

Building Your Brigade Staff Training Program

BATTLE STAFF OFFICER



REMEMBER..

**..EVERYTHING YOU
PLAN AND WRITE
MUST BE
EXECUTED BY
THIS MAN**

**HE AND HIS BUDDIES WILL BE THE
FIRST TO PAY FOR YOUR MISTAKES**

DO YOUR JOB WELL—FUTURES DEPEND ON IT

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Operations Group

The National Training Center

Building Your Brigade Staff Training Program

by

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Developing an effective training program represents a challenge for any unit. At the Brigade level, simply resourcing and synchronizing a training program that creates capable subordinate formations easily consumes nearly all available time. Further, necessarily weighting the predominance of available training time and resources at the Company level and below to maintain small unit proficiency constitutes another *essential* demand on a Brigade's organizational energy.

In the end, Commanders often find their Brigade and Battalion staff training programs treated as an afterthought. They neglect the very individuals we hold responsible for translating guidance into coherent orders, tracking and ensuring our unit's mission preparation activities, and synchronizing the execution of operations. Due to a myriad of competing demands, some staff training programs often devolve into a series of brown bag lunches and tactical decision exercises. While these types of sessions may help a staff, they lack both the depth and breadth of a holistic training program designed to train our staffs to plan, prepare, and execute operations simultaneously.

In an environment dedicated to training decisive action (DA) in a large scale combat operations (LSCO) construct, the primary indicators of unit's success at the National Training Center (NTC) are simple. First, good units arrive trained at the Company level and below in the fundamental tasks for which their formation was designed. Essentially, these small units demonstrate mastery of fundamental tasks. Second, good units arrive with Battalion and Brigade Staffs proficient in assisting the Commander in the operations process. While no staff will ever win a battle, un-trained staffs often doom operations to failure by failing to perform their fundamental tasks. To succeed when called upon, Battalion and Brigade Commanders must plan and resource their staff training programs just like any other unit.

Modern Army doctrine briefly covers staff training programs compared to previous doctrine. Instead of separately describing staff "battle tasks" today's doctrine simply portrays the staff as another unit that requires individual through collective training in order to accomplish a wartime mission. Similarly, our formal command guidance regarding staff training and preparation often lacks the detail needed for Commanders to truly understand how to train a staff. While there may be exceptions, on average, Brigade and Battalion staff training programs boil down to attending a CTC's Leader Training Program (LTP) combined with the execution of some Brigade or Battalion level home station training event. Most often, staffs get two to three repetitions executing all phases of the operations process simultaneously, normally focusing on one or two METs for the BCT. Our Companies and Platoons (and below) at the tip of the spear need us to do better.

This paper describes a methodology for developing a Brigade level staff training program in preparation for a mission to conduct large scale combat operation against a near

peer threat. Adapted for staff size and capacity, the same methodology can be applied at the Battalion level. Additionally, this training program can be accomplished within a unit's normal training cycle, without decrementing the reps and sets dedicated to training Company level and below formations.

Common Staff Training Program Challenges

I've often heard senior leaders say, "Brigades don't train themselves." While true, more accurately, "Commanders don't train themselves." However, Commanders are responsible for ensuring EVERY member of your formation is trained, and that includes members of your staff. In addition, because of the centrality of the Commander to every aspect of the operations process, ONLY a Commander can train their staff. Your Brigade or Battalion Executive Officer can assist, but, more than anything, they bring your vision to life. Higher HQs can provide O/C-T coverage to assist, but ultimately, the staff reacts to the Commander's directives. To be effective, you must be personally involved in your staff's training, ultimately supporting how you intend to fight your formation.

Even more than small unit collective training, there's a long laundry list of possible distractors which prevent Commanders from formulating a coherent staff training program. These perceived challenges can be overcome by creativity and imagination if a Brigade Commander decides training Battalion and Brigade staffs is critical to unit effectiveness. At the end of the day, paying close attention to the principles of training listed in ADP 7-0 (train as you fight, train to standard, to sustain, and to maintain), can assist in developing a multi-echelon training program that trains small units while simultaneously developing a function staff.

Challenge #1: The Commander's Time

Let's face it. Your young staff officers and non-commissioned officers spend long hours at work each day just trying to keep up with the demands of the Army. Time available to train quickly becomes one of the most precious assets for any unit, especially a staff. Carving out time for a staff training program can sometimes seem impossible. However, if you think about it, your staff prioritizes efforts executing tasks that YOU deem important. Is time really a primary concern, or are you, as a Commander, unwilling to accept risk regarding already established priorities? Your staff will go where you go. Lead them. Make their training program a priority, and they will follow.

Moreover, staff training programs do not need to suck the organizational energy out of the entire BCT, but they do require *your* time at various points. Your smaller units can continue training. Think about it. What does a Brigade level staff really contribute to a Brigade gunnery cycle? I would pose that beyond ensuring subordinates are resourced, the actual Brigade staff contributes little to nothing other than supervision, deconfliction, and master gunner expertise. Battalion run platoon lanes or gunneries are a prime time to train a Brigade staff. Additionally, training periods led by Non-Commissioned Officers (gunnery, EIB, etc.) are prime opportunities to train Brigade level staffs. In the end, you're the Commander. Prioritize your efforts accordingly. Do only the things that you can do, and remember, ONLY you can train your staff.

