A topographic map of a region with various hills, creeks, and a pond. The map features contour lines in brown and red, indicating elevation. Blue lines represent water bodies, including Mill Creek, Shell Creek, and Cary Creek. A large blue pond, Weems Pond, is visible on the right side. Several hills are labeled, such as Jordan Hill, Jobs Hill, Hamilton Hill, Reeve Hill, Hutchcraft Hill, Vanveris Hill, Brackenridge Hill, and Acheson Hill. A red diagonal line runs across the upper right portion of the map. A grid of latitude and longitude lines is overlaid on the map. The title 'Orders: A User's Guide' is centered in large, bold, black font.

Orders: A User's Guide

Brendan McBreen
Chad Skaggs

Orders: A User's Guide

**Brendan McBreen
Chad Skaggs**

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Published in the United States

Title: ***Orders: A User's Guide***

Authors: Brendan McBreen and Chad Skaggs

ISBN: 9798363488238

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Dedication: Kabul 2021

“Throughout the summer of 2021, G/2/1 trained relentlessly on orders—deliberate and hasty in process, written and verbal in form. This preparation paid off in Afghanistan. On September 19, during the evacuation, we were inserted into Hamid Karzai Airport and immediately sent to the Abbey Gate. Our orders changed and we adjusted on the move, confronting hysterical crowds, integrating with joint units, working with foreign partners, and coordinating with the Taliban.

“Before sundown that first day, the company was tasked to clear over 2000 civilians between the Abbey Gate and the processing point. Our only guidance from battalion was, ‘Clear to the Baron Hotel, now.’ Just like we had trained, I wrote an order on one sheet of notebook paper. The platoon commanders did the same. In twenty minutes, we organized our Marines, coordinated with Fox company and a British company, and began to roll back the crowd and emplace a blocking obstacle. For nine hours, we operated with multiple units, met the timeline, and avoided injuring a single person.

“The Marines were magnificent. It was incredible to watch these young men, who only hours earlier were almost crushed to death, patiently and professionally usher the crowd backwards. Their unhesitating actions in the face of such adversity was a sign of our training and preparation.



“In chaos and under duress, Marines need to issue and understand orders in minutes, not hours. Kabul is proof that company, platoon, and squad orders are more than just critical communications—they are the basis for trust between a unit leader and his or her Marines.”

– Captain Geoff Ball

Orders: A User's Guide would not be possible without the insight and advice of the leaders listed below. Their guidance is the result of hard-won experience and years of dedicated study:

Colonel John Antal, US Army

Colonel Michael Belcher, USMC

Captain Garrett Boyce, USMC

Colonel Anthony Henderson, USMC

Captain Christopher Howard, USMC

Gunner Jimmy Hussey, USMC

Lieutenant Colonel Tim Jackson, USMC

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Western, USMC

Colonel Michael Wyly, USMC

Perspectives

“Directives should be as clear, simple and concise as each situation permits. Elaborateness and extreme detail are not generally characteristics of effective plans and orders. The more urgent the situation, the greater the need for brevity and simplicity. Where possible, we should use oral orders that are communicated directly between principals. Short sentences are easily understood.

“Superfluous, trite or trivial phrases weaken an order and create ambiguity. To aid understanding, we should make widespread use of map overlays, graphics, and other visual techniques, as these tend to improve and expedite understanding.”

– MCDP 5 Planning, 2018.

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Perspectives

“Orders should instruct only so far as conditions can reasonably be foreseen. Orders which attempt to arrange details too far in advance usually have to be countermanded. Such changes tax the communications system, cause confusion and misunderstanding, impose needless hardships... and harm morale.”

“Clarity and conciseness are more important than format. Slavishly following a prescribed format can result in rigid form and unimaginative content not consistent with the... requirements of each situation.”

– MCDP 5 Planning, 2018

Perspectives

“Only the layman thinks he can see... the... execution of an original idea with all the details thought out in advance.”

– Helmuth von Moltke, quoted by D.J. Hughes (1995). *Moltke on the Art of War*

Perspectives

“General Mattis moved across the Diyala, meeting up with Colonels Toolan and Dunford. Spreading a map out on the hood of Dunford’s vehicle, Mattis carved up the eastern portion of Baghdad into sectors and handed out tasks to his subordinates.”

“Colonel Toolan... moved back to RCT-1... issuing orders directly to his subordinates over the hood of his vehicle.”

– Cole F. Petersen (2017). *The Plan and First Contact*

Purpose and Scope

Purpose

The purpose of **Orders: A User's Guide** is to share best practices for issuing orders on the battlefield.

The focus is ground combat operations by small units—orders for squads, platoons, and companies.

The objective of this manual is to increase the tactical self-confidence of Marine leaders. To fight well, competent leaders need to understand the adversary, exploit the terrain, make tactical decisions, coordinate closely, support effectively, and communicate skillfully. Orders are a critical combat skill.

Audience

The audience for **Orders: A User's Guide** is Marine leaders at the squad, platoon, and company level. Marine leaders issue orders to their units to make things happen.

Perspectives

“When time was available to gather key leaders for a face-to-face brief, the sheer exhaustion of commanders and staff members operating 24-hours per day, constantly on the move, made the lengthy, formal briefs practiced in peace-time ineffective.”

— 3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Report, 2003

In Scope

Orders: A User's Guide covers infantry squad, platoon, and company orders.

This includes the orders of all other ground combat element (GCE) units—conducting convoys, patrols, security operations, or serving as provisional infantry. Artillery, light armored reconnaissance (LAR), reconnaissance, combat engineers, and assault amphibian units may have specialized orders procedures, but most of their orders are in scope.

Although types of operations are not addressed, the orders techniques and procedures in this manual apply across the board. All Marine missions are in scope: amphibious operations, raids, security and stability operations, crisis response and contingency operations, offensive and defensive operations, counterinsurgency operations (COIN), and expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO).

Each of the performance steps in Task 0302-C2-1002 *Issue a Five Paragraph Order*, NAVMC 3500.44D *Infantry T&R Manual*, 7 May 2020, are in scope.

Out of Scope

This manual does NOT address Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) rapid response planning process (R2P2) procedures. The MEU confirmation brief is out of scope.

The Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) is out of scope. War plans are out of scope. The landing plan is out of scope. Fires and targeting directives are out of scope.

Aviation combat element (ACE) operations are out of scope. Assault support (AS) inserts and extracts, offensive air support (OAS), close air support (CAS), and air tasking orders (ATO) are out of scope.

Logistics combat element (LCE) operations are out of scope.

Intelligence orders and directives—intelligence collection worksheet, collection overlay, and collection synchronization matrix—are out of scope. Creating PIRs, indicators, SIRs, and SORs is out of scope.

Conventions

In this manual, the word “order” is used for all types of orders:

- Orders named for their operation: *patrol orders, guard orders, convoy orders...*
- Orders named for their format: *five-paragraph orders, fragmentary orders (FRAGO)...*
- Orders named for their sequence: *warning orders (WARNO), operations orders (OPORDS)...*

The terms “mission order” and “mission-type order”—which are philosophies—are not used. The term “five-paragraph order”—which is a format—is NOT used.

The phrase “complete order” is NOT used. Every order issued is a complete order in the mind of the leader who issued it. *“BUY milk IOT serve breakfast cereal”* is a complete, properly-formatted order.

Assumptions

Hours, days, and weeks after insertion, units cannot assume electricity, computers, or printers.

Units without electricity cannot assume printed documents, imagery, or PowerPoint.

Units with battery-powered radios and computer devices can communicate orders by voice and data, but our orders processes cannot be dependent on computer support.

Perspectives

“The battalion order for the Goose Green battle was a complex ballet of six phases with fragile linkages and schedules requiring excessive oversight and coordination. A critical flaw of the order was its assumption of perfect intelligence on the enemy. It was never understood by the officers or the men.

Yet this order, and the style of planning and control that it represented, was the norm in the British army. The battalion commander who wrote it had been the lead instructor at the army’s school of infantry. When the battle quickly exceeded the scope of his order, the battalion commander froze all initiative, berating his company commanders to remain in position, in some cases for hours: ‘Let me fight my own battle!’”

— Major B.B. McBreen, *Orders at Goose Green 1982*

Orders: A User's Guide conforms to our Marine Corps *Warfighting* doctrine, clarifying and expanding on published techniques and procedures for orders at the small unit level.

Standards for Orders

One page in one hour. In combat, during ongoing operations, on familiar terrain, against a known adversary, the company commander writes and issues a one-page hand-written order in one hour.

Conditions: The Day After

In combat, during ongoing operations, on familiar terrain, against a known adversary...

NOT in CONUS, preparing to deploy. NOT on ship, planning an amphibious landing. NOT on the border, planning the invasion. NOT in the FOB, planning an upcoming mission. But **the day after** these initial events, during ongoing operations with established communication nets, leaders issue orders daily, **one page in one hour**.

Perspectives

"At 0730 24 March, [Colonel Dunford of RCT-5] issued... orders over the radio... With eighty-one words in nine sentences, Dunford launched a force of more than 5,000 Marines and 1,000 vehicles through a friendly position and onto the offensive."

– Cole F. Petersen (2017). *The Plan and First Contact*

Standard for electricity: NONE

Hours, days, and weeks after insertion, units cannot assume electricity. No computers or printers means no printed orders, imagery, or PowerPoint. Orders CANNOT be dependent on computers.

Standard for equipment: NONE

To receive, record, write, and issue orders, leaders need only a **map**, a **notebook**, and a **pen**.

Standard for length: ONE PAGE

A standard order is one page plus a graphic, with only **ONE TASK** for each subordinate unit. Additional pages are for manifests or target lists.

Standard for time: ONE HOUR

The most important standard is **speed of production**. Combat is time competitive. In the battalion, "one hour per echelon" enables the battalion to execute in four hours. If the battalion takes **one hour** to produce an order, companies, platoons and squads have 30 minutes to produce their orders and 15 minutes to deliver them. We must decide, direct, and act faster than the adversary.

At 1200, the battalion is tasked: "NLT 1600, SEIZE Objective ALPHA IOT protect the airfield." The battalion order is done in **one hour** by 1300 and issued by 1330. The company orders are done

by 1400 and issued by 1415. Platoon orders are done by 1445 and issued by 1500. Squad orders are done at 1530 and issued by 1545—for a 1600 execution.

Table. Time standards to produce an order.

	Produce an Order	Issue the Order	Execute the Order
Division	4 hours	2 hours	12 hours
Regiment	2 hours	1 hour	8 hours
Battalion	1 hour	30 minutes	4 hours
Company	30 minutes	15 minutes	3 hours
Platoon	30 minutes	15 minutes	2 hours
Squad or Section	30 minutes	15 minutes	1 hour

Source: Jim Storr (2022), *Something Rotten*, 107. **Notes:** "Produce" is from receipt of HHQ order to start of issue. "Execute" is from receipt of HHQ order to start of movement.

If you have three weeks, three days, or three hours, the order should look the same. When an immediate decision is needed in combat, the standard is:

Three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.

