# Infantry

Fall 2022

# SNIPER TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

# Infantry

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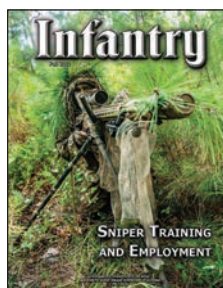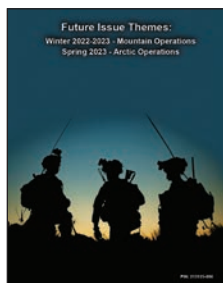
**FRONT COVER:**
A sniper instructor with the U.S. Army Sniper Course prepares to take aim with an MK22 Precision Sniper Rifle at Fort Benning, GA. (Photo by Patrick A. Albright)

**BACK COVER:**
Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, discuss mission plans before moving to an objective during Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center Rotation 22-01 on 18 October 2021 at Pohakuloa Training Area, HI. (Photo by SPC Rachel Christensen)

## DEPARTMENTS

# Commandant's Note

**BG LARRY BURRIS**

Maintaining focus and awareness of the state of our formations is critical in the life of a professional Soldier. As threats increase and evolve in our world, we must ensure we are paying attention and ready to transition as required. Throughout history, our nation's military leaders learned to plan accordingly and allocate resources and equipment against contingencies when we anticipate enemy action before it becomes a reality. We cannot wait for an adversary to reveal its capabilities or intent. Once an international boundary is compromised, an invading force initiates movement or missiles launch, the stakes rise beyond the level of simply "saber-rattling" or rhetoric, and it is now time for those who have prepared rightly to act. Our ability to examine our assumptions and adjust our plan of action remains one of our military's greatest strengths, giving us an advantage over our most significant pacing threats. In this issue of *Infantry*, we look at how Soldiers here at Fort Benning are currently training to engage enemy threats with accurate rifle marksmanship techniques and close-quarter, hand-to-hand combatives in order to prepare them for the rigors of combat.

Throughout history, snipers played a critical role in creating dilemmas for opposing commanders and their formations on the battlefield with their ability to deliver long-range precision fires and collect essential information from the battlefield. These trained personnel also play a part in the psychology of warfare by demoralizing and striking fear into the hearts of enemy combatants with their unpredictable timing and ability to operate undetected. One only needs to look at how many Russian general officers have been killed by Ukrainian snipers since the start of the war in Ukraine. Ultimately, the sniper provides commanders with the ability to effectively deliver precise direct and indirect fires while providing timely intelligence on the composition and disposition of enemy forces, overall improving the situational awareness and understanding of a unit's leadership.

Four articles within this issue of *Infantry* provide a short history of the Army Sniper and the U.S. Army Sniper Course and discuss the employment and relevance of this uniquely skilled position, the need for an advanced sniper course, and factors that have impacted the retention of the elite marksman in the Army. Unfortunately, many units struggle with effective task organization and employment of these assets by using these specially trained, armed, and resourced Soldiers to fill competing requirements and personnel shortages. These articles offer the reader thoughts to consider concerning maximizing the effectiveness of this specialized and lethal capability while not inadvertently diminishing the perception of the sniper as a combat multiplier.

Also, for your consideration of the current events ongoing in Ukraine is an article by Dr. Lester W. Grau and Dr. Charles K. Bartles describing the sniper team organization within the Russian motorized rifle platoon (sniper) of the Russian breakthrough tactical group (BrTG). The BrTG divides the teams into four sniper pairs. One of the teams is tasked primarily with observation and target designation. The remaining three teams are prepared to engage and destroy targets from 1,000 to 1,800 meters with the 7.62 SVD sniper rifle and the heavier 12.7 ASVKM sniper rifle. However, further examination of the organization and the weaponry of the BrTG in the article reveals the Russians' capability and intent to flood the battlespace with even more diverse firepower, one of those being a sniper team from the motorized rifle platoon being task organized with the fire support subgroup.

This edition of *Infantry* also addresses how the training environment is displaying renewed vitality as we resume reforging the Warrior Spirit after 18 months of adjusted training brought on by the COVID pandemic. The tempo of activity here at the Infantry School is approaching something closer to normalcy as we continue to execute the demanding training that yields the tough and battle-ready Soldiers that defend our nation and its citizens. We are once again emphasizing the extensive training of Soldiers in the skills of close-quarter combat with increased hours of combatives and the re-introduction of the Bayonet Assault Course. This training has proven its importance throughout history by its effectiveness against our nation's enemies. Whether in the urban terrain of Iraq, the mountains of Afghanistan, the jungles of Vietnam, or over the "last hundred yards" across the countryside of France, our Soldiers will do what is necessary to close with and destroy the enemy.

Reforging the Warrior Ethos and Spirit through physically demanding and intense hand-to-hand training is an excellent place to refocus training efforts because it works. CSM Stuart Sword Sr. is a subject matter expert on combatives, and he and his co-authors drafted an article in this issue of *Infantry* describing where we came from, where we are today, where we need to be, and how we are going to get there. We must always be prepared to take the fight to the enemy by training as we fight, enhancing our lethality and combat readiness.

A third article I want to highlight examines the intricacies of trust and how it supports the stability of

the interpersonal relations that drive and sustain the civilian and military components we embrace as an Army. In "Trust: A New Formulation of a Fundamental Principle," Chaplain (MAJ) Jared L. Vineyard addresses how our subordinates, peers, and colleagues rely upon each of us as leaders because they know that they can count on us to demonstrate the Army's values, support the Army team, and contribute to the success of their efforts. In their eyes, our conduct reflects our character, and our character is the foundation of mutual trust. These two elements of the leadership equation are the cornerstone of our profession and credibility. This article defines the fundamental leadership principle of trust from the ground up. Over time much has been said about the extent to which character contributes to trust. This article has brought the subject to life in a way we can incorporate it into a discussion with our subordinates as we attempt to develop them as they prepare to one day grasp the reins of responsibility that will make them better leaders.

This issue of *Infantry* alone offers 16 articles on widely diverse subjects, from sustaining the armored force to using mortars on the modern battlefield, and a look back into history at the art and science of mission command. As you scan the contents for the first one that catches your attention, remember these authors are Soldiers and leaders like you and me from our formations. These subject matter experts put forth the time and effort to share the knowledge of what they have learned with the greater Infantry community. I encourage you to join *Infantry*'s broad fellowship of authors by writing and submitting an article or column sharing your knowledge learned from an experience or providing insight into a topic you feel the greater Infantry community could benefit from. As always, we welcome your questions, comments, and submissions on how we can continue to get better at providing you with information that is relevant and applicable.

I am the Infantry! Follow me!

# A Short History of Army Snipers and the U.S. Army Sniper Course

## DAVID SCOTT STIEGHAN

The U.S. Army Infantry School's Sniper Course commemorates 35 years of operation this year. Gathering divisional courses from other posts, a permanent sniper qualification course resumed at Fort Benning, GA, in 1987 for the first time since the Vietnam War. During the 2022 International Sniper Competition in April at Fort Benning, hundreds of current and former snipers from the U.S. Army, other American military and law enforcement agencies, and invited foreign competitors attended the dedication of Camp Powell at


Photo by Markeith Horace

Harmony Church. Considered the founder of the modern Army sniping program, MAJ Willis Powell founded and led the 9th Infantry Division Sniping School in Vietnam in 1968 and returned to establish a similar course at Fort Benning. The Infantry School inactivated the course at Fort Benning following the Vietnam War, but a few divisions maintained their own courses until the Army consolidated them all at Harmony Church in 1987 as the U.S. Army Sniper Course (USASC).


Photo by Alexander Gago

*Leaders from 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment and members of the Powell family unveil a plaque formally memorializing Camp Powell at Fort Benning, GA, on 2 April 2022.*

Photo by CPL A. Hanson, U.S. Army Signal Corps

*Private Leo R. Hahn, a sniper and champion marksman in the 127th Infantry, is pictured in Alsace, Germany, on 27 June 1918.*


Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

*A Union soldier of the 2nd U.S. Sharp-shooters is pictured with a sniper's target rifle, bowie knife, and Colt '49 pocket revolver.*



**U.S. Model 1903 Rifle with Model 1913 Sight and Maxim Silencer**

On 14 June 1775, the 2nd Continental Congress authorized the creation of the Corps of Riflemen composed of volunteer companies: six from Pennsylvania, two from Maryland, and two from Virginia. Each state raised more rifle-men than their original quota and ordered them to march to join the Siege of Boston as rapidly as possible. Candidates for the new regiment brought their own rifles and the bullet mold required to cast their own shot, proved they could hit a target while standing at 100 yards, and convinced their command that they could live and fight in the wilderness. They provided all their own equipment and clothing, including the long linen or deer hide rifle frocks they customarily wore while hunting — or fighting Indians. The shortage of coats among Soldiers of the Continental Army in 1776 and 1777 inspired General George Washington to authorize the issue of the simple cloth hunting shirts worn by the riflemen to all the troops in his army as uniforms. Commanded for much of the war by Daniel Morgan of Virginia, "Morgan's Riflemen" served as light infantry and sharpshooters on the Allegheny frontier at the battles at Saratoga, Cowpens, and Yorktown. They set the standard as American sharpshooters and performed many missions that inspired the creation of the Ranger units in World War II.

Rifle regiments of regulars and volunteers served during the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and on both sides of the Civil War. In addition to heavy custom long-range target rifles used by both Union and Confederate sharpshooters, custom Sharps breechloaders and Whitworth, Kerr, Gibbs, and other British long-range rifles caused casualties often more than 1,000 yards away. The use of black powder in rifles until the late 1880s prevented the use of the earlier muzzleloaders in stealth mode because of the inability to hide from the white cloud of smoke that appeared after each shot. The adoption of smokeless powder, repeating bolt action rifles, the increased range and accuracy of the new class of weapons, and the introduction of telescopic sights initiated the transformation of marksmen into snipers.

The static warfare of the trenches on the Western Front during World War I created the perfect environment for the genesis of true sniping. Specially selected rifles sporting telescopic sights hidden behind steel plates became the greatest daily killer behind field artillery. While initially dominated by the German Army, the "sniping war" became a deadly competition among all combatants. In 1918, following training at British Army schools in France, Doughboys armed with U.S. Model 1903 rifles fitted with Model 1908/13 Warner & Swazey scopes entered the sniping war until the Armistice in November 1918. As usual after each previous war, the U.S. Army disbanded all sniping teams and training. Rifle teams in the Regular Army and National Guard competed in national and regional matches against civilian National Rifle Association clubs and provided potential snipers in case of war.

Shortly after entering World War II, the U.S. Army developed a new sniper rifle, the U.S. Rifle Model 1903A4 (Sniper), which was based on the simplified U.S. Rifle Model 1903A3. The Weaver 330C 2.5 magnification hunting telescope, later renamed the M73, became the first scope mounted on these rifles. Late in the war, the M1C sniper version of the service rifle appeared mounting a modified Weaver "Alaskan" telescope as the M81 and M82 of the same magnification. Each

infantry company assigned as a combat unit included one of these two rifles in the arms room, but snipers received their assignments from the company commander and usually no specialized training. At least one unit, the 30th Infantry Regiment, initiated a two-week sniper course while out of the line in Italy in 1944. The class instructors came from the rifle companies and taught the students what they had learned as shooters and survivors from combat. There are few records of assigned snipers or training programs from World War II.

As the U.S. Army deployed as part of the United Nations force in Korea in 1950, infantry companies again designated their own snipers. The bolt action sniper rifles and the earlier M1C rifle were retired in favor of the M1D rifle that featured altered telescopes and mounts. After the first year of rapid maneuver warfare, the front line settled into trench and bunker warfare similar to the Western Front during World War I. The static nature of the remainder of this war caused the long-range tactic of sniping to become a major source of casualties until the cease fire in 1953.

Following deployment to Vietnam, commanders in U.S. Army combat units demanded the addition of trained snipers for the longer shots required in the rice paddies, river deltas, and hill country. Observing the success of U.S. Marine Corps sniper teams, MG Julian Ewell, commander of the 9th Infantry Division, requested in 1968 that the Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU) at Fort Benning create a sniper course to train specialists for his division to provide precision fire along the Mekong River Delta. The AMU designated



Photo courtesy of Powell family

*Then-CPT Willis Powell founded and led the 9th Infantry Division Sniping School in Vietnam in 1968 and returned to establish a similar course at Fort Benning.*

then-CPT Willis Powell, one of the best competition shooters in the country, to design and initiate a course for volunteer snipers in Vietnam. Adopting the best practices of sniper doctrine from combat since World War I, Army Olympic Shooting team coaching, and the U.S. Marine Corps Scout-Sniper Course manual, Powell and his team created a program of instruction (POI) for a course range in Vietnam. Before initiating the first class, Powell accompanied patrols into the Vietnam countryside and proved his skills and the new doctrine with his rifle. The AMU assisted in developing a specialty sniper rifle, the XM21, converted from a National Match version of the M14 mounting a variety of telescopes and the new night-vision scopes.

After graduating the first cycles of sniper trainees in Vietnam, Powell returned to Fort Benning and established a sniper course at the Infantry School. The centralized course disbanded after all troops returned from Southeast Asia, but select divisions founded their own unit courses to prepare designated sniper teams. The Rangers and Special Forces initiated their own sniper training courses and maintain specialty units today. The U.S. Marine Corps developed custom sniper rifles from civilian hunting and target rifles beginning in World War II, and the U.S. Army fielded the M24 bolt action sniper rifle, which was based upon the Remington

*A sniper team from 4th Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, engages targets during battalion external evaluations in 1989 at Schofield Barracks, HI.*

Photo courtesy of John Foley

Photo by SGT Jeremiah Johnson

*A sniper with 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment scans for enemy activity after an insurgent attack in Mosul, Iraq, on 17 November 2004.*

Model 700 during the 1980s. The useful M21 semiautomatic rifle remained in the hands of the spotter on the two-sniper teams to provide short engagement firepower, but the new M24 provided a weapon capable of consistent shots at more than 1,000 meters. Together with an improved night-vision capability, sniper teams became lethal at longer ranges into the night.

Transferred from the 82nd Division Sniper School at Fort Bragg, CPT Cliff Boltz assumed command of the cadre gathered for the Fort Benning Sniper Course in 1987, followed soon after by CPT Mark Rozycki. SFC William Knox served as the first NCOIC for the course, followed by SFC Lonnie Wright. Together with other experienced NCOs and retired Vietnam snipers, the new company cadre established the requirements by testing and qualifying each other before announcing readiness to start preparing and testing sniper candidates. A few instructors took advantage of the opportunity to attend the U.S. Marine Corps Scout-Sniper Course to learn tactical procedures. The new class depended upon lessons learned from more than 200 years of American sharpshooting and sniping, the POI developed by then-CPT Powell, the skilled shooters from the AMU, and the experience of the assembled cadre. Instructors from the AMU and a few veterans from sniping

in Vietnam provided support to establish a modern class to develop first-class battlefield shooting teams. It did not take long for the first graduates to prove their effectiveness.

Army infantry sniper teams deployed into combat during Operation Urgent Fury in Panama in 1989 and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 after graduation from the new Fort Benning Sniper Course. The spotters on the teams continued using the telescope-mounted M21 rifles developed during the Vietnam War, while the snipers fielded the new M24 sniper rifles modified from Remington Model 700 sporting rifle actions. The open terrain in Iraq and Kuwait proved the value of the long-range engagement of high value targets. In Mogadishu on 3 October 1993, MSG Gary I. Gordon and SFC Randall D. Shughart gave their lives while demonstrating their sniper skills and bravery. Their awards of the Medal of Honor are the only ones presented to U.S. Army snipers in more than 250 years of sharpshooting and sniping service.

Rozycki, who is the 2022 president of the Army Sniper Association, as well as several of the original 1987 Sniper Course cadre and graduates, family members, and snipers from around the world present to participate in the 2022 International Sniper Competition, witnessed the dedication of Camp Powell, honoring the contributions of the father of U.S. Army sniping. For 35 years, USASC has provided the finest combat shooters for the two-way range of the modern battlefield. It is fitting that the unveiling took place during the competition to select the finest sniper team in the world.

**David Scott Stieghan** currently serves as the U.S. Army Infantry branch historian at Fort Benning, GA. Currently, he is editing the Doughboy Series of original World War I Soldier reminiscences for the University of North Georgia Press. He also edited *Over the Top*, which was published in 2017, and *Give 'Way to the Right*, released in November 2018.



U.S. Army photo

*An instructor with the U.S. Army Sniper Course briefs students before a class exercise in 2017.*
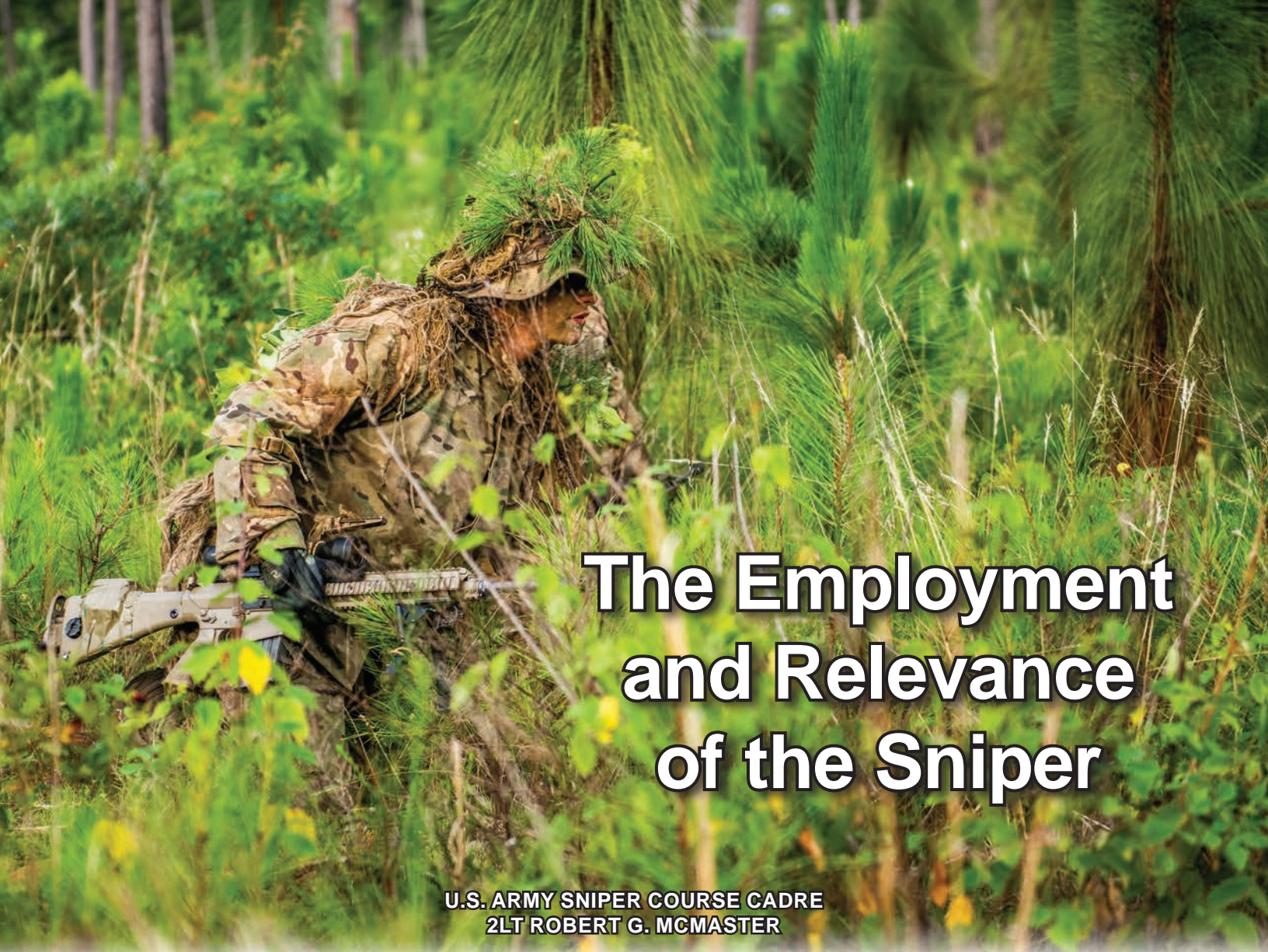
# The Employment and Relevance of the Sniper

**U.S. ARMY SNIPER COURSE CADRE**
**2LT ROBERT G. MCMASTER**

From the earliest days of the rifled musket, the sharpshooter has been one of the most feared, and most mystifying, assets on the field of battle. Few battlefield elements have so captured the imagination as the sniper. The heritage of the sniper is one of legendary feats, master marksmanship, and impossible odds, proving even today that the sniper team is an invaluable asset capable of a multitude of tasks and mission types. It is this versatility that makes the modern sniper team the value-added force multiplier that it is.

The U.S. Army Sniper Course (USASC) has worked to evolve since its founding in 1987 to provide commanders with Soldiers who have the unique skillset and knowledge to fill sniper roles. Unfortunately, the employment of sniper teams can oftentimes be forgotten during operational planning and preparation, allowing these assets to go under-utilized. In response to this lack of utilization, USASC is determined to prove the relevance of snipers on the modern battlefield in large-scale combat operations. A fundamental misunderstanding of snipers, their role, and their capabilities exacerbates an already stressed Army sniper program. Further complicating matters, Soldiers who are developed

*A student in the U.S. Army Sniper Course at Fort Benning, GA, practices the art of stalking targets on 18 June 2020.*
Photo by Patrick A. Albright

through the sniper pipeline are often put into roles that allow their acquired sniper skills to stagnate or perish. For example, junior enlisted Soldiers might, after up to a year in a sniper section followed by completion of the USASC, find themselves as newly minted junior NCOs and sent to be team leaders. There is a very clear gap to bridge between operational planners and sniper employment. If the concept of the sniper is misunderstood, USASC and the Army are missing out on a pipeline with powerful potential during large-scale combat operations.

One of the sniper team's greatest contributions may be in its mobility and infiltration capabilities, providing the opportunity to conduct an array of missions, whether that is the disruption of enemy forces and activities, reconnaissance, or as a direct strike resource. The mastery of concealment and field craft, making use of both natural and synthetic resources to veil snipers from detection, allows them access to strategic positions on the battlefield to conduct their mission clandestinely. From unseen positions, sniper teams can fix enemy forces to a

given location, forcing them to react to the will of the commander. Sniper teams can also conduct reconnaissance, identifying navigable routes for the following main body of the force or providing commanders with real-time intelligence and observations regarding terrain, infrastructure, and the strength, activity, size, and materiel of the enemy. Such a detailed understanding of the enemy can also make sniper teams an advantageous resource to call for fire, guiding artillery or mortar fire upon enemy positions. All these capabilities illustrate sniper teams as a force multiplier, providing commanders invaluable advantages on the modern battlefield.

Considering these and many more advantages and capabilities that snipers can provide commanders, it is surprising these assets are often less understood and undervalued. The Army has historically lagged to describe the ever-changing role of the sniper, and as a result, struggled to find a place for them to be impactful. The inefficient employment of sniper assets, coupled with budget cuts to a relatively young USASC, leaves modernization and innovation of sniper teams to be slower than the pace of the modern battlefield. As the Army marches on focused on large-scale combat operations, leaving snipers behind would be a lost opportunity to maximize the battlefield potential of these experts. Further examination of the role of snipers is warranted, and those at USASC are hopeful for impactful solutions that allow for advanced sniper training and greater retention and career longevity of snipers within the force of the future.

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# The Need for an Advanced Sniper Course

**2LT ETHAN P. STEWART**
**2LT BENNETT R. BUICK**

**Editor's Note:** *This article was written based on input from the following U.S. Army Sniper Course cadre members: SFC Kenneth W. Howell Jr., SFC Jacob L. Pharr, SFC Charles F. Reynolds, SSG Joseph Germain, and SSG Charles S. Riegel Jr.*

Of the roughly 280,000 active-duty personnel in the U.S. Army, fewer than 1 percent are sniper qualified. Only the cream of the crop is selected to go to the U.S. Army Sniper Course (USASC) at Fort Benning, GA. During the seven-week course, Soldiers are expected to shoot with deadly precision, infiltrate enemy positions, and remain undetected by both the human eye and unmanned aircraft. The snipers who graduate are some of the best Soldiers the Army has to offer.

Is it enough to meet the needs of large-scale combat operations? Some would say no. They believe the seven-week course does not cover the requirements for an evolving Army; there are too many skills needed to be taught and not enough time to teach them.

Much of what it takes to be an effective sniper consists of reconnaissance and planning; only about 10 percent is actual shooting. A sniper



Photo by Paolo Bovo

*A sniper assigned to 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, engages targets during a live-fire exercise in Slovenia on 26 February 2020.*

*A sniper engages targets during the 2022 International Sniper Competition on 4 April at Fort Benning.*

and how to use it to positively identify targets, but also how to avoid detection by enemies using similar equipment.