Challenge #2: Taskings & Garrison Demands

Outside demands often seem to detract from a unit's ability to perform staff training. Support other unit training events, warfighter exercises, and hectic schedules at Mission Command Training Centers seem to constitute common excuses. Commanders should generally view these events as opportunities to train their staffs vice training distractors. Viewed correctly, support of other units can become a valuable staff training event. Similarly, participation in warfighter exercises, can result in some of the most realistic constructive staff training your organization could receive.

It all comes down to how you approach the problem. Even if participation is limited, you can still move towards a proficient staff with a well thought out training program. View these types of events as an opportunity to train your staff to plan, prepare, and execute operations simultaneously in accordance with your vision for your organization.

Challenge #3: Small Unit Collective Training Is My Priority

"In my organization, we're focusing our training at the Company level and below in order to build the repetitions needed to master the fundamentals," constitutes one of the more common excuses among Commanders when it comes to establishing an effective staff training program. Mastery of the fundamentals is important for your small units. However, don't use small unit collective training as an excuse for failing to establish an effective staff training program.

When a Battalion is executing platoon lanes, it is possible for the Commander to lead an MDMP session concurrently. When a Brigade has multiple Battalions executing platoon lanes, it is possible to place a constructive exercise over top of the event to allow multi-echelon training at the Brigade and Battalion level. When Non-Commissioned Officers are executing Squad and below training, it is possible for Battalion and Brigade Commanders to conduct exercises that train their staffs to plan, prepare, and execute operations simultaneously. Small unit collective training filling up the majority of your training calendar is not an excuse. In fact, small unit collective training SHOULD fill the majority of your training calendar, but embedded within each of these events, you, as a Commander, should have staff training objectives that build upon your staff training program.

Challenge #4: Lack of Resources

"We don't have the resources to effectively train our staff" appears to be another common excuse for a lack of staff training. In reality, very little other than your operations center is needed to begin a staff training program. While it is true that constructive simulations and the replication of a higher headquarters more effectively drive command post exercises, they are not a pre-requisite for command post setup or teardown procedures, jump procedures, or training your staff to plan or prepare for an operation. Nor is a driving simulation required for RTO training, training local security operations, react to a chemical attack, validating load plans, or a variety of other tasks. The NTC routinely provides higher level orders to Battalion and Brigade staffs to assist in unit training programs. The resources to train are there.

“A Way” to Train Your Staff (And Provide Battalion Commanders Opportunities)

Different TTPs exist to train staffs. Some Commanders choose to set up a series of all-encompassing Command Post Exercises that allow for little other activity within the formation. Other Commanders bring additional outside assistance to provide the exercise backbone for larger, more encompassing constructive exercises. For the purposes of this paper, you’ve just taken command of your BCT, and your unit has just arrived back at home station after an overseas deployment. You have approximately 10 months until your unit’s CTC rotation, and you have approximately 15 months until the next deployment.

Step #1: Assessing Your Staff’s Proficiency (Taking Command)

As you took the guidon, you immediately formed an opinion of your staff. Most likely, critical members of your staff such as your Operations Officer or Executive Officer are new to the formation. If you’re lucky, your staff retained some expertise from their last training progression, and they understand the basics of performing the operations process in a decisive action environment.

Regardless of what level of proficiency the staff demonstrates, one thing HAS changed that is essential to conducting effective operations – the Commander. You are central to the operations process, and the staff must understand how the new leader intends to conduct business. Your assessment provides a solid foundation upon which to build a proficient staff training program. In the vein of preparing for a CTC rotation, Commanders should consider the following areas when assessing their staff:

- Planning:
 - Does your unit have a published Plans SOP and TOC SOP?
 - Does the each member of the staff understand his/her role in the MDMP process?
 - Does your unit have a functional location to conduct planning in a field environment?
- Equipping:
 - What is the setup/layout of your Brigade level TOC/TAC?
 - Do all systems within your TOC/TAC function? What works? What doesn’t?
 - Are all required TOC & TAC C2 systems on hand? Are they up to date with the latest software patches?
 - What vehicles and capabilities constitute the Mobile Command Group (MCG)? What is the condition of this equipment? Is NMC equipment on the ESR?
- Personnel Training Proficiency:
 - Is your staff equipped and manned to allow planning, preparation, and execution activities to occur simultaneously across multiple shifts?
 - Do members of your staff understand TOC/TAC setup procedures, and can they accomplish them in a relatively short amount of time?
 - How does the staff normally resource the Mobile Command Group in order to allow you to command operations from a decisive point?

- Does each member of your staff know how to operate the equipment within his/her specific staff sections?
- **Current Operations**
 - Does your unit have a solid Plans to CUOPS handoff procedure?
 - Does your staff have a defined battle rhythm to keep you up to date?
 - Does your staff have defined inputs/outputs for each battle rhythm event?
 - What are your reporting requirements and are they understood by subordinate units?