1. "I think there's only four or five of them, trying to block the road junction!"
2. "We're going to destroy that machinegun in order to make the road safe for follow-on units."
3. "Left envelopment around the high ground. Harrison, with me, main effort: ASSAULT the gun in order to make the road safe. Fulks: From here, SUPPRESS the gun in order to enable our assault. Peterson: SECURE the berm in order to protect the SBF. Open fire on my signal!"

Standards for evaluation:

A good order is **effective**. When an order is well communicated and fully understood by Marines and leaders, units will coordinate closely, support effectively, communicate clearly, and fight competently. *The best order is the one understood by the most number of people.*

A good order is **short**. Concise orders increase tempo. Each word in the order is critical. Each extra word reduces understanding. Long orders are confusing and rob subordinate units of time. An overly detailed order indicates a lack of training. *In the disorder of combat, simplicity is strength.*

A good order is **clear**. To be understood, the plan must be explained in simple, unambiguous language. Complex terms and acronyms *reduce* understanding. Tasks and control measures must be remembered in the dark, on the radio. *Orders that can be misunderstood will be misunderstood.*

A good order is **specific**. Our common tactical language increases comprehension. Use accurate doctrinal tasks and terms. Professionals communicate a shared understanding of the battlefield. *Precision language is more important than precision weapons.*

A good order is **current**. It solves the situation at hand. Leaders do not plan beyond what they can see. Orders that try to predict the future eventually collapse when the enemy does not follow the plan. New situations demand a new order. *A new phase requires a new mission and a new order.*

A good order **demonstrates**. It is visual and graphic. Whenever possible, leaders should sketch out the plan on a terrain model, white board, or the back of an MRE sleeve to help Marines visualize and understand the commander's intent.

A good order accepts **risk**. In combat, when time is short and the situation changes, Marines will have incomplete information, incorrect intelligence, and inaccurate unit locations. Leaders cannot hesitate, but must issue imperfect orders in an uncertain environment. *Bold initiative requires risk.*

A good order includes **five techniques** that our Warfighting doctrine directs: (1) an **assessment** of the adversary, (2) the higher commander's **intent**, (3) a **mission and intent**, (4) subordinate **task and purpose** statements, and (5) a designated **main effort**.

A good order is **verbal**. The leader's voice, competent and confident, *is* the order. All orders are eventually issued verbally, face-to-face or over the radio. *Printed orders are for the historians.*

A good order needs a well-practiced **SOP**. Trained units with standard procedures replace the routine information in an order, enabling Marine leaders to write only mission-essential sentences.

A good order is followed by a **rehearsal**. Leaders demand backbriefs from their subordinates. *A good rehearsal is better than a good order.*

Perspectives

"I [served]... at Advanced Infantry Training Battalion-East... [where] I witnessed hundreds of squad and platoon-level orders. A consistent theme... was that a [poor] order, well-rehearsed, resulted in good to above-average execution far more frequently than a killer order that wasn't rehearsed as thoroughly."

– Major Michael M. Breslin (2020). *Acta Non Verba: The Company Operations Order*

Prerequisites for orders

The Marine Corps has all the prerequisites to meet the standards for good orders:

- **Competent leaders** with experience, independence, initiative, and a bias toward action.
- **A common language** of doctrine, tactics, and terms.
- **Well-trained units**—cohesive teams—with standard operating procedures.

Orders: A User's Guide

- **A Warfighting philosophy** of implicit communication and shared trust in those frontline leaders who are forward with direct observation of the battlefield.

Orders direct Marine units in combat. Marines need concise, clear, and correct instructions—that support their higher headquarters intent and enable them to act with initiative when the situation changes and information is incomplete.

Recommendations for Orders

Cut everything that is NOT essential. Issuing an order is a learned skill that unpracticed leaders find difficult to do quickly, clearly, and correctly. Subtraction is more challenging—and requires more expertise—that addition. Professionals say *less*.

CUT encyclopedic data. CUT irrelevant and out-of-scope information from the HHQ Situation: adversary, terrain, higher headquarters actions. FOCUS on *your* unit, *your* AO, and *your* mission.

CUT doctrine and SOP explanations. Do NOT teach. Do NOT preach. Routine instructions are NOT repeated in the order. That is the purpose of an SOP—90 percent of most orders are SOPs.

CUT operational-level concepts. CUT paragraphs from the war plan or the campaign plan. CUT phases, end-states, branches, sequels, and assessments (measures of effectiveness, measures of performance). CUT the commander's intent paragraph, the center of gravity analysis (critical capabilities, critical requirements, and critical vulnerabilities), lines of operation, and lines of effort.

CUT micromanagement recommendations. Do NOT say, "*Issue each driver a map.*" CUT "should." AVOID detailed guidance that insults the competence and independence of your Marines.

CUT more-of-the-obvious sentences. Do NOT say, "*Minimize heat casualties.*" AVOID self-evident information that adds no value and makes an order longer.

CUT lists. List are references, separate from the order. CUT equipment checklists, target lists, lists of control measure grids, checklists, landing plans, schedules, manifests—and issue separately.

CUT all adjectives and adverbs.

Perspectives

"We cannot... issue long-winded orders, either written or oral. Whatever order we... issue must be short and... clear. If we hope to do this in war we must practice it in peace."

– Adolph von Schell, *Battle Leadership*

Warning signs of a bad order

A bad order is long and confusing. A bad order lists multiple tasks for each subordinate. A complex task organization with long lists of tasks indicates an overly complicated plan with too many moving parts. A bad order has no mission, no intent, or no main effort. A bad order uses imprecise and non-doctrinal tasks and terms. A bad order tries to choreograph events far into the future. Combat veterans know that issuing a super-detailed order costs a great deal of time and then it loses all value once the firing starts.

A bad order unnecessarily repeats doctrine and SOPs. A bad order includes numerous conditional “on-order” and “be-prepared-to” tasks that require excessive coordination. A bad order is full of micro-management tasks and self-evident, more-of-the-obvious phrases.

Perspectives

*“As a 2ndLt leading my first [operation] in Afghanistan, I was hand-delivered a 65-page company order four hours before my platoon was scheduled to LD. **That is a company commander who failed.** By the time I got that brick, there was little I could do to translate the important parts for the squad leaders. The end result was that I took 40 Marines and 20 [Afghan National Army] soldiers into a multi-day [operation] without me or any of my subordinate leaders truly understanding the [operation].”*

– Major Michael M. Breslin (2020). *Acta Non Verba: The Company Operations Order*

The best order

The best order is no order at all. The security element, the QRF, the casualty collection team, the OP—no one has to tell them, “Do your job.” When the advance guard comes to a dry streambed and takes fire from the far tree line, the unit leader must decide what to do. Radio instructions from his boss, eight kilometers away—“*Deploy west! Secure the far side! Get some weapons up onto the hill!*”—are unnecessary and possibly dangerous.

The HHQ commander thinks he knows what to do, but he is in no position to decide. His orders, all based on a partial and imperfect understanding of the unfolding situation, lead to misunderstandings and lock his advance guard into executing incorrect actions. His orders have now restricted the initiative of the advance guard and denied their freedom of action.

Never order more than is necessary. Do NOT force your subordinates to disobey your orders. The commander should leave the method of execution to the leader on the scene.

Issue as few orders as possible, each as short as possible.

Perspectives

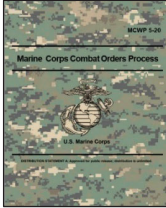
“The best combat leaders clearly communicate what the problem is and set the stage to solve it—as simply and succinctly as possible; enabling their subordinates to improvise and adapt as the situation unfolds. Ineffective combat leaders are overly verbose and controlling, often to compensate for their own personal inadequacies.”

– P.H. Tremblay

Order formats

Remember that order formats are just guidelines, not mandatory checklists. The five-paragraph order format was originally developed in 1897! Skip whatever sections—whatever paragraphs—are not needed. *Content* is far more important than format.

The Marine Corps Combat Orders Process



The 1st Marine Division invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003 and fought every day for the next 24 days. Twenty headquarters, battalions and above, issued combat orders almost every day. Over five hundred smaller units, companies, platoons, and squads, also issued orders nearly every day. The orders for the first day were planned and printed. The remaining orders—over 14,000 of them—were issued verbally, by leaders using notebooks and maps. Number of verbal orders? 99 percent. Number of MCPP evolutions? Zero.

What is the orders process in the field? What do combat leaders actually do? Write? Experienced leaders analyze their mission, look at the terrain, and make an estimate. They decide on a CONOPS, write an order, and then issue this order to their Marines—faster than the enemy.

Perspectives

“Brief and concise orders were a requirement [General] Mattis imposed... [on] the Division. [Orders] were simple and clear enough to be delivered verbally... over the radio or face-to-face... At the RCT level and below, officers... did not recall any written products being issued after crossing the line of departure.”

– Cole F. Petersen (2017). *The Plan and First Contact*

The orders process takes **30 minutes** for companies, platoons, or squads. Five minutes to analyze the mission and propose a COA, five minutes to test the COA and decide on changes, and twenty minutes to write the order. Issuing the order and running the rehearsal follows.

Table. The Marine Corps Combat Orders Process (MCCOP).

Step	Who EXECUTES What Actions
Problem Framing	The commander ANALYZES the mission. Optionally: The commander asks subordinates to help analyze the mission.
COA Development	The commander PROPOSES a COA to accomplish the mission. Optionally: The commander explains his proposed COA to subordinates.
COA Wargame	The commander TESTS the COA against likely adversary actions. Optionally: The commander asks subordinates how to improve the COA.
COA Decision	The commander DECIDES what changes will improve the COA. Optionally: The commander explains his decision to subordinates.
Orders Development	The commander WRITES the order. Optionally: The commander tells subordinates to write portions of the order.
Transition	The commander ISSUES the order. Optionally: The commander tells subordinates to present portions of the brief.

Notes: *Commander*—the unit leader, squad leader through division commander. *COA*—course of action. *Optionally*—when the commander includes subordinates. At the battalion level and above, this is usually the commander's staff.

Problem Framing. The commander ANALYZES the mission.

From the HHQ order, the commander WRITES his portion of the situation—the immediate problem—into *Paragraph 1. Situation*. He WRITES the task given him into *Paragraph 2. Mission*. He WRITES times and other details into *Paragraph 3.c. Coordinating Instructions*. He MARKS his map with friendly positions, adversary positions, and control measures. Studying his map, or the actual terrain, he MAKES an estimate of the situation.

The commander then THINKS about the mission, how he can best support the HHQ plan, and any implied tasks or restrictions. If he must, he EDITS his mission. Usually, however, the task assigned by HHQ is appropriate. *Unless change is absolutely necessary, it is absolutely unnecessary.*

COA Development. The commander PROPOSES a COA to accomplish the mission.

The commander DRAWS a COA sketch describing how he will accomplish the mission. He DISCARDS unworkable ideas and settles on the first solution that works. He WRITES one task for each subordinate unit into *Paragraph 3.b. Tasks*.

COA Wargame. The commander TESTS the COA against likely adversary actions.

The commander ASKS himself, “How could the adversary stop me?” “What is the adversary’s most likely course of action (EMLCOA)?” and “If this operation fails, why exactly did it fail?”

COA Decision. The commander DECIDES what changes will improve the COA.

