



Figure 1. 4-10 Cav scouts conduct a patrol as part of a spur ride. (Photo by 1LT Kyle Howard)

Can the Company-Level Intelligence-Support Team Work in Decisive Action? Lessons-Learned from 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment

by SGT Jared C. Clark

The U.S. military has spent more than a decade drafting and refining its doctrinal, strategic and tactical approach to the counterinsurgency (COIN) fight. The result is a more agile and adaptable force, capable of quickly responding to emergent and complex threats. During this time, many new systems evolved from familiar paradigms, which now seek to enable and augment the lowest echelons of our military. Adaptations such as the company-level intelligence-support team (CoIST) contributed to the success of our Army's intelligence collection and analysis throughout this period.

As the emphasis on training shifts from the COIN fight back to the decisive-action (DA) fight, the military's resilient and adaptive spirit must now find new ways to integrate the lessons and structural evolutions from the past 14 years to meet the changing demands of our military and national interests. With that in mind, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), 4th Infantry Division, integrated a COIN-style CoIST into its DA fight. The process has not been without growing pains, but our squadron's experience confirmed that the practice yields positive results.

During National Training Center (NTC) Rotation 15-02, our squadron deployed CoIST in support of each Cavalry troop. The Cobra observers/coaches/trainers were impressed with the unit's implementation of CoIST and suggested that its standard operating procedure (SOP) and practices be shared with the broader Army. Contained within this article are many of the training objectives, practices and lessons-learned that were responsible for our unit's success.

Structuring CoIST

Current 4-10 Cav squadron commander LTC Chad R. Foster outlined that the CoIST needs to be comprised of the "right people, with the right direction, right training and right attitude." The main reason Soldiers in the CoIST must be the "right" people is because a DA CoIST must operate in an aggressively mobile, Lower Tactical Internet (TI) environment. Therefore, any successful implementation of the CoIST must proceed from this starting point.

CoIST teams in DA will not enjoy access to the hard-stand structures with robust (or any, in some cases) Internet connectivity. However, structuring and training the CoIST team in a deliberate manner can overcome the

constraints of diminished connectivity. Since Soldiers cannot rely on digital systems, the CoIST's effectiveness is predominantly determined by choosing the right individuals to fill the specific roles on the team.

Executive officer is intel officer

The CoIST should be located with key decision-makers of the troop to effectively make accurate assessments of enemy action and provide recommendations for unit employment. The troop commander is occupied with leading and directing his forces, while the first sergeant is concerned with maintaining and sustaining the force. On the other hand, the executive officer in an armored-brigade reconnaissance troop is focused on providing timely and accurate reports to the squadron staff. The executive officer provides running estimates to the squadron, which are critical when painting the picture of the developing battle.

Therefore, the traditional tasks of a squadron intelligence officer are most naturally commensurate with the responsibilities of the troop executive officer. Increasing the executive officer's influence and oversight over the CoIST team during combined-arms maneuver (CAM) unifies tactical knowledge with the ability to synthesize and report enemy activity to higher echelons. The executive officer's analysis is invaluable to squadron operations in conjunction with hard data (for example, battle-damage assessments (BDAs) and spot reports). Without the leadership of a competent executive officer, a CoIST will fail to provide accurate and timely intelligence to the squadron commander and staff.

PACE
Primary: FBCB2
Alternate: FM operations/intelligence net
Contingency: LOGPAC
Emergency: Harris radio

Figure 2. Figure 2. PACE plan used in conjunction with CoIST.

S-2 provides CoIST analyst

It almost goes without saying that the responsibility of guiding and staffing the CoIST falls on the squadron intelligence officer and section. However, due to manning authorizations and unit requirements, this is generally not possible. Therefore, the CoIST's manning and direction must be a partnership between the S-2 and the recon troop. The S-2 must provide the troop an experienced and motivated sergeant (or specialist) who is capable of acting independently, without direct supervision or guidance, to serve as the CoIST analyst.

It cannot be overemphasized that the character and drive of this individual is paramount to the CoIST's success. This Soldier must have enough experience, technical ability and confidence to execute the responsibilities outlined in the SOP for the CoIST. This S-2 representative must also be able to conduct refined intelligence preparation of the operational environment (IPOE) and military decision-making process (MDMP) in conjunction with the troop executive officer. The selected Soldier must also be articulate enough to brief products at the troop level.

Other critical character traits to be considered are organizational skills and doctrinal understanding. The analyst often simultaneously functions as the CoIST noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) and must be able to manage the team in the executive officer's absence.

