

# Effective Company Defense

## A Matter of Time and Task Management

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The essence of time management for a unit in the defense is in identifying the amount of preparation time required and allocating that time to subordinates so they can accomplish their assigned tasks. In this process, however, it is just as important to place these tasks in the proper sequence.

The performance of units at the National Training Center (NTC) has demonstrated that our Army has problems managing time and arranging in an order of priority the defensive preparation tasks to be performed by all members of the command, from the commander to the individual soldier. Included here is a three-part matrix aimed at helping company (or team) commanders solve this problem. (For simplicity, further references will be to company commanders only.) It also gives task force commanders and staffs an appreciation of their subordinates' requirements.

The specific time lines identified in this matrix are not in any current Army manual. They are based upon times identified for certain tasks found in Soldier's Manuals, mission training plans, and engineer manuals, as well as our own collective experiences as company observer-controllers at the NTC for a combined total of 58 rotations. The times are merely guidelines, and the average mechanized infantry or armor company that we have seen would be hard-pressed to meet them unless it had undergone rigorous training and had a competent NCO chain of command.

The matrix is broken down by duty position and separated into three phases:

preparation, establishment of the engagement area, and survivability and rehearsal of contingencies.

The preparation phase starts with the receipt of the task force warning order and ends with the receipt of the task force operations order (OPORD). It is imperative that the task force commander and staff, using an initial warning order as well as supplemental orders, provide the company commanders with the task force mission, the tasks and purposes that support the mission, the task force sector, and any known intelligence on the enemy. This information will give the company commanders enough information to begin their estimates.

### ISSUES WARNING ORDERS

Once a company commander has analyzed the task force warning orders, he issues or updates his own warning orders (Steps 1, 2, and 4 of the troop leading procedures (TLPs)—Receive the mission; Issue the warning order; and Initiate necessary movement). In this process, he must pay particular attention to providing a detailed time management schedule that specifies what maintenance is to be done; when pre-combat inspections are to be conducted; and when, where, and what crew, squad, and platoon rehearsals will be conducted.

On the basis of the information provided in the task force warning order, the company commander, with his platoon leaders and fire support team, should begin preparing his commander's estimate

(Step 3 of the TLP—Make a tentative plan). The first sergeant and executive officer should coordinate with the combat trains' command post (CP) to fill the company's combat service support requirements (Class IV, prestock ammunition, medical supplies), assist the NCO chain of command, and supervise all platoon level rehearsals.

The NCO chain of command is responsible for supervising the accomplishment of certain specified requirements. Thus, the platoon sergeants and squad leaders (or tank commanders) monitor the individual soldiers to make sure they perform any maintenance, pre-combat checks, and rehearsals correctly, and that they rest, perform personal hygiene, and maintain security at all times.

The company leaders should conduct a detailed map analysis of the terrain in the task force sector, analyze the enemy situation, and develop doctrinal and situational templates. If possible, they should also conduct a physical reconnaissance of the terrain to confirm or deny any assumptions they might have made in their map analysis.

By starting his estimate process before he receives the task force OPORD, the company commander can gain a better understanding of the situational assumptions the task force commander and his staff have made when they brief the concept of the operation later. The company commander will also be able to ask intelligent questions at that time about the relationships between his mission, his engagement area, the enemy avenues of approach, and the mission and engagement

areas of the other task force elements. As a result, the company commander will more actively participate in and contribute to the task force's order process. He will understand the staff's deductions and its rationale for the inter-relationships between task force elements and their missions; he can discuss his terrain analysis with the S-2; he can coordinate with the other commanders and combat support staff as needed; and he can verify or coordinate his combat service support requirements with the CSS staff.

The tasks in the second phase (the establishment of the engagement area) must be performed sequentially and cannot be done well during periods of limited visibility. The first step consists of completing the estimate, identifying a tentative plan, conducting the leaders' reconnaissance of the engagement area (EA) to complete the plan, and issuing an OPORD (Steps 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the TLPs).

The second phase begins once the task force OPORD is complete and ends once the company has conducted a rehearsal of its engagement area. If time does not allow, however, or if the battalion commander and his staff accomplish the troop leading procedures sequentially instead of concurrently, the company commander may not get the information he needs to start this phase before receiving the task force OPORD.