A full assessment of your staff's proficiency level cannot take place until you've forced the setup of the Brigade TOC and led the staff through the operations process. Given the pressures of command, it's easy to overlook this first step. However, leading the staff through a 2-3 day MDMP process in a field environment or requiring your staff to setup/tear down the TOC & TAC can provide early insights that inform future staff training plans. Regardless, waiting until your first training event to discover the answers to these types of questions often results in frustration for everyone involved.

Step #2: A Common Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities

Commanders should take the time to discuss roles and responsibilities with each leader in their TOC/TAC. Using unit SOPs as a basis, clearly explaining YOUR understanding of roles and responsibilities to subordinate staff officers and senior NCOs can be invaluable. If unsure, have the leaders present you with their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Regardless, at the end of the day, you and your subordinates, just like any good unit, should arrive at a common set of expectations for standards of performance.

Additionally, members of your staff should collectively understand the role and responsibility of each C2 node. A Brigade TOC, TAC, and MCG serve distinct and separate functions on the battlefield. Ensure that your staff understands why the C2 node exists and how they help you drive the operations process. You can only have one C2 node at a time manage airspace for the BCT. Manning constraints most often dictate that only one C2 node can plan for future operations. Multiple C2 nodes have the capability of synchronizing operations; however, they must clearly understand which operations on the battlefield they have primary responsibility to oversee. Typical C2 node responsibilities might include the following in a BCT:

- **Typical BCT TOC Responsibilities**
 - Responsible for planning all future operations, but can separate a plans cell to operate with the BDE TOC or BDE TAC based upon the situation.
 - Responsible for managing current operations except when moving.
 - Responsible for synchronization of assets to prosecute the "deep area."
 - Responsible for synchronizing activities within the consolidation area with the ongoing actions in the close fight.
 - Capable of protecting itself from direct fire attacks when not split from the TAC.
- **Typical BCT TAC Responsibilities**

- Responsible for all BCT TOC functions for limited periods of time (less than 12 hours) to allow the BCT TOC to jump and re-establish at new forward location.
- Responsible for coordinating/directing economy of force operations.
- Provide redundancy in communications during periods of long movements in the event of lost communications.
- Typical Mobile Command Group Responsibilities
 - Provide the Commander forward C2 capability at the decisive point on the battlefield.
 - Provides a direct link (communications) to fires, attack aviation, joint (Air Force) fires, as well as other critical enablers which allow the Commander to influence the fight through established decision points.
 - Capable of tracking enemy actions.
 - Capable of tracking friendly actions.

Regardless of the roles and responsibilities given to each C2 node, the members of your staff must understand them. *They must know the "why" behind their efforts and understand how they fit into the bigger picture.*

Step #3: TOC/TAC/MCG Layout and Functionality

Setting up C2 nodes should occur early in a new Commander's tenure. While the last Commander might have approved the current setup, remember that setup supported his approach to the operations process. You might receive information differently. You might not. You may want to fight the majority of your time from the MCG. You might want to be near the TOC/TAC the majority of the time because of a less experienced planning staff. Regardless, these C2 nodes must support YOUR approach to executing operations.

Specifically, new Brigade Commanders should examine their C2 node layouts to determine if they allow the staff to perform the critical tasks of receiving, analyzing, and distributing information, making recommendations to the Commander, as well as integrating and synchronizing resources. When conducting large scale combat operations against a near peer threat, Commanders should examine the following factors to determine if the layout and ergonomics of the Brigade C2 node allow the staff to function at the pace required.

- Receiving information: Does each staff section have a specific P.A.C.E. plan that allows them to communicate with their higher echelon counterparts, other staff sections, and subordinate units in a timely manner?
- Analyzing Information: Does the TOC have an established area to conduct the rapid decision making process to allow for proper staff analysis. Is there a central area that allows the OIC to gather the appropriate personnel quickly to determine the "so what" of a report?
- Disseminating information: When information arrives at the TOC, does the staff have a specific method of sharing information quickly to allow analysis by other warfighting function leads and subordinate units? For example, if the Battle Captain states "ATTENTION IN THE TOC" are all warfighting functions represented with appropriate

personnel to immediately begin analysis of the report? Often, during LSCO, these reports are lost.

- Synchronizing & Integrating Resources: Does the C2 node have a central location, where the OIC can make decisions, synchronize intelligence, fires, maneuver, and other warfighting functions to assist the Commander in the operations process?
- Making Recommendations: Does the C2 node have communications capabilities readily available to allow primary staff officers or the C2 node OIC to speak directly to the Commander when a decision is required?
- Maintaining Communications: Does your S6 have a specific plan for the location and layout for your server stacks that enable Upper T/I communications? Where do those capabilities reside in the BCT? Some units use installation as a docking station (IaaS) at home station and during NTC as the resident location for server stacks. From there, the BDE TOC can house the backup server stacks. BCTs can perform in a similar manner during deployments such as OPERATION ATLANTIC RESOLVE or OPERATION SPARTAN SHIELD as well - keeping signal capability at 'hub' locations along with server stacks enables any Battalion to "touch" the BCTs servers at any time without worrying about the BDE TOC or BDE TAC jumping. Regardless, the plan needs to be deliberate and well-thought out ahead of time.

