



## MANNING, TRAINING, EQUIPPING A COMPANY BATTLE STAFF

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The requirement for a company (CO) battle staff type of organization has been validated by thousands of companies during the conduct of Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, U.S. Army doctrine has not caught up to current operations: *“The company CP (command post) normally consists of the company commander, his radio operators, the fire support team (FIST) consisting of the fire support officer (FSO), fire support sergeant, and forward observer; and the CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) sergeant along with possibly other personnel and attachments (XO, ISG, or a security element). The company CP locates where it best supports the company commander and maintains communications with higher and subordinate units.”*

— FM 3-21.10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, July 2006

While nothing in FM 3-21.10 could be considered incorrect, the doctrine does not go into any functional detail. Reading the doctrine a commander could draw the conclusion that his command post exists ONLY to maintain communications and to perform battle tracking. We know this is not true.

In order to close this gap in doctrine, the 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) developed an SOP for CO battle staffs and a plan to train them. This article will focus on the

*A language-enabled Soldier (right) with the 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, translates for a platoon leader during a training exercise at Fort Lewis, Wash., in February 2008.*

Jason Kaye



manning, equipping, and training of the company battle staff in preparation for a deployment to the Iraq theater of operations.

The concept of creating timely, specific, reliable intelligence from raw data at the CO battle staff level has been the primary objective of 5/2 ID (SBCT) in defining the roles and functions of personnel in the battle staff. The challenge exists in identifying those personnel capable of accomplishing the requisite tasks of the CO battle staff, training those Soldiers (individual and collective, digital, etc.), and ensuring they have enough stability to benefit from the training *and* serve on the battle staff during the unit's combat deployment. Because the rifle company (Stryker or otherwise) does not enjoy the luxury of a diverse MOS-base, intelligence analysts and linguists must be selected from the ranks, trained, and groomed. While a fact that will require the diversion of important resources from other key tasks to realize, countless after action reports (AARs) and lessons learned reports state that CO battle staffs will pay dividends in unit efficiency and effectiveness.

In principle, the CO battle staff's primary function is to use digital and analytical tools to update the company-level intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), to provide updated and useful intelligence to the commander, and to help commanders develop courses of action. A key component of this is the requirement for comparative analysis; the CO battle staff should mine, organize and utilize historical data in order to make rapid, accurate assessments of the current area of operations and recommend logical courses of action to the commander. By maintaining situational awareness via radio traffic, FBCB2 communication (and now Land Warrior messaging), the CO battle staff is tasked to update a myriad of digital systems, redundant analog systems, and report information and intelligence to higher, adjacent, and subordinate elements.

The challenge commanders at every level face is how and where to compromise in order to best meet mission requirements. For 5/2 ID (SBCT) the SOP prescribes roles in order to train the members of the battle staff. The majority of the personnel 5/2 ID (SBCT) has identified as minimum force for a CO battle staff are consistent with current doctrine — the company commander, company

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executive officer, company first sergeant, company fire support officer, company CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive) NCO, and the company communications chief (commander's RTO). The 5/2 ID (SBCT)'s SOP has specified the role of the CO battle staff and has broadened the minimum force requirement to include the senior language-enabled Soldier (LES), Stryker Battle Staff NCO (SBSNCO), tactical site exploitation (TSE) technician, and equal opportunity leader (EOL). Of the members of the battle staff mentioned above, the CBRNE NCO, LES, and SBSNCO have been recapitalized, or in other words, specially trained to execute a mission not consistent with the CO modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE).

In the 5/2 ID (SBCT) model the company battle staff is organized into three functional groups. The command group consists of the CO CDR, 1SG, and CO XO, similar to a battalion or brigade command group. The company intel support team (IST) consists of the CBRNE NCO, senior LES, and TSE technician. The CO IST maintains the CO IPB. The negotiation team consists of the CO CDR, senior LES, and the EOL. The CO XO gives directions to the battle staff and supervises. When he is not present in the command post, the SBSNCO is in charge. The CO FSO and communications sergeant perform their traditional roles and assist the commander in developing a course of action and executing those COAs as applicable.

