

TRAINING NOTES

ing them and trapping them in built-up areas.

- Conducting demonstrations of fire support capabilities in uninhabited areas.

- Using the least possible amount of fire support to accomplish the mission.

Fire support in low intensity conflict comes with some unique challenges —

using fire support on a non-linear battlefield, avoiding fratricide, and avoiding unnecessary collateral damage. Maneuver commanders, working closely with fire support planners at all levels and with the operators of the various delivery systems, can overcome these issues through training, planning, and the concern that comes with the

realization that lives and the mission are at stake.

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The Brevity Matrix

CAPTAIN DANIEL L. THOMAS

When I was the S-2 of an infantry battalion, I had to send dismounted patrols of two or three soldiers forward to establish observation posts (OPs) and collect information on the enemy. These teams often went behind the enemy front-line trace, which created several support problems, particularly in communications.

Since secure communications often fail, it is dangerous and irresponsible to give a team full SOIs (signal

operation instructions) that may become compromised. To solve this problem, I modified a method the opposing force at the National Training Center (NTC) uses. It is a one-page code sheet called the Brevity Matrix, which enables OPs, scouts, and the S-2 section to encode and decode transmissions quickly and easily.

Each reconnaissance element and the S-2 section has a copy of the Brevity Matrix. It is used either all the time

or only when secure communications are not available. I found that when teams used the matrix, communications were faster. The code was clear and it eliminated difficulties that arose from mispronunciation and interference. It is on a single page and is easier to use than the brevity codes in the standard SOIs.

The Brevity Matrix is a box with 11 vertical columns and 27 horizontal rows. The numbers 0 through 9 are in

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
A	1	6	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
B	2	7	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
C	3	8	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
D	4	9	Y	Z	HULL				ROAD	UN/ID
E	5	0			IDENTIFY	LZ	MRC	OP/LP	SA	UNIT
F		BRDM			ILLUMINATION		MRB	OPSEC	SAW	
G	ACTIVITY	BULLDOZER	DIG	FRAGO	IMPROVE	M-1	MRR	ORIENT	SCREEN	VEHICLE
H	ADA	BYPASS	DIRECTION	FREQUENCY	OM	M-16	MOVE	OVERHEAD	SEND	VISUALLY
I	AIR	CALIBER	DISMOUNT	FRIENDLY	INDIRECT	M113	MOVING	PASSAGE	SIGNAL	
J	AIRCRAFT	CAMOUFLAGE	DISTANCE	FROM	INFANTRY	M-60 TANK	MY	PATROL	SITREP	WADI
K	ALTERNATE	CHANGE	DRAGON	FRONT	INFILTRATE	M-60 MG	NAI	PERSONNEL	SOUTH	WATER
L	ANTI-TANK	CHEMICAL	DUST	FUEL	INFO	M577	NBC	PHASE LINE	SPELL	WE
M	APACHE	COBRA/AH-1	EAST		INFRARED	MACHINEGUN	NEED	PIR	SPEED	WEST
N	APC	COLUMN	ECHOLON	GALLONS	ING	MAINTENANCE	NEGATIVE	PLATOON	SUPPLY	WHAT
O	AREA	COMMO	ED	GOOD	INSERT	MANEUVER	NLT	POW		WHEELED
P	ARMOR	COMPANY	ENEMY	GREEN	IR		NONE	PREPARE	TANK	WHEN
Q	ARTILLERY	CONDUCT	ENGINEER	GRID		MANY	NORTH	PRIMARY	TEAM	WHERE
R	ASAP		EQUIPMENT	GSR	KIA	MARCH	NUMBER	PROTECTIVE	TIME	WHY
S	AT	CONVOY	ETA		KILL	MEDICAL		P2	TO	WOUNDED
T		COVER	EW	HASTY	KILOMETER	METERS	OBJECTIVE	RADAR	TOTAL	WIDE
U	ATTACK	DARKNESS	EWFILTRATE	HELICOPTER	LIGHT	MILES	OBSERVE	RECON	TRACKED	WIRE
V	AYLB	DECEPTION		HIND	LD/LC	MINES	OBSTACLE	RED	TRAIL	WITHDRAW
W	AXIS	DEEP		HILLTOP	LENGTH	MISSION	OCCUPY	REINFORCE	TRENCH	YOU
X	BATTALION	DEFEND	FEBA	HOW	LOCATE	MOPP	OH-58	REPORT	TURRET	
Y	BLACKHAWK	DEFILADE	FIGHTING	HOURS	LOCATION	MORTAR	ON	RIDGE		ZONE
Z	BMP		FOOD	HUEY/OH-1H	LOOK					ZSU

boxes in the top row. The letters A through Z are in boxes in the left-hand column. These two columns are the set lines. The other boxes in the matrix are filled with letters, numbers, and various words commonly used during communications. (See accompanying figure.)

To encrypt a word, first locate it in one of the matrix boxes. From that box, follow the row to the left to get a letter from one set line, and then follow the column up to get a number from the other set line. The combination of the letter and number is the encrypted word. In this matrix, for example, the word *enemy* is encoded as P3.

To encrypt an entire message, simply follow the same steps for each word, letter, and number in the transmission. For example, the message "One BMP moving north at NAI 8" is encrypted as "A1, Z1, I7, Q7, S1, K7, C2." If a word is not on the matrix, spell it out. For example, *fire* is encrypted "A8, B3, C4, A7." A unit can add any combination of words to the matrix to suit its individual needs. For instance, if your unit expects to encounter T-72 tanks, add the nomenclature to the Brevity Matrix.

For security, scramble the set lines periodically. Change the code for the same word or location by changing the set lines. If the letters and numbers in the set lines are left in the same sequence but each set line starts off at a new point (say at M instead of A), the enemy will have to try 260 different combinations to decode a message, even if the matrix is compromised. The number of possible combinations can be increased astro-

nomically if the set line letters and numbers are completely scrambled. Furthermore, it is easy to make up several other matrices to keep on hand for use if a particular matrix is compromised. Too, if you do not have a spare matrix on hand and you must have another one quickly, it is relatively easy to make a complete new one in a short period of time.

The Brevity Matrix is an excellent communication aid for use between OPs, scouts, and the S-2 section, and its flexibility allows for other uses as well. For example, a matrix can be

designed for use on an administration and logistics net. The Brevity Matrix is a quick and easy tool to help a unit maintain clear and secure communications.

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Mistakes: The Key to Learning

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Being allowed to make mistakes is a key element of learning new skills or sustaining old ones. A critical factor in

military training is how far superiors should let their subordinates go in making mistakes. The answer is: As far

as it takes to build a non-threatening and non-judgmental leadership and training climate in which subordinates