The commander EDITS and refines his COA sketch into an approved CONOPS. He WRITES the concept, with improvements and fire support details, into *Paragraph 3.a. CONOPS*.

Orders Development. The commander WRITES the order.

The commander EDITS the existing order to reconcile discrepancies. He WRITES the unfinished portions, adding *Paragraph 4. A&L* and *Paragraph 5. C&S*.

Transition. The commander ISSUES the order.

The commander BRIEFS the situation and mission, EXPLAINS the CONOPS, and TASKS units. He QUESTIONS leaders using the backbrief technique. If time permits, he RUNS a rehearsal.

Notes

A well-prepared leader formats his notebook with paragraph headers so he can easily extract information from the HHQ order. The unit leader does NOT compare multiple COAs. He focuses on the first solution that solves the immediate tactical problem.

Acronyms: HHQ—higher headquarters. COA—course of action. CONOPS—concept of operations. A&L—Administration and Logistics. C&S—Command and Signal.

Optionally

When the commander includes subordinates in the orders process, he benefits from their experience and different points of view. At the battalion level and above, the commander's staff provides specific areas of expertise and they each benefit from increased situational awareness.

Problem Framing. The commander ANALYZES the mission.

Optionally: The commander asks subordinates to help analyze the mission. They discuss the situation and the mission, specified and implied tasks, and assumptions and limitations. Questions about the enemy or the terrain are recorded as intelligence requirements for the collection plan.

COA Development. The commander PROPOSES a COA to accomplish the mission.

Optionally: The commander explains his proposed COA to subordinates, who ask questions and help the commander clarify his thoughts. There are no multiple COAs, no 'throw-away' COAs.

COA Wargame. The commander TESTS the COA against likely adversary actions.

Optionally: The commander asks subordinates how to improve the COA. They compare the COA to likely enemy actions. They ask, "How could the adversary stop me?" "What is the adversary's most likely course of action (EMLCOA)?" and "If this operation fails, why exactly did it fail?"

COA Decision. The commander DECIDES what changes will improve the COA.

Optionally: The commander decides and explains his decision to subordinates. They discuss the changes and the reasons for each of the commander's decisions.

Orders Development. The commander WRITES the order.

Optionally: The commander assigns subordinates to write portions of the order: one writer with expertise for each section. The commander edits the order to avoid duplications or inconsistencies.

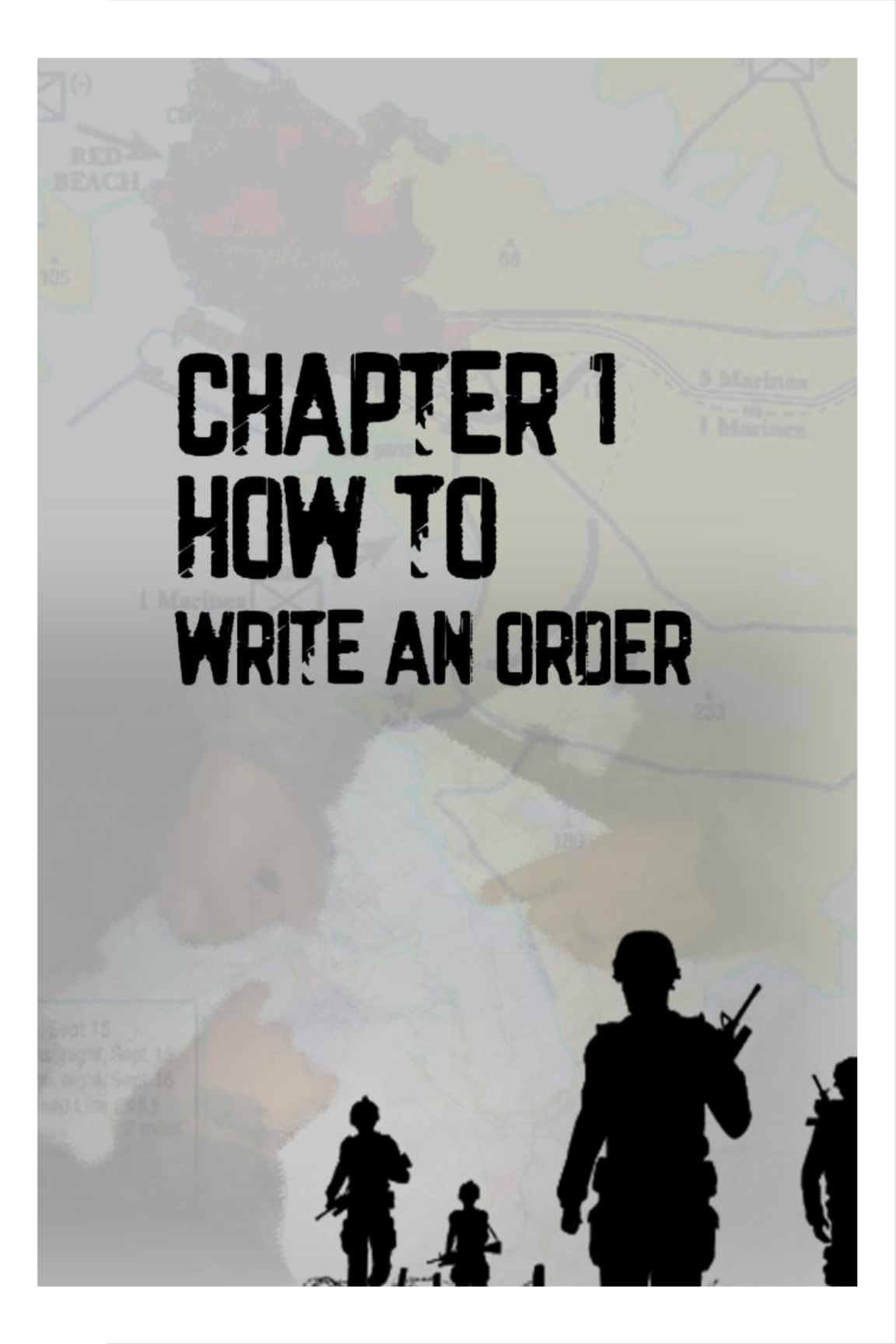
Transition. The commander ISSUES the order.

Optionally: The commander tasks subordinates to present portions of the brief. Briefers should address their area of expertise. If time permits, the commander runs a rehearsal.

The commander

The commander makes decisions and directs the unit. As the most experienced, skilled, and tactically competent Marine in the unit, he must drive the decision making and orders process. A small, competent staff—S-2, S-3, S-4, S-6, AirO, Artillery LnO—can assist the commander, but he is fully capable of making decisions and issuing orders on his own. If the battalion commander has less than one hour to produce an order, he may ask for no help whatsoever.

Orders: A User's Guide

The background is a faded military map showing a coastal region. Key features include 'RED BEACH' with an arrow pointing to a specific area, and several locations marked '1 Marine' and '5 Marines'. The map also shows various terrain features, roads, and elevation markers like '105' and '233'. In the bottom foreground, the silhouettes of four soldiers in full combat gear are visible, holding rifles. The overall tone is somber and tactical.

CHAPTER 1

HOW TO

WRITE AN ORDER

Perspectives

“The essential thing is action. Action has three stages: the decision born of thought, the order or preparation for execution, and the execution itself.”

— General Hans von Seeckt

1.0 How to Write the

Orientation

1. DESCRIBE your **battlespace** to your Marines. ORIENT on the actual terrain or a terrain model. USE a map, sketch, tablet, or imagery only if a terrain model is not available.



2. TASK ORGANIZE your unit before the order. STATE the time attachments are effective. For the roll call, GROUP leaders together so attachments can coordinate during the order.

T/O: Effective @ 2200
 1st Plt + MG Sect
 2d Plt
 3d Plt with MAAWS
 Co CP: FAC, FO, 60s

ORGANIZE **simply**. Fewer units. Simple plans. One leader responsible for each major task.
 ORGANIZE **clearly**. Attach units directly to leaders. Emphasize a clear chain of command.
 ORGANIZE **ruthlessly**. Allocate overwhelmingly to the main effort. AVOID dispersing weapons.
 ORGANIZE **habitually**. Units with established relationships fight more effectively.

The CONOPS dictates the task organization. The task organization dictates the comm plan: three subordinates is three units on your net. When you attach MG down to 1st Platoon, they switch to 1st Platoon net. Units on a command net change as the task organization changes.

3. ORIENT everyone to the **map**: *North, current location, and gridlines.*
 DESCRIBE **natural terrain features**: *Hills, vegetation, and water features.*
 DESCRIBE **man-made terrain features**: *Roads, bridges, and towns.*
4. DESCRIBE **control measures**: *AO, LZ, OBJ, PL, CP...*
Fire support coordination measures: *TGT, EA, TRP, CFL...*
Intel and **airspace** coordinating measures: *NAI, FSCL, BP...*

O: (N). Our POS (@ AA). 53-57 gridlines.
 valley (E)-(W), riverbed, Hill 118.
 Highway N1, bridge, Al-ANAD village.
 AO, PL GOLD, RTE UTAH: CP 17U, 19U
 OBJ 20 (16S GA 130 558)
 TGT AD 1050 (16S GA 132 566), CFL

POST a table of control measures for your subordinates to copy or copy control measure graphics between tablets electronically.

Control measure	Grid	Notes
CFL 1	57 Northing	Parallel to (E)-(W) stream
CCP	16S GA 129 543	= ORP
OBJ 20	16S GA 130 558	
TGT AD 1050	16S GA 132 566	EN HQ, Mortar POS (?)
LZ WREN	16S GA 121 418	

5. BRIEF **terrain** (KOCOA): Key terrain, observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, and avenues of approach. BRIEF **weather** (WX).

Terrain & Weather:

- K: CP 25W intersection is access to airport.
- O: 1 km (N) of village. Fires on road - good.
- C: Buildings (W) of road - ideal for ambush.
- O: NONE. Highway narrows thru village.
- A: Highway. Dismounts can move in alleys.
- Wx: Overcast - no effect. BMNT: 0525.

BRIEF **key terrain**, locations that give you—or the adversary—an advantage. Key terrain can often become an objective. Key terrain works both ways—the adversary can also identify, place under observation, and register targets on dominant terrain.

key terrain — Any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant. — DOD Dictionary, Nov 2022

BRIEF **observation and fields of fire** for both you—and the adversary:

“In the treeline we can expect to see about 25 meters. Small arms range is limited by the trees.”
“Fields of fire for our defense are reduced to 100 meters. Machineguns will be less effective.”

BRIEF **cover and concealment** for both you—and the adversary:

“The dense forest will help conceal us from enemy UAS.”

BRIEF **obstacles**.

BRIEF **avenues of approach**, the routes that both you—and the adversary—will take:

“The draw behind the enemy position is their likely egress route. This is an on-call target.”

avenue of approach (AA) — An air or ground route of an attacking force of a given size leading to its objective or to key terrain in its path. — DOD Dictionary, Nov 2022

BRIEF **weather**, and the effects of weather. Emphasize practical information so Marines can prepare clothing, equipment, and packing lists: *“The cold will cause our batteries to die faster.”*

Weather affects avenues of approach:

“Recent rains flooded the dry river bed, so it's less likely an adversary avenue of approach.”

