"SEIZE that Hill!"

Best Practices for the Mission Statement

Brendan B. McBreen
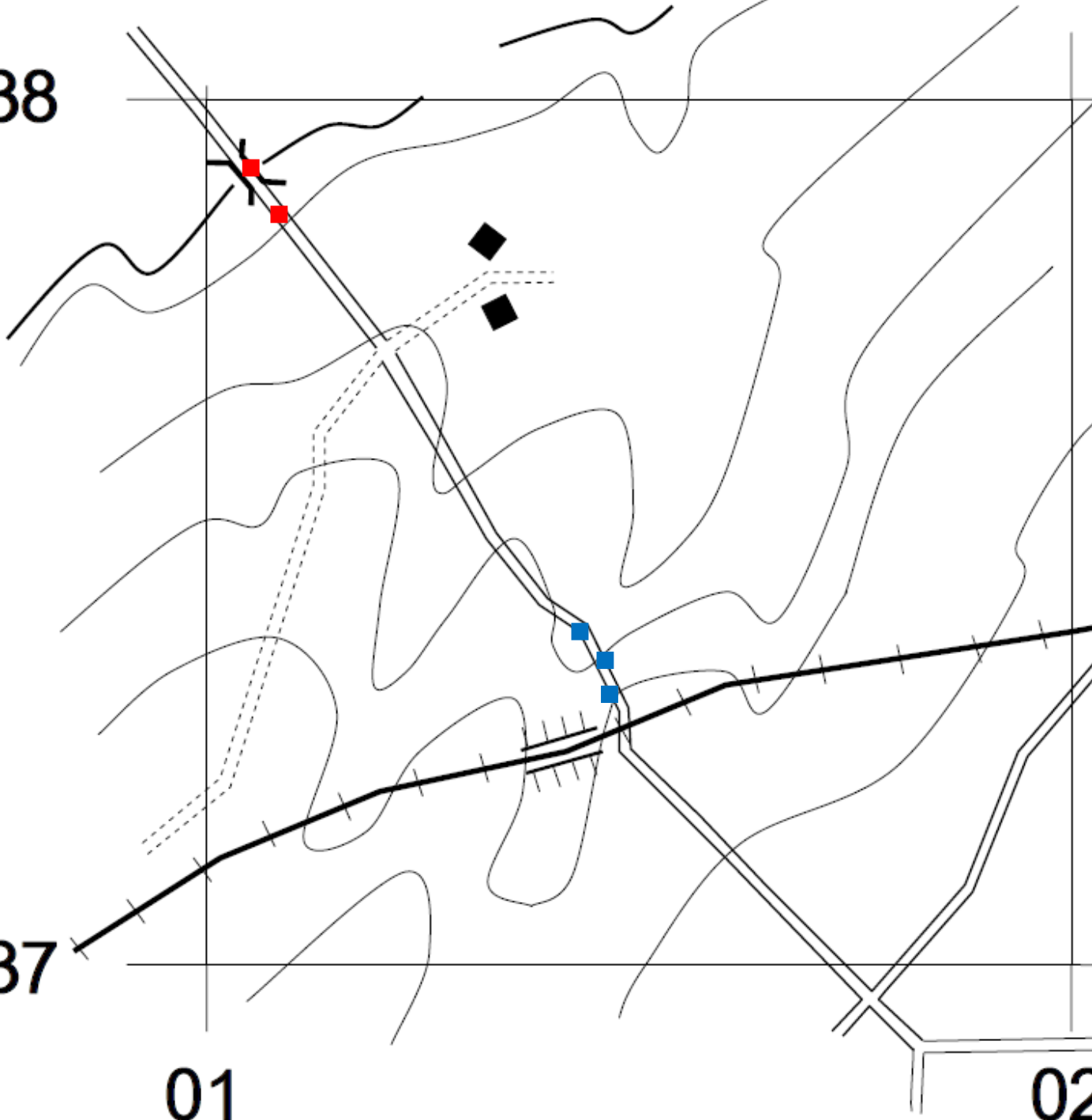
August 2021

1

Quibou A

Your section of nine Marines has three HMMWVs, each armed with an M240 machinegun.