During week four, students could be trained in urban operations, which would put students into a new environment with different challenges and approaches. This week would also end with a live-fire assessment. In the following week, students could be taught mission planning, which would incorporate aspects of the previous weeks' training and get students comfortable with planning and debriefing missions. Week six could cover angle firing, firing up or down angles of 25 degrees or more, and culminate in a

needs to be able to plan a route, infiltrate and exfiltrate, and debrief a commander, and as the modern battlefield changes, training must also evolve to include stalking and infiltration in relevant environments, including urban. All these requirements cannot be properly reflected in the current seven-week course. There is simply not enough time to properly teach all the skills needed to produce a sniper with training spanning the full spectrum of war.

An advanced sniper course could address these issues and more. Many USASC cadre members agree the implementation of an advanced sniper course would be beneficial to the Army. Through the creation of more advanced snipers, the Army would be gaining a twofold asset. These snipers would have the capability of disrupting the enemy and could also be useful as reconnaissance units. Their abilities in recon could help any commander gain useful knowledge of the battlefield. They could prove indispensable, especially during large-scale combat operations. The implementation of an advanced sniper course would allow for students to fully learn both mission sets.

This advanced course could begin with a week of refresher training consisting of a group and zero, a record fire, and a stalking assessment. Towards the end of the week, new topics and environments could be introduced to the students. Week two could consist of long-range engagement training, culminating with an 800 to 1,500-meter qualification event. The third week could be spent learning about thermal optics and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). Students would not only become familiar with this equipment

qualification. At the conclusion of this week, Soldiers would be fully qualified in advanced sniper operations and mission sets.

To ensure the attendance of snipers in the advanced course, all graduates of the sniper basic course could automatically be enrolled in a future class of the advanced course. This would alleviate much of the burden on a Soldier's unit to schedule this course later. It would also allow for longer retention of snipers.

By ensuring that Soldiers are enrolled in future advanced courses, units will be incentivized to leave Soldiers in sniper positions. These Soldiers will become more experienced even as they wait for their advanced course, ensuring greater numbers of more competent and experienced snipers in the force.

A challenge to the creation of an advanced sniper course is the question of location. The current USASC location has neither existing training space nor structures to spare, and the high-angle requirements would necessitate construction of a tower or land with appropriate elevation features.

An advanced course would allow snipers to get more experience and improve the quality and number of expert snipers in the U.S. Army. The increase in snipers' expertise would greatly benefit any unit in which they are assigned.

**2LT Ethan P. Stewart** and **2LT Bennett R. Buick** are both currently assigned to 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, GA.

# The Retention of Army Snipers

SFC KENNETH W. HOWELL JR.

U.S. Army snipers have faced challenges throughout the last 35 years since the establishment of the U.S. Army Sniper Course (USASC). Career longevity and experience are difficult for units to manage when Soldiers rotate through positions to complete career development on time and change duty stations. Sections and battalions may struggle to maintain institutional knowledge and momentum when required to routinely rebuild formations after movement cycles. There are some ways commanders can leverage the Assignment Satisfaction Key - Enlisted Marketplace (ASK-EM) cycle to stabilize qualified Soldiers to retain talent and build a healthy cohort of NCOs to lead and train junior enlisted Soldiers. Two important ongoing issues are sniper career longevity and readiness for large-scale combat operations. These areas hinder the effective use and retention of proficient sniper elements throughout the force. As a result, the experience obtained by Army snipers can be lost through the current complex career progression system.

We can examine the ideal sniper team composition — a sergeant, specialist, and a private first class. Three teams make up a sniper section, which is led by a staff sergeant. Ideally, all Soldiers are sniper qualified and the top performers within their respective formations. Reality paints a different picture, however. Sniper classes more and more feature specialists leading sniper teams in sections trained by non-sniper qualified sergeants. This formula sets the community up to be less successful and could produce diminished returns. Instead, units could prioritize sniper course attendance among their forces. Ensuring a culture of continuous improvement is also critical among the sniper force, and graduates should routinely reach out to the school for updated training material and information to further grow and refine their skills.

The typical pipeline of junior enlisted snipers begins with 22 weeks of learning to be an Infantry Soldier during Infantry One Station Unit Training. Once they graduate and report to a unit, Soldiers may be assigned a host of positions. They may then attend the unit selection for entry into the sniper section. This process often takes about a year. After selection, Soldiers spend a year in the sniper section preparing to attend USASC. After graduating from the course, Soldiers often return to their assigned unit for about six months before starting the permanent change of station process. Soldiers then arrive at a new duty station and often fill a position within an infantry company not related to sniper duties. The process for creating a new sniper in the Army would benefit from streamlining designed to ensure the lengthy period from arrival at first duty station to B4-qualified sniper is truncated, allowing the Army to produce a greater number of snipers and make the most of their marksmanship skills, all while improving career progression.

Commanders need to insulate the role of the sniper, allowing those qualified to make use of their training. Finding the balance at which snipers benefit the unit in their specific role and develop as NCOs is proving to be an elusive equilibrium.



*A sniper team works together to destroy a target during an exercise in Germany on 2 May 2018.*

Photo by CPT Joe Legros

NCOs face different challenges. Some start as junior snipers who take over a team or section and continue to hone their craft. Others, without sniper experience, take a section out of the necessity to fill the slot. Ideally, these NCOs will push to get a school slot to train their snipers more effectively. More Soldiers need to be given the opportunity to attend USASC to meet the demand for slots in sniper sections so Soldiers with the B4 additional skills identifier (ASI) may mature in the sniper role and benefit the sniper community and the unit. The next generation of snipers will always depend on prior generations for training and mentorship, but if Soldiers with B4 are never given the opportunity to gain experience in the sniper role and are relegated to the broader rifle leader career path, then the Army will receive inexperienced snipers and a degradation in quality and return on investment in snipers. Knowledge and understanding of sniper roles is crucial to ensuring the health of the sniper force ecosystem.

The Army remains fluid in manning and filling positions required to advance Soldiers' careers while still maintaining Army national defense commitments. The constant motion and progression serve a greater purpose in developing well-rounded Soldiers capable of functioning in any type of Army formation. However, this decouples many developed and knowledgeable snipers from sniper positions. There is currently no method to recapture experience lost by this decoupling. Often, we find junior Soldiers are more experienced in the craft than their section sergeants since they have served in the position for a greater period. It is important that Soldiers with B4 continue to contribute their sniper-specific skills and knowledge as they progress in their careers so there are snipers at every level of leadership. Senior NCOs with B4 can better inform and guide commanders on proper employment of snipers, mentor and train younger snipers, and ensure qualified candidates are sent to USASC to acquire B4 certification.

Sniper-qualified Soldiers cannot avoid the essentials of career progression outside of sniper-specific roles, but those same Soldiers can continue to make an impact using their B4 skills and knowledge. This would allow for the retention of their amassed knowledge and experience. Ideally, snipers would be selected as privates and progress through to become sniper section sergeants, and the top performers would return to the schoolhouse to instruct, coach, and mentor the future crop of snipers. This would ensure a force of long-range, precision marksmen capable of deploying anywhere in the world to enact the will of the commander upon the enemy.

An experienced sniper knows that only a part of the job is taking the shot — the rest is recon and planning. Recon is something all operations, including large-scale ones, require. Experienced snipers excel at acquiring accurate and relevant



Photo by Patrick A. Albright

*A U.S. Army Sniper Course student takes part in the ghillie wash on 29 July 2022.*

information about a mission area. In large-scale combat operations, reconnaissance snipers could prove vital to the success of missions. Any unit with a sniper section would have a dual-purpose element capable of both disrupting the enemy and conducting reconnaissance. This makes snipers a truly lethal asset for large-scale operations. It is essential that commanders are provided opportunities to obtain literacy in sniper employment and capabilities so sniper sections may be effectively utilized in the field and developed in garrison.

The challenges of sniper longevity and readiness for large-scale combat need to be addressed, but they do not need complex solutions. The current sniper ecosystem simply needs reevaluation and support from unit leadership to accommodate existing snipers with the opportunity to develop their skills further and aid in the development of other Soldiers who may be sent to USASC to continue to grow the community. Addressing the problem of manning economically, training rifle squad members as designated marksmen will generate the next cohort of snipers for the unit. With such a solution, experienced snipers will become a regularity in the Army and their readiness for large-scale combat will drastically increase. Already a deadly asset, snipers will become an indispensable part of any operation.

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This article was edited by **2LT Bennett R. Buick**.

# Hiding Within the Spectrum

## SFC CHRISTOPHER M. RANCE

The sun begins to rise over the white sun-bleached hilltops of northern Syria. Without silhouetting against the orange sky, a sniper team lies softly behind some low brush, nested below the hilltop crest, with eyes fixated on the town roughly a kilometer away. Meanwhile, an electronic warfare support team (EWST), whose mission is to support the sniper team by finding the enemy through electromagnetic reconnaissance, is ready to act a few kilometers away.

EWST Soldiers scan the targeted area from their observation post. First, they determine the line-of-sight bearings of frequencies used by the enemy. Then, over a secure channel, they contact the adjacent sniper team, talking them onto enemy positions so the snipers can begin to collect critical information, which is essential to answering the specific priority information requirements (PIR)/commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) laid out by the commander. With the correct information, the commander can now act. This "blended" reconnaissance method allows the sniper team to take action on the objective differently; perhaps well-placed precision fire on the key targets or the calling in of indirect fire assets. In turn, this completes the cycle of find, fix, and finish.

The concept of pairing intelligence enablers with a sniper team or a forward observer isn't new, but on today's modern battlefield, this tactic is seeing a re-emergence. If the goal of intelligence is exploitation, then pairing one asset with a precision asset like a sniper team which will be making the kill only makes sense. In recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the electronic warfare threat was limited. In today's fight, drones and ground systems conducting electromagnetic surveillance and jamming against satellite, cellular, and radio communications will be the new normal.

***To be detected is to be targeted is to be killed.***

The flip side of that story is that your radio can kill you. Communications equipment is bright (spectrum-wise) and loud. The vast majority of our infantry battalion emissions are voice and data. We boast bandwidth and power, but our adversaries can easily detect these emissions. Even down to the company or platoon level, our radios, mapping services, and even portable electronic devices such as the smart watch on your wrist emit some form of electromagnetic signature or leave some digital footprint for the enemy to sniff out and find.

Hiding within the spectrum requires you to collect your unit's own-force electromagnetic emissions signature from the adversary's point of view. First, have your EWST measure the baseline signals in your area of operation. Then, with tools like a spectrum analyzer, measure your unit's signals. Second, schedule strict communications windows to blend behind "normal" background signal noise. Enforce radio discipline. Keep communications brief. Use terrain masking and communicate on the lowest power setting possible. Finally, analyze your unit's electromagnetic signature. What are you emitting? When and why?

The bottom line is that well-trained units communicate less. Have a robust signature management plan and learn to accept that the next fight you find yourself operating in will be an electromagnetic environment under near-continuous EW observations. Learn to hide within the spectrum.

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Martin Egnash, "US Marines in Norway Pair Electronic Warfare Team with Snipers to Test New Concept," *Stars and Stripes*, 3 July 2019.

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*A Soldier assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade engages targets during a live-fire exercise in Slovenia on 26 February 2020.*
Photo by Paolo Bovo

# Reconnaissance and Security Tasks:

## *How Commanders Control the Battlefield with Scouts and Snipers*

**SSG MICHAEL OMMAHA**

### The Role of Scouts and Snipers during Reconnaissance and Security Tasks

Executing reconnaissance and security tasks are essential to success during combat operations. These tasks provide the supported unit information, time, and space to adjust to the ever-changing situation. Supported units can react to opportunities and danger or enable commanders to transition to future operations. The timely and accurate reporting of information during reconnaissance and security tasks allows the commander to build situational awareness of the operational environment progressively.[1] Scout platoons are the primary reconnaissance asset in the cavalry troop and the organic reconnaissance unit available to infantry and combined arms battalions.[2] Scout platoons can provide commanders with reaction time and maneuver space, allowing them to understand the situation more clearly. Lastly, scout platoons can execute missions with organic and external reconnaissance assets to identify and target enemy forces and capabilities.[3]

In conjunction with scout platoons, sniper teams are a critical reconnaissance and security asset because of their ability to observe and report enemy activities while remaining undetected.[4] Once enemy contact has been established, sniper teams can be utilized to deny enemy access to key terrain through the application of controlled precision fires, denying the enemy the ability to maneuver. In addition to precise, long-range, direct fire on targets, sniper teams can observe, collect, and provide detailed information on the enemy to allow commanders to make well-informed decisions. Scouts and snipers conducting reconnaissance and security tasks can collectively aid commanders in decision-making and their direction for future operations.

### Mutual Support during Reconnaissance and Security Tasks

The primary mission of the reconnaissance platoon is to gain information and survey enemy territory by reconnoitering terrain to determine movement and maneuver conditions relevant to friendly and enemy forces.[5] The platoon can evaluate the enemy's composition, disposition, strengths, and weaknesses in detail once the enemy is located. This can be conducted and performed mounted or dismounted as part of security, stability, or in support of other tactical missions.[6] Employing both mounted and dismounted reconnaissance maximizes the vehicle's optics, firepower, communications, and protection. This allows platoons to gather detailed information, enhance security, and move with tempo and stealth in various terrain. Sniper sections can augment their effectiveness by working with a Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3) crew.[7] The LRAS3 enhances the platoon's effectiveness as snipers are institutionally trained to observe what is known as "patterns of life." The advanced situational



*A scout assigned to 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, scans his designated sector for enemy targets during training at Pohakuloa Training Area, HI, on 22 April 2021.*

Photo by SSG Alan Brutus

awareness that snipers bring to the battlefield provides a better operating picture for everyone.

Additionally, sniper teams can be valuable in support of mounted and dismounted reconnaissance due to their ability to observe and report enemy activities from extended distances while remaining undetected. If needed, direct fire from snipers can affect enemy morale, maneuverability, and overall mission accomplishment. Combining a powerful optic such as the LRAS3 with a sniper team can provide the reconnaissance platoon leader and commander with highly accurate long-range small arms fire.[8] The timely reporting of enemy composition and disposition by scouts and the sniper's ability to produce accurate long-range fire can be critical in facilitating command decision-making. In addition to enhanced observation, both assets are highly skilled in controlling indirect mortar and artillery fire. These skills make scouts and snipers the deadliest Soldiers on the battlefield.

### Reconnaissance and Security Tasks to Answer Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs)

Reconnaissance platoons and sniper squads are fundamental components of all brigade combat teams. Collectively, they serve as mission-essential support to reconnaissance and surveillance within a specific area of operation (AO).[9] The primary role of the reconnaissance platoon is to conduct aggressive and stealthy missions that satisfy CCIRs.[10] The critical information provided by the scout platoon enables the commander to develop situational understanding, make comprehensive plans and decisions, and direct follow-on or future operations. The commander employs combat power augmentation to enhance the effectiveness of reconnaissance platoon missions.[11]

The integration of enablers, such as snipers, provides the scout platoon leader with the right assets to accomplish the mission. The sniper's core competency enhances unit firepower and augments the various means for destruction or harassment of the enemy.[12] Whether snipers are organic or attached, they provide the commander with direct fire support and the ability to gather information in assigned areas. The information provided can be from the ground level or through aerial reconnaissance. Additionally, the sniper's ability to engage point targets with accuracy at a long range with minimal risk of collateral damage makes them useful in all levels of conflict. When scouts and snipers are employed simultaneously, their enhanced observational training with high-powered optics and communication skills make them invaluable tools for information collection activities to answer CCIRs in support of offensive and defensive operations.

### Reconnaissance and Security Tasks through Joint Operations

During the seize initiative phase of large-scale combat operations, joint force commanders take the initiative through the decisive use of joint force capabilities.[13] In combat, this involves conducting reconnaissance, maintaining security, and performing defensive and offensive tasks at the earliest possible time. Doing so forces the enemy to culminate offensively and sets the conditions for decisive operations. Large-scale combat operations require continuous generation and application of combat power.[14] The employment of forces in the operational area through movement and maneuver in combination with fires can achieve a relative advantage over the enemy to accomplish the mission and consolidate gains.[15] In addition, commanders can use movement and maneuver to mass the effects of combat power to achieve surprise, shock, and momentum. This includes conducting reconnaissance and surveillance to delay, impede, or halt an enemy's initial aggression and to deny an enemy its initial objectives.[16]

> *Commanders can control the battlefield at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels when they understand the capabilities and limitations of scouts and snipers.*

The Army has identified that its most important readiness requirement is to prepare for large-scale combat. The ability to fight for information through reconnaissance, surveillance, and security operations through the employment of scout platoons and sniper teams is critical to achieving mission success. Commanders can control the battlefield at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels when they understand the capabilities and limitations of scouts and snipers. Commanders can leverage the battlefield, seize terrain, and consolidate gains by incorporating snipers and employing scouts to their fullest potential during training in preparation for combat.

### Notes

[1] Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-90.5, *Combined Arms Battalion*, July 2021.

[2] ATP 3-20.98, *Scout Platoon*, December 2019.

[3] ATP 3-90.5.

[4] Training Circular (TC) 3-22.10, *Sniper*, December 2017.

[5] ATP 3-20.98.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] TC 3-22.10.

[13] Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, October 2017.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

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# The Russian Breakthrough Tactical Group

**DR. LESTER W. GRAU**
**DR. CHARLES K. BARTLES**

As the experience of military conflicts of recent decades shows, the Russian military believes that subunits are most effective when they deploy in a combined arms tactical group. These combined arms groups usually form within a ground forces' motorized rifle battalion or company, or similar subunits of other branches of the armed forces (airborne troops, naval infantry), combat arms, and spetsnaz. The training and coordination of these tactical groups, and their integration with branches of arms and combined arms formations, are the main efforts of combat training in the Southern Military District (SMD), according to Rafail Nasybulin, the chief of SMD's Combat Training Directorate.[1] Although the battalion tactical group (BTG) is the most well-known of these combined arms tactical groups, this article describes a new type of combined arms tactical group that is being developed in the SMD — the breakthrough tactical group [тактическая группа прорыва].

## Purpose of the Breakthrough Tactical Group

Russian studies of modern warfare show a trend of combined arms combat transitioning from large groupings of forces opposing one another along continuous front lines to a "fragmented battlefield" with smaller groupings of forces employing strong points and more mobile actions. The lessons of Afghanistan, Syria, and the wars in the Persian Gulf show that the main methods of combat are the achievement of surprise, high mobility and maneuverability, the skillful use of air assault detachments (TakVD) [тактических воздушных десантов (ТакВД)], and raiding [рейдовых] and bypassing [обходящих] units. When these methods combine, they lead to the sound defeat of the enemy.

Due to the political-military situation in the SMD's area of responsibility, which includes Georgia and Ukraine, the district's training directorate focused on the development of methods to increase the mobility of its combined arms formations. Given the area of responsibility's terrain and limited routes of advance, the nature of the enemy's defensive capabilities,

and the minimal air defense capabilities, conditions favor the use of air assault detachments.[2]

The effectiveness of TakVD significantly increases if the main body is able to expediently reach the area that the TakVD has seized. Therefore, the motorized rifle and tank units of the main body train to advance rapidly, by way of tactical road marches, to access the flanks and rear of the enemy.

While on the march, the main body must proceed through rugged terrain and obstacles, and since the number of routes are limited, the enemy can create serious knots of resistance and strong points on certain axes. In certain situations, it may not be possible to bypass these areas. In these situations, tactical groups that operate autonomously, separated from the main forces, will have to break through the well-prepared enemy defenses in these areas. It is important to note that the concept is not to break through a traditional positional defense; it is to breach obstacles and/or strong points on a given route of advance.

In furtherance of this concept, motorized rifle and tank units of the SMD are improving their tactical road march skills; practicing with heliborne TakVD; raiding and bypassing detachments to seize and hold designated routes, areas, and/or critical targets; and breaking through enemy defenses and exploiting successes. Specially trained BTGs handle these tasks.[3]

## Composition of the Breakthrough Tactical Group

At present, each motorized rifle regiment and brigade of the SMD has created and trained one breakthrough BTG

**Figure 1 — Structure of a Battalion Tactical Group (Variant)[4]**
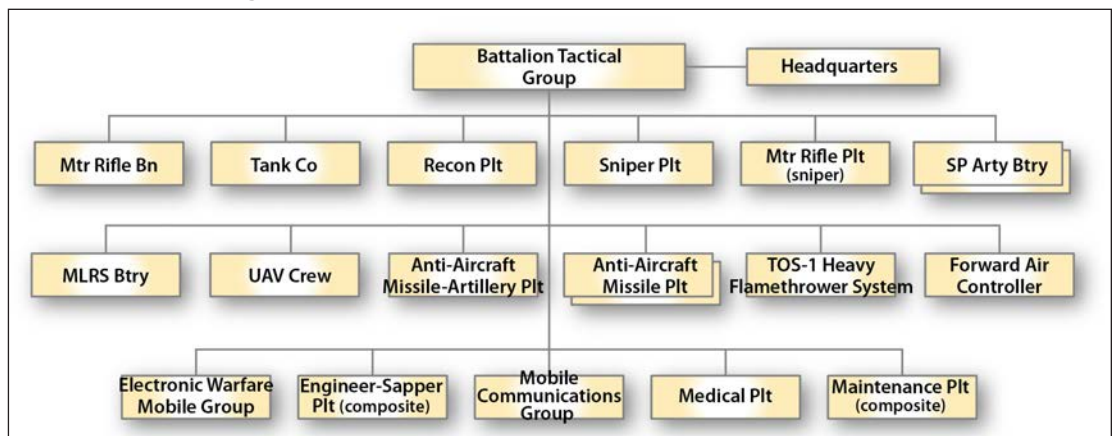
and one exploitation BTG.[5] This is an interesting development as Russian motorized rifle regiments and brigades usually have two BTGs. Typically, these BTGs are "BTG No1" and "BTG No2." In theory, these BTGs should have similar capabilities and be equal in terms of quality and readiness, but in practice BTG No1 is usually qualitatively and quantitatively better than BTG No2. If other military districts adopt this system, determining if a BTG is of the "breakthrough" or "exploitation" variety will become important, as these BTGs will have different capabilities.

The breakthrough BTG is the basis of the breakthrough tactical group (BrTG) which the deputy battalion commander commands. The BrTG usually includes a tank company (minus two tank platoons) with a motorized rifle platoon, a motorized rifle platoon (sniper) from the sniper rifle company, a roving mortar, a BM-21 multiple launch rocket system (MLRS), a TOS-1 heavy flamethrower system, a composite engineer-sapper platoon, and other forces as required.

The breakthrough tactical group consists of several functional subgroups:

**Strike Subgroup** - tank company (minus two tank platoons) and motorized rifle platoon

**Fire Support Subgroup** - BM-21 "Grad" MLRS, UR-77 "Meteorit" mine-clearing line charge vehicle (without drag line) [без тормозного каната], TOS-1 "Buratino" heavy flamethrower system[6]

**Minesweeping Subgroup** - tank platoon with KMT-7/KMT-8 trawlers[7]

**Sniper Team** - motorized rifle platoon (sniper)

*First Sniper Pair* - This pair does not normally destroy targets but instead conducts observation and target designation. These snipers typically report information to the commander of the motorized rifle platoon (sniper), who is collocated with the commander of the BrTG at the command and observation post (COP). Other sniper pairs destroy detected targets upon assignment. The pairs are both equipped with an OPR-3 range finder, VSS Vintorez sniper rifle, and SVD sniper rifle.

*Second Sniper Pair* - This pair is intended to destroy targets at short-range distances of up to 1,000 meters. The pair consists of a senior sniper and sniper. The senior sniper is equipped with an SV-98 or SVDM (7.62mm) sniper rifle, while the sniper has a SVD rifle, and both have a VSS sniper rifle as a secondary weapon.