Weather affects enemy actions: *“In the midafternoon heat, their sentries are likely to be sleepy.”*

“In this rain, their OPs may be less alert and less likely to hear our infiltration.”

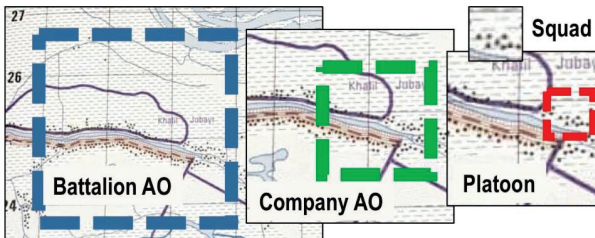
Weather affects times of movement:

“Our approach at sunrise from the east will put the sun in their eyes.”

BRIEF **illumination data**—important for night operations, night vision equipment, and weapons sights. BMNT and EENT can dictate CAS ground markings. Moonrise enables unaided night movement. POST a table of illumination data for your subordinates to copy.

Best Practices

BRIEF *your* terrain, NOT HHQ. FOCUS on *your* unit, *your* AO, and *your* mission. Marines need KOCO. The longer a unit operates in an AO, the greater the familiarity, and the shorter the KOCO needs to be.



BRIEF terrain from one side of the terrain model to the other and sequentially as your Marines will move through it.

WRITE grids on the index cards that identify each control measure on the terrain model.

READ grids during the orientation to avoid reading grids during the order.

If you brief two terrain models—one large map-based model of the AO and one small imagery-based model of the objective—ANNOUNCE clearly when you transition between them.

Common errors

Briefing random portions of the order when identifying control measures: *"This is LZ WREN."*

Do NOT then say: *"Resupply will occur at LZ WREN before 1900..."*

Briefing every hill or ridge as key terrain. Lists of key terrain—K1, K2, K3, K4—are confusing.

Briefing conditional key terrain. Do NOT say: *"If the enemy comes this way, K4 is key terrain."*

Briefing every road or trail as an avenue of approach.

Neglecting streams, fords, and waterways as key terrain or avenues of approach.

Briefing "high speed" avenues of approach. Speed is different for different units. A paved highway is NOT a "high speed" avenue of approach for foot-mobile units.

Briefing "good." Do NOT say: *"Vegetation provides good concealment."*

Designating "Main Supply Routes (MSRs). Avenues of approach are not MSRs unless they are a part of the supply plan. List MSRs as Routes (*Route Nebraska*) during TCM Orientation.

Briefing unclear unit sizes:

Do NOT say: *"Foot-mobile dismounts..."* Say: *"Infantry."*

Do NOT say: *"A squad-sized element..."* Say: *"Squad."*

Briefing more-of-the-obvious weather effects.

Do NOT say: *"The temperature will be in the 90s. Ensure Marines are drinking water."*

Do NOT say: *"Humidity causes rust. All Marines will clean their rifles."*

Timing

A concise Orientation looks the same whether you have **three weeks, three days, or three hours**. Under time constraints, only task organization and tactical control measures are stated. If you only have **three minutes**, you can still issue an Orientation sentence on the radio: *"Designate the road intersection as TRP 1, over."*

Echelons

Company, platoon, and squad Orientation techniques are similar. Smaller units brief details specific to individual Marines. Avenues of approach are different for each echelon. Smaller units brief smaller avenues of approach. A **company** defense may brief a mountain pass as a likely avenue of approach. A **squad** may brief a drainage ditch that an enemy can crawl through.

Notes

Terrain (KOCO) and weather (WX)—analyses of the area of operations (AO)—should be part of the Situation paragraph. The best practice during Orientation is to brief the terrain model and then immediately analyze the terrain and weather in the AO.

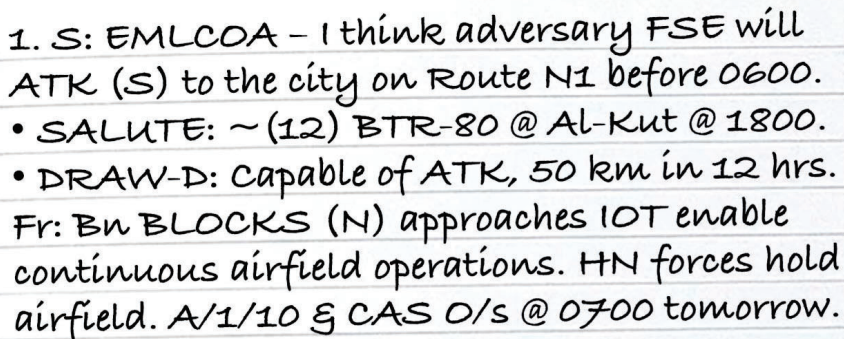
1.1 How to Write the

Situation

1. ASSESS what you think the adversary is going to do. AVOID forecasting in detail or in phases.

The first and **most important sentence**—the only required sentence—is your assessment of the adversary's most likely course of action (EMLCOA). What are they going to do?

Start with *"I think..."* Your assessment provides context. Your orders make sense if your Marines know what you are thinking. Do NOT repeat the facts. Interpret the facts and estimate.



1. S: EMLCOA - I think adversary FSE will ATK (S) to the city on Route N1 before 0600.

- SALUTE: ~ (12) BTR-80 @ Al-Kut @ 1800.
- DRAW-D: Capable of ATK, 50 km in 12 hrs.

Fr: Bw BLOCKS (N) approaches IOT enable continuous airfield operations. HN forces hold airfield. A/1/10 & CAS O/s @ 0700 tomorrow.

2. DESCRIBE adversary **composition**—recent reporting on size, activity, location, unit, time, and equipment (SALUTE). The older the reporting, the less accurate the report. *"An enemy company moved to the ridge 48 hours ago. They've been reinforced with an unknown number of tanks."*

DESCRIBE adversary **capabilities**—defend, reinforce, attack, withdraw, or delay (DRAW-D)—as "likely" or "unlikely." *"The enemy will likely delay on Hill 185 IOT allow the main body to escape North."* DRAW-D statements are assumptions which are validated through reconnaissance.

3. EXPLAIN your friendly **HHQ mission and intent**. This is the second most important sentence. Decisions that you and your Marines make need to support the HHQ mission and intent.

BRIEF higher, adjacent, and supporting (HAS) units.

BRIEF fire support units as: location, priority of fire (POF), and direction of fire (DOF).

Best practices

EMPHASIZE your EMLCOA assessment. Not every part of composition and capabilities are briefed. SALUTE and DRAW-D are mnemonic devices to **remember** what to consider—not a fixed format.

ANALYZE adversary units in *your* area of operations (AO). Do not restate your HHQ Situation.

BRIEF only those parts of the HHQ and adjacent missions that are relevant to you.

AVOID discussing attachments and detachments. Task organization is best done *before* the order, during the Orientation.

Common errors

Briefing the entire adversary order of battle—downloading long lists of units and locations from your HHQ Annex B—and NOT including an estimate.

Briefing outside your area of operations. FOCUS on the adversary that can affect *your* AO. Briefing geo-political, strategic or operational-level issues. FOCUS on *your* AO.

Assuming intelligence is correct. Intelligence is always inaccurate and incomplete. Marines make mistakes, reports are misinterpreted, and the adversary moves. Adversary dispositions must be confirmed through leader's reconnaissance, observation posts, UAS, patrols, or imagery.

Briefing all five adversary capabilities (DRAW-D). FOCUS on likely actions.

Briefing contradictory capabilities. An adversary does NOT defend **and** attack.

Timing

If you have **three weeks** or **three days**, the battalion S-2 can provide comprehensive reporting, analyses, and intelligence products. Company-level intelligence cells (CLIC) can brief current adversary composition, a complete capabilities study, EMLCOA, and EMDCOA.

With **three hours** and scarce intelligence products, BRIEF the adversary information you have. FOCUS on an assessment of EMLCOA and your HHQ mission and intent.

If you only have **three minutes**, issue a single assessment sentence on the radio:
"I think the enemy is going to counterattack from the stream bed!"

Echelons

Company-level Situation information addresses the company AO, supported by the battalion S-2, and CLIC contributions.

Platoon and **squad** orders, without external information, include enemy information from the company order.

Notes

Analyses of the area of operations (AO), usually briefed during the Orientation, should properly be part of the Situation paragraph.

1. **Situation**
 - a. Area of Operations (AO)
 - b. Adversary forces
 - c. Friendly forces

Orders Format for Company-Level Operations.

Derived from MCRP 3-30.7 **Commander's Tactical Handbook**, 4 Apr 2018, page 5.

1.2 How to Write the

Mission

1. ISSUE **one** concise sentence as the mission—the most important sentence in the order.

CONDENSE. CHOOSE each word carefully. Every *extra* word reduces understanding. Your mission is normally identical to the task you receive from HHQ.

2. M: At 0700, "B" SEIZES Hill 118 IOT control the highway bridge (OBJ 40).

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

— DOD Dictionary, Nov 2022

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

Every mission statement includes a **task** and a **purpose**. The purpose gives a task longevity and provides situation awareness. The purpose enables Marines to act with initiative when the situation changes or information is incomplete.

2. M: At H-Hour, "B" SECURES Route OHIO IOT safeguard aid convoys.

mission — The **task**, together with the **purpose**, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore.

— DOD Dictionary, Nov 2022

3. The **purpose** is the **commander's intent**. Do NOT write a separate commander's intent paragraph. The Marine Corps defines commander's intent as *part of the mission statement*.

commander's intent — A commander's clear, concise articulation of the **purpose(s)** behind one or more tasks assigned to a subordinate. It is **one of two parts of every mission statement** that guides the exercise of initiative in the absence of instructions.

— Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary, 10 Sep 2020

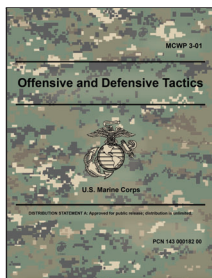
A separate intent paragraph—purpose, method, key tasks, and endstate—is an unnecessary repetition of the order. The redundant commander's intent paragraph has no place in a company, platoon, or squad order. A solid mission statement should stand on its own.

Best practices

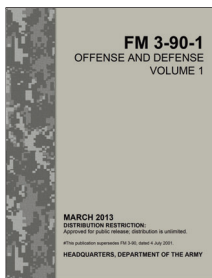
REPEAT the mission statement twice, slowly. At the end of your order, the test is: *Can your Marines remember the mission?* If they can't remember the mission, the entire order fails.

COPY your mission statement directly from your HHQ task.

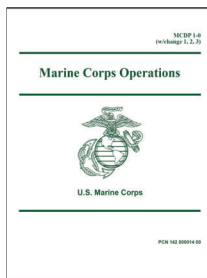
CAPITALIZE the task—the verb. USE precise doctrinal terms for tactical tasks:



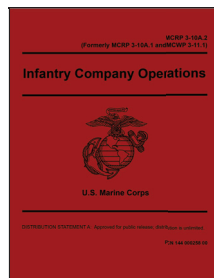
MCWP 3-01 **Offensive and Defensive Tactics**,
20 Sep 2019.
Tasks are Appendix C.