The brigade has been fighting a mechanized enemy for the past three weeks. The nearest enemy is 30 kilometers north.

The terrain is European—rolling fields and farms, cut by streams and tree lines. Visibility is often less than 500 meters.

At 1700, your convoy commander stopped his 36-vehicle resupply convoy in **Quibou** to refuel. Your air escort went off-station, reporting, "no friendly or enemy units anywhere nearby." The convoy security element launched a UAS to search north.

The convoy commander pointed at you and then his map: "SCREEN three kilometers of this road in order to protect our north-west flank. 'Screen' means 'provide early warning,' OK?"

Fifteen minutes later, after your three vehicles crossed the rise at the railroad tracks moving northwest and descended the road, you stop short. Straight ahead, you see one, then two, enemy four-wheeled armored cars moving toward you from the bridge, 500 meters away. They have not yet seen your vehicles.

Your driver looks over at you. "What are we going to do?"

Quibou
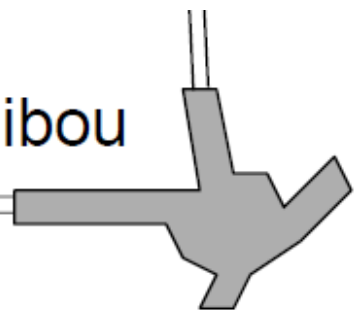
Looking (S), back toward the railroad embankment
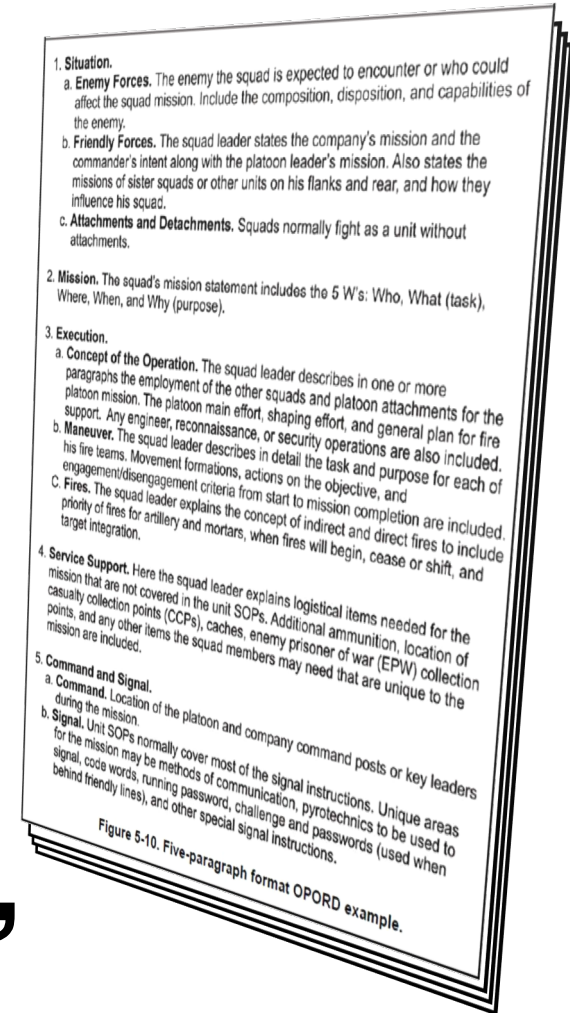
Looking (N) down toward the stream bed

Which is a valid Mission Statement?

"BUY milk"

vs.

"SEIZE that hill"

Which is a valid Mission Statement?

"BUY milk"

vs.

