2.6 Best Practices for
Platoon Orders

USE a 3x5 index card to construct a platoon order in 30 minutes.


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                              2d Plt, E/2/6, 16 Jan 2022
S:  EMLCOA. I think EN recon will be 4–6 fast BTRs.
    "E" blocks (3) (N)-(S) roads IOT delay EN recon.
M:  2d Plat BLOCKS @ EA PUMA IOT delay EN access
    (S) to Route 12 (RTE LINCOLN).
E:  CONOPS. L-shaped block. (S) Sqd stops EN in EA,
    (W) Sqd destroys vehicles. FS—60s, if available.
    1st Sqd+: ABF IOT STOP command veh in EA.
    2nd Sqd+: ME—DESTROY EN vehs in EA IOT
    delay EN access (S).
    3rd Sqd: (1) OP (N), (1) OP (W) IOT provide I&W.
    Coord: O/O WTH (W) to ORP = (W) OP.
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1.   EXPLAIN the **Situation**.

> S: EMLCOA. I think EN recon will be 4–6 fast BTRs.
> "E" blocks (3) (N)-(S) roads IOT delay EN recon.

START with "I think…" Your *assessment* provides context. Do NOT re-state the obvious. When you issue the order, add selected adversary composition (SALUTE) and capabilities (DRAW-D). EXPLAIN the friendly HHQ Mission. Note adjacent and supporting units.

2.   STATE the **Mission**—twice.

> M: 2d Plat BLOCKS @ EA PUMA IOT delay EN access
> (S) to Route 12 (RTE LINCOLN).

ISSUE one concise sentence as the mission—the most important sentence in the order. START with "We"—or your unit designation. USE the IOT format to link task and purpose. CAPITALIZE the verb, the task. USE precise doctrinal terms.

3.   ISSUE the **Execution**, the concept of operations (**CONOPS**) to explain the operation.

> E: CONOPS. L-shaped block. (S) Sqd stops EN in EA,
> (W) Sqd destroys vehicles. FS—60s, if available.

ISSUE the **Fire Support Plan**. During the order, the Platoon Sergeant can brief fires and target information.

4. ISSUE concise, single-sentence **Tasks** to your squad leaders.

> 1st Sqd+: ABF IOT STOP command veh in EA.
> 2nd Sqd+: ME—DESTROY EN vehs in EA IOT delay EN access (S).
> 3rd Sqd: (1) OP (N), (1) OP (W) IOT provide I&W.

CHOOSE each word carefully. USE the IOT (in order to) format to link task and purpose. DESIGNATE a ME. CAPITALIZE the verb, the task. USE precise doctrinal terms.

5. ISSUE **Coordinating Instructions**—information that everyone needs to know.

> Coord: O/O WTH (W) to ORP = (W) OP.

CLARIFY times, movements, and other information for all units.
During the order, POST any **lists**: manifests, schedules, ROE, or checklists.

6. PUT any **Administration & Logistics** or **Command & Signal** notes on the back of the card.
Most logistics and signals details should be SOP.

> A: CASEVAC—CCP (resupply & EPW) @ LZ FALCON (2 km).
> C: PltCdr & Mortar FO with ME 3d Sqd (W).

7. PUT **Orientation** and **Task Organization** notes on the back of the card.

> O: (N). AO. Rte LINCOLN = Rte 12. LZ FALCON.
> EA PUMA (18S TD 886 303)
> (W) OP = ORP (18S TD 877 337)
> (N) OP vic (18S TD 891 310)
> 60s TGT (18S TD 885 323)
> T/O @ 2130:
> 1st Sqd + (2) MGs
> 2d Sqd + (2) SMAWs
> 3d Sqd
> PltCdr, Mortar FO
>
> A: CASEVAC—CCP (resupply & EPW) @ LZ FALCON (2 km).
> C: PltCdr & Mortar FO with ME 3d Sqd (W).

ORIENT your Marines on the actual terrain or a terrain model *before* you issue your order. USE a map, sketch, or imagery only if a terrain model is not available.
ORGANIZE your unit *before* the order. SPECIFY the time the task organization is effective.

Best practices

FOCUS on the critical three sentences of the order:

1. An assessment of the **situation** — *"What is the adversary going to do?"*
2. A collective **mission** — *"What are we going to do?"*
3. A list of **tasks** — *"What do you need me to do?"*

Do NOT write everything. Provide more information when you issue your verbal order.

Do NOT write a redundant commander's intent paragraph. Your Purpose *is* your Intent.
AVOID multiple intents: There should be no "and" in the intent clause.

The acid test for intent is, "Can you replace the task and still maintain the purpose?"
[Do whatever it takes] IOT prevent EN interference with RTE LINCOLN.

Any **lists** are *references*, separate from the order: landing plans, load plans, helicopter manifests, schedules, ROE, and checklists.

Brevity

Each **word** in the order is critical. In the disorder of combat, simplicity is strength. An order must be understood, but extra words and extra tasks *reduce* understanding. Brevity is the mark of well-trained units with standard operating procedures. Leaders share implicit understanding. Excessive detail in an order indicates a lack of training.

There are three types of sentences in an order: (1) Mission-specific: *"H-Hour is 0900,"* (2) Micromanagement: *"ROs should carry extra rope,"* and (3) More of the obvious: *"Avoid casualties."* **Every sentence in the order should be mission-specific.**

Develop your own orders shorthand: BPT, CATK, EN, FIT, HHQ, IOT, ME, O/O, RES, SBF.
Use "**+**" for "attach." The "**@**" is "at place," or "at time." CUT all adjectives and adverbs.

Timing: 30 minutes

After making an **estimate of the situation** (METT-T), the platoon commander should construct an order in less than 30 minutes. If three weeks, three days, or three hours are available, the process does NOT change. When an immediate decision is needed in combat, nothing is written, and the platoon commander's order is *three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

The platoon commander, hours, days, or weeks after being inserted, cannot assume electricity, computer, printer, paper, or imagery support. A multi-page order, even if written by hand, encourages wordiness and imprecision, and is difficult for subordinates to copy.