*Third Sniper Pair* - This pair destroys targets at medium
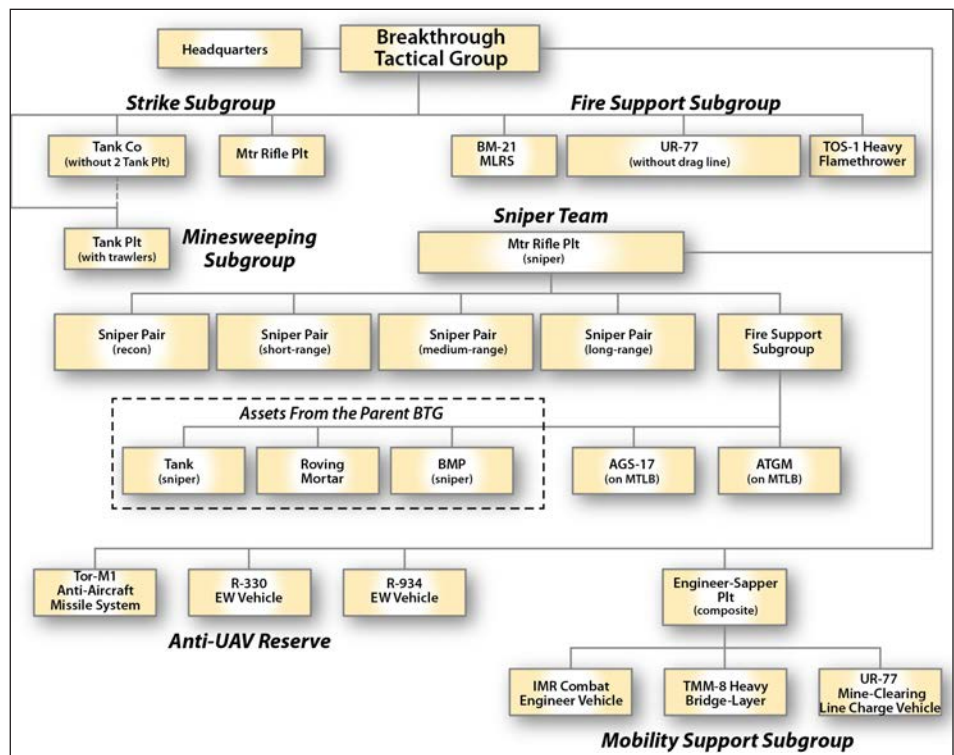


**Figure 2 — Structure of a Breakthrough Tactical Group (Variant)[8]**

range of up to 1,500 meters. The senior sniper is equipped with a ASVK or ASVKM (12.7mm) sniper rifle, while the sniper has a SVD rifle, and both have a VSS sniper rifle as a secondary weapon.

*Fourth Sniper Pair* - This pair destroys targets at long ranges of 1,500-1,800 meters. The senior sniper is equipped with an ASVKM (12.7mm) sniper rifle, while the sniper has a SVD rifle, and both have a VSS sniper rifle as a secondary weapon.

*Fire Support Subgroup* - AGS-17 "Plamya" automatic grenade launcher on MT-LB Russian amphibious armored personnel carrier, antitank guided missile (ATGM) on MT-LB, roving mortar (from the BTG), "sniper" tank (from the BTG), and "sniper" BMP (from the BTG)[9]

**Mobility Support Subgroup** - composite engineer-sapper platoon with IMR combat engineer vehicle, TMM heavy bridge-layer vehicle, and another UR-77 Meteorit mine-clearing line charge vehicle (with drag line)

**Anti-UAV Reserve** - If the enemy has a UAV capability, an anti-UAV reserve [противобеспилотный резерв (ПБПРез)] might form, consisting of a 9K33M3 Osa-AKM (SA-8 Gecko) or 9K331 Tor-M1 (SA-15 Gauntlet) anti-aircraft missile system, and R-330 "Zhitel" and R-934 BMW electronic warfare vehicles.

The source material describing the BrTG explicitly states that a few assets — such as the sniper tank, sniper BMP, and roving mortar — come from the parent BTG, while it suggests most other assets come from the parent regiment/brigade. The source material was ambiguous about the origins of the tank units and the motorized rifle platoon in the

strike subgroup; these assets are most likely drawn from the parent BTG but could be drawn from elsewhere within the parent regiment/brigade.

One interesting aspect of the BrTG is the use of the TOS-1 Buratino heavy flamethrower system. The TOS-1 is not organic to Russian maneuver regiments/brigades but is only in the NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) defense regiments of the combined arms armies or the NBC defense brigades that report directly to the military districts. Given the Russian propensity to "push" these systems down to lower echelons, apparently Russian planners assume the TOS-1 will be available.[10]

### Employment of the Breakthrough Tactical Group

Theoretically, the breakthrough tactical group functions in the following manner. At the appointed time, the BTG artillery and the BrTG howitzer and mortar battery begin preparatory fires to start the offensive. If the expected resistance is stiff, the artillery of the parent regiment/brigade also may participate, as well as any available aviation assets. The mortar battery focuses on suppressing forward enemy dispositions, while the anti-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) reserve disrupts enemy reconnaissance and strike capabilities. After suppressing the enemy's forward elements, the sniper team and the minesweeping subgroup rapidly advance from their

initial positions, usually at a distance of up to six kilometers from the front line of the enemy's defense to the minefield. The minesweeping subgroup deploys in combat formation on a front of up to 300 meters.

The other subgroups of the BrTG support the minesweeping subgroup's advance and obstacle clearance. The sniper team advances covertly (if possible) and finds advantageous firing positions for its sniper rifles, antitank systems, and automatic grenade launcher. The sniper tank and sniper BMP emplace to destroy enemy antitank and other direct fire weapons, primarily tanks and ATGM crews. During periods of time when artillery and/or aviation strikes are not being conducted, the fire support subgroup (BM-21, TOS-1, UR-77) can lay semi-direct fires on targets as they are detected.

After the minesweeping subgroup reaches the minefield, launched smoke grenades conceal the tanks during minesweeping. At this time, the strike subgroup rapidly advances, engaging detected targets. Typically, the strike subgroup deploys in a combat formation of two lines, with the tank platoon on the first line and the motorized rifle platoon on the second. The front of the combat formation extends to 300 meters, with a distance between the lines of up to 200 meters. As the strike subgroup approaches the safe fire line

Figure 3 — Combat Formation of a Breakthrough Tactical Group (Variant)[11]
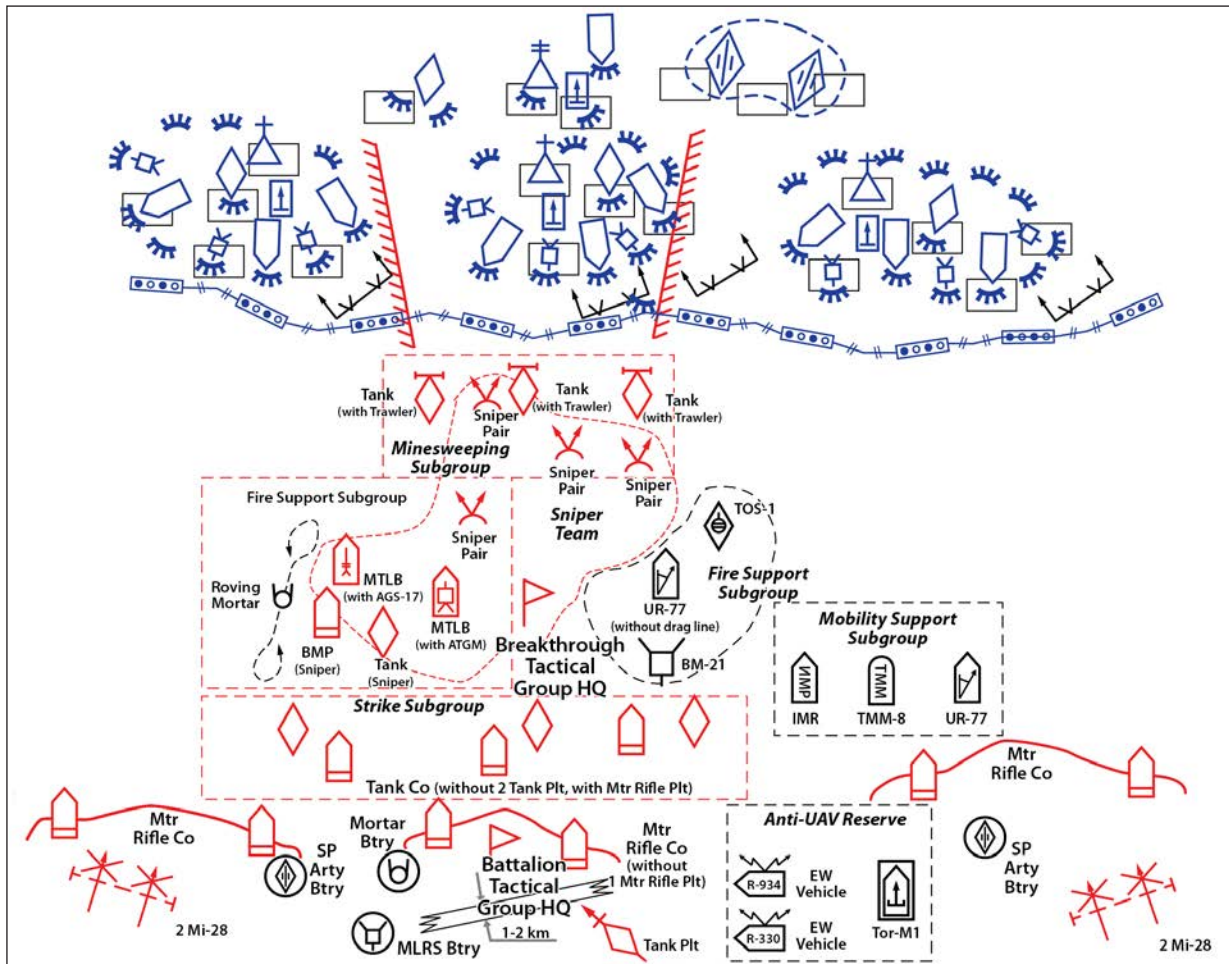
(up to 200 meters from the forward edge), artillery and/or aviation fires are shifted to suppress targets deeper in the enemy rear.

After the minesweeping concludes, the minesweeping subgroup provides covering fire and then joins the combat formation of the strike subgroup. This reinforced strike subgroup advances towards and through the remainder of the enemy defense. After destroying the enemy's strong points, the breakthrough expands towards the flanks. This result creates favorable conditions for the deployment of the BTG, which will then rapidly advance to exploit breach.[12]

## Conclusion

Although Colonel Nasybulin's article was published in May 2022, he likely drafted his article well before Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. If the SMD has adopted this tactical concept, it will take considerable time to fully indoctrinate and train the force on its employment.

That said, a hindsight look at Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine might reveal that some BrTGs fought. It is important to again note that the BrTG is not intended to penetrate or "breakthrough" a strong positional defense; it is designed for route clearance of a contested avenue of approach, such as a hasty defense, or a defense conducted by irregular troop formations, such as territorial defense units. If Russia did employ BrTGs in the early days of the conflict, it may be due to them expecting a nonexistent, or much weaker, defense than was encountered.

Although Nasybulin is discussing a tactical concept of using a breakthrough unit to relieve a TakVD in the Russian Ground Forces, perhaps this concept was attempted operationally. The seizure of the Hostomel airport on the first day of the invasion might have been an operational employment of TakVD (conducted by Russia's airborne force — the VDV). The mission of the Northern Group of Russian forces assaulting from Belarus might have been to conduct their relief by breakthrough. If this was the Russian vision of the operation, Russia's inability to retain Hostomel was not due to the VDV's failure to reinforce their initial successful seizure but was due to the failure of the Northern Group of Russian forces (primarily Ground Forces) to "breakthrough" and relieve the VDV. As details of the special military operation surface, understanding of these matters will certainly increase. Even if the breakthrough tactical groups fought and were generally unsuccessful, the overall concept may still be valid and just need further refinement.

## Notes

[1] Colonel Rafail R. Nasybulin, "Изыскание и осовоение новых (нестандартных) способов боеых действий в ходе подготовки войск [Research and mastery of new (nonstandard) approaches to military actions in the course of training forces], Воелнная Мысль [Military Thought], May 2022, 70-75, https://vm.ric.mil.ru/upload/site178/6bDZRSvP0q.pdf. Colonel Nasybulin is the chief of the Combat Training Directorate of the Southern Military District. His superior, General Alexsandr Dvornikov, was chief of the Southern Military District — the main effort during the initial Russian "special operation" in the Ukraine and is now the CINC of the Russian "special operation." General Dvornikov is a major supporter of the BTG concept. This article proposes a different approach to the failed Russian breakthrough to the encircled VDV (Russian airborne) at the Hostomel airport on the first day of the invasion of Ukraine. This article may have been in the publisher's que or written afterward in response to the Northern Group of Forces' failure to reinforce the initial airborne success.

[2] An air assault detachment is usually a reinforced motorized rifle company or battalion. In the offense, it fights in high-tempo situations to seize designated targets. In the defense, it rapidly inserts into an area, usually in the second echelon, that the enemy has penetrated. Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian Way of War: Force Structure, Tactics and Modernization of the Ground Forces*, https://www.armyupress. army.mil/portals/7/hot%20spots/documents/russia/2017-07-the-russian-way-of-war-grau-bartles.pdf, 45, 141.

[3] Nasybulin, 71.

[4] Ibid, 72. Although not explicitly stated, the structure of this BTG is slightly different from most others, notably the inclusion of an extra self-propelled artillery battery, air defense missile battery, and TOS-1 heavy flamethrower. Likely, these augmented capabilities are due to the BTG designation as a "breakthrough BTG."

[5] Ibid. This article does not discuss the exploitation BTG. Hopefully this will be a future article by Colonel Nasybulin.

[6] If the UR-77 or UR-83 mine-clearing line charge systems are used without a brake (drag) line, they can reportedly launch up to 1,000 meters with the use of two propellant charges, and 12 explosive sections. With the dragline, the distance is 90 meters. The TOS-1 is a limited range MRLS that projects flame or a thermobaric charges.

[7] KMT-7 and KMT-8 are heavy mine rollers pushed ahead of a tank to detonate mines.

[8] Nasybulin, 72.

[9] Sniper tank and sniper BMP are normally the vehicles of the top gunner in each category.

[10] Nasybulin, 73.

[11] Ibid, 74.

[12] Ibid, 75.

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**Dr. Chuck Bartles** is an analyst and Russian linguist with FMSO at Fort Leavenworth. His specific research areas include Russian and Central Asian military force structure, modernization, tactics, officer and enlisted professional development, and security-assistance programs. Dr. Bartles is also a space operations officer and lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve who has deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq and has also served as a security assistance officer at embassies in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. He has a bachelor's degree in Russian from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a master's degree in Russian and Eastern European studies from the University of Kansas, and a PhD from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

# Consolidating Mortars:

## A Task-Organization Strategy for Utilizing Mortars in LSCO

**1LT DAVID MCCORMICK**

What happens when a call for fire goes unanswered? In future conflicts against a near-peer threat, artillery assets and attack aviation will likely not be as readily available at the battalion level as they were in previous counterinsurgency and counter-terror operations. Facing a near-peer threat, we expect attack aviation to "maneuver independently from ground maneuver forces to attack to destroy, defeat, disrupt, divert, or delay enemy capabilities before they can be brought to bear effectively against friendly forces."[1] Furthermore, we expect our nation's competitors to match or exceed our capabilities in the form of "sustained long-range precision fires, integrated air defense systems… and operations against a peer threat will be much more demanding in terms of operational tempo and lethality."[2] This means, in the fight against near-peer threats, rifle battalions will rely heavily on the only fires assets organic to their formations: mortars.

Mortars are a contradiction. Indirect fire Infantrymen, colloquially known as mortarmen, operate across both the maneuver and fires warfighting functions. Mortarmen are tasked to provide accurate and lethal fires while still patrolling and rucking with heavy packs like their Infantryman counterparts. An effective strategy to emplace and utilize mortars across the battlefield is to consolidate company mortar sections under the battalion mortar platoon. The 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), tested this strategy during National Training Center (NTC) Rotation 22-03. During the rotation, 5-20 IN's mortar platoon provided fire support during multiple movements to contact, an attack on an urban area, and an area defense in conditions meant to replicate large-scale combat operations (LSCO) against a near-peer threat.

At the onset of the force-on-force battle period, our battalion commander task organized the mortar platoon to include eight Stryker Mortar Carrier Vehicles (MCVs), eight mortar squads outfitted with eight RMS6L 120mm systems, three 81mm systems, and four 60mm systems. This task organization doubles the size of the mortar platoon organization as prescribed in Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-21.21, *SBCT Infantry Battalion*, which organizes a mortar platoon into four MCVs and four mortar squads outfitted with four 120mm and four 81mm systems. This ability to flex combat power around is unique to Stryker mortar elements as armored mortar platoons are only issued 120mm systems and light mortar sections solely carry 60mm systems. Under our new task organization, battalion mortars' key leadership included the mortar platoon leader, platoon sergeant,

*Soldiers in 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment launch mortars during NTC Rotation 22-03.*
Photos courtesy of author

three Infantry Mortar Leader Course (IMLC)-qualified section leaders, and the battalion mortar fire direction center (FDC). The only mortar element in the battalion not consolidated with the battalion mortar platoon was one section with three mortar squads carrying two 60mm systems and one 81mm system led by one IMLC-qualified section leader. This section was augmented with the 81mm system in order to provide more firepower to the rifle company that was out of fire-support range from our position. The decision to consolidate all MCVs and squads at the battalion level directly contributed to the battalion's overall mission success by improving control, fire mission response time, our ability to mass fires, and survivability of the platoon.

From the start of operations, consolidation of all mortar assets posed a multitude of risks. The biggest risk we faced was that our physical signature had doubled in size, creating a large target for enemy counterfire. This risk was mitigated by operating as mutually supporting mortar platoons. The platoon sergeant-led element consisted of four MCVs, four mortar squads, our FDC chief, and one section leader. The platoon leader-led element consisted of four MCVs, four mortar squads, and two section leaders. We maneuvered utilizing bounding overwatch to emplace one element before moving the next element to a coexisting location that was separated by a terrain feature or a minimum of 100-200 meters. To further mitigate the risk of counterfire and increase our survivability, we operated in a manner similar to a position area for artillery (PAA).[3] This entailed maneuvering and operating within an approximate kilometer square instead of staying emplaced at fixed mortar-firing points. Combined, these strategies enabled us to ensure that one element could emplace, fire, displace, and conduct a survivability move while another element was still able to process and execute fire missions.

Another issue we faced was how to maximize the additional firepower through our FDC. Our approach was to assign pre-planned priority targets to one element of four 120mm guns while the other element focused solely on dynamic targeting. This decreased our fire mission response time by several minutes, as we had more guns to assign targets to and prevented the need to shift guns off one target to fire another. Currently, the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) of a mortar platoon and section in a SBCT does not allow all systems to be run simultaneously. Of the three mortar systems organic to an SBCT, the 120mm provides a blast radius of 60 meters, which is almost double that of an 81mm round and three times as much as the blast radius of a 60mm round. A way to maximize the amount of firepower and mass additional fires is to have company mortar sections man their MCVs with the 120mm system and cross-train other Infantrymen in their company on handheld and direct lay use of the 60mm mortar. This



Soldiers in 5-20 IN launch mortars during NTC Rotation 22-03.

leads to more firepower massed onto the objective while still providing echelonment of fires.

Consolidating mortars at the battalion level deviates from the current task organization of a Stryker mortar platoon and comes with unique risks and advantages. When mitigated, our platoon found that fighting consolidated was an effective strategy at NTC and provides an additional way to employ mortars across the battlefield. We recommend consolidating mortars to improve the control, fire mission response time, and effects of mortars during battalion-level operations. While fighting consolidated will not fit every situation, the ability for battalion mortar platoons and company mortar sections to adapt is critical as we prepare for future conflict.

### Notes

[1] Field Manual (FM) 3-04, *Army Aviation*, April 2020.

[2] FM 3-0, *Operations*, October 2017.

[3] Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-09.50, *The Field Artillery Cannon Battery*, May 2016, Chapter 3.

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# TRUST: A New Formulation of a Fundamental Principle

CHAPLAIN (MAJ) JARED L. VINEYARD

Ask any leader in the U.S. Army to list attributes that encompass either a successful organization or a successful individual and trust will be high on the list. Trust is an attribute that most Army leaders believe is important. When thinking about trust, I was reminded of what Dr. Don Snider, long-time Army officer and professor, once said to his students: "Trust is the currency of an Army officer."[1] The term currency refers to a monetary system. Following this analogy, it makes sense that if a person has no money, then he or she is "broke." If that same "broke" person continues to spend, on credit, while no additional funds are added to their account, he or she would very quickly find themselves bankrupt. Now back to the idea of trust and the Army profession, if an Army leader lacks the trust of those he or she serves with, that leader is considered "broke" from a professional standpoint. To follow the logic, if that same person continues living with no trust in his or her account and no additional "trust-based funds" were added, eventually he or she would be bankrupt, leadership-wise. I wonder if we have leaders today who are on a zero balance when it comes to trust, or worse, are morally bankrupt due to a lack of trust? The purpose of this article is to encourage Army leaders at echelon to get back to the basics with regards to building trust because "the Army profession rests on a bedrock of trust."[2]

While most people have a general understanding of what trust is and is not, it is appropriate to begin looking at how the Army understands the term. Army doctrine states that "trust is shared confidence among commanders, subordinates, and partners in that all can be relied on and all are competent in performing their assigned tasks."[3] Imbedded in the Army's understanding of trust is the idea that trust is lived and demonstrated within a community.[4] The idea of "shared confidence" being "relied on" as well as listing the chain of command clearly demonstrates this communal context. It is in this community that the Army lives and fights. Therefore, trust is not simply an important idea but a vital one, which is why Army leadership doctrine, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, refers to trust or a variant of it more times than there are actual pages.[5]

Trust in the Army context can be viewed as both a strategic concept as well as a tactical attribute. As a strategic concept, the Army understands that as a profession it must maintain trust with the American people. An example of this from doctrine states, "trust is the foundation of the Army's relationship with the American people, who rely on the Army to ethically, effectively, and efficiently serve the Nation."[6] This strategic concept, while societally vital, is not the focus of this article. The emphasis is the tactical attribute of trust of each military leader.[7] It must be noted though that both of these aspects of trust, at the strategic and the tactical level, are intertwined. The Army as a whole cannot be trusted if leaders at echelon are not trustworthy and vice versa. Trust at the tactical level occurs in individual leaders and is viewed in their specific operating environments.

Thus, leaders at echelon must make trust part of the DNA of their operating environment. But the question arises, how do I build trust? According to doctrine, building trust is part of the core competencies of leading.[8] A helpful summary of this section of doctrine is portrayed in the table seen below.

And while this matrix is very helpful, it became clear,

**Figure 1 — The Competency BUILDS TRUST (ADP 6-22)**

| Leaders build trust to mediate relationships and encourage commitment among followers. Trust starts from respect among people and grows from common experiences and shared understanding. Leaders and followers share in building trust. | |
| --- | --- |
| Sets personal example for trust | • Is firm, fair, and respectful to gain trust.<br>• Assesses degree of own trustworthiness. |
| Takes direct actions to build trust | • Fosters positive relationship with others.<br>• Identifies areas of commonality (understanding, goals, and experiences).<br>• Engages other members in activities and objectives.<br>• Corrects team members who undermine trust with their attitudes or actions. |
| Sustains a climate of trust | • Assesses factors or conditions that promote or hinder trust.<br>• Keeps people informed of goals, actions, and results.<br>• Follows through on actions related to expectations of others. |

as an instructor, that many students didn't remember much of what it stated specifically or what doctrine more generally contained with regards to building trust.

With this in mind, and after teaching numerous iterations of students, a formula occurred to me on how leaders could think about building trust with others. It must first be stated that I recognize and believe that there is no such thing as a simple formula for trust. Thus, this is not a "fool proof" recipe but a guide in how to think about building trust in the Army context. Additionally, all of the concepts in the formula are very explicitly discussed in doctrine.[10] But in thinking through how to build trust, this new formula of these older and familiar concepts gives a new and fresh perspective on this topic. The formula for trust includes four C's which are:

| Factors internal and central to a leader serving in either leader or follower roles that constitute an individual's character. | |
| --- | --- |
| Army Values | • Values are principles, standards, or qualities considered essential for successful leaders. <br> • Guide leaders' decisions and actions in accomplishing missions, performing duty, and all aspects of life. <br> • The Army has seven values applicable to all Army individuals: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. |
| Empathy | • Propensity to experience something from another person's point of view. <br> •Ability to identify with and enter into another person's feelings and emotions, enabling clearer communications and better guidance. <br> • Desire to care for and take care of Soldiers and others. |
| Warrior Ethos/ Service Ethos | • Internal shared attitudes and beliefs that embody the spirit of the Army profession. |
| Discipline | • Decisions and actions consistent with the Army Values; willing obedience to lawful orders. |
| Humility | • Inherently motivated to support mission goals ahead of actions that are self-serving. <br> • Possesses honest and accurate self-understanding. <br> • Eager for input and feedback from others. |

**Figure 2 — Attributes Associated with CHARACTER (ADP 6-22)**

### (Character + Competence + Commitment) Consistency = Trust

The three C's within the bracket come directly from doctrine and are both explicitly and implicitly related to trust.[11] Each one of these three C's is vital to the Army professional in leading Soldiers as well as building trust. The brackets, mathematically, distribute the outside term to those terms within. Thus, a leader needs consistency in all of the inside areas: character, competence, and commitment. When a leader consistently demonstrates character, consistently demonstrates competence, and consistently demonstrates commitment, those around that leader have the potential to trust them. We will look at each "C" briefly for further insight.