Given the need to establish mobile C2 nodes capable of conducting large scale combat operations at the required speed, today's staffs often find themselves crammed into trucks and placed into compartmentalized cells with the primary staff officers out of reach of the OICs of the C2 node. These types of C2 node layouts become critical liabilities in the middle of a fight. The best C2 node setups centralize primary staff officers and other critical personnel in a single location (a well manned current operations floor) with the remainder of their staffs located to the periphery in mobile platforms. Between the mobile platforms and current operations floor, there exists a well thought out plan to allow the timely flow of information back and forth. These layouts, unlike others, allow the staff to immediately change direction in the middle of a fight and properly synchronize all warfighting functions.

Step #4: Review Standard Operating Procedures

SOPs serve as the basis for how an organization functions. In most organizations, new leaders task reviewing SOPs as part of their leader certification program. They are the first "how to" document subordinates should turn to when assuming a new position. They serve as an extension of your Command. When looking at how the unit performs operations in a field environment, SOPs provide a point of reference for your staff when producing and disseminating unit orders. "Per SOP" should actually mean something in a published order.

Reviewing unit SOPs should occur prior to taking command; however, Commanders must personally involve themselves in the development of the units SOPs. Determining whether these SOPs fit the way you intend to fight your unit is critical. They are, by default, an extension of your command and should have your personal endorsement. Sit down. Read your unit's SOPs. Take notes. Where applicable, direct changes of substance to suit your personal style of command. Do not direct changes simply because your last unit did it "this"

way. Once satisfied, publish an up to date version of your unit's SOP...don't simply have a single working draft sitting on the Executive Officer's desk for publication just prior to your first major training event.

Finally, pay particular attention to the standardized reporting procedures published in your SOPs. Proper reporting must be trained at echelon throughout your formation, and without standardized reports published well ahead of time, communications will devolve into a series of un-necessary conversations that detract from a unit's ability to efficiently prosecute the fight. If they aren't published in an SOP, get there ASAP. Don't wait until just before your CTC rotation to tell people how you want them reporting information.

Step #5: Individual Staff Training

Staffs often discover during their first exercise that individuals within the C2 node have little idea how to actually operate their assigned equipment. Early investment in individual training for critical staff members allows staff sections to perform their assigned duties. Further, Commanders often pay attention to the wrong types of individual training by centering their efforts on MDMP operations. While not necessarily all encompassing, Commanders should ask themselves if their BDE C2 node has Soldiers that can perform these types of individual tasks:

- S6 personnel capable of putting a CPP into operation
- S6 personnel capable of establishing BCT server stacks
- S6 personnel capable of putting the STT into operation
- S6 personnel capable of putting SVOIP & VOIP capability into place
- S2 DCGS-A trained personnel at the appropriate place
- S2 personnel OSRVT trained
- S2 Trained FM operators to coordinate operations via O/I nets
- S2 SMART-T Trained personnel
- S2 personnel trained on the Trojan system
- S3 CPOF/Ventrillo/CPCE trained personnel
- S3 JCR/JBC-P trained personnel
- S3 personnel capable of placing HF systems into operation
- S3 personnel capable of placing TACSAT systems into operation
- At least 1-2 trained "digital master gunners" on hand in the formation to troubleshoot problems without S6 assistance.
- FSE personnel capable of placing digital (lower and upper T/I) AFATDS into operation
- ADAM/BAE Cell personnel capable of placing TAIS into operation
- JTAC Personnel capable of establishing UHF communications
- All other sections have personnel capable of placing FM, HF, TACSAT systems into operation
- Personnel within each section (enlisted and officer) capable of operating generators
- Personnel within each section (enlisted and officer) licensed on major equipment they will likely need to drive
- Personnel in each section capable of placing NBC detection equipment into operation

- Personnel in each section capable of establishing an individual fighting position with range card

Whether or not your staff has trained personnel that can perform these tasks, you will need to allocate time to ensure individuals are trained to operate critical TOC equipment. Individual Soldiers on your staff will change constantly. On average, your staff will change out 100% of its personnel at least once, maybe twice, during your tenure. Therefore, each staff section should develop an individual training program that supports constant individual training. Without trained individuals, the ability of the staff to perform their core function suffers.

Step #6: Account for Staff Section level training

In order to effectively synchronize each of the warfighting functions, you must have staff sections that are experts in their particular areas. We often overlook some of the most critical training a staff must receive and delve into a Brigade level culminating training event with little more than an MDMP session or a Command Post Exercise under our belt. These exercises fail to account for the section level training that must occur within each staff section. While not representative of every warfighting function, commander focus in the following critical areas, utilizing existing resources, can assist in the section level training for your Brigade Staff.

Intelligence Warfighting Function: The Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS) offers a sound way forward when it comes to training our intelligence personnel throughout the formation. Utilizing resources such as the Foundry Program resident within most Division level posts throughout the Army, this program provides a solid, progressive method for training intelligence personnel up to the staff section level to utilize our intelligence C2 systems (DCGS-A currently), information collection systems, and other intelligence functions. Regardless, a Brigade endorsed program to build proficiency throughout the intelligence enterprise of the BCT sets the conditions for all other warfighting functions during a CTC rotation.