FM 3-90-1 **Offense and Defense**,
13 Apr 2015.
Tasks are Appendix B.



MCDP 1-0 Ch 1-3 **Marine Corps Operations**,
29 Mar 2019.
Tasks are Appendix C.



MCRP 3-10A.2 **Infantry Company Operations**,
4 Apr 2018.
Tasks are Appendix D.

However, you are NOT limited to any list of tactical tasks. *"LIGHT the warehouse on fire IOT signal friendly aircraft"* is a valid mission statement even though "light" is NOT a tactical task.

AVOID multiple tasks and multiple sentences in the mission. AVOID paragraphs. If you have six essential tasks, you need to re-define "essential." Several tasks divert from the main task.

AVOID multiple purposes. AVOID contradictions. There should be no "and" in the purpose. Do NOT say: *"KNOCK down the tree IOT block the road and provide firewood."*

EVALUATE your purpose. Can you change the task and still maintain the purpose? *"[Do whatever it takes] IOT prevent adversary withdrawal on Route 12."*

AVOID grids, date-time-groups, and task organization instructions. Do NOT clutter the mission statement with data. No one can backbrief a grid.

NEST your purpose (intent) with your HHQ intent. All tactical actions support the HHQ plan.

<i>"1st Platoon SBF</i>	<i>IOT enable Co ME to advance."</i>	Platoon
<i>"E' SEIZES Hill 42</i>	<i>IOT protect the left flank"</i>	Company
	<i>IOT secure the beachhead."</i>	Battalion
	<i>IOT advance to NAPLES."</i>	MAGTF
	<i>IOT establish air bases"</i>	JTF
	<i>IOT defeat ITALY."</i>	

Common errors

Issuing long, confusing mission paragraphs that no one can remember. If your HHQ issued a multiple-part task, select the most important part.

Skipping the mission statement and immediately tasking your units.

Not including a purpose (an intent) in the mission.

Equating the task with the purpose: **Task ≠ Purpose.**

Do NOT say: *"ATTACK the village IOT destroy the village."*

Do NOT say: *"SUPPORT BY FIRE IOT suppress adversary positions."*

Equating the task with the CONOPS: **Task ≠ CONOPS.**

Do NOT say: *"CONDUCT infiltration along the stream bed and left ENVELOPMENT of the objective..."* Infiltration and envelopment are forms of maneuver, NOT tasks.

Issuing a tactical task as a purpose. The purpose is not usually a task, but a reason:

...IOT to enable the maneuver element to close."

...IOT prevent the enemy from enveloping the main effort."

Adding multiple follow-on operations:

Do NOT say: *"Following that, reorganize elements, displace south, and conduct link-up..."*

Connecting a long chain of tasks with "and":

Do NOT say: *"SEEK and FIND and FIX and FINISH adversary outposts IOT..."*

Do NOT say: *"ISOLATE and CLEAR and SEIZE Hildago Pass IOT..."*

Connecting a long chain of tasks with "to":

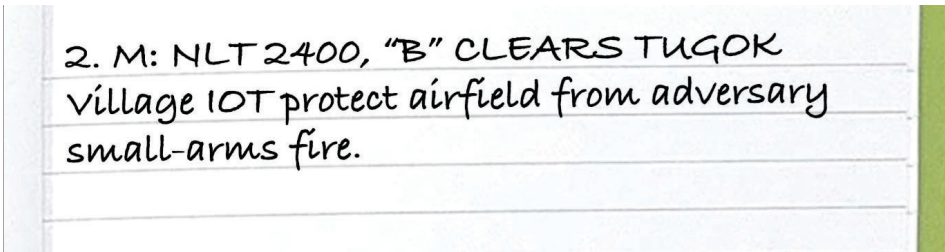
Do NOT say: *"ADVANCE to ATTACK to SEIZE to SECURE OBJ 22 IOT..."*

Using slang terms for tactical tasks:

Do NOT say: *"SWING north, LEAN into the fire, and HAMMER the targets IOT..."*

Moving your unit like a puppet with a chronological chain of navigation tasks:

Do NOT say: *"CROSS river, ADVANCE north, ENTER the treeline, and then CLEAR TUGOK..."*



2. M: NLT 2400, "B" CLEARS TUGOK
village IOT protect airfield from adversary
small-arms fire.

Timing

A concise Mission looks the same whether you have **three weeks, three days, three hours, or three minutes**. *When an immediate decision is needed in combat, the standard is three sentences—including a mission statement—in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

Echelons

Company, platoon, and squad mission techniques are the same. At the platoon and squad level, mission statements often start with “we”:

“We will SECURE the corner building IOT protect the left flank.”

Examples

Each mission statement below includes **Who, What, Where, When, and Why**.

A mission statement without a why—a purpose—is incomplete.

If the **when** or the **who** is NOT stated, they are understood to be “now” and “we.”

Mission = Task + Purpose.

By Marine Corps definition: **Commander's Intent** = Purpose, one of two parts of every mission.

	WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHY
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
			SEIZE	that hill	IOT control road junction
At 1215	2d Sqd	SECURE	the back alley	IOT prevent EN withdrawal	
At H+2	1st Plt	SUPPRESS	the warehouse	IOT enable ME assault	
At 1700	3d Plt	BLOCK	the intersection	IOT protect the airfield	
At L-2:00	“E” Co	SCREEN	right (S) flank	IOT deny EN observation	
On order	“G” Co	SEIZE	Fort CAPUZZO	IOT isolate EN reserves	
		TASK		and	PURPOSE
		MISSION		and	INTENT

Example mission statements.

Perspectives

“Can a battalion operate on verbal orders? Absolutely, yes. In Hue City, Colonel Cheatham never issued anything but a verbal order throughout the battle.”

— Major General O.K. Steele, CG 2d Marine Division, 1990

1.3.1 How to Write the

Execution: Concept of Operations (CONOPS)

1. EXPLAIN the Concept of Operations (CONOPS)—how your unit executes its mission.

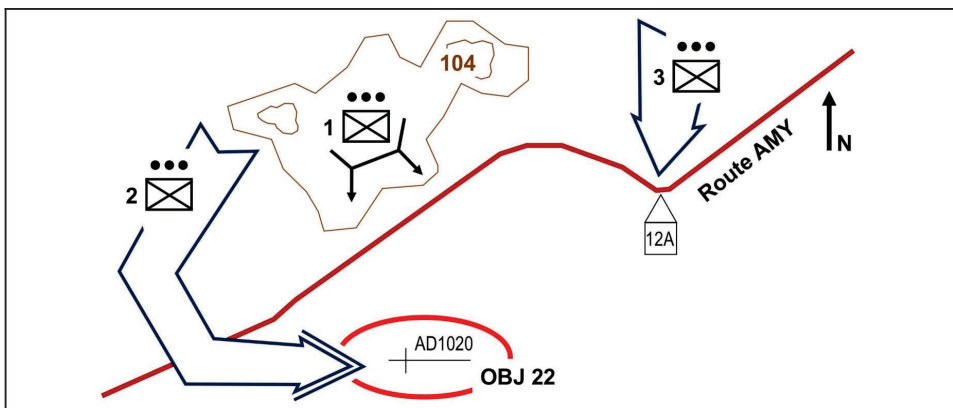
3. E: CONOPS—See graphic. On insert, (1) Plt SECURES RTE AMY @ CP 12A. (2) Plts move (S) to AP, contact SSP, and CONDUCT flank ATK on right side (W) of OBJ 22. Plt SBF vic Hill 104. FS—(1) TGT, AD 1020, on OBJ 22. No prep. RW CAS O/S @ 2200. TOS 40 min.

2. DRAW a simple picture. The best CONOPS is “See graphic.” EXPLAIN the CONOPS on a terrain model, operations overlay, tablet, sketch, or diagram.

concept of operations (CONOPS) — A verbal or graphic statement that clearly and concisely expresses what the commander intends to accomplish and how it will be done using available resources.

— DOD Dictionary, Nov 2022

3. EXPLAIN what **forces** will **maneuver** in what **direction**, guided by what **tactical control measures**. USE precise doctrinal terms for forms of maneuver and defensive methods. USE precise doctrinal symbols for control measures, obstacles, and operations.



BRIEF the CONOPS *sequentially*. Explain the operation from start to finish.
BRIEF the CONOPS *simply* and *clearly*. Explain the operation as you would to a civilian.

4. WRITE fire support information: task, purpose, method, and endstate (TPME). FOCUS on the purpose of fires. WRITE unit: location, priority of fire (POF), and direction of fire (DOF). POST TTILODAC information (target, trigger, location, observer, delivery asset, attack guidance, communications net) for subordinates to copy.

Best practices

Do NOT write a separate commander's intent paragraph. The **purpose** is the **commander's intent**. The Marine Corps defines commander's intent as *part of the mission statement*.

commander's intent — A commander's clear, concise articulation of the **purpose(s)** behind one or more tasks assigned to a subordinate. **It is one of two parts of every mission statement** that guides the exercise of initiative in the absence of instructions.

— *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD*, 10 Sep 2020

A separate intent paragraph—purpose, method, key tasks, and endstate—is an unnecessary repetition of the order. The redundant commander's intent paragraph has no place in a company, platoon, or squad order. A solid mission statement should stand on its own.

SPECIFY directions in two ways—by cardinal direction and by relative direction:

“ASSAULT the adversary **right (east) flank...**”

“SECURE the embassy **front (south) gate...**”

Common errors

Issuing overly-long CONOPS that are difficult to understand. *Simplicity is strength.*

Equating the mission with the CONOPS: **Mission ≠ CONOPS.**

The CONOPS explains how the mission will be executed.

Including branch plans or sequels in the CONOPS. *One mission, one order, one CONOPS.*

Timing

A concise CONOPS is the same whether you have **three weeks, three days, or three hours.**

Perspectives

“When commanders were exposed to combat over a length of time their plans tended to conform to the same simple methodologies. The plans they developed no longer tried to be predictive about the future, detailed concepts and schemes of maneuver disappeared. What was left was long periods of detailed situational analysis and plans that only stated the aim, resourced subordinates, and did not attempt to dictate the method.”

— Major John Garrett, *Plans That Survive First Contact*

1.3.2 How to Write the

Execution: Tasks

Tasks are subordinate missions. Tasks must be *concise, precise, and well-understood*.

1. WRITE **one** concise, single-sentence task for **each** subordinate unit.
CONDENSE. CHOOSE each word carefully. Every *extra* word reduces understanding.

Tasks:

1st Plt: ME. SEIZE OBJ 22 IOT control bridge.

2d Plt+: SBF @ Hill 61 IOT enable ME assault.

3d Plt: RES. BPT FIT ME IOT ABF bridge.

60s: POF to ME.

task — A clearly defined action or activity specifically assigned to an individual or organization that must be done as it is imposed by an appropriate authority.

— DOD Dictionary, Nov 2022

2. USE the **IOT** (in order to) format to link each task with a purpose.
WRITE each task just like a mission statement. Your task to each subordinate is *their* mission.

Tasks:

1st Sqd: ME. CLEAR the corner house IOT control the intersection.