"SEIZE that hill"

Whole or 1%?   Cereal?
Quart or gallon?   Guests?
Chocolate milk?   Kahlua?
If no milk?   Egg nog?
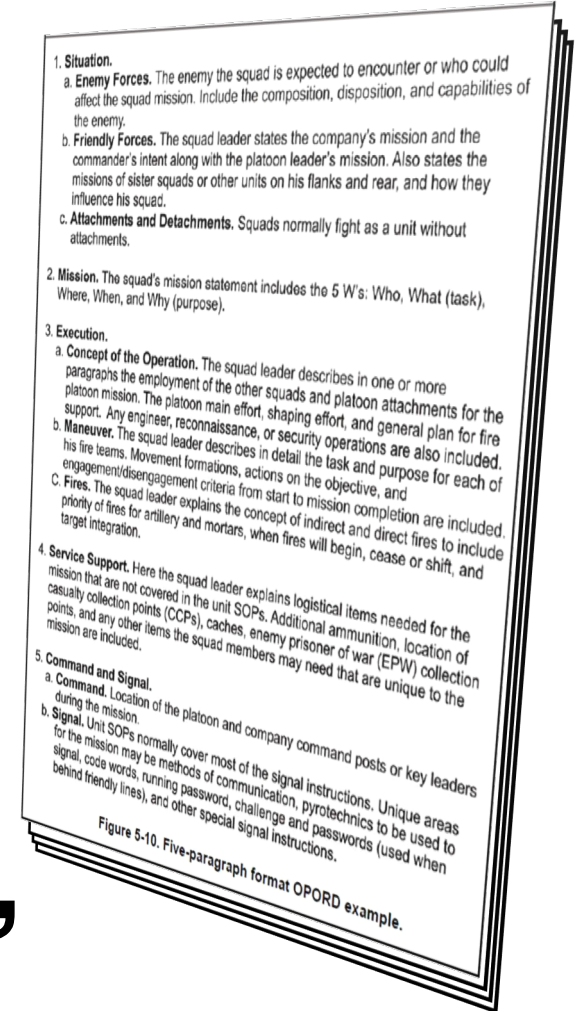
How do we make a Mission Statement better?

"BUY milk IOT make quiche"

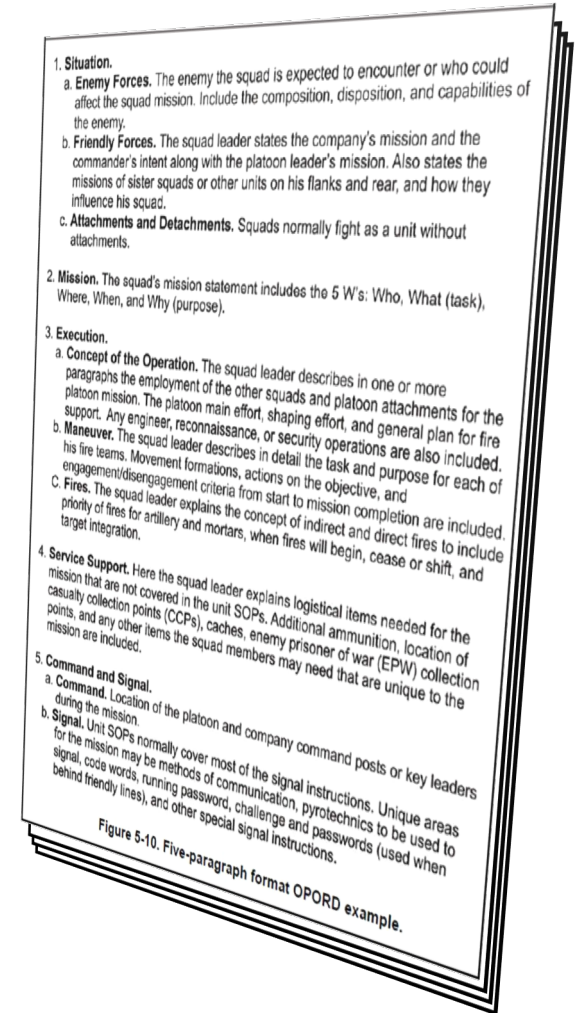**"SEIZE that hill IOT control junction"**

Figure 5-10. Five-paragraph format OPORD example.