Fires Warfighting Function (Digital Sustainment Training Program): The gravitation towards large scale combat operations has re-emphasized the need for fires professionals well versed in a modern BCTs capabilities. Your Brigade Fire Support Coordinator/Field Artillery Battalion Command should establish routine, end to end digital skills training for all fire support officers throughout the formation. Ideally, establishing the entire digital fires in garrison on a routine basis to exercise systems should serve as a goal. Your attention to your BCTs digital skills proficiency program for all fire supporters will allow all fire support sections at the Battalion and BDE levels to maintain proficiency, keep AFATDS computers updated, and ensure the entire fires kill chain remains trained to process fire missions quickly and efficiently.

Airspace Management: Many BCTs struggle with ADAM/BAE Cell manning. In a decisive action CTC rotation, the ability to manage airspace effectively becomes a pre-requisite for the employment of attack aviation and use of both rocket and cannon artillery. The Fires Center of Excellence offers an ADAM/BAE course for young leaders of these sections. Further,

forcing these leaders to establish a training program that teaches the young warrant officers, officers, and NCOs to manage airspace can prove invaluable over time.

Given routinely observed challenges with intelligence operations, employing fires, and managing airspace, these individual section focused training programs can begin to overcome many of the difficulties units experience when conducting large scale combat operation. Beyond that, forcing each remaining primary staff officer to develop an individual staff section training plan can assist in the overall ability of the BCT to conduct operations when the time arrives.

Step #7: The Military Decision Making Process

Ideally, the first time any Commander leads their staff through the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) shouldn't be at NTC during LTP. To be effective, staffs must understand how the Commander receives information, provides guidance, and makes decisions. This cannot be done haphazardly. Early in a Commander's tenure, they should lead the staff through the process of producing an OPORD and subsequently evaluate the staff's efforts based upon the products produced.

Many Brigades find when they first go through the MDMP process that the staff produces a lengthy, 40 (+) page type-written order (or even longer). While doctrinally sound and tactically correct, the sheer volume of these orders will overwhelm any Battalion level staff. Further, typed orders make subsequent FRAGORDs nearly impossible to comprehend by simply lining through deleted items and adding new ones. Orders should be simple, easy to understand, and largely based upon the critical fighting products that a Commander needs to prosecute a large scale fight; graphics (Enemy, Maneuver, Fire Support, A2C2, and CSS at a minimum), synchronization matrix, information collection matrix, fire support execution matrix, and decision support matrix.

The NTC can easily provide written higher level orders to new Commanders leading their staff through MDMP for the first time. When leading your staff through the MDMP for the first time, consider the following:

- **Allow time - 1-2 weeks to produce a written order:** Likely, this will be a slow process, and your staff will have other tasks they need to achieve. The first time executing MDMP should be incremental with specific touch points that you demand as a Commander. Remember, you won't be there all of the time during operations, so leading the staff through a continuous marathon MDMP session isn't realistic.
- **Concentrate on the Process...Not the Solution:** Your staff's tactical prowess will grow over time. But, this first session is the primary time for you to examine how they present information to you. Do you understand what they are saying? Do the charts, graphs, and slides distract you, or do they add value to your ability to provide guidance? Are you executing MDMP in a manner that can be done quickly with future repetitions?
- **Don't allow shortcuts:** Never let a staff officer use "Per SOP" during this first briefing. Make sure that you (and the staff) understand what "Per SOP means."

- **Don't allow the staff to place form above function:** MDMP should help drive an operation. As early as receipt of mission, things start moving in the unit during an operation. The staff should spend as much time thinking as they do preparing to brief you. Demanding in depth power point briefings and other products that only 'look good' detract from a staff's ability to think through a problem. If it's not a fighting product, and it's not distributed to subordinates at the end of the process, it's probably a waste of time.
- **Limit Participation to the Plans Staff:** Too often, Commanders delude themselves regarding the depth of the staff by allowing subordinates at home station to both plan operations and drive current operations. Limit the MDMP session to the primary staff officers and subordinates responsible for planning operations. Sure, the S3 and XO will be involved in both, but if your Battle Captain is writing your OPORD, you're deluding yourself regarding the capabilities of your staff.
- **End with a briefing to subordinate Commanders:** If you really want to know how your staff is doing at interpreting your guidance and translating them into orders, end your first MDMP session with an OPORD briefing to subordinate Commanders. Ask them to immediately backbrief you on their understanding of the OPORD. Most often, subordinate leaders are most critical of your staff's efforts.