2d Sqd: CLEAR the tobacco shop IOT protect our (R) flank.

3d Sqd: SECURE the courtyard IOT protect our (L) flank.

Every task includes a **purpose**. The purpose gives a task longevity and provides situation awareness. The purpose enables Marines to act with initiative when the situation changes or information is incomplete.

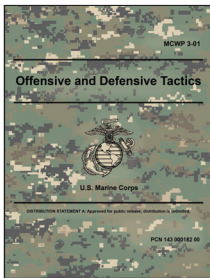
3. DESIGNATE a **main effort** (ME). The main effort will accomplish the overall mission. All of the other units—the supporting efforts (SE)—support the main effort.

main effort — The designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. It is usually weighted with the preponderance of combat power.

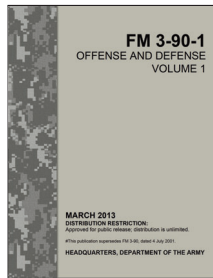
— *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD*, 10 Sep 2020

Best practices

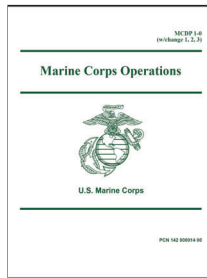
CAPITALIZE the task—the verb. USE precise doctrinal terms for tactical tasks:



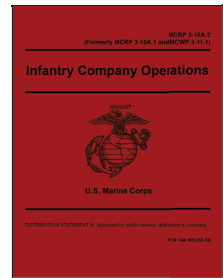
MOWP 3-01 **Offensive and Defensive Tactics**,
20 Sep 2019.
Tasks are Appendix C.



FM 3-90-1 **Offense and Defense**,
13 Apr 2015.
Tasks are Appendix B.



MCDP 1-0 Ch 1-3 **Marine Corps Operations**,
29 Mar 2019.
Tasks are Appendix C.



MCRP 3-10A.2 **Infantry Company Operations**,
4 Apr 2018.
Tasks are Appendix D.

However, you are NOT limited to any published list of tactical tasks. *“LIGHT the warehouse on fire IOT signal friendly aircraft”* is a valid task even though “light” is NOT a tactical task.

AVOID multiple tasks and multiple sentences. AVOID paragraphs. If you have six essential tasks, you need to re-define “essential.” Several tasks divert from the main task.

AVOID multiple purposes. AVOID contradictions. There should be no “and” in the purpose.
Do NOT say: *“KNOCK down the tree IOT block the road **and** provide firewood.”*

EVALUATE each purpose. Can you change the task and still maintain the purpose?
“Do whatever it takes] IOT prevent adversary withdrawal (S).”

AVOID conditional task statements that are open to interpretation.
Do NOT say: *“Upon **effective** suppression...”*
Do NOT say: *“If fires are **effective** and if movement is **possible**...”*

MINIMIZE “on order (O/O)” and “on signal (O/S)” tasks. Do NOT make your units wait for permission. Too many “on order” tasks indicate a scripted plan dependent on top-down control, good situation awareness, and guaranteed communications.

WRITE event-based “when” tasks instead: *“When in position...”* Event-based tasks reduce radio communications and enable subordinate initiative. Event-based tasks are sometimes called *condition-set* tasks.

USE the waterfall method to link a sequence of condition-set tasks:

When	Who	What	Where	Why
O/S	81s	SUPPRESS	OBJ 20	IOTA MG to SBF
Mortar suppression	MGs	SBF	Breach Site	IOT prevent EN interference w/breach
MG suppression	1st Sqd	SECURE	Breach Site	IOTA 2d Sqd to breach obstacle
Breach site secure	2d Sqd	BREACH	Breach Site	IOTA 3d Sqd to CLEAR OBJ 30
Breach site open	3d Sqd	CLEAR	OBJ 30	IOTA 3d Plat to CLEAR OBJ 30

In the waterfall method, the *what* becomes the next unit's *when*. The *why* becomes the next unit's *what*. This method sequences events—and intent—without cumbersome stages or parts.

Common errors

Issuing too many tasks that no one can remember. ISSUE only essential tasks.

NOT designating a main effort (ME).

NOT including a purpose with each task.

Issuing "puppet orders" that move a unit but provide NO tactical direction or purpose.

Do NOT say: "MOVE north, CROSS bridge, OCCUPY SBF BP 22, ORIENT west..."

Support by Fire (SBF) is a tactical task. MOVE, CROSS, OCCUPY, and ORIENT are implied.

Issuing more-of-the-obvious tasks:

Do NOT say: "MOVE quietly... OCCUPY by stealth... CLEAR backblast area..."

Equating the task with the purpose: **Task ≠ Purpose.**

Do NOT say: "SUPPORT BY FIRE IOT suppress adversary positions." What is the purpose?

Do NOT say: "Occupy cold position IOT occupy hot position."

Tasking weapons sections, weapons platoons, or other attachments that are already attached to one of your subordinates. TASK your subordinates. They will task their attachments.

See [Best Practices for Tasking Weapons Units](#).

Using slang terms for tactical tasks:

Do NOT say: "SWING north, LEAN into the fire, and HAMMER the targets IOT..."

Issuing too many BPT tasks to cover every contingency. Too many tasks *reduce* understanding.

Tasking the reserve. ISSUE one "be prepared to (BPT)" task to the reserve as a warning order.

Tasking all units with the same BPT task. Do NOT say: "Be prepared to assume the main effort."

Writing BPT tasks that are SOP. Do NOT say: “BPT to signal 3d Platoon.”

Do NOT say: “BPT CASEVAC casualties upon consolidation.”

Issuing task organization tasks. Do NOT say: “You are the search and EPW team.”

Do NOT say: “Attach one machine gun squad to 1st Platoon.”

BRIEF task organization before the order during the **Orientation**.

Wasting time identifying supporting efforts. Do NOT say: “You are supporting effort number one.”

Every unit that is NOT the main effort is a supporting effort. Numbering conventions for supporting efforts are meaningless.

Timing

Timing. Tasks should look the same whether you have **three weeks, three days, three hours, or three minutes**. *When an immediate decision is needed in combat, the standard is three sentences—including tasks—in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

Echelons

Platoons and **squads** often specify “mission has priority (MHP)” or “time has priority (THP)” for a specific task.

Task and Purpose

Writing a solid purpose forces us to think of goals. We think sequentially, but we need to communicate end states.

Often, the purpose of the ME is the same as the overall unit purpose.

“1st Platoon. SEARCH village IOT uncover evidence of EN.” (Same as company purpose).

When planning a sequence of tasks, the purpose of one task can enable the next unit's task.

A purpose can enable maneuver: “...IOT provide a route into MARIUPOL.”

A purpose can impact the adversary: “...IOT prevent enemy escape (W).”

Tasks:

1st Plt: ME. At 1100 SEARCH Gubi Village
IOT uncover evidence of EN.

2d Plt: At 1030 BLOCK streambed IOT prevent
EN escape (W).

3d Plt: At 1030 SECURE Hill 112 IOT
overwatch GUBI Village operation.

1.3.3 How to Write the

Execution: Coordinating Instructions

1. WRITE **coordinating instructions**—information that everyone needs to know.

Perspectives

“Coordinating Instructions are the last subparagraph of the Execution paragraph of the operations order. These instructions contain coordination and control data for two or more units. Most items in coordinating instructions can be covered in unit Standing Operating Procedures.”

— John F. Antal, *Combat Orders: An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

Times: *L-Hour, H-Hour, time of attack...*

Tactical control measures: *AA, LD, PL, CP, TRP, BP...* are briefed during orientation. Brief actions at tactical control measures.

Movement: *Order of movement, formation, base unit, routes...*

Drills: *On contact, at rally points and ORP, at danger areas, on consolidation, at linkup...*

Contingencies: *Lost Marine plan, no comm plan, escape & evasion (E&E) plan...*

Markings: *Of cleared buildings, bunkers...*

Equipment

Schedules

Information requirements: *IRs, including PIRs...*

Lists: *Checklists, landing plans, manifests...*

Weapons: *Sectors, engagement criteria, rates of fire...*

ROE

2. BRIEF only changes from your SOP. Most coordinating instructions should be SOP. The test is: *Is this information unique to the operation, or is it a standard practice?* MINIMIZE repeating SOPs. MINIMIZE sentences like: *“Linkup signals IAW SOP.”*

Best practices

STANDARDIZE repetitive procedures and operations with a usable, practiced SOP:

STANDARDIZE **SOP drills.**

STANDARDIZE **SOP contingencies.**

STANDARDIZE **SOP markings.**

STANDARDIZE **SOP equipment.**

CUT preparation **schedules** out of the order IOT MINIMIZE coordinating instructions:
MINIMIZE sentences like: "*Rehearsals at 1700. ROC at 1900.*" POST schedules separately.

CUT administrative **schedules** out of the order IOT MINIMIZE coordinating instructions.
MINIMIZE sentences on: *Sleep plan, meal plan, debriefing schedule...*

CUT landing plan **documents** out of the order IOT MINIMIZE coordinating instructions.

CUT **lists** OUT of the order—to issue separately—IOT MINIMIZE coordinating instructions.

BRIEF **tactical control measures**—with grids—*before* the order during the **orientation**.

BRIEF **weapons** directives IOT decentralize control, shorten engagement times, and minimize communications requirements. BRIEF sectors of fire, engagement criteria, and weaponeering—assigning weapons to targets, trigger lines, and rates of fire.

Common errors

Briefing long, overly-detailed coordinating instructions. This indicates a poorly-trained unit without SOPs. Coordinating instructions **cannot** make up for gaps in unit training.

Training students write long, detailed coordinating instructions. Schools, using performance evaluation checklists (PECLs), inadvertently encourage excessive coordinating instructions.

Briefing communications plans, no comm plans, and reporting requirements. These are **Command and Signal**. Briefing casualties. These are **Administration and Logistics**.

Wasting your Marines' time with more-of-the-obvious statements:

Do NOT say: "*Drink plenty of water.*"

Do NOT say: "*Minimize heat casualties.*"

Do NOT say: "*Account for all your Marines.*"

Micromanaging your Marines and assuming incompetence:

Do NOT say: "*Op check equipment prior to departure.*"

Do NOT say: "*Ensure you have all serialized gear before you move positions.*"

Timing

Concise coordinating instructions should look the same whether you have **three weeks, three days, or three hours**. If you only have **three minutes**, skip entirely.

Echelons

Company, Platoon, and Squad coordinating instructions differ by level of detail. The smaller the unit, the more *specific* the coordinating instructions are to individual Marines.

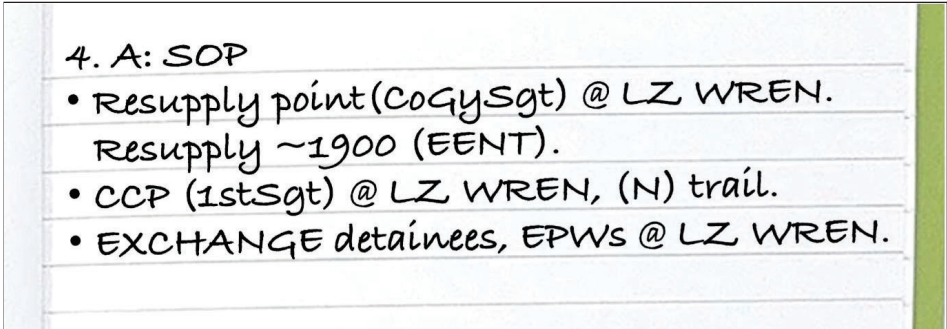
Sources

MCRP 3-30.7 *Commander's Tactical Handbook*, 4 Apr 2018, includes dozens of lists of example coordinating instruction for all types of operations.

