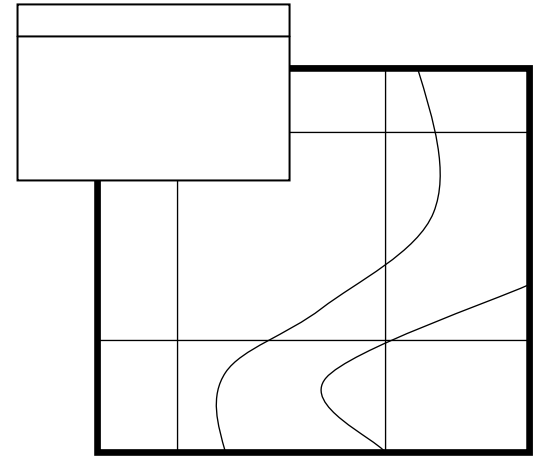


# Orders Techniques in the Infantry Company



Battalion PME  
Major B.B. McBreen

# The Goal



- An verbal company order:
  - Face-to-face or over the radio
  - On the terrain or sand table or map
  - Using an index card and a map
- The order is an Essential Combat Skill:  
**Five sentences, in fifty seconds, under fire.**

# The Key: Brevity

“An order should contain everything a subordinate must know...and only that.”

– *Truppenfuhrung* 1936

- Communicate Key Ideas in Concise Phrases
- Issue single-sentence missions and tasks
- Develop an orders shorthand
- Kill all adjectives and adverbs
- Use precise doctrinal terms

**In the disorder of combat, simplicity is strength**

# Three Types of Sentences

- Mission-specific information: “H-Hour is 0900”
- Micromanagement (MM): “ROs carry extra rope”
  - Training advice does NOT belong in an oporder
- More Of The Obvious (MOTO): “Avoid casualties”
  - SOPs, definitions, and other self-evident information

**Everything in the order should be mission-specific**

# Almanac Information is *Reference*, NOT Order

- War Plans
- Landing Plans / HWSAT
- Annex B: Intelligence
- Schedules
- List of Targets
- Load Plans
- Manifests

# Organization

- Organize First
- Organize simply: few moving parts is best
- Organize clearly: command relationships
- No tasks, no RES, just organization
- Organization drives comm plan and all else

**O: 1st + SMAWs + CEB, 2nd, 3rd + MG + 60mm**

# Orientation

- Key Terrain
- Key Control Measures
- Designate new control measures

**O: LINCOLN, CP32A, OBJ 40, bldgs 42, 44, GOLD**

# Situation

- *An assessment* of EN intentions
  - Use “I think...” format: MLCOA
  - Not restated almanac information
- HHQ Mission and Intent

**S: I think EN will DEF every bldg, even bypassed.  
HHQ: Bn (Bde ME) CIZ IOT open MSR to civ veh.**



Any order consists of one *key* sentence:

# The Mission

- One Sentence
  - Formulated with painstaking care
  - Each word means something. Each *extra* word makes understanding more difficult.
  - Several tasks divert from the main objective
- Use the IOT format
- Use precise doctrinal terms

**M: @ 1200 "E" seizes OBJ 40 IOT O/W Bn ATK on  
rte LINCOLN.**

# The Intent

**Do *whatever it takes* IOT prevent EN interference with civilian traffic on rte LINCOLN**

- Intent = Purpose = End State
  - NOT CoO: Intent survives after CoO operations is OBE
  - NOT restated mission
  - NOT “how” – NOT method – Intent is “why”
  - Good intent focuses on EN, lesser on Fr, then terrain
- Simple enough to be understood two levels down:
  - Short – Visual – Important
- No “AND” – No multiple intents
- Test: Can you replace mission, still maintain intent?

# Execution: CoO

- CoO is an overall verbal picture of the plan.
  - Needed so subordinates understand big picture
  - All tasks require context
  - **Graphic SoM is best**
- FS: TPME – Focus on *purpose* of FS plan

**E: CoO: SBF Plat O/W ME Plat into bldg 42. (1) Plat  
FIT ME to bldg 44 prot Co flank. MG att ME on OBJ.  
FS: R/W CAS O/C @ 1300. POF to ME to O/W Bn.**

# Execution: Tasks

- One Sentence *each*
  - Formulated with painstaking care
  - Each word means something. Each *extra* word makes understanding more difficult.
  - Several tasks divert from the main objective
- Use the IOT format
- Use precise doctrinal terms
- Designate a ME