Troop provides 2 scouts

Again, staffing the CoIST must be a partnership between the S-2 and the line troop. Our unit found that troops were reasonably able to provide a pair of competent and interested military-occupation specialty (MOS) 19D-scouts at Skill Level 10 to augment the intelligence production of the MOS 35-series (intelligence) Soldier. As such, the scouts became an indispensable part of each CoIST team because they were efficient when employing tactics and knowledgeable of weapons capabilities, an expertise most 35-series S-2 Soldiers lack. Though any Soldier can learn weapons capabilities, the scouts are able to quickly provide the "so what" aspect to the assessments.

With that said, 19D10 Soldiers who are selected for the CoIST should possess analytical skills and be curious about how things work together in the broader picture of a mission. In other words, they should possess critical thinking skills and take personal interest in the assignments they are given.



Figure 3. SPC Kascia Vigil of Hunter Troop establishes and maintains the Global Broadcasting Service in the field.
(Photo by 1LT Kyle Howard)

SOP emphasis

The CoIST SOP should detail what the CoIST will provide the troop commander, and it must establish procedures for a thorough communications plan. Establishing what will be provided not only gives guidance to the CoIST analyst, but it also manages the expectations of the gaining commander.

For instance, the 4-10 Cav SOP establishes that the CoIST is required to report BDAs; conduct patrol briefs/debriefs; conduct troop-level IPOE; and recommend priority intelligence requirements and specific intelligence requirements based on changing conditions. It also details that CoISTs are not authorized to task squadron-and-above assets, run or task sources, conduct interrogations or action targets without higher approval.

When it comes to the communications plan, the SOP details how to use the primary, alternate, contingency and emergency (PACE) method. The ability to communicate can determine the success or failure of a CoIST. The communications plan, using PACE, should not only outline the priority of systems (for example, Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2), frequency modulation (FM) or high frequency) but also account for the various conditions under which the CoIST will be expected to operate. If reliable and accurate assessments are not flowing laterally between troops, down to the platoons and up to the squadron, the impacts can be devastating to the entire brigade.

Training CoISTs

Training the CoISTs requires a substantial dedication of squadron resources and time to do so properly. The 4-10 Cav identified Soldiers 10 months before its NTC rotation and laid out a plan that required squadron, brigade, Foundry and garrison support to accomplish.

The squadron S-2 was responsible for conducting all Skill Level 10 training associated with the teams such as IPOE, radio operations, command-post operations, intelligence-collection management and capabilities, and basic troop-

leading procedures. The brigade S-2 assisted with familiarizing the selected CoIST personnel with multiple intelligence disciplines such as the integration of human-intelligence and signals-intelligence teams. The Army Foundry Intelligence Training Program provided multiple classes on IPOE, CoIST responsibilities and duties, tactical-site exploitation, tactical questioning, critical thinking and patrol brief/debrief procedures.

Foundry was also instrumental in integrating brigade-level intelligence and an electronic-warfare tactical-proficiency trainer exercise, which allowed the unit to practice systems in real time. Garrison resources were allocated to assist training; this improved operator competence with the systems in the unit PACE plan.

The outcome-based training plan focused on four key aspects of the CoIST to increase the troop-level CoIST capabilities.



Figure 4. SPC Alex Haskin of Apache Troop prepares intelligence estimates during a squadron field-training exercise. (Photo by 1LT Kyle Howard)

Retraining S-2 analysts

For 4-10 Cav, all the Skill Level 10 Soldiers from the S-2 section had just left advanced individual training (AIT), and most of the unit's junior NCOs were either on their initial location assignment or recently reclassified into the intelligence profession. What this meant to the unit was that the base of its CoIST personnel shared a common set of experience and training: the all-source intelligence schoolhouse.

The U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE) teaches analysts to have a broad-based understanding of the intelligence language (terms and requirements) before arriving at their units so they can quickly integrate into a broad set of missions and requirements. During the time the unit's analysts were in AIT, USAICoE emphasized COIN operations with minimal training on the DA fight. Therefore, as a part of an ABCT conducting CAM, the unit was required to spend a significant amount of time retraining its analysts on IPOE. This training focused on the differences between disruption, battle and support zones, range fans, timed phase lines, order of battle and the role of enemy doctrine throughout a fight.

Less time was spent discussing small-unit tactics such as complex ambushes, and more was spent discussing troop-to-brigade level tactics such as the time and distance between an enemy brigade reconnaissance asset's deployment to the brigade-fixing-force deployment and where long-range artillery would need to be and when it would move to support efforts in a disruption zone. This was important because predictive-analysis training involves identifying and confirming assumptions based on known enemy locations, focusing on battle-tracking and BDAs. CoISTs were challenged to make rapid and deliberate assessments of enemy action, recommend unit employment and answer commander's critical information requirements as intelligence became available to drive commander decision points. Retraining the analysts and helping them focus on DA intelligence needs as opposed to COIN requirements made the CoISTs assigned to 4-10 Cav more effective.