The 5/2 ID (SBCT) commander made the training of the LES (118 Arabic linguists at the platoon level; 101 complete, 17 in training) a top priority. In the LES program selected Soldiers (Infantry, Artillery, Cavalry, Logistics) receive training on Arabic language skills four days a week for 10 months at the Fort Lewis Language Center. The program provides an invaluable asset to the rifle squads who serve as collectors every day. The brigade sustains this training

through constant practical application and scenario training. The program has trained as many as three conversationally fluent Arabic linguists in each of the rifle companies in fewer than the 18 months the brigade has existed.

The 5/2 ID (SBCT) also educated at least one NCO in each company on basic staff functioning via the Maneuver Center of Excellence's Stryker Battle Staff NCO Course, which is taught at Fort Benning, Ga. Graduates are armed with a broad exposure to intelligence collection, data management, pattern analysis, and tactical operations center (TOC) function examples. The requirement is that the Stryker Battle Staff NCO manages the operations of the CO battle staff and takes ownership of the digital and analytical systems that are currently being fielded to the companies (FBCB2, DARPA and *Ascend Intel's* Tactical Ground Reporting System [TIGR], Palantir, Land Warrior).

The TSE technician has specialized training that combines evidence collection and intelligence support. In addition to the CO technician, the brigade will have more than 30 specialized teams with special equipment to conduct TSE once fully equipped.

In the 5/2 ID (SBCT) model, the SBSNCO works closely with the CBRNE NCO. The CBRNE NCO serves as the chief of the intelligence support team. The brigade SOP directs that the companies' 74-series NCOs be retrained as intel analysts and run the company intel support team. All CBRNE NCOs attended an intelligence course from the Military Intelligence schoolhouse at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. Armed with a fundamental course in general analysis operations, the CBRNE NCO briefs the enemy situation, route status, manages products such as pattern analysis, link diagrams, significant actions (SIGACTs), and the company's ISR synchronization matrix. He is also the individual who debriefs patrols after conducting operations and manages the initial analysis and subsequent transport or exploitation of materials gathered during the unit's tactical site exploitation. This task is accomplished by working closely with the companies' TSE technician and senior LES (whose understanding of culture and language provides initial and immediate insight to

what is, without LES input, raw data).

CO battle staffs will continue to differ as long as their structure remains unspecified in the MTOE. This omission will result in vast differences in infrastructure, force utilization, and some specific functioning. The basic operational requirements will remain unchanged: company battle staffs must be capable of providing intelligence from unrefined information regardless of how it is received. The possibilities are finite but not universal. Information may arrive to the CO battle staff through human intelligence (HUMINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT), signal intelligence (SIGINT), radio transmission, FBCB2 messaging, Land Warrior icon manipulation, TIGR data updates, or Palantir information renewal — and that’s just in 5/2 ID (SBCT). The underlying message is that developing and implementing a plan as early as possible in the life cycle of a BCT is critical to the success of its company battle staffs.

The company battle staff must be prepared to operate from a fixed or mobile configuration. Below we outline requirements to run a battle staff from a fixed site. The mobile battle staff works from the CO CDR and XO’s Strykers. The CO CDR normally has the CO FSO and senior LES while the XO has the SBSNCO and IST NCO (CBRNE). The systems for SA are FM radio nets, FBCB2, and stand alone computers. The FBCB2 is the primary tool for “seeing first.” The physical presence of the key members of the battle staff forward with the CO CDR assist him in “understanding first.” The battle staff uses the FBCB2 as the primary reporting tool to keep their higher headquarters informed. By establishing preset buttons and preformatted messages, the battle staff ensures that all addresses are set correctly and no important information is neglected.