If the battalion commander does accomplish the TLPs concurrently, however, then each company commander can get the information he needs to start this phase before the task force OPORD is issued.

As soon as he receives the company's mission, the company commander must begin his mission and time analysis. He updates the company's warning order and issues any necessary movement instructions. While the first sergeant and other NCOs continue to supervise, the commander completes his tentative plan and then takes his platoon leaders, fire support officer (FSO), and executive officer on a leaders' reconnaissance of the company's primary engagement area. During this reconnaissance, the leaders should confirm their tentative plan and complete it by doing the following:

- Verifying their terrain analysis,

POSITION TIME		PHASE I - PREPARATION					
		COMPANY	XO 1SG	FIST	PLT LDR	PSG	SL TK CDR
BATTALION WARNING ORDER	ISSUE COMPANY WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	SUPERVISE SECURITY	SUPERVISE SECURITY	SECURITY/ REST PLAN
	COMMANDERS ESTIMATE (TERRAIN AND ENEMY ANALYSIS)	UPDATE COMPANY CSS STATUS W/TF	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	ISSUE PLATOON WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	SECURITY/ REST PLAN
	COMMANDERS ESTIMATE (TERRAIN AND ENEMY ANALYSIS)	UPDATE COMPANY CSS STATUS W/TF	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	PLAN REHEARSALS	UPDATE CSS STATUS WITH XO & 1SG	WARNING ORDER TO SOLDIERS	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER
	COMMANDERS ESTIMATE (TERRAIN AND ENEMY ANALYSIS)	SUPERVISE PRECOMBAT INSPECTIONS	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	REVIEW REHEARSAL PLAN	PREP FOR PCI'S	PREP FOR PCI'S
	COMMANDERS ESTIMATE (TERRAIN AND ENEMY ANALYSIS)	SUPERVISE PRECOMBAT INSPECTIONS	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	SUPERVISE PRECOMBAT INSPECTION UPDATE CSS STATUS REPORTS	PRECOMBAT INSPECTIONS	PRECOMBAT INSPECTIONS
AMOUNT OF TIME DEPENDENT UPON THE BATTALION OPORD	COMMANDERS ESTIMATE (TERRAIN AND ENEMY ANALYSIS)	UPDATE CSS STATUS REPORTS TO TF BASED ON PCI'S	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	ASSIST COMMANDER WITH ESTIMATE	SUPERVISE PRECOMBAT INSPECTION UPDATE CSS STATUS REPORT	PRECOMBAT INSPECTIONS	PRECOMBAT INSPECTIONS
	ATTEND THE BATTALION OPORD	SUPERVISE REHEARSALS	ATTEND BATTALION OPORD	CONDUCT AND SUPERVISE REHEARSALS	CONDUCT AND SUPERVISE REHEARSALS	REHEARSALS	REHEARSALS
BATTALION OPORD	ATTEND THE BATTALION OPORD	RECON COORD CSS SUPERVISE COMPANY	ATTEND BATTALION OPORD	RECON IF POSSIBLE	SUPERVISE PREP OF DEFENSIVE MATERIALS	SUPERVISE PREP OF DEFENSIVE MATERIALS	SUPERVISE PREP OF DEFENSIVE MATERIALS