1.4 How to Write

Administration and Logistics

1. ISSUE logistics instructions only if they are **new** or **modify** the SOP.



2. ISSUE location of **resupply point**.

ISSUE location of **casualty collection point** (CCP).

ISSUE instructions for **EPWs**.

3. Most **logistics** information is SOP: **Beans** (chow and water), **bullets** (ammunition), **bandages** (medical), **bad guys** (detainees and EPWs), and **batteries** (resupply).

Best practices

DESIGNATE a unit to handle EPWs.

DESIGNATE a unit to handle water purification. DESIGNATE water collection points.

Common errors

Repeating the obvious. Do NOT say: "All casualties will be treated with self-aid, buddy aid, then corpsman." Absolutely do **NOT** say: "BRING all casualties to the CCP for further transport to the next echelon of care by first CASEVAC means available." Just say: "CCP at LZ WREN."

More-of-the-obvious. Do NOT say: "BPT CASEVAC casualties upon consolidation."

Repeating training guidelines. Absolutely do **NOT** say: "All EPWs will be immediately searched and handled in accordance with the acronym STRESS: Search, tag, report, evacuate, segregate, and safeguard." Just say: "EPWs to LZ WREN."

Timing

A concise Administration and Logistics brief should look the same whether you have **three weeks**, **three days**, or **three hours**. If you only have **three minutes**, skip entirely.

Echelons

Company Administration and Logistics orders must coordinate procedures, locations, reports, and schedules with the battalion.

Platoon and **squad orders** do NOT coordinate logistics. *“Resupply IAW Co schedule.”*

5. Administration and Logistics

- a. Administration
- b. Logistics

Orders Format for Company-Level Operations.

MCRP 3-30.7 *Commander's Tactical Handbook*, 4 Apr 2018, page 5.

Perspectives

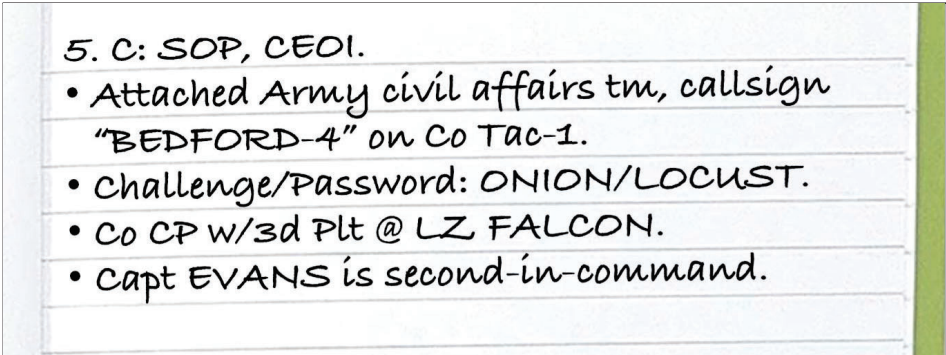
“The most important thing was that I gave all orders verbally. Even my largest and most important operations orders were verbal. After all, there wasn't any need for written orders. As division commander, I forbade the use of written orders within my division.”

— General Hermann Balck

1.5 How to Write

Command and Signal

1. ISSUE communications instructions only if they are **new** or **modify** the SOP.



2. Most **signal** information is SOP:

Radio nets are listed in the CEOI.

Do NOT say: "Radio nets IAW CEOI."

Callsigns are SOP.

Do NOT say: "Callsigns IAW SOP."

Report schedules and formats are SOP.

Do NOT say: "Request resupply IAW SOP."

Signals are SOP.

Do NOT say: "Red star is SOP for cease fire."

ISSUE **challenge** and password only if it changes daily.

3. Most **command** information is SOP:

STATE **location** of key leaders, if not briefed during CONOPS.

STATE **command succession** only if needed.

Best practices

ESTABLISH a disciplined radio procedure SOP. TRAIN extensively on concise comm practices.

ESTABLISH a short list of well-understood brevity codes. STANDARDIZE execution checklists.

MAXIMIZE the number of stations on the primary net to increase SA. MINIMIZE transmissions.

Common errors

Repeating the SOP. Do NOT say: "SOP callsigns are as follows..."

Changing the SOP for no reason: "For today's convoy, the primary net ID will be different..."

Creating new and unfamiliar brevity codes and execution checklists right before a mission.

Defining pyrotechnic signals with colors that are unavailable. AVOID two-color pyro signals.

Timing

A concise command and signal brief should look the same whether you have **three weeks, three days, or three hours**. If you only have **three minutes**, skip entirely.

Echelons

Company, platoon, and squad command and signal orders are essentially the same. When command and signal instructions follow the SOP and CEOI, they do NOT need to be stated or repeated. Well-trained units have well-established SOPs.

5. **Command and Signal**
 - a. Signal
 - b. Command

Orders Format for Company-Level Operations.
MCRP 3-30.7 *Commander's Tactical Handbook*, 4 Apr 2018, page 5.

Perspectives

"Time dominates war. No other element of war can compare with it in importance."

— *Combat Orders*, 1936



CHAPTER 2

BEST PRACTICES

FOR ORDERS



Perspectives

“Burn ‘em! That’s the last written field order this division puts out!”

— Major General John ‘P’ Wood, CG 4th Armored Division, 1944

2.0 Best Practices for

Issuing Orders

1. SELECT a good **location**. A terrain model is good. Overlooking the actual battlefield is better. USE a map, overlay, sketch, tablet, or diagram only if a terrain model is not available. See [Best Practices for Terrain Models](#).



2. LOOK into the **eyes** of your Marines. ISSUE orders face to face, if possible. A leader conveys a strong message through both their verbal and non-verbal communications. CONDUCT a roll call. GROUP attached unit leaders together so that they can coordinate. If possible, ISSUE the order to *all* your Marines. The entire unit benefits from hearing and seeing the commander. Unit SOP defines the minimum orders group—the key leaders, corpsmen, and attachments who **MUST** attend the order. KEEP their attention. Marines will be exhausted. Do **NOT** permit eating, sleeping, or distractions. REQUIRE your Marines to take notes. Everyone leaves the order with a CONOPS sketch.
3. ISSUE the **order**. TASK ORGANIZE your unit before the order. See [How to Write the Orientation](#). ORIENT your Marines to the terrain. See [How to Write the Orientation](#). EXPLAIN the Situation. See [How to Write the Situation](#). STATE the Mission—*twice*. See [How to Write the Mission](#). EXPLAIN the Execution. See [How to Write the Execution: Concept of Operations \(CONOPS\)](#). WALK across the terrain model and describe the steps on the operation. POINT to units, point to

leaders, explain actions, and REPEAT key locations. Let the Platoon Sergeant, FO, or Fire Support Team (FIST) Leader brief fires.

TASK your subordinates. See [How to Write the Execution: Tasks](#).

LOOK unit leaders in the eye when you issue their tasks. POINT to the terrain and explain their actions. EMPHASIZE the main effort.

EXPLAIN Coordinating Instructions. See [How to Write the Execution: Coordinating Instructions](#).

CLARIFY times and movements. SHARE any manifests, schedules, or checklists.

ISSUE Admin and Logistics. Most are SOP. See [How to Write Administration and Logistics](#).

ISSUE Command and Signal. Most are SOP. See [How to Write Command and Signal](#).

4. ASK **questions**. INTERACT with your Marines to gauge their level of understanding.

REQUIRE backbriefs. When you say "Are there any questions?" do NOT accept silence as an answer. ASK about actions at control measures. ASK about key events where two units must coordinate. ASK specific questions of specific Marines: "*Harris. Machineguns. How does 2d Platoon signal you to shift fire? When and where are the Cobras on station?*"

5. CONDUCT a **rehearsal**. *A good rehearsal is more important than a good order.*

The first priority for a rehearsal is actions on the objective, then drills, then contingencies. Movement rehearsals are the last priority.

CONDUCT comm checks.

CONDUCT pre-combat checks (PCC) and pre-combat inspections (PCI).

Best practices for leaders

SIMPLIFY your language to be understood by Marines who are exhausted, hungry, and cold. The right word is one that communicates effectively.

SPEAK clearly, loudly, and slowly. Your Marines need time to take notes.

SPEAK in short sentences. Your directives need to be accurate and concise.

Do NOT read. Reference your notes, but speak directly to your Marines. KNOW your order.

DISPLAY confidence and motivation. BELIEVE in the plan. AVOID doubt.

You are ordering your Marines to conduct violent actions and risking their lives in a dangerous environment. INSPIRE your Marines.

AVOID criticizing HHQ.

AVOID reading grids during the order. Grids should be read aloud during the Orientation, distributed on a list of control measures, and visible on cards on the terrain model.

ISSUE warning orders as early as possible.

Remember that issuing the order is only one step of your responsibility.

Supervising, pushing the plan vigorously to success, is the true role of the leader.

Best practices for other briefers

The unit leader issues the order and decides who else will brief. More is NOT better, but CLIC Marines, FIST Leader, FAC/JTAC, FO, or attachment leaders can add important information.

The unit leader briefs the mission and the CONOPS.
The unit leader briefs tasks to his subordinates.

At the company level, ASSIGN the CLIC to brief the adversary.
At the company level, ASSIGN the FO to brief fires.
At the company level, ASSIGN the FAC to brief air.

At the platoon level, ASSIGN the platoon sergeant to brief fires and Admin and Logistics.

At the squad level, the squad leader briefs the entire order.

Best practices for tactical terms

USE precise doctrinal terms for **tasks**. EXPLAIN tasks to your Marines.
Tasks that focus on the adversary—*fix, suppress*, tasks that focus on terrain—*secure, occupy*, and tasks that focus on friendly forces—*overwatch*, have very precise meanings and need to be clearly understood by your Marines.

USE precise doctrinal terms for **task organization**: “*Attach at 1330...*” “*DS to ME...*”
AVOID imprecise terms. Do NOT say: “*XO will supervise...*” “*Move with 3d Platoon...*”

USE precise doctrinal terms for **control measures**. KNOW the difference between a checkpoint, a contact point, and a release point.

Avoid non-doctrinal statements. Do NOT say: “*Crush in a vice of fire...*”

Best practices for language

USE inclusive language: “*You are moving with me...*”

AVOID exclusive language. Do NOT say: “*You are NOT staying here...*”

AVOID qualified statements. Do NOT say: “*Try to hold...*” “*As far as possible...*”
These lessen responsibility.