As with anything that the Army does, the first step of training is individual training. Soldiers who man the CO battle staff must understand how to operate tactically as a battle staff as well as be technically proficient at their jobs. We continue to identify requirements as we train; so the individual training requirements evolve as well. Below is training that we have validated in training CO battle staffs:

**1. Military Intelligence Mobile Training Team (MI MTT).** The CO battle staff requires

Soldiers trained in rudimentary intelligence analysis. The U.S. Army Intelligence Center offers a nine-week MTT to train company intel analysts. All company CBRNE NCOs were required to attend the training and thus form the backbone of the company intel support team. This enables the company commander to turn information into a target and a target into a mission. The CO IST can also package the information for analysis by the battalion S2. This increases the likelihood that a time sensitive target can be executed successfully. Identification of the CBRNE NCO has been contentious with brigade leaders and others outside of the brigade. Due to the unique training requirement and the fact that so many are required, the brigade commander felt it was necessary to identify an MOS for these duties. Training resources were placed against them in a deliberate fashion regardless of where the Soldier worked within the brigade or when the Soldier arrived. This ensures that as replacements arrived at Fort Lewis, the rear detachment knows to train all 74-series Soldiers in intel analysis before they are sent forward to Iraq.

**2. Stryker Battle Staff NCO Course.** Developed and taught at Fort Benning at the request of the 5/2 ID (SBCT) commander, the SBSNCO Course is a five-week course. Week 1 focuses on the Stryker and its systems. Weeks 2 and 3 focus on battle staff functions. Week 4 covers developing Stryker-focused training plans, conducting Stryker Gunnery, and conducting Stryker

Gunnery Skills Tests. Week 5 covers short-range training plans, and students conduct an exercise. Once complete these NCOs are expected to run the day-to-day operations of the CO battle staff much like a BN operations sergeant does the BN TOC. The SBSNCO is able to assist the company commander with planning and executing Stryker-focused training. Additionally, the SBSNCO can help the company commander refine weapon systems employment COAs during maneuver operations (much like the informal role of the Bradley and Abrams master gunners).

**3. TIGR.** This is a patrol brief/debrief tool (database) designed for use at the company level. TIGR allows the company commander to build a historical database of events in his area of operations. If required it also allows a commander to access the historical events within another area. The graphical user interface is very similar to Google Earth, and the system is quickly mastered. Each company is connected to the larger network so information is shared throughout the brigade. This training is focused towards the SBSNCO. We expect that patrol leaders will also use this system extensively.

**4. BATS/HIDE (Biometrics Automated Toolset/Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment).** This is a system that gathers biometrics information on individuals and stores it for future use. This course is taught by the Military Intelligence School and is available as an MTT. Units in Iraq have used this system



Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

*The Tactical Ground Reporting System allows users to collect and share information to improve situational awareness and facilitate collaboration and information analysis among junior officers.*



U. S. Army photo

*A Soldier demonstrates how to record a person's fingerprint using the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment.*

to great effect for several years now. This training was focused toward the CO IST NCO (CBRNE NCO).

**6. Palantir.** Palantir is a database analyses software program that allows the CO IST to do link diagrams and query for specific information requirements. The software is much easier to use than Intel specific tools and therefore appropriately suited for non-MI Soldiers. Each company is connected to the larger network so information is shared throughout the brigade.

**7. LES.** The LES course is a 10-month Arabic language and Iraqi culture course taught at the Fort Lewis Language Center. The goal is to create Soldiers that are functionally proficient in Arabic in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Our goal is to have at least five LES per company. These Soldiers can be used to interpret, translate, and analyze information that is in Arabic. Due to their cultural training, they can also be used to help Soldiers and leaders avoid cultural pitfalls that can inhibit interaction with local nationals and help commanders predict how local nationals may act. This can be used in targeting and other ways to facilitate mission accomplishment. The senior (best) LES is a member of the company command post who can help the commander understand the culture and improve targeting. Most of the Soldiers selected for this program are E-4 and below, but some NCOs have attended and one MI officer is currently enrolled. There are 118 Soldiers in the brigade in some phase of training: 101 as graduates and 17 in the last class.