POSITION TIME		PHASE II - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENGAGEMENT AREA					
		COMPANY	XO 1SG	FIST	PLT LDR	PSG	SL TK CDR
3 HRS STEP 1	UPDATE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WARNING ORDER	RECEIVE WO	CONTINUE TO PREP MATERIALS	CONTINUE TO PREP MATERIALS SECURITY
	ANALYZE COMPARE C O.A./ID TENTATIVE PLAN	● LINK UP/W CDR AT BP ● SUPERVISE NECESSARY MOVEMENT	ASSIST COMMANDER W/TENTATIVE PLAN	LINKUP W/CDR AT BP	UPDATE PLT WO	RECEIVE WO	RECEIVE WO SECURITY
	CONDUCT LDRS RECON AND ISSUE OPORD	● MARK OBSTACLES ● COORD FOR DELIVERY CLASS IV & V	LDR'S RECON	MARK TRP'S VEHICLE AND WPN POSITIONS	SUPERVISES PREP & MOVEMENT	MOVE AS NECESSARY	MOVE AS NECESSARY SECURITY
3 HRS STEP 2	● RECON ADDITIONAL BP'S ● COMPLETE THE PLAN ● SUPERVISE TROUBLE/ SHOOT	● SET UP CO C.P. ● COORD WITH ENGINEERS	COORD W/TF FSO (ADJUST/ ADD TGTS)	ISSUE OPORD (SCHEME OF MANEUVER FOR PRIMARY EA)	● OCCUPY BP ● RECEIVE PLAN	● OCCUPY BP ● RECEIVE PLAN	● OCCUPY BP ● RECEIVE PLAN
	RECON ADDITIONAL BP'S	● PLAN REHEARSAL OF EA ● SUPERVISE RANGE CARD PREP	ID INDIRECT TRIGGER LINES	ESTABLISH PLT C.P.	● REVIEW POSITION SELECTION ● SUPERVISE RANGE CARD PREP	● DESIGNATE SECTORS/ PDFS ● TRP'S /FPL'S ● PREP RANGE CARDS	● PREP RANGE CARDS ● SECURITY
	COMPLETE THE PLAN	DEVELOP CSS PLAN	POSITION PLT FO'S	VERIFY RANGE CARDS	VERIFY RANGE CARDS	ADJUST WPN POSITION AND RANGE CARDS IF REQUIRED	● ADJUST WPN POSITION AND RANGE CARD IF REQUIRED ● SECURITY
	SUPERVISE TROUBLE/ SHOOT	DIRECT MEDIC AND MAINT TM REHEARSALS	COMPLETE INDIRECT FIRE PLAN	PLATOON SECTOR SKETCHES COMPLETE	RANGE CARDS AND SQUAD SECTOR SKETCHES COMPLETE	RANGE CARDS AND SQUAD SECTOR SKETCHES COMPLETE	RANGE CARDS COMPLETE
1 HR STEP 3	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY	ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL FOR COMPANY

which is the method they will use to focus their reconnaissance efforts (that is, to confirm mounted and dismounted avenues of approach and key terrain).

- Identifying where they will mass the company's firepower on the enemy to kill him (identify the decisive point), and how they are going to use obstacles and in-

direct fire to turn the enemy into their EAs and then block, fix, and disrupt him to increase their engagement time.

- Determining from the vantage point of the EA how and where they are going to position weapons so that they provide depth and mutual support, and can mass their fires at the primary target reference points (TRPs) in the EA.

- Deciding how they are going to use obstacles and indirect fires to protect their battle position (BP).

The leaders should be prepared to mark all TRPs, the left and right limits of all proposed obstacles, and all vehicle and crew-served weapon positions, using visual markers such as VS-17 panels, engineer tape, and pickets. Roads and bushes are not specific enough.

If he has experienced platoon leaders, the company commander can designate specific areas for them to reconnoiter. He can then review these areas and make sure the platoon leaders conduct the required flank coordination and understand where the other platoons are positioned and where they can or cannot see and shoot. With inexperienced platoon leaders, however, he should have all of them accompany him as he helps them pick their platoons' crew-served weapon and vehicle positions and to guarantee that the required flank coordination is accomplished.

When the reconnaissance is complete, the platoon leaders have the commander's concept for the primary EA. This first step should take no more than three hours.

The second step is occupying the battle position. On the basis of the movement instructions that have been issued, the company, under the control of the executive officer or first sergeant, should have moved forward to link up with the leaders' reconnaissance. The platoon leaders take their platoons to the platoon BPs; they show the NCOs the weapon and vehicle positions and brief them on the plan. Then they point out the VS-17 panels marking the TRPs and the engineer stakes with white tape signifying the right and left limits of all the obstacles. The NCOs then do the same for their individual gunners and crews.

The platoon sergeants, squad leaders,

and platoon leaders ensure that their men correctly position the guns and vehicles and prepare proper range cards. The platoon sergeants and platoon leaders spot check key weapon range cards and supervise their squad leaders. These range card checks should verify that each weapon or vehicle position has the required tracking time and fields of fire into the EA, and that each crew understands its sector of fire and can identify the TRPs.

