
The Battle Captain Log

Managing Information

CAPTAIN ROBERT D. MURPHY

The success of a brigade or battalion tactical operations center (TOC) largely results from its ability to manage information. This is true both in combat and in peacekeeping or stability operations, and it is not an easy task, considering the mass of information that passes through it every day. It is easy for units to experience information overload if they do not have simple and effective systems in place for receiving and processing the data transmitted to them. The officer who is usually responsible for keeping track of all this information and knowing the current situation in the TOC is the battle captain.

The battle captain's job is similar to that of the executive officer, a major responsibility at brigade and battalion levels. The duties of the battle captain include the following:

- ♦ Supervising the efforts of the staff noncommissioned officers within the S-3 section.
- ♦ Analyzing and assessing all available information.
- ♦ Helping review and disseminate information within the TOC.
- ♦ Assisting in monitoring the location and activities of friendly units.
- ♦ Serving as the TOC officer-in-charge when field-grade officers are absent.
- ♦ Assisting the S-3 during the tactical decision making process.

Some units have developed battle captain logs—Smart Books—that summarize critical information displayed on charts throughout the TOC.

The battle captain must either know

or be able to get this data to provide information to both higher and lower headquarters. Furthermore, many units that have not participated in stability operations may have battle captain logs that are oriented toward combat operations. Many of these logs can easily be adjusted to support stability operations. Such was the case in Bosnia. One brigade battle captain used his normal combat operations log and adjusted it to fit the stability mission of his brigade. The log worked well and enabled the battle captain to keep on top of the situation.

The log served a secondary purpose as a continuity book. It was used during shift change briefings to highlight changes and cover significant events. It expedited shift changes with-

It is easy for units to experience information overload if they do not have simple and effective systems in place for receiving and processing information.

out any loss of information. It was also easy for another officer to step in and assume the battle captain responsibilities with this Smart Book in his possession. At the end of the day, the log could be photocopied and filed as a permanent record of events.

What should a battle captain log contain? Battle captains should look at their brigade or battalion TOCs and note the various charts used to monitor

critical information. This is the information the commander, executive officer, and staff have deemed worthy of tracking. This is also the information the battle captain needs to access immediately to do his job while moving about the TOC answering questions from both higher and lower headquarters. Frequently, the battle captain cannot see various information displayed on charts or maps because of print size or obstructions, such as other soldiers working nearby. A battle captain log that can be carried in a folder at all times might be the answer to this problem.

An example of various TOC charts and the battle captain log used by one brigade in Bosnia will emphasize this point. The following are the major charts the brigade used to display critical information:

Mission Chart—for mission of headquarters two levels up.

Commander's Intent—two levels up.

Mission—headquarters, one level up.

Commander's Intent—one level up.

Unit Mission—brigade mission statement.

Unit Commander's Intent—brigade.

Mission Data 1—summarized mission data such as:

- ♦ Current orders in effect (division and brigade).
- ♦ Latest fragmentary orders in effect (division and brigade).
- ♦ Priorities of fire and fire support coordination measures.
- ♦ Close air support sorties available.

OUTLINE FOR BATTLE CAPTAIN LOG

TIME: _____ TO: _____ AS OF: _____

1. ENEMY
 - A. WEATHER/TERRAIN UPDATE
 - B. ENEMY SITUATION
 - (1) KEY RECENT ACTIVITIES:
 - (2) PROBABLE COAs:
2. CCIR
 - A. PIR:
 - B. FFIR:
 - C. EEFI:
3. FRIENDLY SITUATION
 - A. ARRC:
 - B. TFE:
 - C. BRIGADE FOCUS ON KEY UNITS:
 - (1) FLANKS:
 - (A) LEFT:
 - (B) RIGHT:
 - (C) FRONT:
 - (D) REAR:
 - (2) BRIGADE AVN/ATK HELOS

UNIT(S):	EA(S):TOT:	BDA:
(A) LAST MSN:		
(B) NEXT MSN:		
4. BRIGADE SITUATION:

	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	SLANT
A. TF 8-27:			M1 M2
HHC/8-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
A/8-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
C/8-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
D/8-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
A/8-61 AR:	_____	_____	_____
B. TF 8-61:			
HHC/8-61:	_____	_____	_____
B/7-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
D/7-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
B/8-27 IN:	_____	_____	_____
C/8-61 IN:	_____	_____	_____
C. 7-4 CAV (-)			M1 M2 OH58D
HHT/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
A/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
B/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
C/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
D/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
E/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
F/7-4 CAV:	_____	_____	_____
D. 4-28 FA:			M109 COLT
A/4-28 FA:	_____	_____	_____
B/4-28 FA:	_____	_____	_____
C/4-28 FA:	_____	_____	_____
5. KEY RECENT EVENTS:

	TIME:	FDLY:	ENEMY:	EVENT:
A. KEY EVENTS:				
B. DEEP:				
C. CLOSE:				
D. RESERVE:				
E. SECURITY:				
F. REAR:				
6. MISSION DATA:

H-HOUR:	_____	LAST UPDATE W/G3	_____	W/TAC	_____	REAR	_____			
CURRENT ORDERS IN EFFECT:	DIV:	_____	BDE:	_____						
LATEST FRAGOS IN EFFECT:	DIV:	_____	BDE:	_____						
DTAC LOC:	_____	DMAIN LOC:	_____	DREAR LOC:	_____					
BDE MAIN LOC:	_____	TAC LOC:	_____	REAR LOC:	_____					
PRIORITY OF FIRES:	_____									
FSCMS	CFL:	_____	HQ:	_____	DTG EFF:	_____				
	FACL:	_____	HQ:	_____	DTG EFF:	_____				
	RFL:	_____	HQ:	_____	DTG EFF:	_____				
	RIPL:	_____	HQ:	_____	DTG EFF:	_____				
CAS SORTIES:	DIV:	_____	1 BDE:	_____	2 BDE:	_____	4 BDE:	_____	DIV CAV:	_____
ADA PRIORITIES:	_____									
HIMAD COVERAGE TO:	_____									
ADA WARNING:	_____				WCS:	_____				
MOPP LEVEL IN EFFECT:	_____									
ENGINEER PRIORITY OF SUPPORT:	_____									
ENGINEER PRIORITY OF EFFORT:	_____									
CSS PRIORITY OF SUPPORT:	_____									
MEDICAL EVAC ROUTE:	_____				FREQ:	_____				
7. CP--BATTLE HAND OVER:

TIME OF MOVE:	_____	ETA NEW LOC:	_____	GRID:	_____
---------------	-------	--------------	-------	-------	-------

- ♦ Air defense artillery priorities, warning, and control status.
- ♦ Status of mission oriented protective posture (MOPP) level.

Mission Data 2--summarized mission data such as:

- ♦ Engineer priority of support and effort.
- ♦ Combat service support priority of support and main supply routes in effect.
- ♦ Medical evacuation data.
- ♦ Escort missions.
- ♦ Civil military missions.

Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs)--expressed in three different charts:

- ♦ Priority intelligence requirements (PIRs).
- ♦ Friendly forces information requirements (FFIRs).
- ♦ Essential elements of friendly information (EEFI).

Brigade Combat Power--brigade rollup of combat power, including:

- ♦ Number of M1s and M2s assigned and fully mission capable.
- ♦ Status of classes III and V and personnel.
- ♦ Location of subordinate unit headquarters.

Battalion Combat Power--battalion rollup of combat power, including all items listed for brigade combat power chart.

Communications Status--summary of communications status by system and unit.

Checkpoint Status--summary of all checkpoint operations within the brigade, providing such information as:

- ♦ Checkpoint number.
- ♦ Location of checkpoint.
- ♦ Unit conducting checkpoint.
- ♦ Status or level of checkpoint.
- ♦ Remarks.

Zone of Separation Reconnaissance--summary of the zone of separation (ZOS); reconnaissance missions for the next 72 hours, providing such information as:

- ♦ Unit.
- ♦ ZOS block patrolled.
- ♦ Number of vehicles on patrol.
- ♦ Number of soldiers on patrol.
- ♦ Number of aircraft on patrol.
- ♦ Routes of patrol.
- ♦ Relevant control measures.

The purpose of this battle captain log was to capture this information in a format the battle captain could use as a Smart Book. Other types of information the battle captain deemed necessary--such as information on the current enemy situation--were added to the log.

A period of time is required to establish a battle captain log initially. The log should be made at home station in some sort of durable binder that will

last in the field. The binder should allow for pages to be added or taken away as needed. Pages can be acetated and the data written in a water-based or permanent marker, or pages can be plain paper with the data written in pencil. The key thing to remember is that the data in the battle captain log will change, and there should be a way to make these changes easily. The first attempt at designing a battle captain log may be frustrating because some information that should be put in will inevitably be absent. In addition, unit

missions may change, and additional data may be needed.

Staff members should make note of the types of information not in the log that the battle captain needs to do his job. The log should then be updated to cover the missing information. The payoff for the time invested in establishing and maintaining a complete, easily used log will be apparent when all the critical information is available at the battle captain's fingertips. A properly maintained log will let the operations of the unit run smoothly and

without interruptions, as efficiently in the heat of combat as in routine training exercises.

Captain Robert D. Murphy, a Military Intelligence officer, is assigned to the Center for Army Lessons Learned at Fort Leavenworth. He previously served in the 10th Special Forces Group, the 107th Military Intelligence Battalion, and the 7th Infantry Division. He is a 1987 ROTC graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute.
