

INFANTRY LETTERS



JANUS SIMULATION IS A COMBAT MULTIPLIER

“Fighter 6, this is Charlie 6, we are REDCON 1.”

These are the famous last words before the wily OPFOR begins to teach the BLUEFOR a lesson in tactics during the Janus simulation. This mission was no different, but what I did learn was the value of the simulation system in preparing future leaders at the company and task force level to do battle in today’s operationally constrained environment. Janus has been implemented in the Infantry Captain’s Career Course to allow future company commanders the ability to implement operations orders that they continuously plan for and brief throughout the course onto a simulated battlefield.

I had the opportunity to fight an armor company team defense in battle positions in the Janus simulator for ICCC. After a rigorous orders process that included a humbling backbrief to my SGI, I now had to put my money where my mouth was and fight my plan. My company team consisted of one mechanized infantry platoon (M2A2 BFV X 4, Javelin X 3), two armor platoons

(M1A1 Abrams MBT X 4), one FIST vehicle, and the company trains found in an armor company table of organization and equipment (TO&E). The mission was to defend in battle position to destroy approaching enemy forces in an engagement area to prevent the enemy from enveloping the division main effort.

Janus provided each acting platoon leader and me with our own cubicle that consisted of one computer, one Janus operator, and two CB radios. The Janus operator’s main mission was moving vehicles, soldiers, and equipment depicted on the computer screen based on the decisions we made. I briefed my graphics to the Janus operator, who put them into the system. This took approximately one hour. This allowed the acting platoon leaders to see the graphics on their computer screen. They were able to immediately begin developing their platoon engagement areas. I was surprised at the ease in preparing the system to execute the mission.

The actual fight lasted approximately one hour. Receiving spot reports from the acting platoon leaders, calling and adjusting indirect fire, attempting to mass direct fires on the enemy’s point of penetration, providing SPOTREPS to the TF commander, maneuvering platoons based on OPFOR actions, and maneuvering the TF reserve to fill gaps were some actions that occurred during the battle. We were able to conduct a detailed after-action review (AAR) that included a replay of the battle that was six minutes long.

The operators were also able to depict each action of the OPFOR and BLUEFOR in detail to include: location and amount of artillery fired, catastrophic, mobility kills location and how vehicles were destroyed (i.e. direct or indirect fire.)

I found Janus very realistic in three areas of vital importance:

↳ Command and control during the fog of battle,

↳ Reporting and passing information to subordinates and superiors, and

↳ Conducting adjacent unit coordination with another company team tied into the fight. The three tasks listed above were to be simultaneously completed while attempting to successfully maneuver mechanized units on the battlefield.

Lessons learned include better adjacent unit coordination to prevent the OPFOR from exploiting the seam between company teams, and an ammunition resupply plan. The battle didn’t stop when my tanks went black on ammo, and accurate reporting to the TF commander let him decisively commit his reserve. My decisions to maneuver forces were based solely on the SPOTREP’s that I received from my acting platoon leaders. This depicts a same environment that future company commanders will face while fighting our future battles inside of their tank, Bradley fighting vehicle or M577.

This system also assists every leader in developing the confidence and improving plans necessary to win on today’s nonlinear battlefield. This process can be done at battalion, company, and platoon level OPD’s very easily. All one would need is an example OPORD and the Janus (civilian) operators. The Janus operators at Fort Benning are so willing to assist a unit in training that they will write the OPORD for the unit if time is not available or the unit needs to focus on battlefield command and control for an upcoming field problem.

I recommend the Janus system to commanders who are looking for an efficient way to establish/develop SOP’s, and TTP’s, or who would like to refine tactics before executing a field problem. The Janus simulation system can be effectively used in a constrained time environment and provides a valuable training tool for any unit whose, “train never seems to stop.”

-- CAPTAIN JAMES J. SMITH

Student, Infantry Captain’s Career Course