The first sergeant assists the NCO chain of command by supervising the preparation of range cards, continuing to coordinate with the combat trains CP for CSS requirements, and ensuring that the maintenance and medical teams rehearse evacuation routes rearward to the battalion collection points and forward to the platoon positions. The executive officer coordinates with the commander to get the rehearsal of the EA organized, using whoever has been detailed as the rehearsal opposing force (OPFOR)—company trains elements, medics, maintenance personnel, XO vehicles, maybe one or two platoon vehicles.

The company FSO briefs his forward observers (FOs) on the indirect fire plan. He then physically times how long it will take the enemy to move from point to point and compares that to the time it will take the indirect fire rounds to reach each target. He then identifies and marks the trigger lines for the indirect fire plan and helps the platoons position their FOs; he also coordinates with the task force FSO to adjust and add any indirect targets.

Meanwhile, the company commander is preparing his OPORD and, if required, reconnoitering alternate or supplemental positions. This second step, like the first, takes no more than three hours.

The third and final step of Phase II is the rehearsal of the primary EA. All members of the chain of command position themselves, with communications, where they plan to fight the battle. The XO, controlling the vehicles detailed to him, moves into and through the EA along the different avenues of approach.

The purpose of the rehearsal is to confirm that every leader, gunner, and soldier understands the company plan and the tasks he must perform for that plan to succeed. As the XO moves through the

EA, the platoons practice issuing platoon and crew fire commands. They ensure that each weapon crew understands its sector of fire and when to shift fires; demonstrates that the unit can mass its firepower in all portions of the EA; and illustrates how the obstacles and indirect fires are integrated with the direct fires. During the rehearsal, the company FSO and his FOs verify and identify the indirect fire trigger lines to the crews.

The rehearsal should be conducted in a crawl, walk, run mode (that is, the unit should control the speed of execution by regulating the XO's rate of march through the EA). Adjustments should be made to positions or timing as any problems are discovered. These adjustments should be minor if the commander paid attention to detail during his reconnaissance and during his verification of the range cards. Reactions to chemicals and enemy air should also be integrated into the rehearsal. This third step should take about one hour.

During Phase II, then, the company issues an OPORD and conducts a leaders' reconnaissance (three hours); occupies the battle positions and makes and confirms range cards (three hours); and rehearses the EA (one hour)—a total of seven hours. Seven hours after the task force OPORD, the company team is prepared for enemy contact in the EA. The entire command, down to the individual soldiers and crews, have a detailed knowledge of the mission, as well as the direct fire, indirect fire, and obstacle plans, and can begin digging in. (NOTE: The platoon leaders can start digging in their armored vehicles after they have verified the range cards and if they are pressed for time, but the company commander must ensure that the positions support his plan.)

If the unit does not perform the tasks of Phase II sequentially as outlined in these three steps, it will probably not reach this level in 24 hours. It cannot dig adequate positions before making range cards and cannot adequately position weapons and make range cards without understanding the avenues of approach into the engagement area. Each step is the foundation for the next.

Phase III (survivability and rehearsal

of contingencies) begins right after the rehearsal of the EA and continues until the enemy attacks. The NCO chain of command ensures that all problems identified during the EA rehearsal are corrected and adjustments made to the positions. Then the NCOs focus on making their positions survivable by digging in, putting on overhead cover, laying and digging in platoon and company hot loops, ensuring the TRPs can be seen through thermal sights during periods of limited visibility, laying in the mine and wire obstacles, and pre-stocking ammunition (Step 8 of the TLP—Supervise and refine the plan).

If supplementary positions are required, the commander and platoon leaders begin Phase II all over again. The level and detail of the preparation may vary depending upon the time available. Ideally, this is the time for the commander to issue the company a FRAGO.

The FRAGO is a coordinating measure to tie in all aspects of the fight. The information the unit must have to begin preparing the primary position has already been passed out, and the FRAGO focuses on ensuring the BP's survivability by doing the following:

- Specifying the security (counter-reconnaissance) plan (observation posts, patrols, sensors, level of alert, stand-to).
- Detailing the casualty evacuation plan.
- Updating the priorities for the allocation of Class IV and V supplies and dozer assets.
- Identifying the participants and the time of the rehearsal of the supplemental positions' EAs and the repositioning of the unit to the next BP.

On the basis of the rehearsal of the EA, the company FSO briefs the adjusted fire support plan, the counter-reconnaissance fire support plan, and the limited visibility fire support plan.

