

TRAINING NOTES



Battle Staff Training

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Unit performance at the combat training centers (CTCs) has clearly revealed the need for an effective battle staff training program. Battle-focused training programs for battalions and brigades must, therefore, include routine training for their staffs.

When I was assigned to the 2d Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), we used the "baseline" approach to training our battalion battle staff. We chose this approach because of the diversity of the staff members in both branch and experience level. The areas that received primary attention were operational terminology, intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), the targeting process, and the tactical decisionmaking process (mission analysis, and the development of courses of action).

This training was conducted once a quarter or, when there were new members on the battle staff, before a major deployment. The participants included the primary members of the battle staff and their officer and NCO assistants—specifically, the S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, fire support officer (FSO), and fire support NCO, engineer, and air defense platoon leaders, and all the officers and senior NCOs in the S-3 section. We also included our scout and mortar platoon leaders. In addition to learning staff planning con-

siderations for the employment of their platoons, the scout platoon leader had an opportunity to work directly with the S-2, and the mortar platoon leader with the FSO. As the staff became more efficient with the battle staff fundamentals, more staff NCOs were brought into the training, which increased flexibility and added depth to the battle staff team.

Operational Terms and Graphics

Battle staff training should always begin with operational terms and graphics so that every staff member will understand and use them the same way. For example, commanders and their staffs often use the word *secure* when they mean *seize*; one of these words may appear in paragraph 2 of an operations order (OPORD) and the other in the commander's intent or concept in paragraph 3, referring to the same objective. The terms *on order* and *be prepared* routinely appear in OPORDs, and the staff must be able to differentiate them in terms of planning priorities. An *on order* mission assigned by higher headquarters is one that *will* be accomplished later and must be thoroughly planned; the *be prepared* mission is one that *may* be accomplished later and therefore has a lower planning priority. An *on order* mission is part of the paragraph 2 mission statement, while a *be prepared* mission may appear either

in a sub-unit mission or in the OPORD's coordinating instructions.

Similarly, it is critical for infantrymen to understand the language of other branches in order to communicate the commander's intent for attachments, understand higher headquarters' OPORDs, and request support. For example, *destroy*, *neutralize*, and *suppress* are the terms used when communicating desired target effects to the FSO. Attack aviators use some of the same terminology, but with distinctly different meanings. Target effects guidance to an attack helicopter company commander, or his liaison officer, is in terms of *destroy*, *attrit*, and *disrupt*. To the FSO, *destroy* means he is expected to destroy 30 percent of the enemy target with a certain number of rounds within a specified period of time. To an aviator, *destroy* means he is to kill more than 70 percent of the enemy target and, depending on the nature of the objective, this may take an indefinite amount of time and resources and may put the aircraft at greater risk to antiaircraft fire. (See also "The Language of Fire Support," by Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Sander, *INFANTRY*, March-April 1990, pages 21-24.)

The battle staff must also know military graphics so they can correctly complete course-of-action sketches, operations overlays, and templates. Our staff

training reviewed maneuver, fire support, and combat service support symbols and graphics. All the symbols for assigned and attached units were discussed and practiced.

Frequently overlooked and misunderstood, for example, are the four key engineer symbols that describe the maneuver commander's intent for his obstacle plan: *disrupt*, *turn*, *fix*, and *block* (Figure 1). The battle staff must know what these words mean, and the engineer platoon leader must explain the time, personnel, and materials required to establish each type of obstacle. (See also "Obstacle Integration: A Matter of Intent," by Captain Bryan G. Watson, *INFANTRY*, May-June 1990, pages 42-46.)

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

A few years ago, someone suggested that the intelligence preparation of the battlefield should be called the *staff* preparation of the battlefield, and I agree. The term IPB creates a false idea about who is responsible for the development of intelligence products. The IPB is not just an S-2 product. In its development, who better understands the effects of inclement weather on terrain and on both friendly and enemy courses of action than the engineer platoon leader? And who better understands the enemy fixed-wing and rotary aircraft avenues of approach into an area of operation than the air defense platoon leader? These two platoon leaders are often the most junior members of the battle staff—probably fresh out of an officer basic course—but they arrive at the tactical operations center (TOC) full of knowledge and already trained to serve as integral members of the battle staff. Still, if they are to make the most of their talents, they must also be cross-trained in the tasks of the other members of the battle staff. The FSO also plays an important role in the IPB. He is the expert in enemy artillery systems and capabilities, and he develops the high value target lists during the IPB.