Training scouts

Training scouts to think like intelligence analysts in some ways seemed easier in the unit than retraining the analysts. The scouts selected to serve in the CoISTs were bright and enthusiastic, and they took a personal interest in their new positions. Furthermore, they brought tactical experience and training to the CoIST, which increased competency when discussing doctrine and weapons capabilities. Specific emphasis was placed on training the CoIST scouts on the basics of IPOE as well as teaching them military-intelligence language and requirements.

The hands-on method proved to be the most effective way to train the scouts. For instance, standing on a piece of terrain and looking at the surrounding area is an excellent way to integrate a lesson on the effects of terrain and weather on military operations. The scouts would draw a military combined-obstacle overlay (MCOO) and then add a template of an enemy mechanized infantry battalion to the terrain. This proved to be an effective way to practice IPOE, and it led to dynamic discussions about the doctrinal accuracy of the Soldiers' assumptions.



Figure 5. SPC Timothy Fenstermaker of Blackfoot Troop shows that Cav scout CoIST teams often function on the go from within an M1068, reducing reliance on digital systems. (Photo by 1LT Kyle Howard)

Focus on analog

Since the unit identified that its CoIST must be aggressively mobile and function in a Lower TI environment, it focused IPOE efforts on creating analog products. Acetate and map markers became both their biggest enemies and best friends; the materials were invaluable necessities.

During training, the squadron S-2 created multiple small-scale scenarios based on the DA training environment (DATE). The CoIST was then tasked to create multiple analog MDMP products based on the derived DATE scenarios. Through repetition, Soldiers became more familiar with MCOOs, enemy event templates and named-area-of-interest overlays. A simple piece of Plexiglas with a map underneath was a great tool to battle-track while being jostled around in the back of a M1068 Command Post Vehicle or an M3A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

Focusing on analog products allowed the CoISTs to be mobile and unrestricted in their analytical processes regardless of their environment; they were no longer dependent on connectivity for Tactical Ground Reporting System, Distributed Common Ground System-Army or other network-reliant systems.

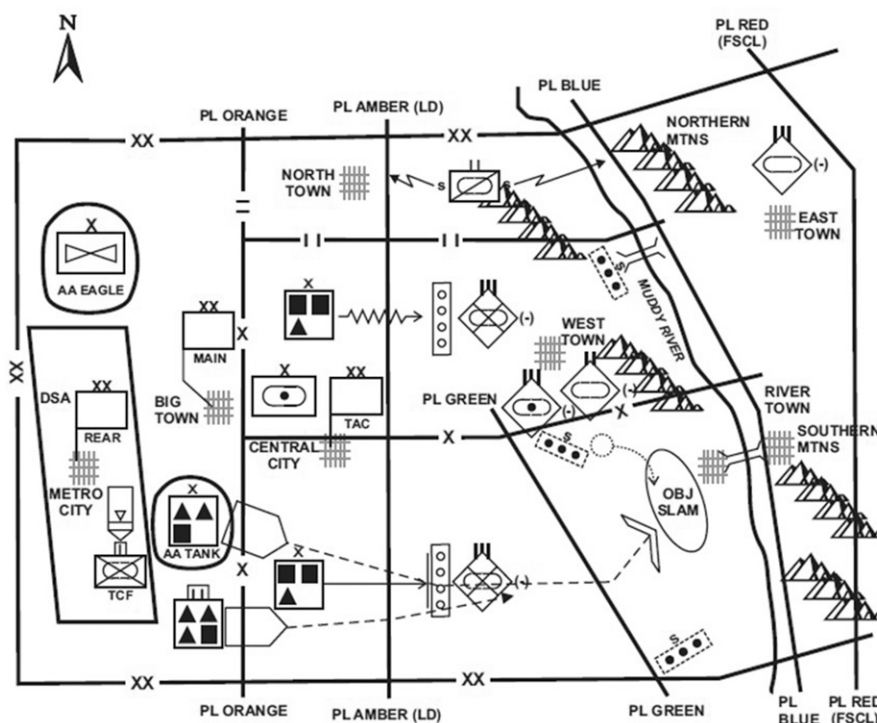


Figure 6. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 1-02 establishes the doctrinal standard for preparing military graphics and symbology. You may also find this information in Field Manual 101-5. (From Figure 5-5, FM 101-5)

Doctrinal terms, graphics

The focal point of intelligence analysis in the COIN fight revolves around understanding the human terrain, how those factors influence the environment, and how individual actions are linked in time and space to various operational factions and players. In the COIN fight, the emphasis was primarily on the human terrain, so knowledge and employment of traditional doctrinal terms and graphics were not always necessary. However, in a true hybrid-threat environment, these disciplines are still required.