Once the commander's FRAGO is complete, the platoon leaders take time to prepare and issue their own orders. Upon completion of the orders process, the entire chain of command focuses on accomplishing the priorities of work as outlined by the company commander and platoon leaders. Particular emphasis is placed on doing all rehearsals and registering all artillery priority targets before

POSITION		PHASE III - SURVIVABILITY/REHEARSAL OF CONTINGENCIES					
TIME	COMPANY	XO TSG	FIST	PLT LDR	PSG	SL TK CDR	SOLDIER
EA REHEARSAL COMPLETE	● RECON ADDITIONAL BP'S IF REQUIRED ● PREP CO FRAGO	● ASSIST IN RECON ● COORD W/ ENG ● PREP SERVICE SUPPORT FOR FRAGO ● SUPERVISE BP PREP	ASSIST IN BP RECON/ FRAGO PREP	ASSIST IN RECON OF ADDITIONAL BP'S	ADJUST POSITIONS AS NEEDED	ADJUST POSITIONS AS NEEDED	● ADJUST POSITIONS AS NEEDED ● SECURITY
	● RECON ADDITIONAL BP'S IF REQUIRED ● PREP CO FRAGO	● ASSIST IN RECON ● COORD W' ENG	PREP FIRE SUPPORT BRIEF FOR FRAGO	ASSIST IN RECON OF ADDITIONAL BP'S	SUPERVISE POSITION PREP	● BEGIN POS PREP ● DIRECT BULLDOZERS	● BEGIN POS PREP ● DIRECT BULLDOZERS
	● ISSUE CO FRAGO	● RECEIVE FRAGO ● BRIEF CSS PLAN	BRIEF FIRE SUPPORT PLAN	RECEIVE FRAGO	SUPERVISE POSITION PREP	● BEGIN POS PREP ● DIRECT BULLDOZERS	● BEGIN POS PREP ● DIRECT BULLDOZERS
	● BN BRIEF BACKS ● SUPERVISE COMPANY ● REST PLAN	● PLAN CO REHEARSALS ● ASSIST/ ● SUPERVISE BP PREP	ASSIST IN BP PREP	PREPARE PLT FRAGO	ASSIST FRAGO PREP	CONTINUE BP PREP	CONTINUE BP PREP
	● BN BRIEF BACKS ● SUPERVISE COMPANY ● REST PLAN	● PLAN CO REHEARSALS ● ASSIST/ ● SUPERVISE BP PREP	REGISTER INDIRECT	ISSUE PLT FRAGO	RECEIVE FRAGO	RECEIVE FRAGO	RECEIVE FRAGO
NLT DEFEND TIME	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP	● COMPANY REHEARSALS ● COMPLETE BP PREP

sunset—FASCAM targets, illumination targets, and groups of targets that support a unit's battle position.

In summary, the driving force during Phase I is a detailed task force and company warning order to let the NCO chain of command know the order in which each of the tasks must be performed and allows the company leaders to begin the estimate process.

Phase II must be accomplished in sequence and requires at least seven hours of intense activity that culminates in a rehearsal of the engagement area.

Phase III is characterized by the orders process (company through squad), which results in all members of the company working toward increasing the survivability of the BP, conducting reconnaissance of and rehearsing the movement to alternate BPs, and adjusting or registering the indirect fire plan.

This is one method of solving the time and task management problem leaders face when assigned a defensive mission. It is not the only method. Some might argue about the exact times we have allocated or whom we have assigned the responsibility for specific tasks. But there is no doubt about the importance of understanding the troop leading procedures and the estimate of the situation. It is essential that all leaders know the order in

which all tasks from squad to battalion level must be performed and how much time is required to perform each.

One way a leader can assess whether or not his unit needs to train in this area is to give his subordinate leaders or staff officers a simple test:

Gather his subordinates in a room and give them about an hour to use their knowledge of the troop leading procedures (without any discussion) to outline how they would prepare for a defensive mission. Specifically, have them detail the sequence of tasks, the time required for each, what soldier and leader actions are occurring concurrently, and what information they need from the leader.

The results may be surprising. If nothing else, they will provide feedback on a unit's training and its officer and NCO professional development programs.

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