How do we make a Mission Statement better?
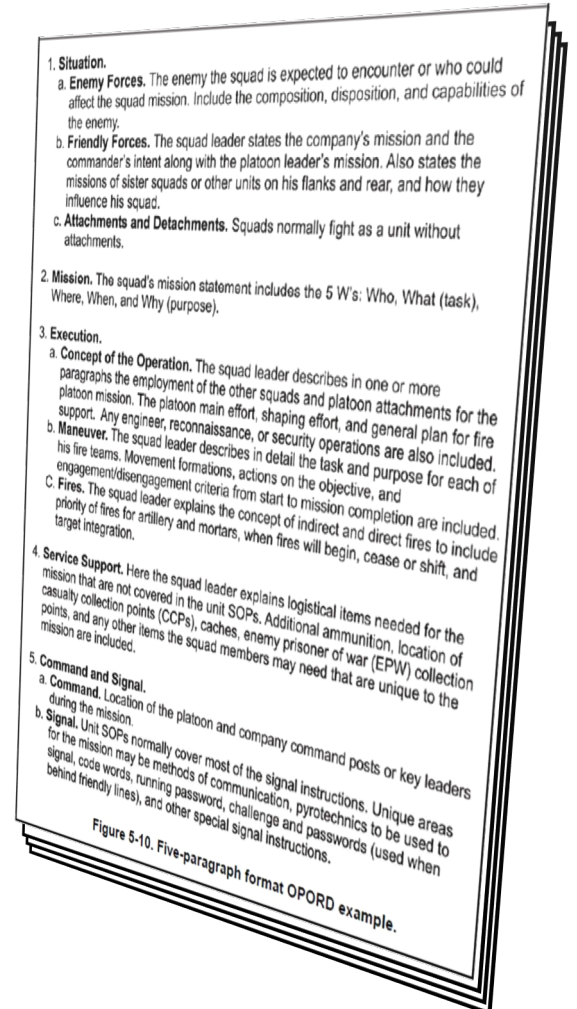
task

"BUY milk

IOT make quiche"

purpose

task

"SEIZE that hill

IOT control junction"

purpose

Whole or 1%?   Cream!
Quart or gallon?   Cheese!
Chocolate milk?   No!
If no milk?   Frozen quiche!

Mission Statement Best Practices: Every task needs a purpose

- USE the in-order-to (IOT) format to link **task** with the **purpose**

  A purpose gives your task **longevity** and **situation awareness**

  A purpose enables **initiative** when situation **changes** or information is **incomplete**

task

purpose

SEIZE Hill 205 IOT protect airfield.

SECURE route OHIO IOT safeguard aid convoys.

- CONDENSE: **Each word** means something — Each extra word *reduces* understanding

  The mission statement is the single most important sentence in the order

- CAPITALIZE the **task** — USE precise doctrinal **terms**

  Precision language is more important than precision weapons

Quibou B

The convoy commander pointed at you and then his map: "SCREEN three kilometers of this road in order to protect our north-west flank. 'Screen' means 'provide early warning,' OK?"

Two hours later, your vehicles are returning south to **Quibou**. You have seen no enemy. You and your Marines drove out for four kilometers, reported "all clear" at the turnaround point, and then drove back slowly, still studying both sides of the road. It is now dark, but there is a good moon.

At the bridge, travelling south, you tried to report your position, but the radio net is down. Off to your right, maybe 700 meters away, you can see the silhouettes of four friendly vehicles coming down the farm road toward you to link up with you on the main road.

Suddenly, your driver shouts, "Those aren't friendly! Those are enemy BMPs! What do we do now?"

Best Practices: Mission Statement Task and Purpose

- ASK yourself, "Can you change the task and still maintain the purpose?

  ***Do whatever it takes* IOT prevent enemy withdrawal on Route 12.**

- AVOID equating the task and purpose: task ≠ purpose

  DEFEND the village IOT retain the village.

- AVOID multiple purposes—there should be NO "and" in the purpose

  KNOCK down the tree IOT block the road AND provide firewood.