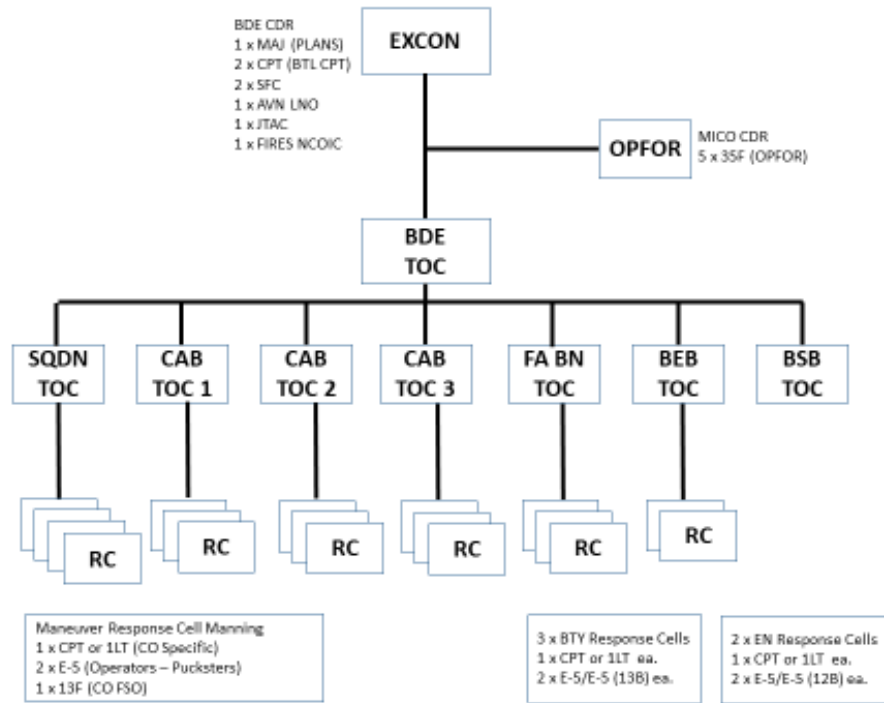
The first seven steps listed above sound monumental. They are not. Effective TOCSOP and PLANS SOP reviews can occur over the course of a month. A review of roles and responsibilities can occur over the course of counseling sessions or a single staff LDP. An evaluation of a TOCs functionality can be done over the course of 1-2 days. An OPORD can be written in a couple of weeks. Ideally, new Commanders can accomplish each of these tasks within the first two months of command.

Conversely, the next steps take time and planning. Remember, your goal is to develop a staff that can assist in the entire operations process...planning, preparing, and executing operations continuously as YOU drive the operations process for the BCT. Additionally, as a BCT Commander, you have a responsibility to ensure that subordinate Battalion Commanders have the resources to train their staffs. You must ensure they have the time with their staffs, along with dedicated resources to train effectively.

Step #8: Month 3 - CPX #1 (CUOPS)

In preparation for your first Brigade level Command Post Exercise (CPX), you had your unit execute a 2 week MDMP process. You based the order and the scenario on your unit's next mission - a National Training Center rotation. The process culminated with a formal OPORD briefing to the Battalion Commanders a week before CPX #1 was set to begin. If you executed the MDMP process correctly, your OPORD includes branches that can be executed by your staff depending upon the staff's performance. You have leveraged the Mission Training Center on your installation to set up a constructive exercise allowing all BDE C2 nodes and Battalion TOCs to C2 the operation. Now, it's time to exercise your staff's ability to conduct current operations.

The exercise overhead for an event such as this seems daunting; however, because you are only exercising the CUOPS portion of your staff, capacity for exercise control, OPFOR, all exist within your BCT. The C2 chart for the exercise highlights the overhead required for this type of exercise:



In the construct pictured above, Battalions do not arrive at the exercise with fully trained Battalion staffs. Similar to your staff, they have progressed through an MDMP process, utilized the OPORD produced by the BCT as a means to exercise their internal planning processes, and are subsequently prepared, as subordinate Commanders, to focus on their training of their staff. Conducting the exercise in this manner provides all Battalion Commanders in the BCT along with the Brigade Commander, an opportunity to specifically focus on training their staffs personally. Additionally, the multi-echelon approach to training allows each Commander to understand how their higher headquarters will function. This allows them to better focus subsequent training, rather than setting up Battalion level events in a vacuum with a much smaller staff.

Similarly, the timeline for this exercise does not need to include 24/7 operations. In fact, Commanders driving their staffs to 24/7 operations too early often leads to burn out and fatigue. If you have a staff of professional officers, they will naturally push themselves hard enough without you overburdening the staff.

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
AM: Mini-EX PM: - Recon Fight - PAUSEX: 1630	AM: BDE ATK (DP 1) PM: - BDE ATK - Staff AARs - AAR Prep	AM: Formal BDE AAR PM: - Reset - Recon Fight	AM: BDE ATK (DP 2) PM: - BDE ATK - Staff AARs - AAR Prep	AM: Final AAR PM: Tear Down

CPX #1 Training Objectives should be clear to the staff and personally approved by the Commander. Example training objectives for the MDMP session leading up to CPX #1 and for the actual exercise include:

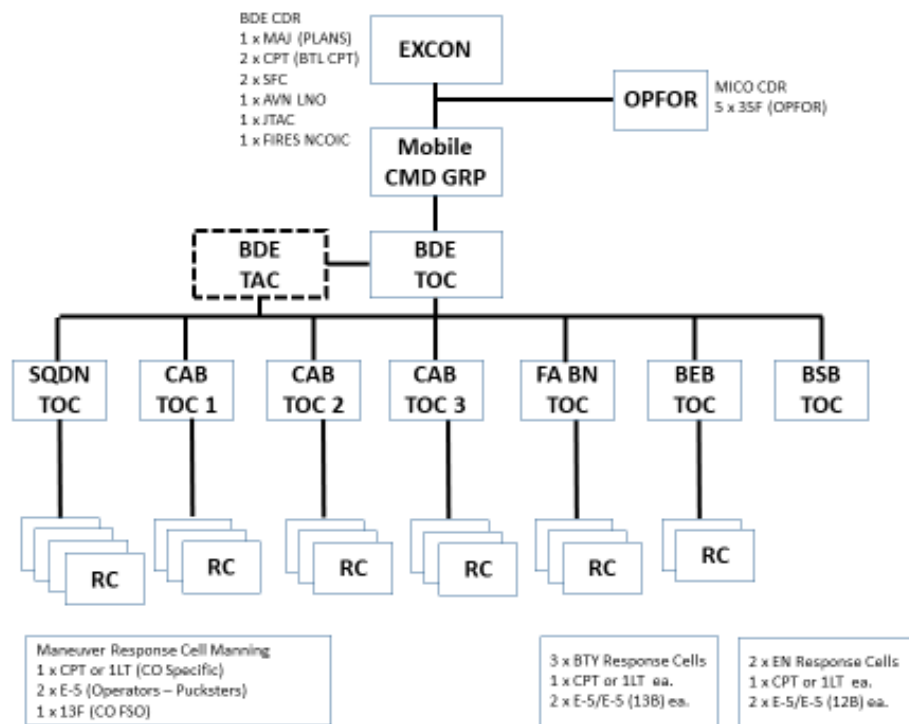
- Produce and disseminate a to standard BDE OPORD that allows the BCT to synchronize operations
- Establish and maintain 100% connectivity for all C2 systems
- Conduct a Combined Arms, IC/Fires, and Sustainment Rehearsal at the BCT level which enables shared understanding of the upcoming operation.
- Improve the ability to the BDE TOC to receive, analyze, and distribute information as well as integrate and synchronize resources while making timely recommendations to the Commander.
- Establish clearance of fires procedures throughout the BCT which enable timely and accurate fires into the BDE deep area when required.
- Establish A2C2 procedures which allow the BCT to deconflict and manage airspace in a LSCO environment
- Clearly delineate decision making authorities within the BDE TOC.

During CPX #1, the Brigade Commander serves as the primary trainer for the staff. Rather than focusing on subordinate Battalion Commanders, the Brigade Commander provides time to their subordinates Battalion Commanders to train their staffs. This approach requires the BCT Commander to visualize, describe, and direct the BCT's operations...all the while leading and assessing the staff's ability to meet established training objectives. During iteration #1, the Commander directs the OPFOR and chooses a decision point for the staff to execute. The staff subsequently reacts to OPFOR action providing feedback to the Commander and directing operations in accordance with the Commander's intent. During iteration #2, the Commander makes sets a different set of OPFOR conditions and drives a different decision point, seeing if the staff can recognize and react to the situation.

Step #9: Month 5-6 - CPX #2 (CUOPS + PLANS)

CPX #2 adds to the speed and complexity of CPX #1. If focus + repetition = mastery, then ensuring exercises are progressively difficult and offer the repetitions needed to achieve staff proficiency is critical. For CPX #2, Commanders should require staffs to conduct the MDMP process in a more compressed timeframe. If time is available, sequestering the staff for a complete OPORD process is recommended. However, given time available, most units cannot take 2-3 days to conduct MDMP as a standalone event. Regardless, building upon

demonstrated staff proficiency remains the primary goal. The construct for CPX #2 adds the other critical C2 nodes during LSCO, namely the BDE TAC and the MCG.



In many cases, due to training timelines, CPX #1 or CPX #2 can coincide with a Division level Warfighter Exercise or other unit training event. When this occurs, Commanders should transform these events into training opportunities that assist towards meeting the next training objectives for the staff. Training objectives for CPX #2 can include:

- Conduct a TOC to TAC handoff of current operations
- Execute a jump of the BCT TOC in less than ___ hours (must jump from fiber connection to fiber connection)
- Exercise an effective P.A.C.E plan across Brigade and BN C2 nodes and within staff sections to assist in the synchronization of operations
- Execute distributed operations with Battalion TOCs in a field environment (requires long haul communications to MTC buildings to communicate w/response cells)
- Exercise CUOPS and PLANS simultaneously by executing a FRAGO to an existing OPORD
- Issues orders at the speed required to enable LSCO in a DA environment

While the construct for CPX #2 may be similar to CPX #1, minimal assistance provided by outside organizations can ensure the exercise remains a relatively low cost event for the remainder of the BCT. *Regardless, the opportunity to gain more repetitions at planning, preparing, and executing operations simultaneously remains the primary point. Overall, CPX #2 should provide the BCT staff their first insights as to the overall demands placed on their time and resources in the context of an NTC rotation.*

Similarly, the timeline for CPX #2 should further stress the BCT staff. An example timeline for CPX #2 could consist of the following:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
AM: Mini-EX PM: - Recon Fight - PAUSEX: 1630	AM: BDE ATK (DP 1) PM: - BDE ATK - Staff AARs - BDE AAR	AM: - TOC – TAC Handoff PM: - Issue BDE FRAGO - TAC Tracks Preparation Activities	AM: - BDE DEF Preparation - TAC – TOC Handoff PM: - BDE Combined Arms Rehearsal - BDE CR Fight	AM: BDE Defense PM: - BDE Staff AARs - BDE Final AAR

Upon the conclusion of your CPX #2, staffs should understand the pressures they are likely to encounter in a decisive action environment. From there, it's a matter of assessing unit performance, increasing exercise complexity and generating enough repetitions to achieve proficiency over time while integrating and training new members of the staff.