### Character

Character is the first component when thinking about trust. With regards to character, the Army states that: "A person's character affects how they lead. A leader's character consists of their true nature guided by their conscience, which affects their moral attitudes and actions… Character consists of the moral and ethical qualities of an individual revealed through their decisions and actions."[12]

The Army, being a values-based organization, needs men and women with deep moral convictions and the courage to live by those convictions. A way of thinking about character is being the right kind of person. Department of the Army Pamphlet 165-19, *Moral Leadership*, states that

"character is described as the moral and ethical quality that helps leaders determine what is right and gives a leader motivation to do what is appropriate regardless of the circumstances or consequences."[13] Character is needed when times are easy and when times are tough. Character is needed when people are looking and when people are not looking. Character is not merely what you do but is part of who you are. Specifically, when the Army looks at character, five attributes are of key importance. These are seen above in Figure 2.

When professionals have character, others around them have a sense of confidence that tasks are being accomplished ethically. Character is a key component when thinking about building trust.

### Competence

A second component for trust is competence. The Army as a profession is made up of experts in their specific fields who work together to accomplish the mission. This points back to the communal nature of the profession. A way of thinking about competence relates to having the right knowledge. Specifically, doctrine states that "developing military-technical expertise is the foundation of competence, which is in turn a significant basis of professional trust within cohesive teams. Army professionals trust each other to perform their jobs absent evidence to the contrary."[15] Every Soldier should know basic warrior skills and tasks while distinct skills and knowledge are necessary depending on the Soldier's specific military occupational specialty (MOS).

From a doctrinal standpoint, the box below states how the Army views the demonstration of technical and tactical competence:

| Demonstrates technical and tactical competence | • Performs duty with discipline and to standards, while striving for excellence. |
| | • Displays appropriate knowledge of equipment, procedures, and methods; recognizes and generates innovative solutions. |
| | • Uses knowledgeable sources and subject matter experts. |

When professionals are competent in their warrior tasks, others around them have a sense of confidence that tasks are being accomplished effectively and efficiently. Competence is a key component when thinking about building trust.

### Commitment

The third component for trust is commitment, which apart from character and competence is harder to define. A way of looking at commitment relates to having the right priorities. The Army defines commitment as the "willing dedication or allegiance to a cause or organization."[17] This is in the context of being committed versus simply complying. That is commitment is always better than compliance. Units that have men and women who are committed to the mission and organization will generally outperform personnel who exist to simply comply to a standard. Proper commitment may mean that there are times when priorities shift. There may be times when leaders need to prioritize a mission, other times when leaders need to prioritize a Soldier's or family's needs, and so on. When professionals are committed to the organization and the mission, others around them can have a sense of confidence that tasks are being accomplished wholeheartedly. Commitment is a key component when thinking about building trust.

Doctrinally, the Army pulls these three concepts together with regards to the Army Ethic. Figure 3 helps to explain and clarify all three concepts together.

Trusted Army professionals have character, competence and commitment. When these three components are lived out, they meet the intent of the "builds trust" matrix of APD 6-22 (Figure 1). As a reminder, the three areas which the matrix encourages are setting a personal example for a trusting environment, taking direct action to build trust, and sustaining

a climate of trust. Character relates to the first idea, that of being an example, because it takes the right person to be the right example. Competence relates to the second idea, which is taking direct action, because it takes the right knowledge to take the right action. And commitment relates to the third idea, which is sustaining the climate of trust, because it takes the right priorities to sustain the mission and the organization.[19]

### Consistency

The final component for trust — and the one that bolsters each of the other three components — is consistency. While the other three might be oversimplified as being the right person with the right knowledge and the right priorities, consistency adds the right timing into the equation, which is all of the time. This doesn't mean that professionals are perfect, but it does mean that they are reliable or depend-

**Figure 3 — The Army Ethic, including Army Values (ADP 6-22)**

## The Army Ethic
### The Heart of the Army

The Army ethic includes the moral principles that guide our decisions and actions as we fulfill our purpose: to support and defend the Constitution and our way of life. Living the Army ethic is the basis for our mutual trust with each other and the American people. Today our ethic is expressed in laws, values, and shared beliefs within American and Army cultures. The Army ethic motivates our commitment as Soldiers and Army civilians who are bound together to accomplish the Army mission as expressed in our historic and prophetic motto:

#### This We'll Defend.

Living the Army ethic inspires our shared identity as *trusted Army professionals* with distinctive roles as *honorable servants*, *Army experts*, and *stewards of the profession*. To honor these obligations we adopt, live by, and uphold the moral principles of the Army ethic. Beginning with our solemn oath of service as defenders of the Nation, we voluntarily incur the extraordinary moral obligation to be:

### Trusted Army Professionals

#### Honorable Servants of the Nation—Professionals of Character:
We serve honorably—according to the Army ethic—under civilian authority while obeying the laws of the Nation and all legal orders; further, we reject and report illegal, unethical, or immoral orders or actions.

We take pride in honorably serving the Nation with integrity, demonstrating character in all aspects of our lives.

In war and peace, we recognize the intrinsic dignity and worth of all people, treating them with respect.

We lead by example and demonstrate courage by doing what is right despite risk, uncertainty, and fear; we candidly express our professional judgment to subordinates, peers, and superiors.

#### Army Experts—Competent Professionals:
We do our duty leading and following with discipline, striving for excellence, putting the needs of others above our own, and accomplishing the mission as a team.

We accomplish the mission and understand it may demand risking our lives and justly taking the lives of others.

We continuously advance the expertise of our chosen profession through lifelong learning, professional development, and certifications.

#### Stewards of the Army Profession—Committed Professionals:
We embrace and uphold the Army Values and standards of the profession, always accountable to each other and the American people for our decisions and actions.

We wisely use the resources entrusted to us, ensuring our Army is well-led and well-prepared, while caring for Soldiers, Army civilians, and families.

We continuously strengthen the essential characteristics of the Army profession, reinforcing our bond of trust with each other and the American people.

**LOYALTY–DUTY–RESPECT–SERVICE–HONOR–INTEGRITY–COURAGE**

able. Army doctrine states, "trust encompasses reliance upon others, confidence in their abilities, and consistency in behavior."[20] Army professionals need to do the right thing, the right way, for the right reason, not some of the time, but all of the time. This consistency in character, competence, and commitment gives others around them a sense of confidence that all is being accomplished reliably. Consistency is a key component when thinking about trust. Therefore: (Character + Competence + Commitment) Consistency = Trust.

But what happens when one or more components are missing or lacking? The simple answer is: that leader might not be trustworthy. An example of this might be a leader who has both competence and commitment but lacks character. This might be what many call a counterproductive leader.[21] Or what about the leader who has character and commitment but is not competent? This would be an incompetent leader who could very easily get Soldiers killed. Or what about a leader who is not consistent in one of more of these areas? Like the previous examples, this would be someone who breeds mistrust within the unit or larger organization. Trusted Army leaders need all four of the C's.[22]

While it is true that there is no formula for trust, the above formulation is a new way to start thinking about an old but vital topic, which is how to build trust. Additionally, it is formatted in a way that is easy to remember and in a doctrinally sound manner. And if correct, implies that every Army leader ask themselves, how do those with whom I serve see my character? How do those with whom I serve see my demonstrated competence? How do those with whom I serve see my commitment? How do those with whom I serve see consistency in me? Also, leaders need to ask themselves: How am I intentionally teaching these principles, and how are my Soldiers regularly getting "sets and reps" in these ideas? If trust is the currency of our profession, then I pray that our bank accounts will be full! If trust is the bedrock of our profession, then I hope that our foundations are solid. If so, then we will be the trusted professionals that our Army desires, a part of a trusted profession that our nation needs!

## Notes

[1] The author was a student of Dr. Snider's at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) in 2002, and he has listened to a number of his presentations since that time, including, most recently, during Intermediate Level Education (ILE). While the focus of the lecture was officers, which is what the quote is focused on, the idea can easily be extended to all Army professionals.

[2] Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras, "Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty on the Army Profession," monograph published by the U.S. Army War College Press, February 2015, x.

[3] Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, July 2019, 1-2 through 1-3.

[4] While this is a true statement, trust can also apply individually. An example of this might be "I trust in my skills to accomplish the assigned mission." Although in the Army context, this still carries a communal component since even the idea of individual trust helps the larger team.

[5] ADP 6-22 refers to trust or a variant of that word 196 times while only having 132 total pages in the document.

[6] ADP 6-22, 1-2.

[7] Doctrinally, trust is one of the five characteristics of the Army profes-

sion, which also include honorable service, military expertise, stewardship, and esprit de corps found in ADP 6-22, 1-2.

[8] ADP 6-22, 1-16.

[9] Ibid, 5-9.

[10] These concepts are not only found in doctrine but have been used by Army leaders for years. For instance, in a famous speech in 1991 to the Corps of Cadets at West Point, GEN Norman Schwarzkopf stated that "to be a 21st century leader, you must have two things, competence and character." The full speech can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-aytw--YUY.

[11] One of the most overt examples in relating these three C's to trust came from a slide graphic from a Captains Career Course distance learning course, Lesson 701T-UCCAP106, entitled, "The Army Profession and the Army Professional Ethic," slide 17. On a Venn diagram, trust was illustrated at the confluence of character, competence, and commitment. Additionally, ADP 6-22 lists these three C's under "Trusted Army Professionals," which can be viewed later in the article.

[12] ADP 6-22, 2-1.

[13] Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 165-19, *Moral Leadership*, 27 November 2020, 4.

[14] ADP 6-22, 2-12.

[15] Ibid, 1-5.

[16] Ibid, 5-14.

[17] Ibid, 5-2.

[18] Ibid, 1-9.

[19] The idea of connecting the matrix to the three C's of the profession was introduced to the author in a conversation with Janetta Harris, Center for the Army Profession and Leadership (CAPL), at the Combined Arms Center (CAC) Ethics Training Conference at Fort Benning, GA, on 24 February 2022.

[20] Ibid, 5-8.

[21] Counterproductive leadership is the newer term for the older phrase "toxic leader." The definition of a counterproductive leader is: "The demonstration of leader behaviors that violate one or more of the Army's core leader competencies or Army Values, preventing a climate conducive to mission accomplishment." (ADP 6-22, 8-7).

[22] While I believe that other topics can be included in the trust discussion, I also believe that there should not be fewer topics discussed. What I mean is that all four of these are vital. In addition, many other topics might nest within the four C's. An example of this came up in a discussion with a student about the need for both personal and professional growth. While I believe that this a vital area to be a trusted leader, I would argue that this idea falls under the concept of being a humble leader, which is one of the five attributes of character.

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# Re-energizing Modern Army Combatives

CSM STUART SWORD SR.
1SG STEPHEN HODGSON
1LT KELLI VETTER

As we emerge into the post-COVID pandemic era, there are numerous warrior tasks that must be re-energized into unit training plans (UTPs). The Modern Army Combatives Program (MACP) is one of these tasks.

After having to cease the program for almost a year and a half as a COVID mitigation measure due to the close nature of training, commanders and NCOs must now revive their unit- and installation-level combatives programs. Train as you fight is a principle which encourages training that replicates tough, realistic, and near-peer threats in complex combat scenarios.[1] The hand-to-hand capabilities of American Soldiers are an important weapon during close-quarter combat and non-lethal engagements.

The global war on terrorism (GWOT) provided numerous lessons learned on the importance of Soldiers being able to protect and defend themselves in close quarters battle.[2] MACP provides the baseline fight strategy to ensure success on the battlefield. The program is applicable to all Soldiers regardless of military occupational specialty (MOS) or branch as all Soldiers are all trained to destroy the enemy first. MACP empowers and enables the fighting spirit of the American Soldier — the most decisive weapon on the battlefield.
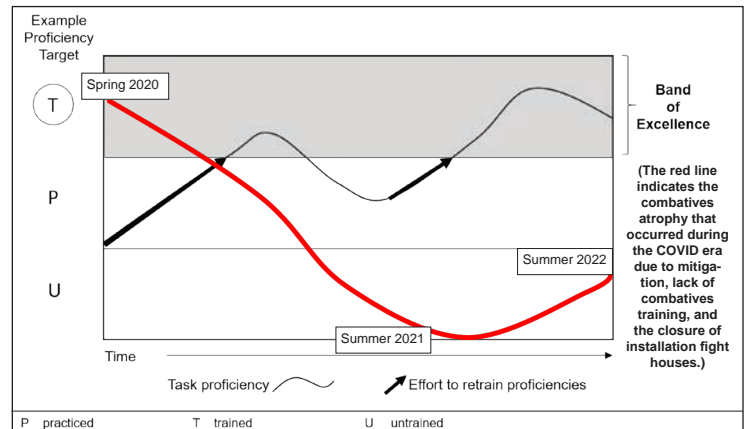


Figure 1 — Proficiency Levels for Mission Tasks from FM 7-0

## History of MACP

Martial arts have been a key part of military training since the earliest records of human history. It stands to reason that the importance of this training and its practical applications have been widely accepted throughout time. Throughout the years, we have also changed and adjusted martial arts techniques to meet modern challenges and ensure Soldiers have effective means by which to destroy the enemy. The Modern Army Combatives Program was created in 1995 with the purpose of refining hand-to-hand combat skills of Soldiers. At the time, a manual for combatives training (Field Manual 21-150, *Combatives*) existed, although it was very ambiguous in terms of how combatives would be introduced at the lowest unit level. The biggest questions that weren't answered in this manual included who was qualified to teach Soldiers and what made them qualified instructors? At the time, the qualifications of instructors varied — and so did the effectiveness of the training. In 1995, the 75th Ranger Regiment began reviewing the Army's combatives training and formulating improvements; these efforts led to the development of the current MACP, which has paid dividends on the varying battlefields during the 20-year GWOT campaign.



Photos by 1LT Sydney Thorpe

*Trainees compete in a battalion combatives tournament in April 2022 at Fort Jackson, SC.*

Matt Larsen and Greg Thompson are branded as the fathers of Modern Army Combatives because of their efforts to completely revise the archaic and partially lacking system of the 90's Army. In an effort to improve hand-to-hand fighting, it was paramount to develop a system of key movements (drills) and a fighting strategy.[3] MACP incorporated functions from multiple martial arts disciplines — such as judo, Jiu-Jitsu, wrestling, boxing, and Muay Thai — to form the program's foundation. The hybrid disciplines enabled modern Soldiers to protect, defend, and defeat the enemy on the battlefield. The renowned Royce Gracie plan of taking an opponent to the ground and then finishing the fight is a sound concept but requires repetitions and sets of practice in various environments. Today, in the post COVID-era, there are tactical gaps that exist with combatives competencies and capabilities of all Soldiers — especially our frontline fighters! Now is an opportune time to reintroduce the MACP and implement training plans to further prepare our force for future operations.



*Trainees in 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment grapple during a battalion combatives tournament in April 2022 at Fort Jackson.*

### CATS aligned to Modern Army Combatives

The Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS) tool on the Army Training Network (ATN) can assist commanders with prioritizing unit task lists in order to build and maintain capabilities.[4] Some of the combatives tasks are sub-tasks to larger platoon, company, and battalion mission-essential tasks:

1. 071-COM-0512 - Perform Hand-to-Hand Combat
2. 19-PLT-3107 - Process Detainees at Point of Capture
3. 07-CO-1092 - Conduct an Attack - Rifle Company
4. 07-BN-1099 - Conduct a Raid
5. 07-BN-1181 - Conduct an Attack in an Urban Area

A Soldier who is equipped with all the physical, mental, and emotional attributes will succeed in the modern and ever-changing operating environment. We must ensure the competencies are aligned with these attributes for guaranteed success on the battlefield.

In order to inculcate these qualities and characteristics, we must plan, resource, and execute all training with the aim of replicating the conditions of combat. In combat, our Soldiers can expect to be exposed to situations whereby their physical limitations will be challenged greatly. The pressure, time sensitivity, and implications of war will induce stress and fatigue beyond that of what average civilians are likely to experience at any point of their lives. Such being the reality, Modern Army Combatives serves as one of our most effective tools to challenge physical limitations and induce extreme stress, while at the same time imparting skills and techniques upon Soldiers that may save their lives or the lives of others in combat.

### Unit Training Plans in Basic Combat Training (BCT)

BCT units transform civilians into Soldiers during a 10-week period. The Army expects that Soldiers are properly trained on the required mission-essential tasks (METs) before graduating and continuing on to their Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Performing hand-to-hand combat was one MET that was taken off the core map during COVID. During this period, Soldiers arrived to their first duty assignments without any combatives experience and resulted in units having to teach these basics to newly arrived Soldiers, which delayed other essential training. This was a detriment to the force; re-introducing MACP into the BCT plan is essential.

During BCT, there are four main phases (Yellow, Red, White, and Blue) that progressively teach trainees how to effectively be a member of a team. In order to effectively train combatives in the BCT environment, introducing combatives after Red Phase allows trainees to piece together the core skills taught in earlier phases before beginning hand-to-hand combat training. In MET 071-COM-0512 (Perform Hand-to-Hand Combat), trainees are expected to learn Drills 1, 2, and 3 from Training Circular (TC) 3.25-150, *Combatives*.

**Drill 1:**
A. Arm Trap and Roll
B. Pass the Guard
C. Achieve Mount from Side Control

**Drill 2:**
A. Arm Push and Roll to the Rear Mount
B. Rear Naked Choke
C. Escape the Rear Mount

**Drill 3:**
A. Escape the Mount, Shrimp to the Guard
B. Scissors Sweep
C. Cross Collar Choke from the Mount
D. Straight Arm Bar from the Guard
E. Sweep from the attempted Straight Arm Bar

In order to effectively instruct trainees in a battalion, each company should have at least one Level II Combatives

instructor/master trainer with at least four Level I Combatives instructors. This allows seamless instruction and effective results as trainees are able to learn from multiple certified instructors. Training combatives in BCT will ingrain in these future Soldiers the importance of winning on the battlefield no matter the circumstance.

As mentioned previously, introducing combatives after Red Phase has proven to be more effective based on the established skills learned in previous phases. Utilizing non-program of instruction (POI) days to introduce combatives is imperative to ensure all drills are properly taught and trained. BCT companies able to effectively train combatives during weeks 5, 6, and 9 of each training cycle complete a cumulative of 20 hours of instruction. These weeks consist of rifle marksmanship and recovery operations respectively. This allowed for drill sergeants and cadre to effectively home in on critical METs without overwhelming required POI days. During week 9, the master trainer was able to effectively train selected trainees (based off of the order of merit list) to be certified in Level I combatives. Every trainee received at least 20 hours of training and will be of instant value to their next unit and to the U.S. Army. In addition to trainees, the master trainer also trains cadre members to Level I or Level II standards quarterly to ensure that instructors remain certified to train our next generation of Soldiers.

## Reinvigorating the Importance of Combatives Training

In order to capitalize on the importance of combatives, top Soldiers in heavy/light categories from each company competed against one another in front of the entire battalion in Week 10. The action that occurred in these exhibition bouts generated fruitful conversations that provoked thought among the trainees. More importantly, however, is

> *Combatives training directly aligns and supports the Army's Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) program when planned, resourced, and executed properly. We as Army leaders (officers and NCOs) must re-energize the MACP program in a similar fashion to how drastic changes were made in the late 1995 era.*

what takes place within individuals when they willfully enter mutual combat, in front of a large crowd, knowing that they will either win or lose. This creates an immense amount of stress and pressure that will pay dividends in future combat. Situations such as these introduce variables that cannot readily be measured in their entirety, and, henceforth, the propensity for negative outcomes increases. When the winner is announced, he/she is overcome by happiness, joy, pride, and confidence. The loser must deal with the loss in front of teammates and leverage necessary resiliency skills to bounce back and move forward.

On 5 April 2022, Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fighter Colby "Chaos" Covington visited Fort Jackson, SC, and spent the day with 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment for an external review of combatives training. Covington is currently the number 1-ranked UFC welterweight (170 lbs) fighter in the world and holds numerous credentials across the various martial art disciplines, including UFC Champion. He is a huge supporter of the military, and before his accolades in the UFC, he was an accomplished collegiate athlete from Oregon earning an NCAA D1 wrestling championship.



*Trainees compete in a battalion combatives tournament in April 2022 at Fort Jackson, SC.*

*Professional relationships and partnerships matter. UFC fighter Colby Covington offered pro-tips during a visit to Fort Jackson in April 2022.*

The visit from a top-ranked UFC fighter undoubtedly boosted morale and esprit de corps within our battalion. Covington stated, "The 1-61 combatives program is exactly what I'd hope [for] and expect of our Army Soldiers; grounded in the Warrior Ethos and professionally executed the MACP. These finite details to combatives training are evident through the disciplined Soldiers about to graduate and will prove [to be] a powerful weapon on the battlefield. I am proud to stand among real American Warriors!"

Combatives training directly aligns and supports the Army's Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) program when planned, resourced, and executed properly. We as Army leaders (officers and NCOs) must re-energize the MACP program in a similar fashion to how drastic changes were made in the late 1995 era.

NCOs, train as you fight! Commanders, fight to train![5] We challenge all leaders at every echelon to ensure combatives training is implemented into unit training programs. The tenacity of the American Soldier is the most important intangible on the modern battlefield.

### Notes

[1] Field Manual (FM) 7-0, *Training*, June 2021.

[2] One of the authors, CSM Sword, knows firsthand and recalls using combatives during countless engagements with unarmed hostile combatants while fighting house to house in downtown Baghdad as an infantry team and squad leader with the 82nd Airborne Division.

[3] Special Operations Combatives Program and Modern Army Combatives Program, accessed from https://ussocp.com/history/macp/.

[4] Army Training Network, accessed from https://atn.army.mil/ATNPortalUI/CATS/.

[5] FM 7-0.

## Modern Army Combatives Recommendations Moving Forward

1. Establish combatives UTP aligned with CATS/METs.

2. Certify trainers for Levels I and II and Master Combatives Trainers.

3. Baseline train skill level one Soldiers.

4. Incorporate combatives training into physical readiness training.

5. Leverage all training aides at Training and Support Center (TASC) — pugils, Blauer suits, training knives/pistols.

6. Incorporate combatives training into mutually supporting METs:

    1. Airfield seizures;

    2. Raid (Enter and Clear a Room);

    3. Offensive Operations; and

    4. Detainee Operations.

7. Host quarterly or semi-annually combatives tournaments.

8. Re-establish installation-level fight houses.

9. Establish partnerships with local universities, fight clubs/houses, and dojos.

10. Lastly, as we re-energize combatives, implement a color rigger's belt system to identify combatives skill classification (for example, ocp = student/entry level, tan = Level 1, green = Level 2, black = Master Combatives).

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# Developing our Soldiers to Outthink, Outmaneuver, and Outfight the Enemy

LTC CRAIG BROYLES, CPT NATHAN FREI, CPT TREY BOTTEN, CPT JOHN KRYWICKI, CPT TIM KASTENHOLZ, AND CPT BRANDON SANDERS

## Introduction

LTC Craig Broyles

Here in the Dark Rifle Battalion (3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment), we practice the "Dark Rifle Way of War" (DRWoW). This method is rooted in doctrine, which states: "success in operations hinges… on the ability of leaders and Soldiers to… outthink, outmaneuver, and outfight the enemy."[1] Our method focuses on advancing these principles and building leaders. As such, leader development is our number one priority. Teaching combined arms maneuver is central to our leader development program. We are different than our peers because we focus on combined arms maneuver at echelons as low as buddy teams and as high as battalion.

We operationalize combined arms maneuver by having an "ambush mentality," summed up in our motto: "Hunt, Race, Kill."[2] An ambush mentality means outthinking (hunt) the enemy by cultivating a hunter mindset in every Soldier that focuses on finding the enemy first. After finding the enemy, we train our Soldiers to outmaneuver (race) the enemy, attacking the enemy from behind. Once behind the enemy, we teach Soldiers to dislocate the enemy to ease our ability to outfight (kill) the enemy through employment of combined arms. By combining the different capabilities of our weapon systems, we create a dilemma for the enemy. For example, if the enemy stands up, we cut them down with direct fire. If the enemy seeks cover, we blast them with indirect fire. Should the enemy seek an armored solution, we deny that solution with our anti-tank weapons. By surrounding the enemy and combining arms, we create psychological shock which ultimately defeats the enemy. Instilling shock by combining arms to the enemy's rear is our decisive point. In other words, it is how we attain "checkmate."