- AVOID a long-range purpose — your purpose should nest with the long-range purpose

  SEIZE Hill 424 IOT defeat ITALY.

  SEIZE Hill 424 IOT guard flank IOT secure beach IOT seize NAPLES IOT acquire airfield IOT defeat ITALY

Best Practices: Tasks to Subordinate Units

- Your **task** to each subordinate is their **mission**

- WRITE one concise, single-sentence task for **each** subordinate

- WRITE each task just like a mission statement:

  USE the in-order-to (IOT) format to link **task** with **purpose**

  CONDENSE: **Each word** means something — Each extra word *reduces* understanding

  CAPITALIZE the **task** — USE precise doctrinal **terms**

  1st Platoon. ME. At 1100 SEARCH GUBI village IOT uncover evidence of enemy

  2nd Platoon. At 1030 BLOCK streambed and bridge IOT prevent enemy escape

  3rd Platoon. At 1030, SECURE Hill 112 IOT overwatch GUBI village operation
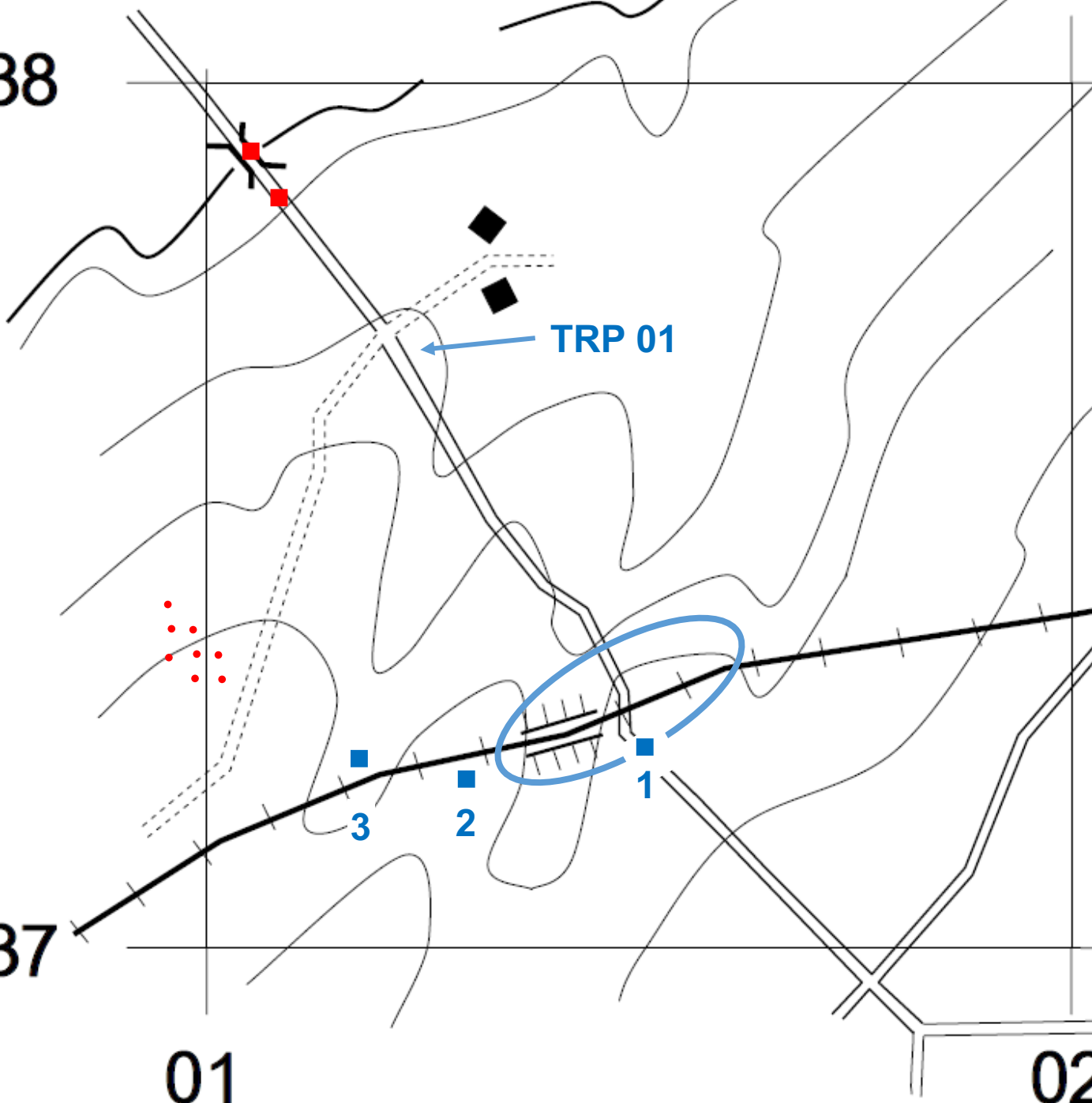
- ASSIGN a main effort