The battle staff must understand, too, that the IPB is a continuing process (as shown in Figure 2), not a search for a final product. The IPB focuses staff attention by conducting a battlefield area

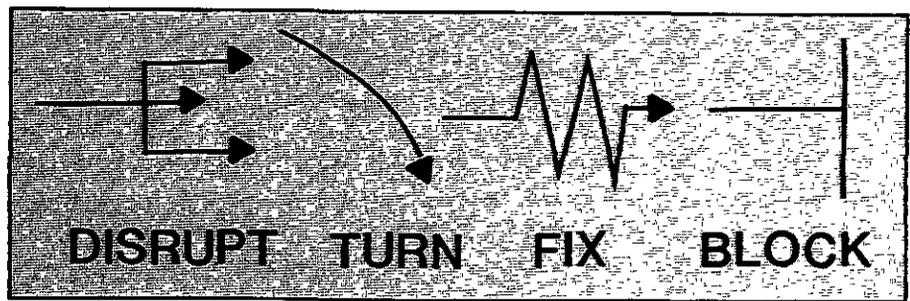


Figure 1. Four key engineer symbols.

evaluation (BAE). A BAE assesses the area of operation (AO) and area of interest (AI) and forms the basis for the analysis of the terrain, weather, and threat forces.

The battle staff learns terrain and weather analysis by practicing the preparation of the modified combined obstacles overlay, which contains GO, SLOW-GO, and NO-GO terrain, the AO, enemy avenues of approach, and mobility corridors. Frequently overlooked at this stage of the IPB is the line-of-sight analysis. The signal officer explains the effect of terrain and distance

on frequency modulation (FM) ranging. All members of the staff must have a thorough appreciation of the effects of terrain on military operations, especially on emplacing weapon systems and designing battalion engagement areas.

Most of the intelligence training time is devoted to the fundamentals of the construction of IPB templates, the selection of priority intelligence requirements (PIRs), and collection planning.

Everyone on the battle staff learns how to construct doctrinal, situational, and event templates. These templates should at least portray the enemy's most prob-

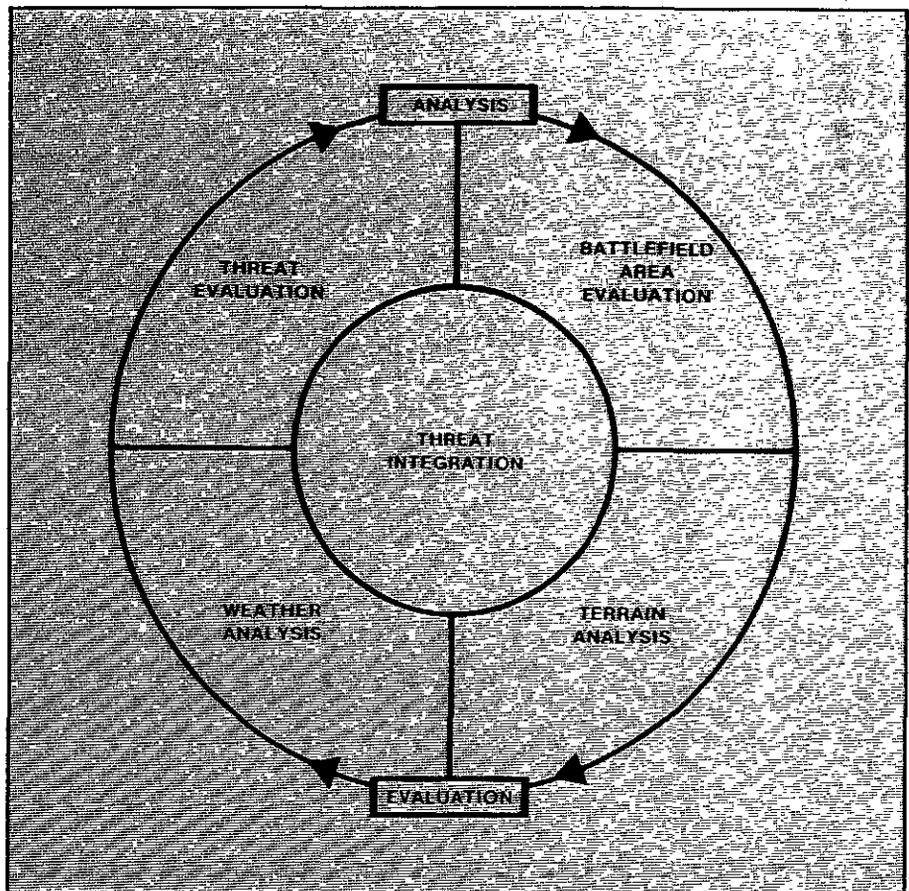


Figure 2. The continuing IPB process.