**1st: ME. Seize bldg 42 IOT O/W Bn on LINCOLN.  
2nd: FIT ME. Seize bldg 44 IOT prot Co flanks.  
3rd: SBF to (NW) IOT spt ME onto OBJ.**

# Execution: Coord Instructions

- Unit-wide information
- Coordination tasks for all units

**Coord: Bn H-Hour is 1300. 13 Apr ROE update.**

# Admin and Logistics Command and Signal

- For a well-trained and well-led company, most A&L and C&S should be SOP

**A: CCP is CP32A**

**C: SOP**

Speak full sentences when issuing the order

# The Index Card

**O: 1st + SMAWs + CEB, 2nd, 3rd + MG + 60mm**

**O: LINCOLN, CP32A, OBJ 40, bldgs 42, 44, GOLD**

**S: I think EN will DEF every bldg, even bypassed.**

**HHQ: Bn (Bde ME) CIZ IOT open MSR to civ veh.**

**M: @ 1200 "E" seizes OBJ 40 IOT O/W Bn ATK on rte LINCOLN.**

**E: CoO: SBF Plat O/W ME Plat into bldg 42. (1) Plat FIT ME to bldg 44 prot Co flank. MG att ME on OBJ.**

**FS: R/W CAS O/C @ 1300. POF to ME to O/W Bn.**

**1st: ME. Seize bldg 42 IOT O/W Bn on LINCOLN.**

**2nd: FIT ME. Seize bldg 44 IOT prot Co flanks.**

**3rd: SBF to (NW) IOT spt ME onto OBJ.**

**Coord: Bn H-Hour is 1300. 13 Apr ROE update.**

**A: CCP is CP32A**

**C: SOP**

# Techniques for Delivery

- **Terrain:** Overlook Terrain
  - OR Terrain Model OR Map
- **Organization:** Once organized, sit attached unit leaders together
- **Graphics:** Subordinates depart with a graphic
  - Either overlay or notes on map or hand-drawn sketch
- **Briefback:** Always briefback to clear up questions or misunderstandings
- **Language:**
  - Look men in the eye. Speak to them and point to the terrain.
  - Display confidence. Avoid doubts.
  - Use inclusive, not exclusive, language: “You are moving with me.”
  - Avoid qualified statements: “As far as possible...”
  - Avoid conditional statements: “If you make it...”
  - Avoid needless adverbs: “Attack vigorously...”
  - Avoid vulgar, non-doctrinal statements: “Crush in a vice of fire!<sup>16</sup>”



# Backup Slides

# Justifications

- Handout: *3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom AAR*
- USMC Wargaming 1994-5: Over and over again field grade officers were lost when given only fifty minutes for orders
  - “If we had time, we would have written something up.”
  - No mission, no intent, no main effort, no CoO
- 3M and the one-page memo
- No such thing as “sufficient planning time”

“If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.”  
– Albert Einstein

# Mission Order Philosophy

- Mission Orders assign what must be done without saying how it will be done: Requires clear Intent
- Assume Competence
- Do NOT trespass on subordinate independence
  - Respect their authority and prerogatives
  - The ability to act on one's own initiative creates enthusiasm for the task and joy of responsibility
- Fast decisions require short orders
  - Make decisions faster than the EN
- Avoid *Phases* until you're fighting the MEF

# Bad Orders

- [In] French planning...Great importance is attached to the formulation of very long orders... The analysts cited instructions for a high-level French war game...[that] was 280 pages long, not counting its twenty-two appendixes.
  - German Foreign Armies West Study, 1938
- **Gen Fredendall II Corps Order**, February 1943
- **2 Para at Goose Green**, 1982
- **CAX MAC OpOrder**, October 2000
- **“Solutions to TDG #04-1,” MCG**, March 2004

# Top Ten Bad-Order Warning Bells

1. NO Mission
2. NO ME
3. Complex Organization: Too many moving parts
4. Too many O/O: Conditional tasks = excessive coord
5. Too many BPT
6. Too many tasks: Order is NOT a script for puppets
7. Tasking the RES
8. Imprecise use of doctrinal terms / non-doctrinal terms
9. MM - Micromanagement
10. MOTO – More of the Obvious

# Commander's Intent Confusion

- MLCOA, MDCOA, CV, CG is **Situation**
- Vision or Endstate WRT EN, Fr, and Terrain is **CoO** or **Intent**
- Purpose = **Intent**  
Method = **CoO**  
Endstate = **CoO** or **Intent**
- Intent Paragraph is NOT a restated CoO, should NOT be a separate order

# Order: ME and Nesting

- Every order has a Main Effort
- All orders “Nest” from echelon to echelon
  - Trace ME / Maintain accurate tactical tasks
- *“Seize Hill 116  
IOT control SAIPAN A/F  
IOT prev EN air interference during seizure of Marianas  
IOT provide naval and air bases (isolate Central Carolinas)  
IOT ATK Japan by sea, air, and further amphibious OPS  
IOT win the war in the Pacific.”*
- Handout: *Nesting the Main Effort: Example*

“Rommel...practiced an opposite policy: drawing every possible tank and gun together to work in concert against a single objective.”