The DRWoW relies on simple definitions. We use simple definitions to create shared understanding and purposefully combat against vague generalities and obscure terminology that both masquerade as sophistication. We define maneuver simply: it means moving to attack the enemy from behind. In other words, it means gaining the decisive rear-naked choke on the enemy. To gain this decisive position, we must first fix the enemy. By fix, we mean pinning down the enemy using frontal fire. Our goal is to create "tunnel vision" in the enemy and draw them closer, encouraging their overeager leaders to rush to establish a base of fire. We then exploit the tunnel vision created by our frontal fire. Our base-of-fire position aimed frontally is the lure, setting up the trap. The trap springs when our out-of-contact maneuver element "hits the other fellow as hard as [they] can, as fast as [they] can, where it hurts him the most, when he ain't looking."[3]

The "lure and trap" is the basis for the DRWoW, both offensively and defensively. When met with frontal fire, few Soldiers or leaders can break out of the tunnel vision it creates. They cannot resist being drawn into a frontal engagement. That basic human tendency is the weakness we attack. We aim to turn every encounter into an ambush.

To realize this ambush-focused way of war requires leaders who are both teachable and willing to learn the maneuver warfare theory founded by John Boyd and recognized in Army doctrine. Therefore, our number one priority is developing leaders who are committed to outthinking, outmaneuvering, and outfighting the enemy.

Task Force Dark Rifles (TF DR) succeeded during National Training Center (NTC) Rotation 21-05 because of our development and adherence to the DRWoW. Beginning 12 months prior to our rotation, leaders across all echelons developed and vigorously ingrained this model into our task force. As illustrated in Figure 1, culture is the pintle; it is the critical point that links our tripod to success. The three legs of the tripod build and enable each other: Leader development enables

**Figure 1**

Photo by SGT Adeline Witherspoon

*Soldiers in 3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment maneuver to a new position on 4 March 2021 during training at Yakima Training Center, WA.*

combined arms operations, which in turn enables success in fires and intelligence. TF DR's success was the product of a shared vision and the continual work of leaders throughout the formation. Although implementing this process was not easy, other units can replicate and improve it.

## Leg 1: The Dark Rifle Leader Development and Certification Program

### CPT Trey Botten

The Dark Rifle Leader Development and Certification Program is a deliberate, methodical approach to validating all Soldiers and officers who have the word "leader" in their duty position title. The purpose of this program is multi-faceted. First, in many organizations within the Army, leadership positions are assumed based on rank, not by merit, capability, capacity, or competence. This program serves to mitigate the inevitable discrepancies that occur when positions are simply "given" not "earned." Second, the program serves as a model for subordinate echelons to design their own organic certification process for authenticating and outlining competencies expected for each position. Third, the program is designed to create leaders who think, act, and make decisions aligned with the DRWoW, focusing on understanding the intent two echelons above their current grade which is key for mission command. Finally, in creating these programs, subordinate leaders are forced to validate their own knowledge, describe their leadership philosophies, and learn through deliberate teaching, coaching, and mentorship — which serves as an indirect approach to force subordinate leaders to achieve mastery. This program was tailored and applied to all platoon leaders, squad leaders, and team leaders in TF DR.

### Platoon Leader Certification

At first, we began this leadership development course with only the Infantry platoon leaders as the training audience. When 3-161 IN transitioned from a battalion to a task force for its mobilization to NTC and follow-on NATO mission (Enhanced Forward Presence Poland), we expanded the program to include all officers at the second and first lieutenant (2LT/1LT) ranks, including fire support officers, specialty platoon leaders, and troop and battery officers (however, company executive officers and staff primaries were exempt). The program was introduced with a memorandum of instruction to all platoon leaders describing three phases: a written examination, a practical exercise with both physical fitness and tactical events, and a board, which was chaired by the commander and included all company/troop/battery commanders. The certification process endured over the course of four months to allow attention and effort to be dedicated toward preparation, execution, and evaluation of the training audience.

Phase 1 began with the distribution of an open-book, written examination comprising 20 questions. The questions were pertinent to the art of warfare, the Dark Rifle Playbook (how we fight), maneuver warfare, combined arms theory, and leadership. The commander encouraged the junior officer leadership to seek guidance from and ask questions of their commanders to facilitate discussion, consolidate knowledge, and provide a deliberate opportunity for mentorship and coaching. As a company commander, I had the opportunity to review the questions, determine my ideas for appropriate responses aligned with the battalion commander, and have intellectual discussions with my junior officers participating in the exam. Over the course of a week, I allowed the young leaders to work through their own thoughts, study, and take a stance on their answers. I then guided them as necessary to create shared understanding. Interestingly, this process also created an opportunity to observe which officers sought guidance and mentorship, which did not, who took it seriously, and who put in nominal effort. After reviewing each of their exams prior to submission, I found many opportunities to retrain, coach, and guide toward answers that better aligned with mine, which were informed by the battalion commander's priorities. After submitting the exams to the commander, each exam was given timely, specific feedback. This feedback was then shared with each junior officer, highlighting both correct responses and shortcomings in knowledge or application.

Phase 2 was an 18-hour field training exercise (FTX) with the battalion commander and all participating junior officers. This phase started with a grueling, two-hour physical training competition designed and led by the battalion commander. This event prioritized and reiterated the necessity for combat leaders to be physically and mentally tough. Throughout the day, the junior officers worked with the battalion commander in the field to better understand forms of maneuver as well as the effects and impacts of tunnel vision created by fixing and flanking forces, movement techniques, movement formations, and engagement area development. While executing

the situational training exercise (STX)-based training, the LTs saw the effects of the "lure and trap" ambush mentality — both employing and being caught in the trap. The training concluded with a classroom officer professional development (OPD) describing the commander's standing orders, culture-building, and leadership theories.

Phase 3 was a formal board that took place in the battalion conference room. Approximately three weeks prior to the week-long event, the training audience received a short study guide describing concepts and questions that may be asked during the board. Junior officers received individual timeslots in which they would report to the president of the board and answer a series of questions from the company, troop, and battery commanders. The commanders conducted a rehearsal of the event and came to the board with a variety of questions focused on maneuver warfare, combined arms theory, leadership philosophies, commander's intent, and mission command — all concepts, principles, and strategies applied to the DRWoW.

This event offered the opportunity to apply simulated stress outside of a combat or field training environment, with the underlying goal to inoculate newer officers to its effects. As expected, the board showcased a wide array of talent, preparation, and effort. Commanders coached those who were unable to answer questions toward the desired response. This model served to reinforce the knowledge the commanders' possessed and guide the junior officers toward shared understanding of complex concepts.

### Squad Leader Certification

The Squad Leader Development and Certification Program modeled similar approaches, but each company's course could be unique at the company commander's discretion. As the commander of B Company, I developed a list of 20 standards of performance against which we would measure our leaders in the company. The program was initiated with a one-on-one counseling with each of the 19 leaders, senior sergeants and staff sergeants across the company, where we discussed the training methodology for the program. The course would similarly be conducted in three phases.

Phase 1 comprised both an extensive closed-book exam primarily focused on the science of warfare, land navigation principles, characteristics of the offense and defense, mission and civilian variables, and movement formations at the squad, platoon, and company levels. Afterwards, participants then took a 15-question short response exam. This test was similar to the platoon leader exam, focusing on maneuver warfare, decision-making techniques, the OODA (observe, orient, decide, act) Loop, and leadership philosophies.[4]

Phase 2 comprised four blocks of instruction: combat leadership, protecting our people, the art of war, and the DRWoW. Each block of instruction was assigned four primary instructors and a correlating comprehensive reading assignment. Squad leaders received the reading assignment three weeks prior to each of the four classes. The readings related to the block of instruction and facilitated the instruction and discussion during the class. These classes took place over the course of three months while the company simultaneously completed rigorous FTXs, platoon live fires, gunnery, and community engagements to build relationships with the local Polish community.

Finally, the certification program concluded with a board comprising the platoon sergeants, platoon leaders, first sergeant, and company commander. The questions asked in this board were designed to move squad leaders' thoughts from specific to conceptual, focusing on open-ended questions to force squad leaders to wrestle with wider and more theoretical ideas surrounding the profession of arms and leadership.

*In preparation for a National Training Center rotation, Soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment conduct tactical movement training on 4 March 2021 at Yakima Training Center, WA.*

Photo by SGT Adeline Witherspoon

**Team Leader Certification Academy**

After completing squad leader certification, we implemented the Team Leader Development and Certification Program. Under the mentorship and guidance of the operations sergeant major (SGM) and command sergeant major (CSM), the squad leaders, platoon sergeants, and first sergeants planned, resourced, and executed this event entirely, making it an entirely NCO-driven event. Platoon sergeants and squad leaders developed and instructed field training courses for tasks including communication, battle drills, combat water survival, field craft, weapon characteristics, land navigation, and leadership. Team leaders executed a grueling, weeklong FTX in adverse conditions with minimal food and sleep to test and certify the junior NCOs physically and mentally.

I have served in the Army National Guard for 11 years. This is the first example of a leader development program that has been planned, resourced, and executed to completion, and I am proud to have played a part in implementing the program. The effects of the Dark Rifle Leader Development and Certification Program are far reaching. Because the program taught all our leaders to understand both the DRWoW and the playbook, we all have a shared understanding of how we fight. Although the variables of fog, fear, friction, and fatigue are difficult to replicate in garrison, this program deliberately placed leaders in stressful situations to better introduce them to what they may face in combat. Through this program, NCOs and officers proved to themselves and their leadership that they were capable and ready to lead our nation's men and women in combat.

## Leg 2: Maneuver, Combined Arms, and Bronegruppa

LTC Craig Broyles and CPT John Krywicki

### Maneuver

*"The enemy must be surrounded and destroyed to win. We believe a strong, rapid enveloping attack is decisive as long as the enemy is pinned down by frontal fire."*[5]

One bad habit in our formations is the unwillingness — or inability — to read, understand, and follow standard operating procedures (SOPs). A unit may have a tactical SOP (TACSOP), but it is often outdated and copied from a previous command. Even if the unit has a TACSOP, it is rare that the formation will know or follow it. The Dark Rifles took a different approach. We developed a small football-like playbook based on a guiding philosophy that centered around the statement: "You are doing no wrong if you are attacking the enemy from behind." The envelopment is the basis for everything we do. Our base offense, defense, and movement plays all aim to lure and trap the enemy. Simply, we cloverleaf our opponent (see Figure 2).

Running our offense typically requires three maneuver units (with a reserve) and leaders willing to make a deci-
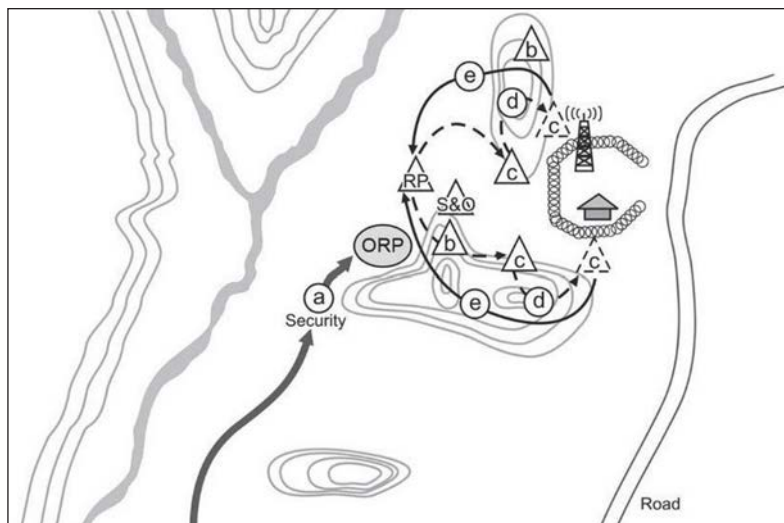


Training Circular 3-21.76, *Ranger Handbook*

**Figure 2**

sion at the point of action.[6] The Hunters (Team 1) find the enemy and — once found — initiate a support by fire (SBF) through direct/indirect fires to allow the incoming Tank Killers (Team 2) to move. The goal is to fix — or create tunnel vision in — our opponent. The Hunters communicate to the Tank Killers the presence/location of anti-armor and the best way to destroy them. The Tank Killers maneuver to an assailable flank and initiate an SBF for the Destroyers (Team 3). If the situation requires breaching or seizing a foothold, the Destroyers will assault up the middle between Teams 1 and 2. If we are attacking to destroy, Team 3 maneuvers to get behind the enemy to serve as an SBF for the final assault. The final assault can be made by either Team 2 or 3 — or instead, the enemy can remain fixed and be destroyed using indirect fire assets. Either way, once SBF 3 is set, we have checkmate.

Doctrinistas contend we have a direct-fire fratricide problem. We would if the engagement was fought two-dimensionally, like on paper or on a whiteboard. However — in the real world — distance, terrain, communication, and threat-based direct-fire control measures negate that problem. We take the additional step of breaking down and moving SBF 1 laterally to become the reserve once the Destroyers cross a specific phase line. Again, think cloverleaf.

Defensively, the lure and trap methods are generally the same. The Hunters (Team 1) engage the attacker frontally while the Tank Killers (Team 2) get bypassed. Ideally, Team 1 withdraws pulling the attacker forward to facilitate the human tendency to push/bound forward. This sets the ambush. Once bypassed and fixed frontally, Team 2 engages the enemy from the flank and rear. The Destroyers (Team 3) are staged as the reserve to counterattack between Teams 1 and 2 or to cloverleaf, rerunning our offense.

Our movement play — dubbed the "Lazy Trident" — is the lure and trap in motion, ready to execute the envelopment no matter the direction of contact. This is how we outmaneuver our enemy.

## Combined Arms

The DRWoW focuses on combining arms to put the enemy into a dilemma. If we engage with our machine guns, we expect the dismounts to take cover. When they take cover, our mortars, M320s, and grenades blow them out. If they stand back up, our machine guns cut them back down. If they call for armor support, our javelins and Carl Gustafs reduce the enemy's armor to coffins. No matter what they do, they lose. That is combined arms warfare.[7] Anticipation and sequence is key. We plan, rehearse, and practice combined arms fighting in all training events. This is how we outfight our opponent. If they know what they are doing and practice, all infantry formations — from fire teams to brigades — have the capability to fight this way.

## Bronegruppa

A crucial part of the DRWoW is fighting asymmetrically. The battalion does this at every echelon to achieve the greatest affect against an enemy that can outnumber and outrange us. Given our battalion's manning, we knew we could only man two platoons per line company prior to NTC. Based on the way we fight and maneuver, we need three maneuver elements. In order to overcome this, the battalion adopted the bronegruppa, a method used by the Russians in Afghanistan to maximize combat power and create flexibility where there would be none. The bronegruppa creates a third maneuver element consisting of infantry fighting vehicles after the Infantry Soldiers have dismounted.[8] This group of vehicles can be used as an ambush team, a mobile reserve, or as an "extraordinary (enveloping) force."[9] This technique has proved successful on numerous occasions to rapidly envelop enemy forces that were concentrating on friendly dismounted forces. Our Infantry Soldiers dismount and cover terrain, avoiding detection and identifying or neutralizing any kill threats to the Strykers. Once all anti-tank threats are cleared, the bronegruppa can then suppress dismounts.

The use of bronegruppa at NTC allowed us to further our combined arms mentality and put the enemy in no-win situations. Its use supported the tenant that "[w]e combine supporting arms, organic fire, and maneuver in such a way that any action the enemy takes to avoid one threat makes him more vulnerable to another."[10] When the enemy is behind cover, we blast them out with company mortars; when they attack, our Infantry Soldiers shoot them; and when they attempt to maneuver, our bronegruppa envelopes them. The combined arms mentality is something that we focus on from the battalion down to the fire-team level. We know that to win we must put the enemy in a no-win situation by combining arms. By that same token to prevent defeat, each arm protects each other.[11] We also use the bronegruppa to draw our enemy infantry away from their tanks and remove the enemy's flexibility to combine arms against us. Once enemy infantry soldiers are removed from their tanks, we fight asymmetrically to defeat them.

When the Russians used bronegruppa, they generally placed it in a rear staging area until needed.[12] In TF DR we mirrored that technique and adapted a few techniques of our own. One technique we used was to have infantry clear intervisibility (IV) lines while Strykers were in defilade, able to support our dismounted Soldiers. Once the IV line was clear, our Strykers would move up and assume a new support position as our infantry continued forward. When these steps were followed, the results were successful. The danger in employing bronegruppa with Strykers is that they are highly susceptible to destruction from armored threats. Leaders must ensure armored threats are neutralized before exposing Strykers, even in a supporting role.

Bronegruppa works when a key leader is placed in charge. We found the company executive officer was the best person to assume this role. I believe it would be more successful if the following deliberate planning steps were taken:

1) I would establish company named areas of interest (NAIs) tied to decision points within the company-level plan and based on suspected enemy locations.

2) I would aggressively assume more risk to commit the bronegruppa. The absence of anti-tank assets on the battlefield is not evidence that there are anti-tank assets to be found!

3) I would commit the bronegruppa with other tasks and purposes outside of the decisive point. One such task would be to conduct a feint one terrain feature away from an enemy's



Photo by SGT Adeline Witherspoon

*Soldiers in 3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment camouflage their Stryker vehicle at the National Training Center on 10 March 2021.*

attack. From the enemy's perspective, they would have recon report to them that around 10-12 Strykers are moving in their vicinity, but they do not know if dismounts are in them. Therefore, the feint would turn their direction of attack — or force the enemy to commit some forces to react to the threat — and set the conditions for the enemy to be defeated in detail.

4) I would infiltrate dismounts into an objective where the enemy would conduct an ambush on friendly movement. The bronegruppa would move out on their route and be spotted by the enemy listening posts/observation posts (LP/OPs). As the enemy moves to their ambush position, they would then be ambushed by our dismounted forces. The bronegruppa would then cut off any retreat of the enemy or assume an SBF role.



**Figure 3**

The separation of Infantry Soldiers from their vehicles has long been a go-to technique for Stryker brigade combat teams (SBCTs) at NTC. TF Dark Rifles took it one step further and used Strykers as more than simply a vehicle or mobile SBF. The Stryker is essential to combining arms, and we employed them in a way to maximize our lethality and flexibility.

## Leg 3: Fires and Intelligence Synchronization

CPT Timothy Kastenholz

### The Power of Reconnaissance and Indirect Fire

Reconnaissance and indirect fire (IDF) are central to the DRWoW. For our maneuver plays to be successful, we must find the enemy first. To this end, our TF uses our attached cavalry troop as our close reconnaissance and long range surveillance (LRS) teams as our deep reconnaissance. In doing so, we strive to find the enemy first and maximize our IDF assets to support the main effort and create shock in the enemy.

As a TF, we had both reconnaissance and IDF assets that are not typically available to an organic Stryker battalion. We had an attached battery consisting of four M777A2s, meaning our IDF assets could reach the enemy at three times the range of the typical, organic IDF assets for a Stryker infantry battalion. We also had additional reconnaissance: a cavalry troop with an added heavy weapons platoon. This troop (+) consisted of the following Stryker variants: 13x Reconnaissance Vehicles (RVs), 2x Mortar Carrier Vehicles (MCVs), 2x Mobile Gun System Vehicles (MGS), and 2x Anti-Tank Guided Missile Vehicles (ATGMs). During battalion operations, we primarily tasked the cavalry troop with conducting close reconnaissance, counter reconnaissance, and screening. Their key task in each mission was to identify the probable line of contact (PLC) for our dismounts.
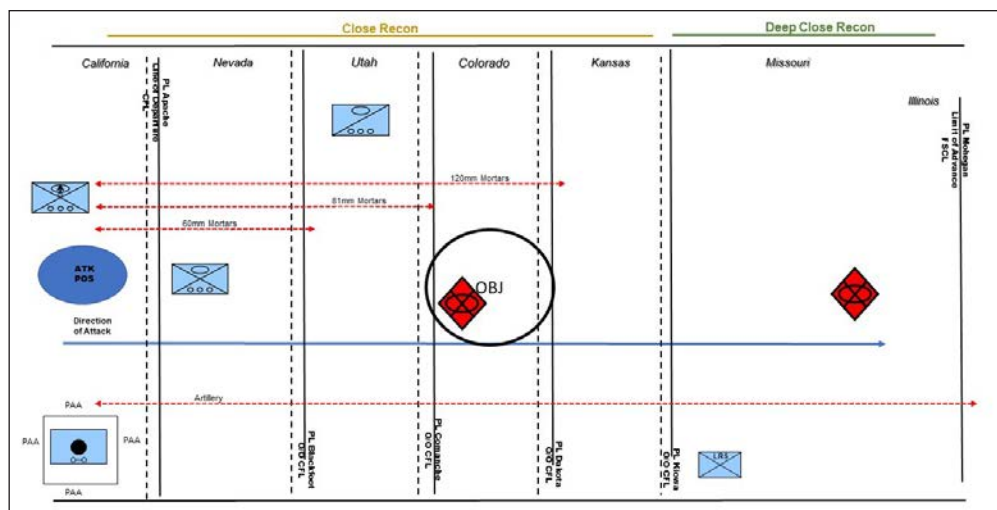
Given the extra reconnaissance assets attached, our TF chose to combine our organic scouts and snipers into a reconnaissance platoon. This formation paired the target acquisition and engagement capabilities of our snipers with the mobility, communication, and surveillance capabilities of battalion scouts, creating battalion LRS teams. These teams could remain mounted to rapidly move across the battlefield and then dismount to push deep behind enemy lines, identify enemy critical vulnerabilities, and destroy high-payoff targets using direct and indirect weapon systems. The Strykers served as mobile retransmission for our dismounted radios.

In practice, our method of reconnaissance was not merely successful, it proved to be decisive. During NTC Rotation 21-05, TF DR LRS teams infiltrated deep into the enemy's defenses, located the Black Horse tactical command post (TAC), and destroyed it with indirect fire — calling upon our attached battery of M777A2s to hit the enemy deep. Not only did they destroy the TAC, they killed the enemy battalion commander: Black Horse 6. For an infantry battalion — whose organic indirect fire assets of 120mm mortars are limited — it completely changes the battle to be able to get reconnaissance deep, identify high-payoff targets, and kill them at a range of 20 kilometers.

### The Killing Machine

Our Killing Machine play focuses on massing IDF assets in a given area while minimizing coordination and communication with higher echelons. Speed is the goal; the quicker indirect fires can be massed the more effective they will be. The genesis of this play comes from a Center for Army Lessons Learned article produced by the 25th Infantry Division.[13] We used the ideas discussed in that article to pair our indirect fire assets with observers and streamline air and space deconfliction. We separated the Killing Machine into two areas, the deep fight and the close fight.

For the deep fight, this play starts with S2 establishing target selection standards; these standards are based on the commander's priorities and serve as a flowchart to determine

Photo by SGT Adeline Witherspoon

*Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment "Dark Rifles" pull security during a National Training Center rotation on 14 March 2021.*

when to engage the enemy with IDF assets. The S2 then establishes NAIs for observation by all collection assets: unmanned aerial systems (UAS), TF reconnaissance, and forward observers (FOs). S2 then shares fighting products — enemy event template; enemy decision point matrix; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) matrix; and high-payoff target list (HPTL) — up and down the chain of command to ensure shared understanding and efficient use of collection assets. If any TF asset observes enemy within an NAI, the NAI transitions into a target area of interest (TAI). The enemy is then referenced against HPTL and pre-established target selection standards. Once an HPT is identified in a TAI or target selection standards criteria are met within a TAI, that TAI becomes a "hot" kill box. All or some available assets engage targets in the kill box. When the desired effect meets the desired end state — either destroy, neutralize, or suppress enemy within the kill box — the kill box becomes "cold." The battalion collection assets will then look at other NAIs (potential future kill boxes) to continue to mass effects on the enemy.[14]

For the close fight, the TF used organic mortars to achieve effects against any enemies that outmatched our Strykers in a head-to-head fight. In other words, we used mortars to fight asymmetrically, pitting our strength against enemy weakness. By constantly bounding our mortars forward to support the main effort, we provide a protective blanket for our Infantry Soldiers and can rapidly employ our organic IDF when they find the enemy.

At NTC, our TF used the Killing Machine play to great effect. We nested our collection priorities with those from both division and brigade, increasing the likelihood higher echelons would devote assets to our TF. We synchronized our organic and attached assets, ensuring shared understanding and efficient use of collection assets. For example, we successfully employed our attached Special Forces element to identify and destroy enemy air defense artillery, maximizing effectiveness of our UAS and rotary wing assets.

Every collection was given some IDF asset to destroy enemy that met our pre-established criteria. We kept our mortars in range to support our infantry as they advanced. By doing this, we fired more mortar rounds on the enemy than our observer-coach-trainers (OCTs) had seen in their two years of observing units. Further, by pushing our LRS deep, we destroyed the enemy TAC and enemy battalion commander. Our detailed planning and execution of IDF with recon allowed us to shoot faster as our planning pushed for decentralization of fires as much as possible. This all fits with the asymmetry that is central to the DRWoW: Mortars kill infantry and field artillery kills HPTs.

## The Pintle: The Battalion Culture

Chaplain (CPT) Brandon Sanders

The Dark Rifles' philosophy can be summarized as "Hunt, Race, Kill, Strength, and Honor." Each tenant of our philosophy shapes who we are as individuals and informs how we interlace our personal efforts with the mission of the TF. These tenants craft a tapestry of excellence that has, time and again, outperformed those who are better manned and superiorly resourced. As Dark Rifles, we have crafted an internal culture that has allowed us to consistently fight outnumbered and win. We have done so by pursuing perfection of outcome rather than perfection of method. Rather than managers who merely operate within the culture, we have created leaders willing to change the culture for the better.