able course of action (COA), and the staff must be prepared to discuss the enemy's most dangerous course of action. The staff reviews the way the PIR is developed to fill in information gaps and confirm or deny the templates, and then reviews the basics of collection planning to demonstrate the interrelationship between the PIR and the templates. The most difficult task for a new member is learning how to develop a decision support template. Although this template is the most important IPB product, it is the one least likely to be produced during rotations at the CTCs.

The Targeting Process

To make the most of the resources at the fingertips of the brigade and battalion FSOs, all members of the battle staff should understand the targeting process. Artillerymen think in terms of the three *Ds*—*decide*, *detect*, and *deliver*.

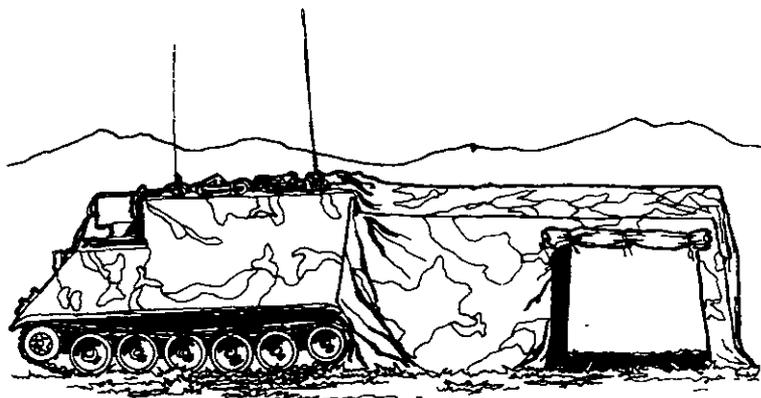
During the *decide* phase, the FSO participates in the IPB and develops three products—the attack guidance matrix (AGM), target selection standards (TSS), and the high payoff target list (HPTL). The brigade FSO develops the AGM and TSS, and they are seldom modified at battalion level. Each FSO prepares the HPTL and recommends it to his maneuver commander for approval. The targets on the HPTL should be kept to a minimum, usually only four or five.

Central to the *detect* phase is the artillery battalion's AN/TPQ36 and its forward observers. Since the AN/TPQ36 is a high-payoff target for the enemy, plans must be made for its protection. The brigade should allow the unit that is the mission's main effort to identify critical fire zones for the AN/TPQ36.

The *deliver* phase is simply the weapon system that engages the target. This delivery system can be close air support, artillery, the battalion mortars, or non-lethal fire systems.

The Tactical Decisionmaking Process

Once the battle staff has a firm grasp of the basics of operational terms and graphics, the IPB, and the targeting process, staff training is focused on the tactical decisionmaking process—the “bread and butter” of a well-functioning



staff. Mission analysis and COA development receive primary attention in this training; ST 100-9, *Techniques and Procedures for Tactical Decisionmaking*, discusses some of the components of mission analysis, such as the IPB. These components are brought together with the analysis of the mission and intent of higher headquarters.

In our battalion, we routinely requested two copies of the brigade OPORD when it was first issued. One copy remained with the commander and the S-3 while the brigade staff verbally issued the order. The battalion liaison officer immediately sent the second copy back to the executive officer and the battle staff waiting in the battalion TOC. The staff was taught to dissect the brigade order; identify specified, implied, and essential tasks; and write a restated mission statement. The restated mission statement clearly identified the task and purpose for the battalion.

Staff training in the development of courses of action consists of three parts—the COA sketch, the COA narrative, and the discussion of the components of the commander's intent. Once the staff members master operational graphics, they usually find constructing the COA sketch simple. The sketch includes boundaries, control measures (phase lines, objectives, main and supporting attacks, and fire control measures), decision graphics for the allocation of forces, and key terrain features.

