich in Berchtesgaden. We led the way . . . Cottonbalers, by God!

I was one of the first to see action in Korea. I

unslung my rifle and hitched up my belt once again. I stopped the Communist Chinese, relieved battered Marines, and kept the corridor open with my blood. I spilled my guts at the Iron Triangle and showed my courage with eight Medals of Honor. They were all damn fine soldiers . . . Cottonbalers, by God!

I fought the tenacious Vietcong through rice paddy, steaming jungle, and forest. I met the determined NVA and rose to every challenge in this country far away. I fought and spilled my blood when others chose to run. I did my duty . . . I honored my country . . . I am a damn fine soldier . . . a Cottonbaler, by God!

Today, I stand on freedom's frontier . . . a fighting team . . . willing and able. When you speak of the Infantry, I am the Infantry . . . my brothers before me, present and those to come . . . all proud soldiers . . . all damn fine soldiers . . . all Cottonbalers, by God!

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A BILATERAL STAFF



MAJOR WALTER E. MATHER

Although its exact organization is not prescribed in an Army field manual, the mechanized infantry battalion staff traditionally has used the same organizational structure that is used by brigade and higher level staffs (Figure 1). In a mechanized in-

fantry battalion, the battalion motor officer (BMO) is considered a principal staff officer, and this only reflects his overall importance to the unit's successful operation.

This conventional staff organization appears logical and functional.

But it does not reflect reality, and it certainly does not encourage efficient staff action. The main problem revolves around the actual relationship between the commander and his principal staff officer for training and operations, the S3.

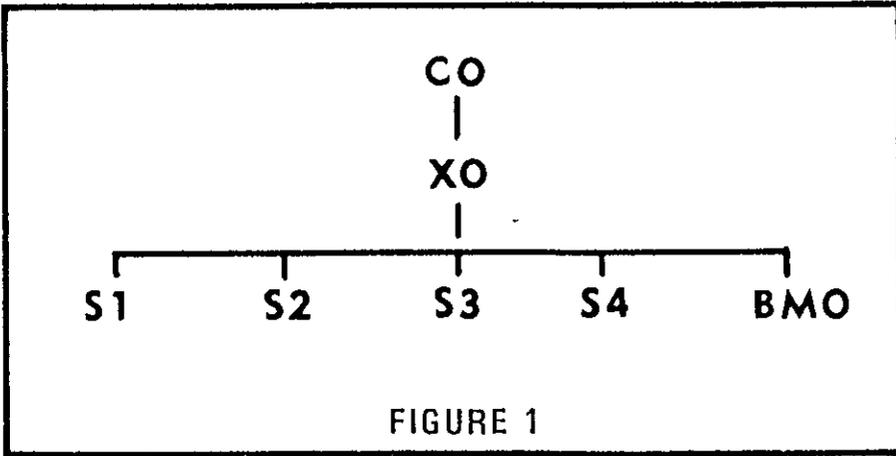


FIGURE 1

The S3 operates closely with his commander in both an operational and a training environment, and there should be no barrier, artificial or otherwise, between them. Unfortunately, in the conventional staff organization there is such a barrier — the Executive Officer — although

Figure 2 should be adopted. I call it a "bilateral staff."

There would be many advantages to this organization. The "dotted line" that now runs between the S3 and the commander would be done away with; the intelligence-operations tie would be firmly knotted; and the

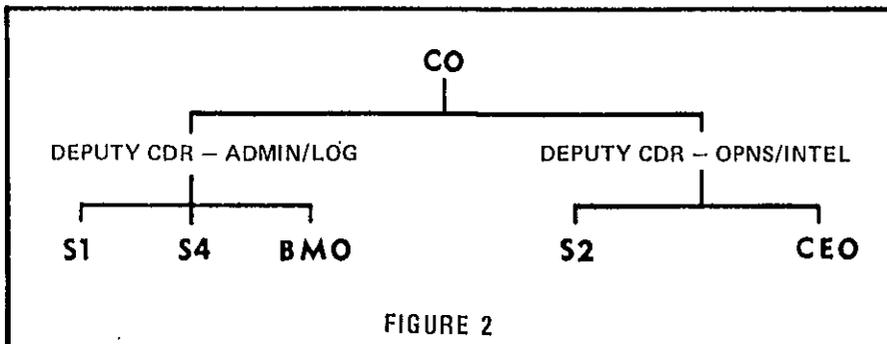


FIGURE 2

those who favor this organization deny that the Executive Officer's position is a barrier. They suggest, rather, that there is actually a "dotted line" that runs between the S3 and the commander and that the S3 can use that "line" to bypass the Executive Officer when he needs to.

In practice, though, that "dotted line" is virtually a solid one because of the realities of training and actual operations, with the S3 and the commander usually working closely together in such places as jump TOCs while the Executive Officer oversees the field and combat trains and, occasionally, the main command post.

To reflect the true situation and, more important, to give the staff badly needed balance, I believe the present mechanized infantry battalion staff organization should be done away with and that the one shown in

internal staff shuffling that now goes on between the S3 and Executive Officer positions based on dates of rank would be eliminated and the battalion

commander would be able to place his most experienced major, regardless of seniority, in charge of the area that most needed supervision. A deputy commander for administration, logistics, and maintenance is also sorely needed in a mechanized infantry battalion, with its more than 150 vehicles and attendant maintenance and personnel problems.

There is one possible disadvantage to a bilateral staff: The deputy commanders would have to coordinate their responsibilities to prevent staff isolation, but that should not be an insurmountable problem. That coordination could be effected by the two majors themselves, or by the commander, if necessary.

All a battalion commander would need to do to implement the bilateral staff concept would be to change the existing battalion rating schemes. No approval would be needed from above, and no existing regulations would have to be modified.

A bilateral staff would not only make for a more responsive staff, it would more accurately reflect the kind of organization many of our mechanized infantry units are now using. I don't know whether this concept could be fitted to light infantry battalions, but there is no question in my mind that it would benefit mechanized infantry battalions in both their garrison and field environments.



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