### Hunt — The Ambush Mentality

We seek to leverage defeat mechanisms to win psychologically rather than through attrition and destruction. This is how we fight outnumbered, under-resourced, but consistently win. In combat, mass, momentum, and continuous combat are operative tactics. However, surprise can be substituted for mass. Thus, ambushing allows us to have a greater impact on the battlefield, as it leverages surprise to compensate for our size.[15] Our internal culture and planning prioritizes skill, craft, and deception and ignores force ratios and other physical constraints that cripple other organizations.[16] By exploiting the volatility of the human soul and having a greater desire for victory, we win.

The single greatest device to invoke defeat in the soul of an enemy is the ambush. In the offense and the defense, we seek to set the ambush so that we remain "shapeless" in the mind of the enemy and therefore a constant threat.[17] This affords two key advantages. First, we always have the initiative. No matter if in the offense seeking to envelop or in the defense setting "islands of resistance" of squads throughout the battlefield, we are always setting the ambush. Secondly, we are afforded a psychological force multiplier that increases our lethality far beyond what we are capable of inflicting physically. The enemy can never fully articulate how many Dark Rifles they are facing or where they are. This allows us to concentrate upon their critical vulnerability and dissolve in such a way that counterattacks prove difficult, if not impossible.

This mentality on the battlefield also has a strengthening effect upon our formation. Since we are always hunting, we seek to do difficult things. This demands a tireless recon effort to be perpetually ceaseless. While on the battlefield, ISR, LRS, and cavalry elements provide this capability, and the Dark Rifle leader at the lowest level is our greatest sensor. Therefore, the team leader is our greatest asset in finding and fixing issues before they become initiative-crippling stumbling blocks.

### Race — Speed is Everything

In TF DR, we prioritize speed and audacity beyond all other attributes. We see ourselves in keeping with the light infantry tradition of the German Jäeger, in that we emphasize open-order tactics and value high-quality, independent junior leaders and Soldiers.[18]

To accomplish this, we believe decisions must be made closest to the point of action. Thus, we empower and enable our most junior leaders with making informed decisions in the moment. We truly believe that one Soldier, in the right place at the right time making the right decisions, is our path to success.

Team leaders are always encouraged and empowered to manage their Soldiers in the best way that they see fit. Therefore, TF-level standards and discipline issues are kept to a minimum in order to allow team leaders the greatest flexibility to solve problems. This is crucial in placing the Soldier first as team leaders know their Soldiers better than anyone else in the battalion and can tailor solutions faster and more effectively than anyone else.

In keeping with that, trust is our biggest force multiplier. We believe that operations can only occur at the speed of trust in our formation.[19] Therefore, we empower team leaders and squad leaders more than most of our peer organizations. Having this level of trust in our most junior leaders allows us to withstand a large amount of stress and strain without having to have a lot of discussion.[20]

Our culture of empowerment and trust allows us to establish and maintain momentum on the battlefield by making decisions at the point of action. This momentum — above all else — is crucial to gaining the initiative, pressing the attack, and staying well inside the decision loop of our adversaries.[21] We believe that operation tempo is a state of mind, and we have largely grown accustomed to maintaining a high pace of operations.[22-23] Everything is a race; if you don't know it, it is because you are so far behind.

Since we believe that it is not the stronger opponent that wins but rather the faster one, we tolerate a certain degree of imperfection.[24] Having a partial solution to a problem and acting on it today, is far more desirable to us than having the perfect solution tomorrow. This methodology leads to Soldiers improving themselves through practice. With each successive iteration of training, Soldiers refine themselves, which ultimately makes the Dark Rifles a more lethal organization as time goes on.

### Kill — Overwhelming Bias for Action

As a partner to speed, TF DR prioritizes aggressiveness and initiative in all things.[25] We adamantly detest risk aversion and seek to leverage a "solve for yes" culture. We want a culture that seeks the toughest of challenges. Because of our culture, our leadership has consistently tasked our battalion with the hardest assignments. Whether it is riots, pandemic response, rotations at NTC, or deterrence of a near-peer adversary, we have time and again shown up only to win, nothing else.

Using this attitude and culture, we leverage the unique personalities and abilities of those in our formation, regardless of their traditional role and responsibilities. Understanding our National Guard origins, we know that our capability actually goes far beyond our modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE). In our formation we have computer programmers, software engineers, avionics technicians, teachers, law enforcement officers, professional logisticians, media managers, etc. Given this set of unique and eclectic capabilities, we think beyond someone's title and position and look to their interests and abilities when solving the challenges presented to us by our leadership. Where many pay lip-service to the concept that "people are our greatest asset," the Dark Rifles truly live it.

Our culture is one of extreme lethality due to this empowerment and the audacity of commanders. Our culture calls for visionary command guidance and low-level empowerment, resulting in unique and ambitious solutions to problems that are the norm rather than outliers. This allows for continual, outside-the-box thinking as the creativity of leaders and Soldiers are used in all aspects of operations.

Ultimately, inaction is the only sinful action in TF DR. Considering the ample amount of trust and empowerment in our formation, we exhibit a large amount of grace and development of up-and-coming leaders. Soldiers must always be seeking to solve the problem and overcome the current adversary, or they cease to be part of the team.

### Strength

Our culture is grounded in our reality. As a part-time force, we must optimize our existence to having only a few people — with only a few resources — most of the time. We view this as a value-added strength rather than a hindrance. Much like successful forces that have preceded us, we do not look to fix the things out of our control, rather we choose to leverage our reality to exploit the opportunities afforded us. Much like Israel in the Six-Day War, we turn to leadership and doctrine to answer our conundrums.[26]

We truly believe that people are our greatest asset and the source of our strength. To take those people and coalesce them around a unified purpose, we spend a large amount of time on branding. Stickers, flags, awards, digital products, and a robust social media push lets our Soldiers, potential recruits, and adversaries know that we are a professional fighting force and ready for a challenge to test ourselves against.

This results in people who genuinely care and see the organization as an extended family. Once Soldiers feel "themselves to be full members of a close-knit group which forms the object of their loyalty, facing almost certain death probably becomes easier for them than deviating from the behavior pattern they know the group expects."[27] This leads to Soldiers personally owning their part of the mission and ensuring that they are successful. When Soldiers are welcomed into an elite unit with a strong culture of competence, branded as an elite Soldier, then trusted and empowered to bring their own unique solutions to complex and meaningful problems, excellence is the only possible result.

Our culture of strength revolves around developing those in our formation regardless of where they are at. At times this may mean moving people to new positions, but more often than not it means enabling and encouraging Soldiers in the midst of their present challenges.

We prioritize the study of maneuver warfare, emphasizing its theory, history, and application. As we firmly believe that "developing military judgement requires studying war," our officers study past engagements and battles.[28] During regular professional development meetings, our officers and senior enlisted leaders research and teach tactics and doctrine based on an assigned reading list. Collective learning is facilitated by leveraging a highly interactive discourse between those in attendance. This allows the topics covered to be seen from multiple perspectives as our own strengths and weaknesses teach one another.

Ultimately, this culminates in a training exercise where we put our newly developed strategies, skills, and techniques into action. We do this through free-play training where judgment is emphasized over the transmission of knowledge.[29] By frequently pitting two elements against one another and having a third observe the engagement, not only do the two elements get to test their own judgement and experiment, but the OCT element learns from watching them.

### Honor

*"You can tell a great unit by how they welcome and send off their Soldiers."*

**— LTG Willard M. Burleson III**

We seek to honor those Dark Rifles who both presently live our values as well as those who have gone before us. We believe that by celebrating the success of those who actively live our desired culture, our legacy will be that of an effective organization our country can count on when needed.

We honor the past Dark Rifles in two distinct ways. First, we regularly incorporate the running legacy of the 161st Infantry Regiment in our awards and ceremony. This allows our Soldiers to have their name placed beside those who have committed heroic acts in extremely adverse conditions. By opening this possibility up to our junior leaders, we incentivize them to be visionaries of what they and their teams can accomplish.

Secondly, we honor our Soldiers and those who have lived the Dark Rifle culture by recording them in the Order of the Dark Rifle book. Any Dark Rifle Soldier can submit another to consideration for entrance into the order, and there are incremental induction ceremonies to celebrate the contributions of individuals to the good of the organization.

These induction ceremonies are live-streamed for family and leadership to celebrate the individual alongside the Soldiers. This breeds a culture of excellence as entrance into the book has become more of a status symbol than any formal military award or accolade.

Along with celebrating the Dark Rifles of the past, we also seek to simultaneously honor those who are actively contributing to the good of the organization in the present. Social media is a fundamental culture-shaping tool in this regard. While it has many functions, our social media efforts communicate to our Soldiers that they are a part of an elite organization that is fundamentally different from other infantry battalions they could be serving in. This creates positive incentives to join the Dark Rifles and stay to perform at the standards that our battalion's image stands for. The



*A Soldier with 3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment calls for ammunition during a training exercise at Bemowo Piskie Training Area, Poland, on 23 September 2021.*

Photo by SPC Osvaldo Fuentes

speed, audacity, aggression, and honor that make for a formidable warrior is thoroughly documented and published for the world and our own formation to see.

Along with shaping the culture through social media, leaders produce unique awards that incentivize the behaviors we desire most in our junior leaders. This comes from community-sponsored gifts that tie our battalion close to the people that they are directly serving. These awards incentivize junior Soldiers to be the most aggressive, innovative, and audacious Soldiers in the U.S. military. While formal awards are given at liberty to the deserving, these unique battalion awards are of the most coveted and the most proudly displayed amongst the junior leaders of the Dark Rifles.

We see discipline as our protective fabric.[30] No Soldier is above the law and dishonoring the name of oneself and the battalion is the fastest way to cease being a Dark Rifle Soldier. Given our high emphasis on trust and empowerment of junior leaders, we demand honor — doing what is right no matter how you feel about it.

## Conclusion

By prioritizing our efforts into four main areas, the Dark Rifles have remained successful, both at NTC and the follow-on deployment to Poland. We have created a culture that focuses on leader development, combined arms maneuver, and synchronization of fires and intelligence. Our leader development program has created buy-in and helped solidify a shared understanding of how we fight. As such, we have been able to successfully employ maneuver warfare theory, using combined arms to pit our strengths against the enemy's weaknesses. We have been able to employ a unique approach to reconnaissance, getting deep to destroy the enemy's command and control centers. Through our successes, and reflection on our failures, we have created a culture of competence and widespread desire to constantly improve our ability to win.

## Notes

[1] ATP 3-21.8, *Infantry Platoon and Squads*, August 2016, 73 (1-41) (emphasis added).

[2] Marine Corps Doctrine Publication (MCDP) 1-3, *Tactics*, July 1997.

[3] Sir William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Cassell & Co, 1956), 550-551.

[4] Observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) — The OODA Loop is a rapid decision-making process; key to this process is the fact that it's a loop. Once the decision is made, its affects need to be observed and any follow-on course corrections needed are made, or the result is favorable and left as is.

[5] Dark Rifle Playbook, from the Company Officer's Handbook of the German Army (Military Intelligence Division War Department, 31 March 1944).

[6] Two units can run our offense, but those two units would need to be fast and proficient at lateral bounds.

[7] MCDP 1-3, 39-41.

[8] While the Stryker platform is not a fighting vehicle, it can still be used to support dismounted Soldiers in a similar fashion to fighting vehicles. For example, Strykers can still be used as a support by fire, to disrupt, to pursue, or to fix the enemy while the dismounted maneuver elements move to a position of advantage. Leaders must be aware of the risk of using the Stryker in this manner, namely that the Stryker's armor and range will be outmatched in a head-to-head confrontation with armor. However, we found using bronegruppa tactics with Strykers to be overwhelmingly successful.

[9] Robert R. Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver Warfare Theory and AirLand Battle* (NY: Presidio Press, 1995), 31.

[10] Ibid, 39-40.

[11] Ibid, 40-41.

[12] Dr. Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian Way of War* (Fort Leavenworth, KY: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2016), 76.

[13] MAJ Bobby Sickler, MAJ David Henderson, and John Hansen, "An Integrated Division Deep Fight, Deep Battle 2.0," News from the Front, Center for Army Lessons Learned, February 2017.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Richard E. Simpkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare* (Washington, D.C., Potomac Books, 1985), IX, 303.

[16] Leonhard, The Art of Maneuver, 31.

[17] Simpkin, *Race to the Swift*, XI, 303.

[18] Richard D. Hooker, *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology* (NY: Presidio Press, 1993), 262.

[19] Jim Mattis and Bing West, *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* (NY: Random House, 2019).

[20] Ibid.

[21] Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*, 31.

[22] Mattis and West, *Call Sign Chaos*.

[23] Marshall Erwin Rommel, *Infantry Attacks*, February 2014.

[24] Hooker, *Maneuver Warfare*, 262.

[25] Mattis and West, Call Sign Chaos.

[26] Hooker, *Maneuver Warfare*, 262.

[27] Simpkin, *Race to the Swift*, XI, 303.

[28] Hooker, *Maneuver Warfare*, 262.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Mattis and West, *Call Sign Chaos*.

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# 'New' Fundamentals Remain Fundamental:

## *Preparing Leaders and Units in Contested Electromagnetic Environments*

**CPT HAL RIVARD**
**CPT CHRIS SALERNO**

A brigade tactical group (BTG) is preparing to conduct a counterattack to regain lost territory while serving as the division tactical group's (DTG) reserve. The DTG had lost key terrain and was vertically enveloped by elements of a U.S. airborne division. The reserve BTG's attack aims to stop the U.S. advance and allow the DTG to regain the initiative. The BTG commander designates two battalion detachments (BDETs) as assault forces and aligns capabilities at echelon to support these subordinate commanders. The lead assault force commander needs to penetrate elements of a U.S. brigade which seized key road intersections north of a U.S. objective. The lead BDET assault force commander plans, as part of his obscuration plan, to employ both smoke and jamming capabilities. With this equipment, they can jam frequency modulation (FM) radios, locate command and control (C2) nodes, and spoof signals, all aimed at confusing the defenders and facilitating the breach. These enablers can disrupt mission command and allow C2 nodes to be targeted throughout the defense.

*The assault force commander understands that the smoke may blind the defending force, but even if they can see, the defenders are effectively blind if they cannot communicate amongst themselves. The elements from the U.S. brigade remain precariously exposed until the trail armored units can complete their seizure and maneuver forward to reinforce them. The internal dispersion and distance from their higher headquarters leave these light infantry forces particularly vulnerable. The assault force commander effectively leverages his own strengths while maintaining his tempo. He cannot permanently conduct these jamming operations as the different equipment creates its own signature that the defending force can detect and target, but if employed at the correct time and place, the assault force's decisive operation can seize the initiative.*

### Leader's Responsibilities

*"REC's [radio electronic combat's] most salient feature was its emphasis on integration, entailing the simultaneous combination of multiple protective and disruptive means into a 'greater than the sum of its parts' whole, in support of the ground scheme of maneuver. In time, American doctrines would appropriate REC's integrating precept, and it remains today a definitional feature of information operations."*

— **COL Mark D. Vertuli and LTC Bradley S. Loudon**[1]

Information connects leaders to their units and enables commanders to drive the operations process. Adversaries use electronic warfare (EW) capabilities to disrupt the operations process. This disruption creates a mental obscuration on the battlefield — the eyes can see and the brain can function, but the two remain disconnected. Leaders must rigorously enforce standards and apply our doctrine consistently; well-disciplined Soldiers who adjust to operating in accordance with doctrine will excel in any environment and overcome the difficulties associated with the EW threat.

The emergence of new technology and the resulting tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) will improve formations over time, but current leaders should focus on fundamental skills already written into doctrine as they prepare their formations to act in a contested electromagnetic environment. The introduction of wireless communication during the interwar period — combined with armor, infantry, and fires — created the conditions for rapid maneuver. The ability to contest that communication threatens to undermine our ability to combine arms and maneuver. These concerns have existed since the first radios were installed in vehicles. "Information" is a part of the Army's elements of combat power because it underpins everything done in large-scale combat operations. Soldiers understand that good information drives good decisions and bad or late information costs lives. Leaders across the Army must understand this and prepare their units appropriately.

So, what can leaders do? They can ensure they have communication redundancy through both maintenance and training. Commanders can ensure their units are well trained to identify EW attacks and have a plan to react to this contestation. Key to this is a well-rehearsed primary, alternate, contingency, emergency (PACE) plan where individual vehicles, squads, and platoons acknowledge the contact and execute the appropriate battle drill. These drills take training and effort to gain proficiency. Additionally, commanders can ensure subordinates both speak in brevity and understand how to use signal flags. Commanders must practice mission command because only through mission orders and fighting products will subordinates be able to act when communications are jammed and decisions must be made. Leaders can train for this threat just as they would for any other action on contact. Commanders can train the ability to operate in a contested electromagnetic environment across the institutional, operational, and self-development domains. It can also be reinforced during command maintenance as well as sergeant's/leader's time training.

## Maintenance

*"Units train to maintain to keep personnel, equipment, and systems in the fight. Leaders ensure units conduct maintenance under all conditions to sustain effective combat power over time and significant distances."*

— **Field Manual (FM) 7-0,** *Training*[2]

The best defense against an electronic warfare threat is a robust PACE plan, and leaders start building this capability in the motor pool. Leaders must take command maintenance seriously. A mechanized rifle company within an armored brigade combat team (ABCT) owns multiple FM radios, Joint Battle Command-Platforms (JBCPs), and high frequency (HF) radios. Signal flags can also be ordered. Leaders must ensure that all equipment is fully mission capable and routinely trained upon. A proper command maintenance discipline program involves more than just the vehicles; it involves maintaining the entire inventory of equipment.

A company commander should run weekly maintenance meetings. Leaders all the way down the chain of command should track the status of their equipment, including their communication equipment. Every sub-hand receipt holder and end user should understand what is full mission capable (FMC), what is not mission capable (NMC), and the status of the parts against the fault. This type of knowledge represents a formation that embraces command maintenance and is more likely to have a higher operational readiness rate. Leaders who handwave maintenance and formations that do not track their equipment at echelon are more likely to see everything break the first time they need to use them in the field or in a combat environment. The key to maintenance is engaged leaders and subordinates who take ownership of their equipment.

The S6 must fully participate in command maintenance including the battalion maintenance meetings. Operators conduct C2 systems maintenance, and the combat net radio shop verifies the faults and ensures the correct national stock number (NSN) is ordered against the faults. Regardless of formation type, always defaulting to runners as the alternate form of communication is wrong and favors the adversary. The S6's role is vital because Soldiers who feel like their maintenance efforts are for naught will stop over time. Additionally, the S6's equipment is vital for creating redundancy within the battalion's PACE plan. Those long hours in the motor pool are essential and will pay dividends when under contact.

## Sergeant's/Leader's Time Training

*"Sergeant's time training is standards-based, is performance-oriented, and supports unit mission-essential tasks and battle tasks. Mutual trust and confidence between Soldiers and their first line leaders are absolutely critical outcomes to sergeant's time training."*

— **FM 7-0**[3]

Once a formation's Soldiers understand that their equipment works, they can properly train in the environment. The

*A platoon leader in the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division communicates over radio during an exercise at Fort Carson, CO, on 29 March 2022.*

Photo by MAJ Jason Elmore

first question new commanders should ask their NCOs is: What is the difference between communications security (COMSEC) compromise and jamming? The two different situations result in two different battle drills. Yet many subordinate leaders do not know the difference. Commanders are the primary trainers within a formation, and it is imperative that commanders evaluate their formation's EW knowledge. Commanders can then empower their NCOs to train their individual Soldiers, crews, and small teams. Knowledge deficits undermine trust throughout the entire formation, and units can rectify this through thoroughly resourcing sergeant's/ leader's time training.

Leaders should reference doctrine as well as those subject matter experts within the brigade combat team. They should also read the applicable EW publications, specifically on offensive and defensive preparation. While leaders cannot be subject matter experts in everything, they should not be ignorant either. It is easy to recognize something is wrong with the radios, but leaders at all echelons must consider how the enemy can bring to bear the full spectrum of their equipment and capabilities.

Chapter 7 of Army Techniques Publication 3-12.3, *Electronic Warfare Techniques*, spells out the measures to take prior to a threat's EW employment in addition to how to identify and react to an active EW threat.[4] It also contains information on executing an EW jamming battle drill and more in-depth information on how higher subject matter experts can enable success. The threat can contest across the spectrum; intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) enables a leader to determine when and where it will be employed. The S6 must build redundancy into the PACE plan.

Leaders must understand when and how the enemy is contesting them in an EW environment for them to effectively respond. The enemy can intrude, probe, pulse, and jam. Commanders and first sergeants must develop leader development programs that account for the different types of EW attacks. Radio wave theory is a fundamental skill that units can routinely train on. Leaders can reach out to the staff EW officers and NCOs early in the training progression and combine their knowledge with what information already exists in references like the Ranger Handbook. Leaders can train the rest of the formation on how to tell if radios are just having issues or are actively being jammed. Combine this with a maintenance program where Soldiers and leaders learn how to properly maintain their equipment, as discussed earlier.

Are your Soldiers following the technical manuals when it comes to encrypting all of the assigned communication? Do they understand the associated tasks? Are leaders across the formation trained on the specified tasks from their applicable Soldier training publication? Leaders need to ensure they are building Soldiers capable of operating in these environments and that is possible by training them to the standard spelled out in doctrine.

> *A well-trained unit with a current SOP, built in conjunction with the EW experts, can quickly respond and act against the threat. The time gained is time the enemy hoped to use to their advantage.*

### Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

*"Shared understanding of the situation, along with the flow of information to the lowest possible level, forms the basis for unity of effort and subordinates' initiative. Effective decentralized execution is not possible without shared understanding."*

**— Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*[5]**

Leaders must invest the time to build, refine, and distribute standard operating procedures. An SOP, at echelon, should include cards dedicated to the electronic warfare environment. Multiple doctrinal references encourage units to build SOPs. These cards can cover those tasks trained as part of the leader development time, TTPs for troubleshooting equipment, proper encryption steps, and associated battle drills. An SOP creates shared understanding, meaning anyone within the formation can reference it. SOPs also enable subordinates because they understand the commander's intent and can act. Subordinates no longer have to wait around to guess at their actions. Units being jammed along the FM band can immediately start acting because they understand what the battle drill is.

SOPs buy units time, free leaders up, and minimize confusion. Even the best-trained formations cannot be expected to remember everything at once. A well-trained unit with a current SOP, built in conjunction with the EW experts, can quickly respond and act against the threat. The time gained is time the enemy hoped to use to their advantage. A unit without solid SOPs is more likely going to need leaders at echelon to step in and make decisions because subordinates are not trained or enabled through their SOPs. These leaders are now not doing their job but managing their subordinates' jobs. The second and third order effects mean leaders at echelon will degrade their ability to enable and think of the next fight.

### Training Events

*"A standard is the proficiency required to accomplish the task under a specific set of conditions that reflect the dynamic complexities of operational environments to include cyber, electronic warfare, and hybrid threats."*

**— FM 7-0[6]**

Leaders should enforce the principles of training at all times. They should build the dynamic and complex environment outlined and built in a contested EW environ-

ment throughout their training progression for both mission command nodes and subordinate units. This can be as easy as turning off radios or JBCPs at certain key times, forcing subordinates to react. These conditions force leaders to use mission orders and provide clear intent to their subordinates. Radio transmissions should not be long extended messages that do nothing but allow the enemy to triangulate positions. A well-synchronized plan can be fought with short burst transmissions on the proper power settings using a synchronization matrix and pro-words.

This forces units to validate or update their SOPs. Squad leaders who cannot reach their platoon leader need to understand both how to troubleshoot their radios and when to send a runner. A mission command node's Soldiers need proper training on all systems so when the primary option is blocked, they can seamlessly start reporting on the alternate or contingent option. Leaders should ensure we are using terrain to mask omnidirectional whenever possible and offset radios with cables from their platforms. Leaders must decide where to allocate dig assets because the enemy can and will conduct IPB as well to determine those ideal locations for C2 assets and aim to target them with indirect fires.

## Mission Command

*"There are few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others. Trust*



Photo by Antonio Bedin

*A 173rd Airborne Brigade Soldier assembles a single-channel ground and airborne radio system during training in Italy on 5 April 2022.*

*is given by leaders and subordinates, and [it is] built over time based on common shared experiences. It is the result of upholding the Army values, exercising leadership consistent with Army leadership principles, and most effectively instilled by the leader's personal example."*

— ADP 6-0[7]

Mission command involves six mutually supporting principles: build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk. Mission command is woven throughout this article because it underpins everything leaders should be doing to prepare their subordinates for this environment.