Often Overlooked Opportunities to Train the Brigade Staff

Company STX/LFXs: As you roll the entire BCT to the field to execute CO/TM STX or live fire exercises, you will likely demand a BCT level C2 node control the exercise. Don't limit yourself. Roll the entire staff to the field. A staff that learns to conduct daily operations in a field environment is a staff that has one less condition to overcome during an NTC rotation. For example, units can roll both the TOC and TAC to the field. The TAC can assume responsibility for all LFX events, and the TOC can assume responsibility for coordinating all STX events as units flow through Company level lanes. At specific times, order the C2 nodes to conduct a battle hand off, break down, and jump to another location. Occurring several times over the course of Company STX/LFXs, a simple exercise like this can significantly improved the unit's setup, teardown, and jump procedures.

Fire Coordination Exercises (Mixing Live/Virtual/Constructive): Given that BCTs typically conduct a BCT Fires Coordination Exercise prior to a CTC rotation, staffs can use this as an additional opportunity. For example, one Combined Arms Battalion, with only leader vehicles, can conduct a combined arms breach live on a range. A second Combined Arms Battalion can conduct a linked Movement to Contact inside of CCTT. The Cavalry Squadron can execute a constructive level Zone Reconnaissance operation that transitions to a Guard. The Field Artillery Battalion can simultaneously fire live against a constructive enemy in the deep area and then transition to supporting the breach force in the close fight. Meanwhile, the Brigade TOC can work to prosecute the overall fight against a constructive enemy played by the BDE S-2 with assistance from the Division Staff. This approach can add much needed rigor to an exercise designed to simply exercise fires across the BCT by stressing the staffs in a competitive environment.

Leader Training Program: The Leader Training Programs at the CTCs provide units another repetition at the operations process. While the exercise construct does not necessarily allow for simultaneous planning, preparation, and execution activities, the program does add tremendously to the depth of knowledge for Battalion and Brigade level staffs. Most units fail to synchronize these event as a part of their overall staff training program. Our recommendation is to execute as early as possible rather than just before your CTC rotation. Ideally, units should execute LTP after their staff is comfortable with the first six steps of the progression described in this paper. At the latest, execute LTP after your first home station CPX. The staff will know what you want, you won't be providing guidance for the first time, and you can spend precious time refining your internal CUOPS and PLANS procedures to account for the operational environment you will encounter during your rotation.

The Final Step: Culminating Training Events

If your Division executes a culminating training event in preparation for your BCT's rotation, more than likely it will include a constructive and live aspect given the training area constraints at most installations. *Regardless, as the Commander, you must generally prepare your staff to accomplish the following to truly consider the staff a proficient unit:*

- Train to plan, prepare, and execute operations simultaneously for extended periods of time (10-14 days) (organize the staff accordingly).
- Establish 100% connectivity throughout the BCT on all P.A.C.E systems...by echelon and warfighting function
- Train to employ multiple C2 nodes simultaneously (TOC, TAC, Mobile Command Group)
- Train specific responsibilities for each C2 node (deep, close, consolidation area coordination responsibilities and authorities)
- Train TOC and TAC mobility (jump procedures)
- Train rehearsals for operations (Combined Arms, IC/Fires, and Sustainment for every mission)

Conclusion:

Multiple ways exist to train a staff to conduct large scale combat operations. Most often, staffs that struggle have Commanders who failed to establish a deliberate staff training program as a critical portion of their overall training program. These Commanders fall into their comfort zone by focusing nearly all of their precious energy into training Squads, Platoons and Companies while forgetting that, more than any other formation in the BCT, only THEY are capable of training the BCT staff. Small unit training *should* consume the majority of a unit's time; however, when committed to a real world conflict, the staff won't work for anyone else. They must understand how the Commander thinks and how he/she expects them to assist in the operations process. That takes time. It takes a deliberate plan, formulated at the beginning of a training cycle. It also provides Battalion Commanders venues to train their staffs without overburdening the lower echelons of the formation.

Following this method, staffs will generally execute 10-12 repetitions of the operations process with at least 10 of those repetitions simultaneously planning, preparing for, and executing operations against 2-3 established BCT METs. These repetitions ensure your staff's familiarity with the operations process and will allow you to enter a CTC rotation (proficient, not trained) in conducting operations at the pace envisioned in a LSCO construct. Adding brown bag lunches or other tactical decision exercises adds even more depth to the overall staff training program to correct assessed shortcomings. Combined with lethal Platoons and Companies, your unit will have set the conditions to achieve the highest training levels possible upon completing your CTC rotation.

Lethal Companies and Platoons are critical to success not only National Training Center, but in any contingency mission the Army might ask us to execute. But, they are only part of the equation. In large scale combat operations, it takes Battalion and Brigade staffs that can combine arms and synchronize the application of their combat power against a determined enemy to succeed. The staff won't win the fight for you, but by failing to personally train your staff, you can easily doom an operation to failure before crossing the line of departure.