Quibou C

The convoy commander pointed at you and then his map: "We have a report of possible enemy reconnaissance vehicles ten kilometers north. I need you to BLOCK the road here," — he draws a goose-egg on his map — "in order to protect our refueling operation. Bring a javelin missile team."

Forty minutes later, your Marines are set in position. You and your **Vehicle 1** machinegun will SUPPRESS the enemy when they pass target refence point (TRP) 01, the farm road intersection. **Vehicle 3** javelin, in the low ground of a draw, will fire missiles and destroy the enemy vehicles. **Vehicle 2** machinegun, with good visibility from a high point, will pursue the withdrawing enemy by fire.

Two hours after dark, **Vehicle 2** reports on the radio, "I seem them! Enemy vehicles slowly crossing the bridge."

Suddenly, **vehicle 3** interrupts. "There's enemy infantry in the woods! Two-hundred meters. They're coming straight at us! We have to pull back!"

TRP 01

Quibou

Common Errors with Tasks to Subordinate Units

- Issuing NO mission — Leader issues tasks, but NO collective mission:

GO get dressed!

BUY cheese! BUY meat! BUY bread!

- NOT designating a main effort

- NOT including a purpose with each task

- Issuing too many tasks

- Issuing "puppet orders" to control movement

CROSS the bridge, MOVE north along the treeline, STOP outside the village

task ≠ CONOPS

- Issuing "more-of-the-obvious" tasks

"Do your job!" Do NOT say "MOVE quietly… CHECK equipment… CARRY batteries…"

Mission Statement

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHY
		SEIZE	that hill	
		SEIZE	that hill	IOT control road junction
At 1215	We	SEIZE	the SURI pass	IOT prevent enemy withdrawal
At H+2	1st Plt	SUPPRESS	the warehouse	IOT enable evacuation of town
At 1700	"E" Co	BLOCK	the intersection	IOT protect the LZ and airfield
At L-2:00	"G" Co	SCREEN	right (S) flank	IOT deny enemy observation
On order	TF Cox	SEIZE	Fort CAPUZZO	IOT isolate enemy reserves

- **mission statement** — A short sentence or paragraph that describes the organization's essential **task**(s), **purpose**, and action containing the elements of **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, and **why**. (*DOD Dictionary*, Jan 2021)

Mission Statement

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHY
		SEIZE	that hill	
		SEIZE	that hill	IOT control road junction
At 1215	We	SEIZE	the SURI pass	IOT prevent enemy withdrawal
At H+2	1st Plt	SUPPRESS	the warehouse	IOT enable evacuation of town
At 1700	"E" Co	BLOCK	the intersection	IOT protect the LZ and airfield
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- **mission statement** — A short sentence or paragraph that describes the organization's essential **task**(s), **purpose**, and action containing the elements of **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, and **why**. (*DOD Dictionary*, Jan 2021)