**8. Intelligence Warfighting Function Training.** This is training that teaches an LES how to think like the enemy and hence help a commander determine how to attack or engage the enemy. LESs are particularly well suited to this role as they already have a good working knowledge of the culture and language of the people a unit may be engaged with. In addition to language training they attend predictive profiling, Arab media training, Red Team training, and tactical questioning training. Selected Soldiers also attend terrorist immersion training (Mirror Image). Commanders may send their CBRNE NCOs to any of this training as well.

**9. FBCB2 Training.** The FBCB2 is the primary SA tool at the company level within the SBCT. The SBSNCO and any other

Soldier in the CO battle staff must be proficient in using and troubleshooting the system.

**10. Negotiations Training.** Company EOLs are trained using several programs run by the state of Washington: the 40-hour Dispute Resolution Center Mediation Training Program and two-day state negotiation training. These courses certify them to conduct mediation between employer and employee but more importantly to our requirements they teach negotiation skills. The EOL is thus prepared to assist the company commander in devising his strategy for a planned negotiation.

The 5/2 ID (SBCT) CDR designated six key training tasks that he wanted every CO battle staff to accomplish by the end of our initial collective training. These tasks were:

1. Battle tracking;
2. Conducting patrol briefs and debriefs;
3. Collecting combat information and immediately performing a rudimentary analysis;
4. Building link diagrams;
5. Developing targets for proposal to BN/BDE; and
6. Providing INTSUM/OPSUM to BN.

In conjunction with I Corps Mission Support Training Facility (MSTF) at Fort Lewis, 4-23 IN BN and the 5/2 ID (SBCT) staff planned, resourced, and synchronized a collective training strategy. The training was divided into Modular I - Instruction (MOD I-Instruction), Modular I CPX (MOD I CPX), and Modular II (MOD II).

The MOD I - (Instruction) is conducted by the MSTF staff. The instruction focuses on basic battle staff operations and outlines how to set-up and operate a CO battle staff. It covers battle tracking, information management, communications, and other basic battle staff functions that are traditionally executed by a CO CP. It places the CO battle staff at a baseline standard so that they can handle the added complexity that the more advanced digitally-based MOD(s) require.

The MOD I CPX is a one-day simulation CPX conducted at the MSTF. MSTF staff and the training unit provide a white cell higher control (HICON) to drive the training. The training audience is the CO battle staff and commander. It is critical that the company commander be present at the CPX to provide direction and oversight. This MOD's training is focused on the "analog" or traditional rolls of a CO CP. It is this CPX that sets the battle staff up for success when they execute the more complicated MOD II (CO digital CPX).

MOD II (CO digital CPCPX). It is a four-day exercise that is conducted in the MSTF CO CP bays. The entire CO battle staff must be present for the training. This is the best chance for the company commander to prepare his battle staff to meet his objectives. For the companies, this training incorporates all the systems, hardware, and software that a CO battle staff may use. The 5/2 ID (SBCT) focused on exercising the following systems to provide commanders with the best situational awareness possible: FM comms, FBCB2, TIGRNET, and Access-Pro (later replaced by Palantir).

Training units are expected to come to this training fully trained in all the systems that they will use during the CPX. The white cell and HICON is provided by the training unit. We decided that the

training unit's battalion S2 and S3 is best able to drive and control the CPX and they are assisted by the MTSF staff. JCATS is the system we used to drive the training. In our case the training scenario is built and maintained by the MTSF staff so that any unit can use the products.

The four-day training construct for MOD II battle staff CPX is as follows:

(1) Day 1: Preparation and support system training day. This includes white cell and HICON training. CO battle staff will be read into the scenario and will set up their battle staffs. Remedial/initial training on TIGRNET or Palantir can happen this day.