Cohesive teams have outstanding SOPs, are knowledgeable on their equipment, and are built in both the motor pool and the training area. Trust is a two-way street and is reinforced constantly. The mental obscuration originally described at the beginning of this article can be alleviated with empowered subordinates whose leaders trust them to act within their intent when they cannot be reached. The enemy may disconnect leaders from their subordinates, but the enemy did not stop the ability for decisions to happen. The principles of mission command reinforced constantly will ensure units will survive and win in all environments.

This is only possible through maintenance, SOPs, development, and rigorous training. Leaders have everything they need to prepare their Soldiers for a contested EW environment. It is woven throughout our doctrine; leaders should enforce the systems and train their Soldiers properly.

### Notes

[1] COL Mark D. Vertuli and LTC Bradley S. Loudon, eds., *Perceptions are Reality: Historical Case Studies of Information Operations in Large-Scale Combat Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018), 6.

[2] Field Manual (FM) 7-0, *Training*, June 2021, paragraph 1-13.

[3] Ibid, paragraph 4-28.

[4] Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-12.3, *Electronic Warfare Techniques*, July 2019, Chapters 6 and 7.

[5] Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, July 2019, paragraph 1-36.

[6] FM 7-0, paragraph 1-10.

[7] ADP 6-0, paragraph 1-30.

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# Upholding Discipline — Administrative Enlisted Separations

## CPT JACK CHRISTOFFERSEN

> *"Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak and esteem to all."*
> — **George Washington**[1]

Company command is unique among all assignments in which a junior officer serves. The authority and responsibility of the commander exceeds any other position, as the commander is responsible, to use the hoary saying, for "everything that the company does or fails to do." The commander must prioritize unit readiness, establish a positive command climate, and develop cohesive and disciplined teams.[2] While "training is the cornerstone of unit readiness and must be the commander's top peacetime priority," very few things detract from training as much as mundane legal and administrative matters stemming from Soldier indiscipline.[3] After 22 months of rifle company command, I can say from personal experience that 10 percent of your Soldiers do indeed take 90 percent of your time. That is, non-judicial punishment, separation proceedings, and the process involved can consume valuable time if the commander does not have a system in place.

In this article I will examine enlisted administrative separations — specifically, how company commander involvement can ensure their timely processing. Fundamentally, "Soldiers who do not conform to required standards of discipline and performance and Soldiers who do not demonstrate potential for further military service should be separated in order to avoid degradation of morale and substandard mission performance."[4] I will not summarize Army Regulation (AR) 635-200, *Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations*, but rather provide a general framework, based on regulation and personal experience, for navigating the process.

Additionally, this article should not supersede advice from your brigade legal office (for specific questions, always ask them first). I will, however, discuss systems I implemented at the company level that helped myself and junior leaders build each packet for submission to the legal office, track the progress of each packet, discuss relationships I built with on-post agencies, and lessons learned (often through painful experience) that helped streamline the process. Ultimately, once commanders decide to separate a Soldier, they must ensure that the process moves as efficiently as possible. Discipline underpins unit readiness, and commanders and subordinate leaders bear responsibility for maintaining it.[5]

Once the unit makes "maximum use of counseling and rehabilitation" to correct substandard Soldier performance, the commander may initiate separation proceedings.[6] First, the company must build the separation packet. My brigade legal office provided a checklist summarizing the required documentation for each type of administrative separation, as each type differs. For example, a separation under Chapter 14-12c2 (abuse of illegal drugs) requires positive urinalysis documentation, and a Chapter 14-12b (a pattern of misconduct) requires applicable evidence substantiating continued misconduct on the part of the Soldier.[7-8] Regardless of the type of separation, all require counseling forms (DA Form 4856), flags (DA Form 268), the Soldier's Soldier Record Brief (SRB), other administrative paperwork for the Soldier, pertinent evidence, as well as medical and physical examinations.[9]

While legal offices may vary, my brigade legal office required the Soldier to complete medical examinations by the physician assistant (PA), a mental status evaluation by a behavioral health officer, and enroll in Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) prior to chapter packet submission to the legal office for draft. This allowed the legal office to process separations more quickly once the packet arrived at their level, but it required additional initial effort at the company echelon to build the packet. In order to facilitate this process, I found it most effective to insert myself directly. Due to the working relationships I built with our Embedded Behavioral Health (EBH) team and my battalion PA (more on this later), I would email or call them personally rather than ask an NCO escort to try to book an appointment through the front desk at the clinic. Admittedly, this circumvented the established process, but it allowed Soldiers to get an appointment quickly rather than wait for an opening in the schedule.

Once the company consolidates all pertinent evidence and required administrative, mental evaluation, and medical paperwork, the company builds the final separation packet for submission to the legal office. In my company, a senior squad leader or platoon sergeant would build the packet, and then the first sergeant and I would review it personally. I reviewed each packet for two reasons:

(1) The commander should review all paperwork leaving his or her company, and

(2) A Soldier's career in the military hangs in the balance; the commander must be convinced that separation is the right decision.

Once the packet has been built and verified, a senior NCO then turns it in to the legal office. At this point, the commander must track the progress of the packet and know when and where to apply pressure.

Chapter 2 of AR 635-200 describes the process for drafting the separation packet, notifying the Soldier, allowing the Soldier to access Trial Defense Services (TDS), and routing the final packet through the company commander to the separation authority.[10] This complicated process can be time consuming without company-level tracking systems. The commander owes the Soldier prompt, firm, courteous, and fair action when exercising his/her military authority.[11] Meaning, the commander should ensure the separation process happens swiftly for the sake of the Soldier and in accordance with regulation (which allows 15 working days for processing separations).[12] Without a system in place, the process can easily surpass 15 working days, to the detriment of the Soldier and the unit.

Figure 1 illustrates a system that I used as a company commander. Each week during the company training meeting, platoon leadership would backbrief me and the first sergeant where each separation packet stood in the process.

In this tracker (using a notional Soldier), each column corresponds to the steps of the separation packet from creation until final turn in for decision by the separation authority. The table lists the steps in roughly sequential order from left to right; for example, leadership must counsel and flag a Soldier for separation before making medical and mental evaluation appointments. Once flagged, medical, mental, SFL-TAP, and evidence gathering can occur simultaneously. As discussed previously, I would make the medical and mental evaluation appointments for the Soldier, while platoon leadership consolidated evidence and got the Soldier enrolled in SFL-TAP. The first sergeant and I would review the final packet before turning it in to legal for draft and then follow up with our battalion paralegal.

Particular attention to dates allowed me to identify when the process lagged. For instance, if it took longer than five business days between submission of the packet to legal and return of the completed packet to the company for notification, I would call our battalion paralegal to check the status. Likewise, if I notified a Soldier of separation but the Soldier had yet to meet with TDS or started SFL-TAP but not completed it, it indicated that the Soldier may be, intentionally or unintentionally, slowing the process. Only by tracking the process on a weekly basis and knowing specific dates for each gate can the commander keep track of each separation packet. Ultimately, it takes intrusive leadership on the part of the company command team to ensure the process works.

As the discussion above illustrates, the commander takes an active role calling on-post agencies and scheduling appointments to facilitate the separation process. Without a relationship with the Soldiers and civilians who work at these agencies, a demanding or uncompromising commander may strain these working relationships. For my brigade, pre-command captains must complete an office call with the brigade staff judge advocate (SJA) before assuming command. This meeting helps establish a baseline relationship with both the battalion paralegal and your legal advisor, both of whom I would talk to on a weekly basis. These individuals will also provide an overview of the chapter process for the incoming commander and provide insightful guidance on legal matters.

In addition to the SJA, I strongly recommend making office calls with EBH, your battalion PA, and SFL-TAP. As I stated previously, I would email or call EBH and our PA directly to schedule appointments — having a first-name relationship with them allowed me to do this. Where I failed as a commander, and advice I offer incoming commanders, is to build a relationship with SFL-TAP before you need help from them. Civilians staff SFL-TAP and they interact with captains on a daily basis. Because I never met with anyone who worked for SFL-TAP before I took command, I did not know how the process worked. One specific example

**Figure 1 — Example Separation Tracker**

| Rank | Name | Type | Counseling, Flag, and Updated SRB | Medical Phase 1 | Medical Phase 2 | Mental Evaluation | SFL-TAP Start Date | Evidence | Turned into Legal for Draft | Chapter Notification | Trial Defense Services | Commander's Chapter Memo | Battalion Commander's Chapter Memo | Turned into Legal for Closure | Status/ Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PFC | Doe, John | 14-12c2 | 21 MAR | 22 MAR | 25 MAR | 22 MAR | 23 MAR | Positive UA | 01 APR | 08 APR | 09 APR | 12 APR | 12 APR | 12 APR | Packet Turned into Legal for Brigade Commander's Signature |

comes to mind: A Soldier separating under Chapter 14-12c (commission of a serious offense) arrived late to a brief which took place only once per week. Because he arrived late, SFL-TAP rescheduled him for the next week. As a frustrated commander, I called the SFL-TAP front desk and demanded that they allow the Soldier to attend his required brief even though he arrived late. My attempts failed and the Soldier's separation was delayed. To stop this sort of thing from happening again, I learned the step-by-step process of SFL-TAP, when each mandatory separation brief took place, and who to talk to if I needed help — all things that could have been accomplished during an office call. I would have saved myself and my NCOs significant headache had I learned this before taking command.

Besides building a better relationship with SFL-TAP, I offer incoming commanders and junior leaders the following additional lessons learned. I previously described in detail the role of the commander in the separations process, but your NCOs are critical for success. I recommend that each platoon designate a mature, senior squad leader as the "legal NCO" for the platoon. The commander and first sergeant should train this NCO so that they thoroughly understand the separation process, know the location of all on-post agencies, and know their points of contact. This NCO escorts all separating Soldiers to their medical, mental, SFL-TAP, and out-processing appointments; maintains all legal and out-processing paperwork; and keeps the Soldier on track for timely separation. Beyond doing the legwork for separation, this NCO also provides emotional support and guidance to Soldiers being separated and helps transition them back to civilian life.

Finally, the commander should never underestimate the effect of showing up in person or calling directly when necessary. Several times during my command, I initiated separation for Soldiers who had committed more serious offenses and needed to be separated as expeditiously as possible. To enroll one Soldier in SFL-TAP, I drove to their office and stood in the lobby until I could meet with the supervisor on duty (this occurred after the incident described above). By personally explaining the situation in a calm and respectful manner, I got the help I needed. On a different occasion, a Soldier needed out-processing orders issued by the post transitions office. By directly calling this office and asking for help, I ensured that the Soldier received discharge orders the same day. Finally, I made a habit of meeting with the battalion paralegal whenever I had to go to our brigade headquarters building. This built rapport and gave me a chance to ask about (and put emphasis on) specific cases. The commander personally asking for help, rather than the platoon legal NCO described above, can dramatically change how military and civilian agencies work with you. The position and responsibility of the commander carries additional weight, which you can use effectively to get supporting agencies to help.

Commanders owe all Soldiers in their formations engaged and compassionate leadership. Regardless of the reason for separation, the process should flow smoothly and efficiently in order to maintain discipline within the unit and for the sake of the Soldier being separated. Through the techniques and lessons described above, commanders and junior officers can make sense of Army regulations, develop systems at their echelon, and train their NCOs to process administrative separations.
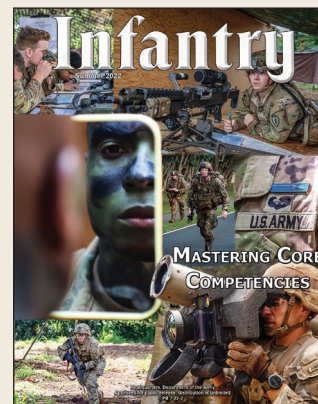
### Notes

[1] George Washington, Letter to the Captains of the Virginia Regiments, July 1759.

[2] Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, July 2020, 1-6.

[3] Ibid.

[4] AR 635-200, *Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations*, June 2021, 1-16.

[5] AR 600-20, 4-1.

[6] AR 635-200, 1-17.

[7] AR 600-85, *The Army Substance Abuse Program*, July 2020, 10-6.

[8] AR 635-200, 14-12.

[9] Ibid, 1-33.

[10] Ibid, 2-1 through 2-3.

[11] AR 600-20, 4-6.

[12] AR 635-200, 1-8.

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# Fly to Supply: Executing Aerial Resupply in an ABCT

## MAJ JONATHAN M. COHEN

From the squad to brigade echelon, across all warfighting functions, Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations expose issues within our formations which cannot be replicated in other training events. At the conclusion of these rotations, there is rarely a shortage of identified areas for improvement. For anyone who has taken part in these events, issues such as an ineffective allocation of reconnaissance assets, a concept of medical support which does not nest with the maneuver plan, or desynchronized logistical distribution most likely sound familiar. However, a frequent issue often overlooked by leaders within an armored brigade combat team (ABCT) is the ineffective use of aerial lift assets to supplement the brigade's concept of distribution.

It is no surprise why this oversight occurs. ABCTs have large logistical requirements, most of which cannot be delivered by aerial platforms. The complexities associated with supplying an ABCT often convince sustainment planners their time would be better served focusing on their concept of ground distribution in lieu of examining how aerial lift can supplement their plans.

One cannot fault these planners. Most Army logistics operations centers (ALOC) struggle to execute current sustainment operations, let alone create future concepts of sustainment which support maneuver plans. However, National Training Center (NTC) Rotation 22-04 was uniquely situated to leverage echelons above brigade (EAB) assets due to the integration of a security force assistance brigade task force (SFAB TF).

During 22-04, 2nd ABCT, 1st Infantry Division (2/1 ID) partnered with an SFAB TF as a proof of concept for the integration of the SFAB during large-scale ground combat operations. As a part of the scenario, 2/1 ID served as a partner foreign security force (FSF) ABCT, and the SFAB TF operated as part of a simulated coalition task force which provided support to an FSF maneuver division. In this role, the SFAB TF possessed operational control (OPCON) over all coalition aviation assets, but it could provide tactical control (TACON) of these assets to the FSF upon request. As a part of this scenario, a maneuver advisor team (MAT) from the task force partnered with the FSF ALOC.

During reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI), the MAT identified it could provide additional support to the FSF ALOC by leveraging EAB aerial lift assets to supplement their sustainment plan. After developing a concept of aerial resupply and executing the air mission planning process, the MAT assisted the partner force in conducting a daily aerial resupply mission that utilized a UH-60 and CH-47 for the entirety of the force-on-force portion of the exercise. Due to the efforts of the MAT, the FSF transported more classes of supply and personnel than any rotational training unit (RTU) in the history of NTC. The following article describes the best practices used by the MAT during the planning, coordination, and execution of the aerial resupply mission known as the "Brown Line."



*Advisors with the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade and their 3rd Infantry Division security element exit UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters during a mission in Afghanistan on 19 September 2018.*
U.S. Army photo

### Aerial Resupply Planning

Prior to the execution of the Brown Line, we had to determine what the aerial resupply mission should deliver. As discussed earlier, the purpose of aerial resupply was not to replace but rather supplement the FSF's distribution capabilities. To do so, we prioritized the following:

1. Class IX parts ordered against deadline faults for pacing items that were not moved from the division support area (DSA) to the brigade support area (BSA) during the daily ground logistics package (LOGPAC). By moving these parts via aerial resupply, they could be delivered to the unit for installation at least 24 hours prior to when they otherwise would have been.

2. Reconstituted personnel moving from the division personnel holding area (PHA) who were not transported during the daily LOGPAC. Oftentimes, subordinate units do not have the means to transport personnel from the DSA. This results in a backlog of personnel in the PHA, which can be alleviated by air movement of these passengers.

3. Class II or IX parts for units with extended interior lines of communication or that were separated from the BSA by restrictive terrain.

4. Commonly used Class II, IIIP, IV, and VIII that are frequently requested by the BSA or subordinate units. Transporting these items on a daily basis increased the size of bench stocks in the support zone, which enabled support units to effectively respond to unforecasted supply requests.

Once we determined the priorities for aerial resupply, the next step was to ensure the Brown Line possessed the means to distribute the supplies and personnel. To do so, the MAT had to ensure the resources required to execute the mission were forecasted and available. This required an understanding of the assets available to the aviation task force, as well as coordinating with the SFAB TF staff to ensure the assets were allocated to support the Brown Line in lieu of other missions which required aerial lift (distinguished visitor flights, air movements, air assaults, etc.).

For the task force, this coordination took place at the daily targeting working group. At this group, members of the TF staff determined how EAB assets would be allocated during the following three daily tasking orders (DTOs). While most of this meeting was dedicated towards synchronizing intelligence and fires assets, it served as an opportunity for TF advisors to discuss how all EAB assets would be allocated based on operational requirements in the next three DTOs. By attending the targeting working group, the MAT assigned to the ALOC could lock in its lift assets, which enabled it to properly coordinate future aerial resupply operations.

Once the lift assets were allocated, the MAT had to determine what the lift assets were going to deliver. This required a series of inputs from the partner force. To coordinate the submission of these inputs, we developed the following process:

1. The MAT assigned to the ALOC would confirm the

> *The complexities associated with supplying an ABCT often convince sustainment planners their time would be better served focusing on their concept of ground distribution in lieu of examining how aerial lift can supplement their plans.*

status of the aerial lift assets during the SFAB TF combat update brief (CUB).

2. Once the status of the aircraft was confirmed, the FSF S1 would coordinate with his/her counterpart in the DSA to determine which personnel required movement via the Brown Line. The identified personnel would then be added to that day's air mission request (AMR).

3. The MAT would attend the partner force's daily logistics synchronization meeting (LOGSYNCH) and maintenance meeting to determine which critical parts and supplies would be delivered on the Brown Line. These were determined based on if the part was designated for a deadline fault on a pacing item, if it was present in the DSA, and if it had not been transported via the daily ground LOGPAC. In addition, the LOGSYNCH provided the FSF the opportunity to make unforecasted requests for Class II, IIIP, IV, or VIII. If available in the DSA, these supplies could be added to the evening Brown Line.

4. Once these parts/supplies were identified, they were added to the AMR and shared with the FSF representatives located in the DSA. These representatives (usually a member of the FSF S4 who is familiar with operations in the SSA) would then locate, pack, palletize (if required), and move the equipment to the pickup zone (PZ) at the DSA.

5. Once the personnel and equipment were identified, the MAT would produce the final AMR and share it with advisor teams aligned to subordinate combat trains command posts (CTCP). During this coordination, the ALOC MAT would confirm the following information:

    a. The CTCP landing zone (LZ) location (8-digit grid).

    b. Whether the CTCP is capable of monitoring the correct communications PACE (primary, alternate, contingency, emergency).

    c. The CTCP has the requisite personnel to secure the LZ (minimum force was one dismounted squad or two gun trucks).

6. The final step was the production of the final AMR which was shared with the SFAB TF aviation cell; this cell would then coordinate with the aviation task force (AVN TF).

Once the AMR was submitted to the AVN TF, there was a deliberate command and control transition which took place between the ALOC MAT and SFAB TF current operations cell (CUOPS). At that point, all further coordination concerning

the Brown Line took place through the CUOPs. This was an important transition because the CUOPs cell had both the bandwidth and communications infrastructure to make reliable and timely coordination with subordinate elements.

### Aerial Resupply Execution

One hour prior to the initiation of the Brown Line, the AVN TF would provide a mission update to the TF CUOPS, and any delays were communicated with the CTCPs that would receive the aircraft. If there were no delays, the LZ controller was required to be postured at least 30 minutes prior to the arrival time listed on the AMR. After takeoff, the aircraft would communicate with the SFAB TF CUOPS via the published PACE, and the CUOPS cell would provide LZ controllers with wheels up and down times when they were reported by the aircraft.

The first stop of the Brown Line was always the DSA. The DSA and the BSA were the only two heavy LZs (capable of loading and unloading equipment with a forklift). After the equipment was secured, the passengers and pallet rider would load the aircraft. The pallet rider would communicate with the crew throughout the mission and help off-load passengers and equipment at each LZ.

The next stop for the Brown Line was the BSA. The LZ controller at the BSA would communicate directly with the aircraft and have a forklift as well as personnel postured near the LZ to unload the aircraft. Upon far recognition of the aircraft, the LZ controller would mark the LZ with the pre-coordinated marking signal and await confirmation from the crew that the forklift and personnel could unload the aircraft. Since the BSA was the only LZ capable of unloading heavy loads, all equipment which required a forklift needed to be unloaded at that location. After equipment was dropped at the BSA, the aircraft would continue to the subsequent stops on the AMR.

At the CTCPs, personnel and equipment were off-loaded once the aircraft made contact with the LZ controller at the CTCPs. If contact could not be made with the LZ controller, the aircraft would provide itself enough time to return to the BSA to drop off the remaining personnel and equipment prior to its return to the DSA (required to drop off the pallet rider) and ultimately the AVN TF.

Using this method of coordination and execution enabled the brigade to move more than 300 personnel and 50,000 pounds of supplies from the DSA throughout the FSF's support area during the 10-day force-on-force exercise. According to the NTC observer coach/trainers (OC/Ts), this was more than any other ABCT in the training center's history. However, despite the success of the Brown Line, there were



Photo by CPT W. Scott Walters

*A flight engineer with the 1st Armored Division guides a forklift operator while placing an M1A2 Abrams tank engine onto a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Fort Bliss, TX, on 4 May 2015.*

still areas which could have been improved.

### Areas for Improvement

Regarding the planning of the Brown Line, we did not reevaluate the enemy situation in the support zone prior to the execution of these missions. Although we executed an initial intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) assessment as a part of our air mission planning process during RSOI, we did not consult the engineer battalion (responsible for security in the support zone) or the AVN TF intelligence cells (S2) for a reevaluation of the enemy situation during the exercise. While this may be permissible at NTC, doing so could be a lethal mistake during large-scale ground combat operations.

If the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh or Ukraine have taught us anything, it is that air defense systems have made aerial lift operations vulnerable throughout the entire length of a unit's interior lines.[1-2] In addition, coordination with the intelligence cell responsible for rear area security would enable the aircraft to serve as non-traditional sensors, which could help answer intelligence requirements for an S2 which does not normally receive assets to assist with its collection efforts.

In addition, the FSF as well as the SFAB TF did not come to NTC with the requisite equipment or expertise required to conduct sling load operations which limited the type of equipment that could be transported. While we partially solved this problem through the use of heavy LZs at the DSA and the BSA, we could not transport palletized Class IX parts to the battalion support zones where they could have been rapidly installed. Prior to the start of any operation where a unit wants to leverage aerial resupply, leaders must ensure the requisite equipment and expertise are available within the division,

brigade, and battalion support zones to enable the use of sling loads.

Finally, coordinating with LZ controllers in the battalion support zones was challenging which limited the effectiveness of the Brown Line. Communication is always a challenge, and coordination for aerial resupply was no different. These challenges were magnified because the partner force never executed aerial resupply during home-station training. Therefore, the LZ controllers in the battalion support zones did not understand the battle rhythm, reporting requirements, or LZ marking procedures required to receive aerial resupply. If an organization plans to use aerial resupply, they should use this method of distribution during collective training so that stakeholders in the process are aware of their responsibilities.

### Conclusion

While aerial resupply cannot replace an ABCT's ground distribution plan, it can certainly supplement one. For good reasons during operations within an ABCT, planners become consumed with coordinating complex intelligence, fires, maneuver, and sustainment plans while allowing aerial lift assets to go latent. Developing a coherent and reliable concept of aerial resupply can expedite the delivery of mission-critical parts and personnel to geographically dispersed units to help them maintain momentum during large-scale ground combat operations. By doing so, a formation can avoid culmination, which will enable them to turn tactical opportunities into operational success.

### Notes

[1] Nicole Thomas, LTC Matt Jamison, CPT Kendall Gomber, and Derek Walton, "What the United States Military Can Learn from the Nagorno-Karabakh War," *Small Wars Journal*, 4 April 2021, accessed from https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/what-united-states-military-can-learn-nagorno-karabakh-war.

[2] Douglas Barrie and Yohann Michel, "The War in Ukraine, Where Quantity as well as Quality Matters," iiss.org, 22 April 2022, accessed from https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2022/04/war-in-ukraine-where-quantity-as-well-as-quality-matters.

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# Explaining Educational Benefits: A Leader's Responsibility

**CPT MICAH A. FARMER**

Let me start by stating I was not a perfect company commander; such a person does not exist. However, a strong point of my command was talking with Soldiers and discussing the educational opportunities and benefits they could use while serving besides the GI Bill. What always amazed me was the lack of information that Soldiers received from previous leadership. Too often Soldiers either never received information about benefits such as tuition assistance or had no idea about the requirements and tools to access it. When I mention Soldiers, I am not only referring to junior Soldiers but also senior NCOs and junior officers. Regardless of rank or time in service, three commonalities remained: a lack of knowledge on benefits such as tuition assistance (TA) and credentialing assistance (CA), little to no knowledge on schools that offer discounted tuition for active military, and a lack of knowledge on how to setup and request these benefits.