Mission Statement

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHY
Now	We	SEIZE	that hill	
Now	We	SEIZE	that hill	IOT control road junction
At 1215	We	SEIZE	the SURI pass	IOT prevent enemy withdrawal
At H+2	1st Plt	SUPPRESS	the warehouse	IOT enable evacuation of town
At 1700	"E" Co	BLOCK	the intersection	IOT protect the LZ and airfield
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Mission Statement

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		SEIZE	that hill	
		SEIZE	that hill	IOT control road junction
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- **mission statement** — A short sentence or paragraph that describes the organization's essential **task**(s), **purpose**, and action containing the elements of **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, and **why**. (*DOD Dictionary*, Jan 2021)

Mission Statement

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHY
		SEIZE	that hill	
		SEIZE	that hill	IOT control road junction
At 1215	We	SEIZE	the TASK	and PURPOSE
At H+2	1st Plt	SUPPRESS	the warehouse	IOT enable evacuation of town
At 1700	"E" Co	BLOCK	MISSION	and INTENT
At L-2:00	"G" Co	SCREEN	right (S) flank	IOT deny enemy observation
On order	TF Cox	SEIZE	Fort CAPUZZO	IOT isolate enemy reserves

- **mission statement** — A short sentence or paragraph that describes the organization's essential **task**(s), **purpose**, and action containing the elements of **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, and **why**. (*DOD Dictionary*, Jan 2021)

The Five-Paragraph Order Format for Company-Level Operations

1. Situation

2. Mission

3. Execution

   Concept of Operations (CONOPS)

   Tasks

   Coordinating Instructions

4. Administration and Logistics

5. Command and Signal

Source: MCRP 3-30.7 *Commander's Tactical Handbook*, 4 Apr 2018.

MINIMAL Guidance on Orders

- MCIP 3-10A.4i Ch 1 *Marine Rifle Squad*, 295 pages, 7 Aug 2020. MINIMAL guidance, see page 42 and Appendix C for (bad) templates

- MCIP 3-10A.3i *Marine Infantry Platoon*, 376 pages, 10 Jun 2019. MINIMAL guidance, see pages 34, 57–61, and Annex J for a (bad) template

- MCRP 3-10A.2 *Infantry Company Operations*, 389 pages, 4 Apr 2018. MINIMAL guidance, see pages 2-10, 4-19, 5-8, and Appendix D for tasks

- ATP 3-21.8 *Infantry Platoon and Squad*, 826 pages, 23 Aug 2016.

- ATP 3-21.10 *Infantry Rifle Company*, 618 pages, 14 Mar 2018.

- ATP 3-21.20 *Infantry Battalion*, 584 pages, 28 Dec 2017.
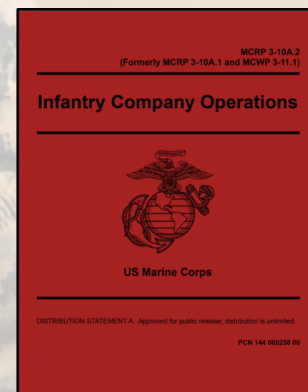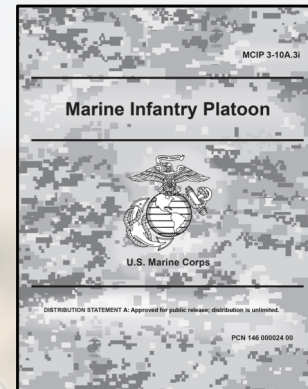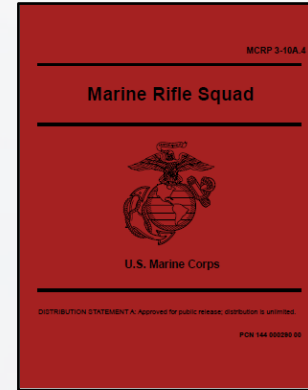
USE Precise Doctrinal Terms for Tactical Tasks

- MCDP 1-0, Ch 1–3 *Marine Corps Operations*, 279 pages, 29 Mar 2019. Annex C.