For instance, before the squadron moves into wide-area security, the brigade will often elect to decisively defeat the conventional threat. This was a common theme in both the train-up and execution for our NTC rotation. As a result, we discovered that the squadron commander required both the S-2 section and CoIST teams to be able to think and communicate in more traditional, tactical and doctrinal terms. This was important when the teams had to disseminate products with appropriate symbology and graphics. With that in mind, communicating in precise, doctrinal language became a focus area of our training for the CoIST, which set up our teams for success in many rapid CAM scenarios.

Employing CoIST

For more than 10 months, from inception through integration to evaluation, the unit learned key lessons about employing CoIST teams from both the effective CoISTs and the ones who struggled. These lessons included engaged leadership, headquarters NCO support and a flexible PACE plan.



Figure 7. SPC Gabriel Mercado of Hunter Troop and other troopers in the squadron TOC battle-track and report real-time enemy activities. (Photo by 1LT Kyle Howard)

Engaged leadership. Troop commanders need to be actively engaged, setting expectations and guiding their CoIST to effectively support troop operations. This means understanding the CoIST's role (its capabilities and limitations), establishing the space and means to communicate, and demanding accurate and rapid intelligence assessments. Successful troop commanders in our squadron required CoISTs to produce and brief products during troop MDMP and pre-mission briefs. They helped refine these products and mold the analysts for effective communication with the line Soldiers. The best CoISTs were found to have troop commanders who valued their CoIST's contributions and drove it to constantly improve.

Headquarters NCO support. The troop commander should direct the headquarters NCOs to prioritize intelligence as the CoIST's primary function. This helps mitigate less-than-optimal use of CoIST Soldiers, who sometimes get redirected toward logistical or administrative support.

For example, CoIST analysts who are technically proficient in their MOS skills but lack enough individual responsibility are sometimes viewed as ineffective by NCO leadership in the headquarters. When this happens, the seemingly underperforming attachment gets new priorities that pull the CoIST away from its primary mission. Then the CoIST only supports the immediate operational needs of running a troop. While CoISTs can certainly be integrated into support tasks and still maintain intelligence responsibilities, it is often not the case that both can be accomplished well when performed simultaneously. The headquarters NCOs may tend to overlook the importance of maintaining the CoIST's personnel integrity and its intelligence focus without the commander's support.



Figure 8. 1LT Steven Stringfellow of Apache Troop and his troop observation post reports opposing-force positions over FM to the troop command post. (Photo by 1LT Kyle Howard)

Flexible PACE plan. DA fights move quickly and often over large areas of difficult terrain, especially in a Cavalry squadron. During multiple battle periods at NTC, 4-10 Cav was spread over large areas of terrain, near the doctrinal limits of a Cavalry squadron when conducting screening operations. Not only was communication severely limited due to range, but the squadron was inhibited by the several large mountains that separated the troops from one another and from the squadron's tactical-operations center (TOC). Despite these limitations, the brigade commander depended on timely and accurate reports to defeat the enemy.

The original PACE plan relied heavily on FM communication, forcing the unit to adapt as the fight unfolded. It was necessary to prioritize the use of FBCB2 messaging. Communicating, like moving or accurately leveraging firepower, is essential to victory and survival. The ColST's ability to switch from FM to FBCB2 allowed the squadron to rapidly transmit time-sensitive reports and assessments to keep the brigade in the fight. This method allowed the squadron to identify and report on more than 85 percent of enemy activity during the final two battle periods at NTC, and it enabled friendly forces to counter enemy movements effectively.

CoISTs should rehearse the full PACE plan in training and take certain elements out to see if the CoIST can still communicate. Without timely reporting and analytical assessments, the squadron and the brigade may be completely blind on the battlefield. CoISTs must be able to communicate up, down and to other friendly units.

Summary

Adapting the squadron CoIST for a DA fight can be a challenging process. Implementing CoIST for 4-10 Cav came at a cost, both to the squadron and to the troops. However, when a troop executive officer assumes the role of troop intelligence officer and oversees a CoIST comprised of a mature, driven intelligence analyst coupled with several bright Skill Level 10 scouts, the payoff exceeds the cost.

An effective CoIST can provide assessments and data in a timely manner, shaping the direction of the entire brigade's fight. The 4-10 Cav witnessed this multiple times during its NTC rotation. The takeaway from this is that when units set aside time to properly train CoIST Soldiers on doctrine, IPOE, analog product production and how to execute a flexible PACE plan, the entire organization will truly benefit in the DA environment.

Responsibly integrating the lessons-learned from the past decade of war will ensure that our nation's military continues to be adaptive, responsive and effective when meeting the growing threats to our nation's security. CoISTs have been vital in the success of our nation's intelligence collection and analysis over the last decade of war, and CoISTs can continue to be a powerful tool to shape the future battlefield in a DA environment.

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