As standing operating procedure in our battalion, the S-2 drew a map of the AO on butcher paper, from which two other copies were traced. Three teams (three

or four men each) used these three maps to develop distinctly different COAs. An advanced course graduate was usually chosen to lead each team. When the battle staff was short on IOAC graduates, the headquarters company commander was brought in to lead a team; since he had been on the battle staff before, he was familiar with the drills and quickly fit in with the staff.

The COA narrative has three major components—*purpose statement*, *battlefield framework*, and *risk*:

- A sample purpose statement is “250230 Feb 93, TF 2-327 attacks with three rifle companies to destroy an enemy regimental command post.”

- The battlefield framework includes *close*, *deep*, *rear*, *reserve*, and *security*. The *close* battle includes the main effort or main attack and its size, the supporting attack and its size, the scheme of maneuver, the decisive point, and the defeat mechanism. *Deep* operations are limited for a battalion and usually address the scouts' reconnaissance and surveillance operations. Attack helicopters supporting the operation are a part of deep operations when escorting the scouts into the AO. The *rear* operations section addresses such special activities as convoy security operations for strike operations or mobility, countermobility, or survivability operations of the engineers. *Reserve* forces are identified by size and location of unit, with on-order missions specified. The *security* force, usually the scouts, is given a location and mission—a screen, for example.

- The last point addressed in the COA narrative is the point at which the com-

mander is prepared to accept risk in regard to the mission or the unit. For example, the COA may not have a reserve.

If this format is followed in preparing the COA narrative, the narrative can easily be converted to a paragraph 3a of the OPORD.

The commander communicates his vision of the operation through his statement of intent. Each unit commander and his battle staff must clearly understand the intent of the commander two levels up. By our battalion SOP, the division and brigade missions and the commanders' intent statements were posted throughout the tactical decisionmaking process and then briefed when the OPORD was issued. The staff was taught to recognize the four parts of a commander's intent—purpose, method, risk,

and end-state—in regard to the disposition of friendly and enemy forces and terrain. The battalion commander's intent was then communicated two levels down the chain of command through the company commanders by the OPORD and during the battalion reduced-force rehearsal, at which the platoon leaders were present.

This baseline battle-focused approach works in training Active Army battalion and brigade battle staffs, and it should also work for Reserve component (RC) units. Our battalion exported this training package to a battalion of our RC partnership unit one summer, where it was used as opportunity training during the battalion's annual training period. They found that it fit in perfectly with the BOLD SHIFT philosophy, and that it

gave the staff battle-focused training objectives while their squads conducted situational training exercises.

Clearly, setting aside time in garrison for this battle staff training is difficult, but it can be done if it is given high priority. A baseline approach that includes a foundation in the language of our profession, the IPB, the targeting process, and the tactical decisionmaking process will pay big dividends, both in training and on the battlefield.

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The Use of History In Professional Development

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The competence of junior officers and noncommissioned officers is a critical factor in the success of an infantry unit in combat. Well-trained, seasoned leaders have often made the difference between defeat and victory.

During the past 20 years, most U.S. Army infantry units have had a cadre of combat veterans who brought to training their practical knowledge and experience. Most of these veterans gained their combat experience in the jungles of Southeast Asia and have now either retired or advanced to positions in which they have limited contact with small-unit leaders. The U.S. combat actions since the Vietnam War have also provided valuable experience to many officers and NCOs, of

course, but these actions generally involved only a small percentage of the entire Army and were of limited intensity and duration.

Confronted by this lack of extensive combat experience in their units, small-unit commanders now face a difficult question: How can a commander improve the seasoning and experience of his subordinates, short of actually engaging in combat operations?

The obvious answer to this question is to plan and execute realistic training. But constraints on time and resources frequently limit the duration and the scope of field training exercises. Many units use simulations and map exercises to develop their leaders. Simulations offer tremen-

dous potential for training officers but are not always readily available to units.

Often officer professional development (OPD) or NCO professional development (NCO PD) classes are used as training tools. A solid, well-planned program is one of the easiest and most economical means of improving the competence of these leaders, and integrating military history into an OPD or NCO PD program is essential to this process.

The great battle captains of the United States Army in the past clearly understood the importance of studying military history. Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur, for example, once said, "More than most professions the military is forced to depend upon intelli-