- FM 3-90-1 *Offense and Defense* Volume I, 290 pages, 13 Apr 2015. Annex B.
  "There is no definitive list of words or terms to describe the what and the why of a mission statement."

- MCRP 3-10A.2 *Infantry Company Operations*, 389 pages, 4 Apr 2018. Annex D.

Table C-1. Tactical Tasks.

Enemy-Oriented Tactical Tasks	Terrain-Oriented Tactical Tasks	Friendly-Oriented Tactical Tasks
ambush	breach*	cover
attack by fire	clear	disengage
block	control*	displace
breach*	cordon*	exfiltrate
bypass	occupy*	follow and assume
canalize	reconnoiter*	follow and support
contain*	retain	guard
corrupt	secure*	protect
deceive	seize	screen
defeat		
degrade	**Population-Oriented Tactical Task**	
deny		
destroy	advise	enable civil authorities
disrupt	assess the population	exclude
exploit	assist	influence*
feint	build/restore infrastructure	occupy*
fix	contain*	reconnoiter*
influence*	control*	secure*
interdict	coordinate with civil authorities	train
isolate	cordon*	transition to civil control
neutralize		
penetrate		
reconnoiter*		
support by fire		MCDP 1-0
suppress		

Table B-1. Actions by friendly forces and effects on enemy forces

Actions by friendly forces	Effects on enemy forces
Attack by fire	Block
Breach	Canalize
Bypass	Contain
Clear	Defeat
Control	Destroy
Counterreconnaisance	Disrupt
Disengagement	Fix
Exfiltrate	Isolate
Follow and assume	Neutralize
Follow and support	Suppress
Occupy	Turn
Retain	
Secure	
Seize	
Support by fire	FM 3-90-1

Advanced Mission Statement Concepts

- There is **NO Commander's Intent paragraph** for companies, platoons, or squads
  In Marine Corps mission statements, the purpose *equals* the intent

- There is **NO Center of Gravity analysis** for companies, platoons, or squads
  COG Analysis is done by the MAGTF or the Joint Task Force

- There is **NO Marine Corps Planning Process** for companies, platoons, or squads
  MCPP applies to units with staffs—Small unit leaders make estimates and issue orders

- There are **NO Annexes** to OpOrders for companies, platoons, or squads
  MCWP 5-10 formats do NOT apply below the battalion level

- Although all of these are taught, NONE applies to Lieutenants, SNCOs, or NCOs

Quibou D

The convoy commander pointed at you and then his map: "We have a report of possible enemy reconnaissance vehicles ten kilometers north. I need you to BLOCK the road here at the bridge," — he draws a goose-egg on his map — "in order to protect our refueling operation. Bring a javelin missile team. Major Macgregor will go with you. He knows what to do."

Twenty minutes later, your three vehicles are parked near the barns at the farm complex. Major Macgregor, an Army liaison officer who had hitched a ride with your convoy, says to you, "Wait here. I'm going to walk down to the bridge and reconnoiter the area."

After you have waited thirty minutes, and Major Macgregor has NOT returned, the convoy commander calls from Quibou. "Why are you NOT in position yet? It's almost dark!"

You have no communications with Major Macgregor. What orders do you issue?
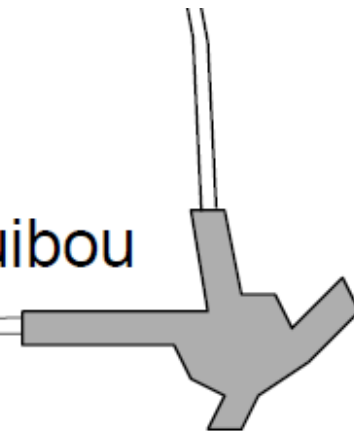
Orders: A User's Guide, August 2021

How to Write an Order

Best Practices for Orders

    Shorthand, Terrain Models, 3x5 Orders

Reference on Orders

    Doctrine, Training, Glossary

Available at: **www.2ndbn5thmar.com**

:ORDERS:
A USER'S GUIDE
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CHAD SKAGGS
AUGUST 2021