While many who read this will insist that these responsibilities belong to the education center, that simply is not true. With the high operations tempo found in most brigade combat teams, it is often difficult for Soldiers to sit down with an education counselor. There must be another method for Soldiers to get this information. Hence the importance that military leaders especially at the platoon level and higher be able to explain educational benefits. So how can this be done? I am glad you asked.

When it comes to explaining benefits such as TA and CA to Soldiers, leaders first need to educate themselves on what these benefits are. Tuition assistance is a resource for any Soldier who has completed basic training and advanced individual training as well as officers who have completed the basic officer leaders course (BOLC). Once eligible, Soldiers who have not yet earned an undergraduate degree are able to receive $250 per credit hour for 16 credit hours per fiscal year up to 130 credit hours total.[1] For Soldiers and officers who enter the military with an undergraduate degree, they are able to use TA to obtain a graduate degree. The Army allots funding for 39 credit hours also at a rate of $250 per credit hour limited to 16 credit hours per fiscal year.[2] It is also important to inform junior officers that if they use TA they will incur a two-year active duty service obligation (ADSO) starting from the completion date of the last class in which TA was used. For example, I used TA when pursuing my graduate degree and completed my last course in December of 2019; my ADSO required me to continuing serving in the military until at least December of 2021.

Credentialing assistance is a newer benefit that allows Soldiers to pursue certifications and credentials that can be MOS related or a personal interest. Currently, the Army offers more than 1,600 different credentials for Soldiers to pursue. These credentials generally cover any subject a person can think of from computer science to project management. CA also allows Soldiers to pursue multiple credentials a year, providing up to $4,000 per fiscal year in funding through approved providers.[3] It is important to note that CA and TA use the same pot of money. That means if I use $1,000 for credential-

ing assistance then I only have $3,000 for tuition assistance and vice versa. For leaders, it is imperative that we discuss credentialing options with Soldiers and know what they are interested in. Too often as leaders, we push college on Soldiers who generally are not interested in the concept. We need to push the pursuit of credentials with the same fervor we push college; and like giving dairy to someone who is lactose intolerant, if we force college as the only option for Soldiers, it could end in disaster. A great tool for leaders to use with Soldiers is the Army Credentialing Opportunities On-line (COOL) website (https://cool.osd.mil/army). This website allows Soldiers to view the full library of available credentials and the steps to applying for CA.

Once leaders are competent on what TA and CA are, the next step is making the time to sit down with subordinates and explain this information. Now there are several ways to convey this, but I will share the two methods that worked best for me. The first is making the most of quarterly counseling. While some leaders may see this as a "check-the-box" requirement, it is a key event to ensuring the personal development of subordinates. While discussing a Soldier's performance over the last quarter, it is also important to listen to their goals for self-development moving forward. When I conducted my first quarterly counseling with my platoon leaders, I would ask if they wanted to pursue a credential or graduate degree. If they did, I would ask what type of credential/degree, the reason for pursuing it, their timeline for completion, and if they were willing to pay anything out of pocket.

Each aspect played a key role in the recommendation I would give. For example, the type of credential or degree could affect the type of university I would recommend. For my Soldiers who wanted to pursue things like a degree in cyber security, I would often recommend universities that were a member of the National Security Agency's (NSA) National Center for Academic Excellence.[4] If they had a timeline for

completion, I would sit down with them and discuss what their course load would look like. Many were often ambitious and wanted to complete their degree in one to two years. However, once we laid out how many courses that would be per semester, we often would adjust after considering both professional and important personal life events (field exercises, promotions, permanent changes of station, weddings, and childbirths.

A very important aspect for assisting Soldiers is understanding the reason why Soldiers want to pursue a degree or credential. Is it for personal growth? Is it for professional growth, or is it to assist the Soldier before transitioning to the civilian workforce? The Soldier's answer greatly impacted my response. Many of my NCOs wanted to pursue a degree to assist with career advancement. This meant creating a very strict timeline and looking for universities that would give the most credit for the NCO's joint service transcript (JST) or utilize universities that allow students to demonstrate their current knowledge using competency-based evaluations. These considerations were critical to ensuring they could complete the degree and have it added to their enlisted records brief (ERB) prior to the next promotion board.

The other method that worked for me in explaining educational benefits to Soldiers was bringing a representative from the education center to our formation. Using the People First Initiative, I would invite a representative to speak to my company on the last Friday of the month before or during the closeout formation. This method was a huge success; the representative was able to answer Soldiers' questions on the spot and provide information on universities that had partnered with the installation and offered classes on post. The representative would also discuss trends in the use of TA and CA. Leaders and Soldiers could continue receiving information on educational benefits by requesting access to the education center's email distribution. This enabled leaders to continue updating Soldiers on educational opportunities and provide updates to any changes to TA and CA requirements.

One of the hardest parts of informing Soldiers about educational benefits is talking about the cost. Most Soldiers do not have the experience to differentiate between schools that are looking to provide a worthwhile education that sets them up for success verses those that prey on Soldiers' lack of experience and purely see their tuition assistance as a quick cash grab. Herein lies the leader's task; it is tedious and painstaking but well worth the effort. As leaders, we must sit with Soldiers and assist in the groundwork.

I cannot count the number of times Soldiers came up to me and said they found a college that offered the degree they wanted and only cost the price of TA. However, once we sat down and investigated the institution, they were often unaccredited or accredited by an agency that

**Figure 1 — Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line Website**
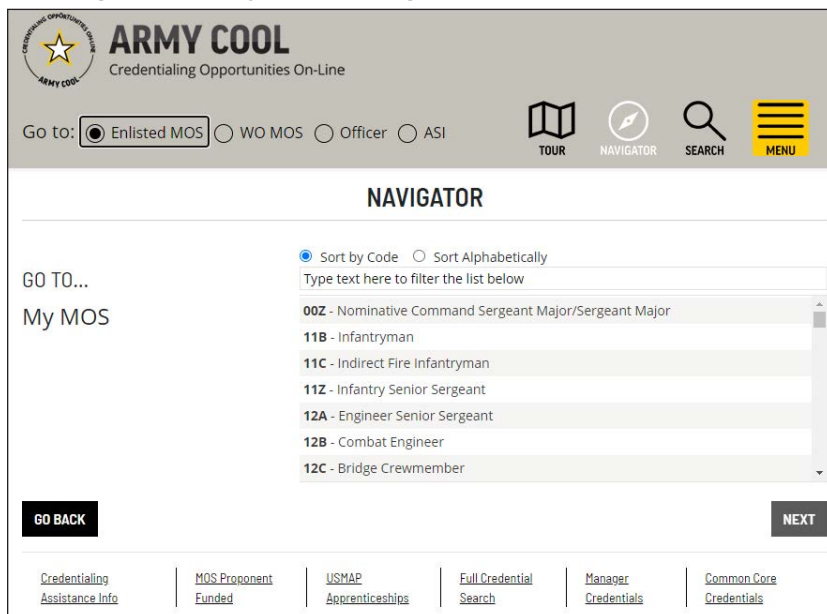
would make it near impossible to transfer earned credits to another university. The best way to explain this process for a leader is to compare it to taking a teenager to a used car dealership. Every place is different, and they do not all sell the same level of quality. It is vital to make the time and assist Soldiers through the process. Do the initial Google search with Soldiers and find colleges that will only cost what the Soldier is willing to pay. When I would sit with Soldiers, I would ask how much they were willing to pay. For myself, my thought process was: "You can have my time or you can have my money, but I'm not giving you both." When I would look at a university, I would see if they offered a tuition discount for military. I specifically looked for universities that limited the cost of attendance to the Army's TA rate. If they did, I would do a "look under the hood." I would ensure that there were not additional fees, that the tuition would not change dependent on the Soldier's state of residency and who they are accredited by, and whether the university is regionally or nationally accredited (in this case regional accreditation being the better of the two).



**Figure 2 — ArmyIgnitED Website (https://www.armyignited.com)**

It is especially important to differentiate between schools that label themselves as military friendly and those that are actually cost effective. Just because a school has a veteran's office and hosts veteran events does not mean it has any sort of tuition discount for veterans or those currently serving. They may accept the GI Bill and have a yellow ribbon program, but that does not mean there are any benefits for those using tuition assistance.

The last item to mention is that leaders should assist Soldiers with setting up their TA and CA accounts. The first step is to guide them to the Army's official education assistance website — www.armyignited.com. For those who share the battle scars of using GoArmyEd, the ArmyIgnitED website is much easier to access and user friendly. Starting at the login page, ArmyIgnitED breaks the process into five easy steps.[5] After Soldiers create their user profile, they will do a search for a degree they want to pursue. Then they will create their education path, deciding when and how many courses to take each semester (this is where sitting down with Soldiers ahead of time and considering important events pays off). Once that is complete, they apply for classes and request tuition assistance to either pay for the class completely or are prepared to pay a portion of the cost. Soldiers will attend their classes either online or in-person and then earn their degree after meeting the necessary requirements.

The credentialing assistance on ArmyIgnitED uses the same account as tuition assistance. The main difference is that once Soldiers login they will request CA instead of tuition. Afterwards, they will request to add a credential for funding. They can either searc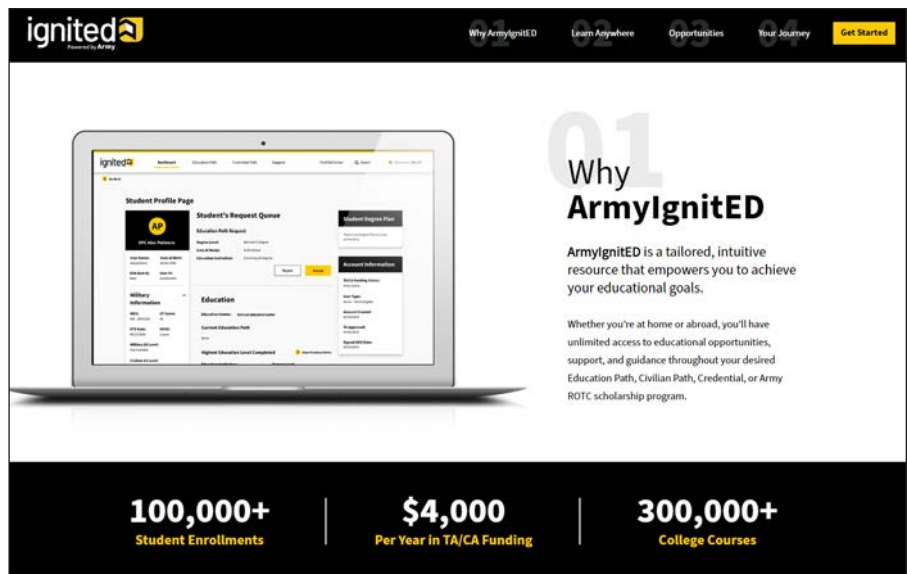h the list of available credentials or type in the name of the credential they want. Once Soldiers have selected the credential they want, they will add it and request funding. Once they request funding, Soldiers get to choose the provider they want to receive training from. After Soldiers submit their request to ArmyIgnitED, it can take 30 days to receive funding. Leaders need to sit down with Soldiers and ensure that they have time available to complete the credential training. Soldiers must consider items such as the company's short-term training calendar especially considering items that would take them away from internet connectivity such as field exercises or Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations.

As leaders, we must make the time and commitment to our Soldiers to ensure their personal and professional development. We must make the investment and learn about education benefits that Soldiers can use while they serve. When done successfully, we create future leaders, our successors, both in and out of the military who capable and confident. In return, they will educate future generations of Soldiers on how to better themselves and the U.S. Army as a whole.

### Notes

[1] "Tuition Assistance," MyArmyBenefits, accessed 13 February from https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Tuition-Assistance-(TA).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line — Costs and Funding, accessed 13 February from https://cool.osd.mil/army/costs_and_funding/index.htm.

[4] National Security Agency/Central Security Service, National Centers of Academic Excellence, accessed 13 February from https://www.nsa.gov/Academics/Centers-of-Academic-Excellence.

[5] "It Starts with a Spark," ArmyIgnitED, accessed 13 February from https://www.armyignited.com/app.

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# Lessons from the Past

# A Master Class in Mission Command:

## LTG Matthew B. Ridgway's Leadership at Chipyong-ni

**CPT ANDREW LIGHTSEY IV**

On 25 June 1950, the North Korean communists launched an attack on the Republic of Korea (ROK), starting a war that would last 37 months, claim more than 33,629 American lives, and leave another 103,284 American Soldiers wounded.[1] The fighting was due to a battle of philosophies featuring communism, backed by the newly founded People's Republic of China, and democracy, endorsed by the United Nations (UN) and most notably supported by the United States. The impact on the United States following the war was profound as it "greatly intensified hostilities between the West and Communist-bloc nations, gave powerful impetus to a massive nuclear arms race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and gave root to the notion that communism could be contained by military power… which led to American intervention in Vietnam."[2]

Having struggled early in the Korean War, the U.S. made personnel changes that led to the placement of LTG Matthew B. Ridgway as the commander of Eighth Army. Having proven himself in Washington, D.C., as the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Administration, he had the endorsements of then Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall and GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower, who noted LTG Ridgway had "never undertaken a job that he has not performed in a soldierly and even brilliant way."[3] His placement in this position was unequivocally significant as he organized his forces to participate in the Battle of Chipyong-ni. Considered the decisive point of the war, this battle proved to the UN troops that they could defeat the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF), and from the conclusion of the battle until the armistice agreement, the UN troops conducted purely offensive operations.[4] Through the utilization of the mission command principles of shared understanding, mutual trust, risk acceptance, and competence, LTG Ridgway and his forces repelled the Chinese attack at the Battle of Chipyong-ni, effectively turning the tide of the Korean War.

The Battle of Chipyong-ni took place from 13-15 February 1951 and ended in a defeat for the CCF, which lost an estimated 5,000 Soldiers.[5] The 23rd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), accompanied by a French battalion, withstood hundreds of Chinese attackers who tried to break through its perimeter, which was situated on a ring of eight hills surrounding the city. Supported by more than 131 air sorties for aerial resupply and fires from the 37th Field Artillery Battalion, the 82nd Anti-aircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion, and the 503rd Field Artillery Battalion, Ridgway's Soldiers fought around the clock, countering continuous waves of communist invaders.[6] Having only given up ground twice, only to regain it through vigorous rounds of close combat, the fighting ceased at 1715 as 20 tanks from the 5th U.S. Cavalry Regiment arrived in relief. The Chinese forces fled and unsuccessfully attempted to invade the city of Chechon in the east, and the 5,600 UN Soldiers who fought there were awarded the American Distinguished Unit Citation.[7]

LTG Ridgway continuously relied on concise messaging to communicate what had to be accomplished. Most notably, by answering the questions of "what are we fighting for" and "what would happen if the line did not hold," he was able to create a shared understanding across the Eighth Army, which inspired the Soldiers to maintain a successful defense at Chipyong-ni. While conducting an



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*Erle Cocke, American Legion; LTG Matthew B. Ridgway, commander of Eighth Army; and LTC Gilbert J. Check, commander of 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment inspect the lines in Korea on 14 March 1951.*

earlier battlefield circulation, LTG Ridgway was astonished by his Soldiers' lack of esprit de corps and unit pride in comparison to that of troops past in the European theater.[8] Upon the completion of the trip, he realized that a major source of his units' apathy was that they did not understand their purpose in the Asian theater. He made it a point to address this question in written correspondence titled "Why Are We Here?" In the address, LTG Ridgway explained, "To me the issues are clear. It is not a question of this or that Korean town or village. Real estate is, here, incidental… The real issues are whether the power of Western civilization, as God has permitted it to flower in our own beloved lands, shall defy and defeat Communism."[9] The message to "defeat communism" was well received and understood by the Soldiers preparing for battle at Chipyong-ni.

The second message LTG Ridgway pushed out created shared understanding and elicited buy-in from Soldiers and policymakers; this message was that his Soldiers would fight. This came from the realization of what would happen if the defense at Chipyong-ni collapsed. Senior leaders in Washington, D.C., his direct superior GEN Douglas MacArthur, and subordinates all felt that any hope of gaining momentum and securing the town was lost. Adamantly refusing these notions, LTG Ridgway made it clear that further withdrawal would seriously jeopardize any hope of gaining a foothold in the southern region of the country.[10] His message to the President down to the newest Soldier: "We are going to stay here and fight it out."[11]

LTG Ridgway understood that in order to hold the defensive position at Chipyong-ni, the American forces would have to rely on their allies. As the relationship with the ROK Army was seeming to sour due to a series of withdrawal to the south, he looked towards the UN country of France.[12] This trust built between LTG Ridgway and the French Army, and in turn the French Army and the American 23rd RCT, proved critical in defeating the Chinese. In his account of the relationship leading up to the battle, LTC Sherman Pratt recalled, "They were just another battalion in the regiment, and we saw them regularly… We intermingled often with the French troops, and sometimes they would share their daily ration."[13] The French battalion commander, Lt. Col. Ralph Monclar, also held the mutual trust with his American partners in high regard having stated, "This war marks the first time in all recorded history that armies have taken to the field… simply to preserve the peace and stop wrongful aggression, and do it under the banner of an international organization created for just that purpose."[14]

During the engagement, the confidence between the U.S. and French armies paid off as the French soldiers were able to hold key terrain along the southwest perimeter of the town, against various elements of three separate Chinese armies (Corps).[15] The bond built between LTG Ridgway, his Soldiers, and the French, proved essential at Chipyong-ni and became a major theme for the rest of the war. This was largely because it answered the question of whether "the UN forces could stand up to the Chinese oceans of manpower."[16] From
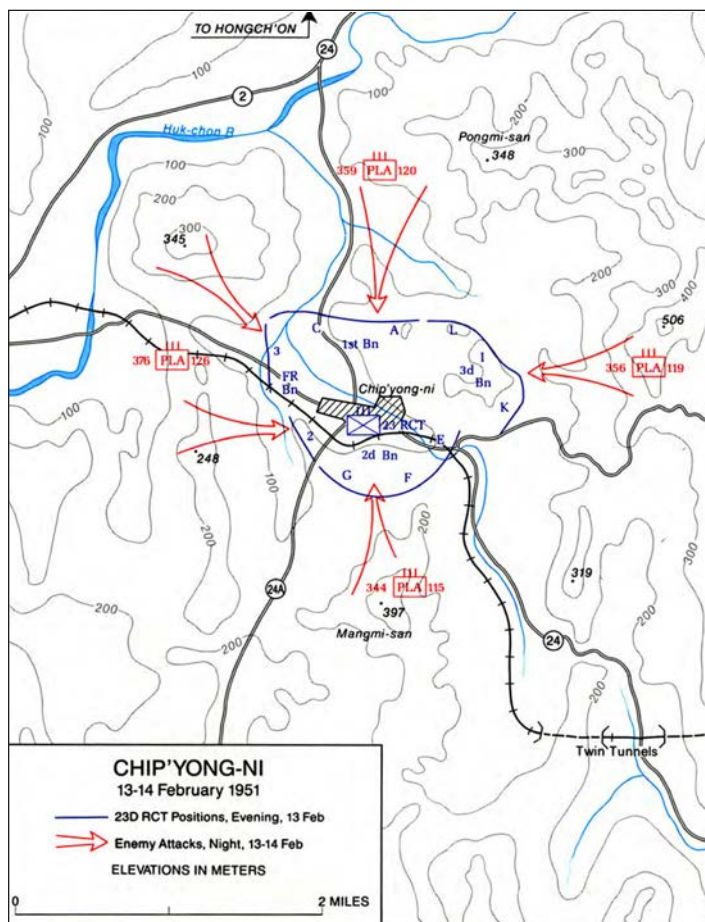


*Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951* by Billy S. Mossman
**Map — Battle of Chipyong-ni**

Chipyong-ni on, China and the rest of the world understood that it could.

LTG Ridgway had a masterful understanding of his enemy, to include their capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, and history. This enabled him to make the call to dig into the high ground on the ridgetops surrounding Chipyong-ni. Knowing the Chinese doctrine of the day and having cut off the CCF's dwindling supply route from the nearby city of Wonju days earlier, LTG Ridgway was able to accept the risk that came with holding the town. He believed in his Soldiers' ability to outlast the Chinese and that the CCF's weakened supply lines would keep them from participating in a prolonged engagement.[17]

Chinese forces generally carried any necessary fighting and personal supplies, to include ammunition, on their backs into battle. This allowed them to operate without being tied to logistical hubs or sustainment areas, unlike the American troops. Utilizing this tactic, the CCF was able to send out its men quickly but could not keep them in the fight for extended periods of time.[18] This problem was exacerbated by the fact that factories in mainland China could not meet military demand, which amounted to a shortfall of more than 12,600 tons of ammunition and "critical shortages in anti-tank weaponry, surface-to-air communications equipment, and trucks for both transportation and supply."[19]

Although he did not have specifics, the knowledge of the Chinese supply overextension and standard operating procedures was key to LTG Ridgway's decision to fight at Chipyong-ni. This meant accepting the possibility that if the CCF broke through during the battle a corridor would be open to the city of Yoju, where the enemy could resupply and isolate LTG Ridgway's remaining forces.[20] His line held and the 23rd RCT and French battalion soundly defended against their attackers.[21]

LTG Ridgway, a West Point graduate and former commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division and the XVIII Airborne Corps respectively, was a highly competent leader heading into the Korean War. Applying lessons learned from the invasion of Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, and the Western Allied invasion of Germany, he immediately recognized the importance of understanding geography and coordinating logistics in Korea.[22]

An astute tactician accustomed to combat operations on tough terrain, LTG Ridgway was eager to make a stand against the offensive-minded CCF in an area that gave his Soldiers an advantage. He selected Chipyong-ni after successfully maneuvering the U.S. X Corps and III ROK Corps to maintain a blocking position on-line to the southwest while simultaneously advancing the U.S. IX Corp on their immediate left-flank.[23] LTG Ridgway picked the village, predicting the Chinese were planning to march on the UN communications center, Wonju, 30 kilometers to the southeast.[24] He assessed the village had hills "that rose from 100-400 meters in height… and provided excellent defensive positions, with good fields of fire… that stretched the ridgelines."[25] It was from these hills that the 23rd RCT and French battalion were able to call airstrikes and artillery on the CCF hordes in the early hours of the Battle of Chipyong-ni, which softened the enemy as the fighting advanced. LTG Ridgway's competence, showcased by his innate ability to conduct strategic planning under pressure and wargame enemy courses of action, led him to choose the optimal location in which his Soldiers staged their defense.

In the aftermath of the Battle of Chipyong-ni, LTG Ridgway was recognized for his remarkable strategic-thinking abilities and later named the Allied Commander of the Far East, following the dismissal of GEN MacArthur.[26] Eighth Army used the momentum it had gained to push the CCF invaders back to the north and remained engaged in offensive operations until the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953.[27] LTG Ridgway's mastery and use of the mission command principles of shared understanding, mutual trust, risk acceptance, and competence during the Battle of Chipyong-ni was the differentiator of the Korean War.

## Notes

[1] Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War* (NY: Times Books, 1987), Foreword.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, 563.

[4] "The Battle of Chipyong-ni: February 1951," *Parallel Narratives*, accessed 18 February from https://parallelnarratives.com/the-battle-of-chipyong-ni-february-1951/.

[5] Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost* (NY: Hippocrene Books, 1986), 393.

[6] Ministry of National Defense, *The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War* (Republic of Korea: War History Compilation Committee, 1975), 475.

[7] Alexander, *Korea*, 393.

[8] Matthew Ridgway, *The Korean War* (NY: Doubleday & Company, 1967), 86.

[9] Ibid, 264.

[10] Ministry of National Defense, 469.

[11] Ibid, 470.

[12] Alexander, *Korea*, 380.

[13] Sherman Pratt, *Decisive Battles of the Korean War* (NY: Vantage Press, 1992), 165.

[14] Ibid, 160.

[15] Alexander, *Korea*, 393.

[16] Pratt, *Decisive Battles,* 161.

[17] Ansil Walker, "Ansil L. Walker Recalls the Battle of Chipyong-ni During the Korean War." Historynet, accessed 19 February from https://www.historynet.com/ansil-lwalker-recalls-the-battle-of-chipyong-ni-during-the-korean-war.htm.

[18] Alexander, *Korea*, 301.

[19] Harry Crocker, "Chinese Intervention in the Korean War" (master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 2002).

[20] Alexander, *Korea*, 393.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ridgway, *The Korean War,* 1.

[23] Ministry of National Defense, 467.

[24] Ibid, 466.

[25] Ibid, 467.

[26] Blair, 796.

[27] Ibid, 975.

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**U.S. Army in Action Poster — Breakthrough at Chipyong-ni**



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# Future Issue Themes:

Winter 2022-2023 - Mountain Operations
Spring 2023 - Arctic Operations