– Bevin Alexander, *How Great Generals Win*

# Training

- Issuing orders is an acquired skill. Practice is the only path to proficiency.
- The art of issuing orders is difficult to train, but too late to learn in combat.
- It is essential that commanders are trained to act independently with initiative during peacetime
- **Issue an order for all exercises and evolutions**
- **Issue an order for all TDGs and wargames**
- Critique orders / Cross out excess information
- Train multiple levels to same standards



# Orders and the Bigger Picture

1. Receive / Deduce the Mission
2. Estimate the Situation  
[EN, Fr, terrain, HHQ]
3. Make the Decision
4. **Issue the Order**
5. Supervise

**“A good rehearsal is better than a good oporder.”**

# Handouts on Orders

- *3/7 OIF AAR, 2003*
- MajGen Wood's Verbal Order Philosophy, 1944
- *FM 17-33, 1949*
- MajGen Allen Order, 1942
- "Ten Years of TDGs," McBreen 2003
- "Kodiak Actual: Thoughts on Verbal Orders," 2003
- *Orders: Terms and Graphics*
- *Orders Shorthand and Worksheet*
- *Nesting the Main Effort: Example*

# Quotes

- “The direct answer to the question: Can a battalion operate on verbal orders? Is an absolute yes...In Hue City, I don't recall Col Cheatham, CO 2/5, ever issuing anything but a verbal order throughout the battle.”  
– MajGen O.K. Steele, CG 2nd MarDiv, 1990
- “The most important thing was that I gave all orders verbally. Even my largest and most important operations orders were verbal. After all there wasn't any need for written orders. As division commander, I forbade the use of written orders within my division.”  
– Gen Hermann Balck
- “A commander must train his subordinate commanders, and his own staff, to work and act on verbal orders. Those who cannot be trusted to act on clear and concise verbal orders, but want everything in writing, are useless.”  
– Montgomery of Alamein, *Memoirs*, 1958
- “The smaller the unit, the more frequently were orders issued orally...As the war continued, the practice of issuing oral commands was adopted even by medium and large units.”  
– Gen Erhard Raus, CG 6th Panzer Division, 1942
- “The higher the command, the shorter and simpler the order.”  
– LtGen George S. Patton, CG 3rd Army 1945
- “Burn'em! That's the last written field order this division puts out!”  
– MajGen John 'P' Wood, CG 4th Armored Division 1944
- “In a tank division, there are no written orders.”  
– MajGen F.W. von Mellenthin
- “Orders were more often than not verbal. We issued...only four written directives.”  
– LtGen William Slim, CG XIV Army, Burma, 1944

# References

- “Terminology and Graphics,” The MSTP Staff, *Marine Corps Gazette*, April 2002.
- “The Intent of Intent,” John R. Sutherland, III. *Infantry*, Mar-Jun 1997, p9. [The corruption of the intent concept from manuals to curriculum – longer and wordier results in less clarity and usefulness.]
- *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology*, Richard D. Hooker, Jr. Novato, CA: Presidio, 1993. “The Wehrmacht Approach to Maneuver Warfare Command and Control” by John F. Antal. [German orders philosophy]
- *Heers Dienstvorschrift 300 Truppenfuhrung* [German Army Regulation 300 Command of Troops], 1936.
- *Combat Orders: An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*. John F. Antal. Fort Leavenworth, KS: C&GSC, 1990.
- *Defeat Into Victory*. Field Marshal Viscount Slim. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000. [Reprint of 1956 version]
- “Estimate of the Situation,” 21st Panzer Division, 1943. U.S. National Archives, T-315, Roll T69. Reprinted in *Tactical Notebook*, Summer 1994.
- “Notes on Orders.” ColGen Lothar Rendulic, April 1917. Reprinted in *Tactical Notebook*, October 1992.
- <http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com>