(2) Days 2 and 3: Simulate 12 hours of operations.

(4) Day 4: This is the final day of training. The outcome is target nominations made to the BN HICON by the company commander. It concludes with a CO battle staff AAR facilitated by the training unit's HICON.

After this collective training, units understand the level of proficiency of battle staffs with respect to commanders' key tasks.

Current MTOEs do not adequately support CO battle staff operations. The 5/2 ID (SBCT) has identified the following equipment requirements:

1. Hardware.

a. Laptop computers to run TIGR and Palantir; associated servers so that the information is available to any unit in the SBCT.

b. Stand-alone FBCB2. While a battle board is needed as a back up, the FBCB2 is the standard in our SBCT for companies to track patrols and send combat information up and down. Current MTOE does not provide the company a stand-alone FBCB2. It is forced to come up with a field expedient way to bring the FBCB2 into the battle staff, normally the 1SG's FBCB2. This is a poor substitute.

c. Wireless SIPRNET. There are many functions at the CO battle staff that will require them to have SIPRNET connectivity: HIIDE data, patrol reports, INTSUMS, etc. In order for companies to have SIPRNET connectivity, the solution 5/2 ID (SBCT) is pursuing is the Harris Corporation LOS radio. It allows the CO battle staff to have SIPRNET connectivity and push reasonably sized files in a short period of time. This radio is currently being employed by a SBCT in Iraq.

d. Flash drives. Flash drives allow the CO battle staffs to move information quickly when distance is not an issue.

e. Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS). Power fails, sometimes for several hours or longer. Computer batteries are good for 1-2 hours. Loss of computers and other automation in the CO battle staff reduces the CO battle staff to minimum information management. Not to mention critical information can be lost that may take hours to recreate. UPS can extend the CO battle staffs effectiveness until the power is restored.

f. Digital camcorder. Visual records of debriefs are far more accurate than dictation. Accurate records are needed so that information can be referred back to in answering questions that over time become clouded and tainted by normal human frailties. This documentation can also be used for 15-6 investigations that all units will encounter in their tours of duty.

g. BATS/HIIDE. A biometric information gathering system that allows information to be input into a database and analyzed and cross referenced in targeting and detainee management.

2. Software: TIGR, Palantir, and Microsoft Office. This list is what 5/2 ID (SBCT) has determined will best support its targeting and C2, but is not "the" definitive requirements for a CO battle staff. New equipment, software, and tools are constantly being required by the boots on the ground and developed by private industry.

Outside of the specialized equipment and software listed above are the mundane, but needed supplies/equipment to make the battle staff functional. The short list that we have developed is:

■ Proxima. The CO battle staff has to have a way of displaying critical information.

■ Tent or shelter. Some battle staffs can be in a "hardstand," other battle staffs will not be so fortunate. We use a GP Medium or SICUP for our battle staffs to help provide an environment that the battle staff can operate in for long periods of time and in all weather.

■ Environmental control (air conditioning and heat).

■ Generators: all this equipment takes power.

■ Other equipment: tables, chairs,

tough boxes (for storage and transport of equipment), extension cords, surge protectors/power strips, light sets, battle boards, office supplies, floor tarps (for temporary usage, plywood for long term).

The goal for all CO battle staffs in 5/2 ID (SBCT) is to give the company commander situational awareness, answers to CCIR, and other information requirements that enable him to "see first, understand first, act first, engage decisively, and re-engage at will." The company battle staff is a proven combat multiplier. It is possible to effectively prepare a CO battle staff for operations in the Iraq theater of operations. It is not cheap. The 5/2 ID (SBCT) model for manning, equipping, and training a CO battle staff is a significant commitment of resources. It additionally requires outside assistance such as TRADOC support and home station installation resources. With the support of commanders and senior enlisted leaders at all levels, it can be accomplished. It must be a priority.

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