
uation was necessary, the vehicle would be returned by wrecker to the UMCP or to the OMS for more extensive service. This system helped put deadlined vehicles back on the road as soon as possible.

Later, when armored personnel carriers were pre-positioned at local armories in anticipation of a possible riot situation, the maintenance section made arrangements to use the transport trailers if recovery became necessary. Although it may seem obvious, a BMO must ensure that he is prepared to recover any equipment his unit might use; if buses are used, for example, a civilian wrecker may be needed, and such details should be worked out before mobilization.

The most difficult recovery operations take place in civil disturbance

operations. At some point, a vehicle may have to be recovered amid hostile civilians; television pictures of a military vehicle being burned may have a dramatic effect on public confidence and contribute to further lawlessness. Getting inoperative vehicles back to secure areas is therefore critical.

In our battalion, elements of the battalion scouts and mortars operated as a quick reaction force (QRF) under the control of the S-3. In anticipation of such contingencies, the QRF platoon leader and I created a tentative plan in which a recovery team, with security provided by elements of the QRF, would move in quickly and recover a damaged vehicle. The BMO should ensure that the forces selected to perform such a mission make this part of their CSO mission essential task list and train on it

before the need arises.

The keys to successful maintenance in civilian support operations are creativity on the part of the BMO and a dedication to proper maintenance on the part of every leader in the unit. The best repair is one that never has to be made, but when the maintenance section does have to swing into action, a little advance planning and coordination will pay off in terms of both safety and readiness.

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Parallel Planning

Managing the Information Flow

MAJOR ANTHONY R. GARRETT

The "information war" has been a subject of much discussion recently. To prepare for that war, the Army has implemented a strategy that will provide command, control, communications, and intelligence systems that are reliable in terms of the timeliness of information and the ease and speed of maintenance.

Viewed from a small-unit planning perspective, this strategy suggests that the decision making process will be compressed and the operational tempo accelerated as information becomes more readily available, thereby permitting faster analysis and execution. By implication, the time available under the one-third, two-thirds rule associated with sequential planning will decrease

without a corresponding reduction in requirements. In addition, information flow is likely to become continuous, in effect relegating sequential planning to a secondary role, except in the early stages of operations when enough planning time is available.

Given this situation, it is critical that the battalion commander and his staff implement a planning process that takes into account the implications of the information war. I believe a parallel planning process will be critical to success on tomorrow's battlefield.

Because parallel planning seeks to take advantage of the time available, all planners must proceed from a common understanding of a clearly

defined, achievable goal—the task and its purpose. The commander's intent establishes this common ground: It articulates the commander's vision of success, the effect of the operation on the enemy, and the end state following the operation; and it concludes by establishing the criteria for success and providing direction to leaders and planners.

Parallel planning, by both design and necessity, is continuous. It must have efficient communications and staff procedures to ensure a continuous exchange of information, both vertically and horizontally. The obvious danger of such a system is that the staff will flood the battalion and company commanders with information that is not critical to parallel

Action	Bn Time	Product to Companies	Co Time	Product to Platoons
1. Receive Mission/Analysis				
2. Issue WARNORD (15 min)		Mission, AO, Task Org, Time Schedule		Mission, AO, Task Org, Time Schedule
3. Make a Tentative Plan				
4. Initiate Movement		Movement FRAGO		Movement FRAGO
5. Initial Recon Instructions		Zone/Sector & Assets		Zone/Sector & Assets
6. Develop/Update Estimates		Critical CS/CSS data		Critical CS/CSS data
7. COA Development/Wargame				
8. Decision Brief/Cdr Guidance		Planning guidance		Planning guidance
9. Issue WARNORD		WARNORD w/overlay		WARNORD w/overlay
10. Prepare OPORD/Ex-Matrix				
11. Issue OPORD/Ex-Matrix		OPORD/ExMatrix		OPORD/ExMatrix
12. Cdr Backbriefs		TACSOP format		TACSOP format
13. Supervise/Refine Plan		Staff Assistance		Co Cdr's supervision
14. Rehearsals		TACSOP format		TACSOP format
15. Air Mission Briefing (AMB)		Movement plan		Movement plan
16. H-Hour				

Parallel Planning Timeline

planning. The submission of lengthy reports at specified times, often during peak planning periods, can also create a large volume of information that the staff members must analyze before presenting it to the battalion commander and the company commanders. During this time-consuming process, critical information may be overlooked.

A useful guide for determining the information that warrants dissemination is the commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs). The CCIRs further redefines the commander's intent, thus giving the staff and the company commanders a planning focus.

The CCIRs takes three forms:

Priority intelligence requirements (PIRs), which help the commander decide what he wants to know about the enemy and the battlefield.

Essential elements of friendly information (EEFIs), which help the commander determine how the enemy sees the friendly unit.

Friendly forces information requirements (FFIRs), which help the commander determine how the unit sees itself.

The battalion executive officer (XO) plays a significant role as the unit information manager in the parallel planning process. Specifically, he oversees and monitors the staff's duties, functions,

and responsibilities in processing information. The CCIRs enable the staff and the company commanders to use the available time efficiently, but it is the XO who must see that the staff adheres to the planning timeline and stays focused on the mission.

Identifying the planning products that are essential to the companies at any given point in the process should not be left to subjective judgments. The staff should have a standard template that identifies the critical items the subordinate units need to support their planning efforts.

A useful tool for identifying the company commanders' essential planning products is the parallel planning timeline matrix shown here. The *Action* column of the matrix identifies the critical events of the planning process. In addition to the steps of the troop leading procedures and the tactical decision making process, units may tailor the list on the basis of tactical SOP requirements. The *Battalion Time* column reflects the mandated staff completion time for each event. The battalion XO and S-3 develop this timeline and submit it to the commander for approval.

The timeline serves two primary purposes: It establishes suspenses for the staff and helps focus their efforts; and it notifies the company commanders when

they can expect to receive certain planning products. With this information, the commanders can develop a timeline for convening the orders group, beginning preliminary planning, and other events.

The absence of an entry in the *Products to Companies* column implies that the staff is working on an event listed in the *Action* column and that no product will be forthcoming until the staff has completed that action. The remaining columns, *Company Time* and *Product to Platoons*, are for the company commanders' use in conducting parallel planning.

Warning orders are issued on at least two occasions as the primary methods of transmitting the information critical to parallel planning. Leaders and planners therefore should not feel constrained by this matrix; in fact, experience suggests that there will be more warning orders instead of fewer.

The parallel planning process ensures that the available planning time is used effectively and that the result is a coherent, focused operations order or plan. Critical to this process is a clear articulation and understanding of the commander's intent. Parallel planning also implies intellectual and operational flexibility instead of the rigid, methodical process often associated with sequential planning.

In future conflicts, battlefield information systems will reduce planning time and simultaneously increase the demand for real-time analysis and decisions that are attainable only through mental agility. In such an environment, only parallel planning will be able to respond to competing demands by focusing a battalion's efforts without sacrificing flexibility and speed of execution.

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