AVOID conditional statements. Do NOT say: “*If you can get across the bridge...*”

AVOID needless adverbs. Do NOT say: “*Attack vigorously...*”

AVOID imprecise terms with multiple meanings. Do NOT say: “*freedom of maneuver...*” “*kinetic...*” “*logistics...*” “*C2...*” “*high-speed avenue of approach...*” “*employ our assets...*”

Best practices for radio orders

AVOID radio orders. As far as possible, ISSUE orders face-to-face. Leaders communicate best by looking into the eyes of their Marines, and displaying the confidence that removes all doubt.

When issued over the radio, an order that is well-constructed, succinct, and unambiguous is less likely to be misunderstood. But even an excellent radio order is missing a graphic CONOPS.

Tablet devices can share graphics. Text-based digital orders, passed by tablet, should be supported by graphic imagery, IPB products, and CONOPS.

AVOID saying: “left” or “right” or other terms that can be misunderstood by people at distant locations. AVOID saying: “The third building...” or “The bend in the road...”

CONFIRM the order with each subordinate, one by one on the radio, while everyone else listens, to ensure each unit leader understands the order.

Timing

If you have **three weeks, three days, or three hours** to prepare, the process does NOT change. The unit leader—company commander, platoon commander, or squad leader—issues the order on a terrain model, face-to-face to their unit leaders, in 30 minutes.

When an immediate decision is needed in combat, the standard is *three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

1. *“I think there's only four or five of them, facing the road junction!”*
2. *“We're going to destroy that machinegun nest in order to make the road safe for later units!”*
3. *“Left envelopment around that tree line. Harrison, with me, main effort: assault the machinegun in order to make the road safe. Anderson: from here, suppress the gun in order to enable our assault. Peterson: secure this berm in order to protect the SBF. Open fire on my signal!”*

Perspectives

“We cannot... issue long-winded orders, either written or oral. Whatever order we... issue must be short and... clear. If we hope to do this in war we must practice it in peace.”

– Adolph von Schell, *Battle Leadership*

2.1 Best Practices for

Orders Shorthand

DEVELOP your own orders shorthand technique IOT **write** and **issue** concise orders quickly.
 DEVELOP your own orders shorthand technique IOT **receive** and **record** concise orders quickly.

M: @ 0700, 1/5 SEIZES Hill 118 IOT control the highway bridge.

M: O/O "A" GUARDS Bn (R) flank IOT protect resupply convoys.

"G": NLT 1200 DEF BP 21 @ CP33D IOT prevent EN access to coast road.

"E": ME. @ H-Hour ATK (NW) to SEIZE LZ SPARROW IOT enable insert of FOF.

"F": RES @ BP21. BPT CATK (SW) IOT prevent EN withdrawal. ME and POF on CATK.

81s: POF to "G" (ME). BPT displace to Hill 118 after 1800 IOT support bridge DEF.

1st Plt: BPT SECURE Bldg 31 IOT overwatch RTE 4 intersection (CP 16B).

3d Plt: ME. NLT 1200, DEF @ BP20 IOT FIX EN CRP in EA FOX.

1st Sqd: BLOCK HWY N1 @ CP 27B IOT prevent EN WTH.

The following are recommendations, NOT exhaustive lists.

1. CAPITALIZE **place names** IAW STANAG 2014.

TUGOK	BAGHDAD	KABUL	NASIRIYAH
NAKTONG River	INCHON Harbor	Port ARTHUR	HUE City

2. CAPITALIZE **countries** IAW STANAG 1059 (ISO 3166) three-character country codes.

YEM	IRQ	AFG	SAU
DEU	CHN	HTI	KWT

3. CAPITALIZE **control measures**.

EA LION	BP ASP	PL GOLD	AO DAGGER
AA ALPHA	LZ SPARROW	PZ PEPPER	OBJ ECHO 21

4. CAPITALIZE **routes**.

MSR UTAH	ASR TEXAS	RTE TRUMAN	HWY N1
SAHEL (COAST) RD	AA BRANDY	CP 32D	SP 10, RP 70

5. PARENTHE SIZE **directions**.

(N)	(S)	(E)	(W)
(NE)	(SW)	(N)-(S) highway	(E)-(W) orientation

6. STATE **times** with four digits, with or without a colon.

0700	13:00	NET 2200	NLT 17:30
~1500	00:30	ETA 1500	TOT 18:30

7. ABBREVIATE **time** modifiers IAW *DOD Dictionary*.

NET	NLT (or by)	BMNT	EENT
TOS	TOT	ETA	DTG

8. ABBREVIATE the **start time** IAW STANAG 2014. Hours or minutes are stated. Days are NOT.

H-30 min	H+45 min	H-2 hours	H+6 hours
L-Hour	D-Day	D-1	D+3

9. STATE **grids** with six or eight digits, with a space after the easting, with or without the prefix.

657 879	11S TR 456 425	CP 32 (659 789)	vic 345 876
8765 9823	11S TS 4561 4252	TRP A1 (345 891)	@ 783 456

10. ABBREVIATE **unit sizes** IAW MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*.

Bn	Btry	Co	Det
Plt	Sect	Sqd	Tm

11. ABBREVIATE **unit types**.

AA	AD	AAV	AT
FA	HMG	SP	LAR

12. ABBREVIATE **unit designations** IAW MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*.

1st Tm	2d Sqd (NOT "2nd")	3d Plt (NOT "3rd")	"E"
E/2/5	2/5	E23 (2d Plt, 3d Sqd)	MG Sect

13. ABBREVIATE **U.S. weapons** and equipment.

AH-1W	MV-22	PRC-117F	M-4A1
JLTV	M-327 120mm	MTVR	LAV

14. ABBREVIATE **adversary weapons** and equipment IAW NATO designations.

BTR-80	BMP-2	T-72	HIND
2S3 155mm SP	ZSU	BRDM	SAGGER

15. PARENTHE SIZE **amounts**.

(21) EN soldiers	(4) SA-6	(11) days	(7) vehicles
(24) hours	(2) BTR-60	(50) meters across	(4) 81mm mortars

16. CAPITALIZE **negatives**.

NO	NOT	NONE	NO ONE
NOTHING	NEITHER	NEVER	ZERO

17. USE **symbols** as shorthand words.

"E" @ BP21 (at location)	ATK @ 1200 (at time)	"E" + HMG (attached)	"E" & "F" (and)
resupply ~1500 (around)	(L) flank	EN? (unknown)	SP = CP 31 (same grid)

18. ABBREVIATE **billets** IAW MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*.

1stSgt — 1st sergeant	Ldr — leader
CDR — commander	PltCdr — platoon commander
CO — commanding officer	PltSgt — platoon sergeant
CoGySgt — company gunnery sergeant	S-2 — intelligence
FAC — forward air controller	SL — squad leader
FO — forward observer	XO — executive officer

19. ABBREVIATE **control measures** IAW MCWP 3-01 *Offensive and Defensive Tactics*.

AA — assembly area	LZ — landing zone
AO — area of operations	OP — observation post

BP — battle position	PL — phase line
CP — checkpoint, contact point	PZ — pickup zone
EA — engagement area	RP — release point
LD — line of departure	SP — start point

20. ABBREVIATE **tasks** and **maneuvers** IAW MCWP 3-01 *Offensive and Defensive Tactics*.

ABF — attack by fire	FIT — follow in trace
AIZ — attack in zone	OCC — occupy
ATK — attack	REIN — reinforce
CATK — counterattack	RES — reserve
DEF — defend	RIP — relief in place
DEST — destroy	SBF — support by fire

KNOW the definitions of tactical tasks, the language of your profession. KNOW the symbols.

- MCDP 1-0 Ch 1-3 *Marine Corps Operations*, 29 Mar 2019. Tasks are Appendix C.
- MCWP 3-01 *Offensive and Defensive Tactics*, 20 Sep 2019. Tasks are Appendix C.
- MCRP 3-10A.2 *Infantry Company Operations*, 4 Apr 2018. Tasks are Appendix D.
- FM 3-90-1 *Offense and Defense*, 13 Apr 2015. Tasks are Appendix B.
- MIL-STD-2525D *Joint Military Symbolology*, 10 Jun 2014. Appendix H is control measures.
- FM 1-02.2 *Military Symbols*, 10 Nov 2020. Chapter 5 is control measures.

21. ABBREVIATE **conditions** for tasks.

BPT — be prepared to	O/C — on call
IOT — in order to	O/O — on order
IOTA — in order to allow	O/S — on signal
ME — main effort	SE — supporting effort
MHP — mission has priority	THP — time has priority

22. ABBREVIATE **intelligence** terms IAW MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*.

AOI — area of interest
CLIC — company level intelligence cell
IPB — intelligence preparation of the battlefield
NAI — named area of interest
PIR — priority intelligence requirement

UAS — unmanned aircraft system

23. ABBREVIATE **aviation** terms IAW MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*.

CAS — close air support

FARP — forward arming and refueling point

FW — fixed-wing

RW — rotary wing

TACP — tactical air control party

TOS — time on station

24. ABBREVIATE **fires** terms.

DOF — direction of fire

DS — direct support

HE — high explosive

GS — general support

POF — priority of fire

TOT — time on target

25. ABBREVIATE each **section** of the order.

1. S: — Situation

EN: EMLCOA, EMDCOA, SALUTE, DRAW-D

Fr: HAS

2. M: — Mission

3. E: — Execution

CONOPS: — Concept of Operations

FS: — Fire Support Plan

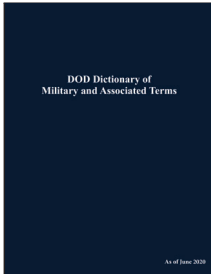
Tasks: — Tasks

Coord: — Coordinating Instructions

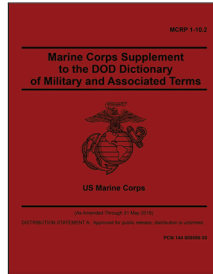
4. A: — Administration and Logistics

5. C: — Command and Signal

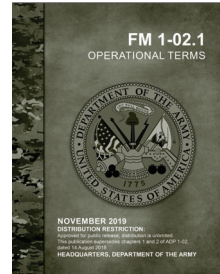
26. LOOK it up. The primary source for all definitions and abbreviations is the ***DOD Dictionary***, Nov 2022. Additional Marine Corps terms are defined in MCRP 1-10.2 ***Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary***, 31 May 2018. For ground operations terms and control measures, see FM 1-02.1 ***Operational Terms***, 21 Nov 2019.



DOD Dictionary,
Nov 2022.



Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD, 10 Sep 2020.



FM 1-02.1 ***Operational Terms***,
9 Mar 2021.

27. Train on orders shorthand techniques.
Read the example sentences aloud, fully pronouncing all tactical terms.
Leaders then write what they hear in shorthand on whiteboard or notepaper.

Perspectives

“Precision language is more important than precision weapons.”

— Major B.B. McBreen

2.2 Best Practices for

Control Measures

1. ASSIGN **fewer** control measures.

Too many control measures slows down the order. Control measures are copied incorrectly, must be restated during the order, and are difficult to remember. Control measures clutter our minds and our maps. Fewer control measures leads to less confusion and less mistakes.

Control measures must be *shared*. They exist to increase *shared* understanding—between units, across boundaries, with aircraft, and even between different services. **Fewer** is better.

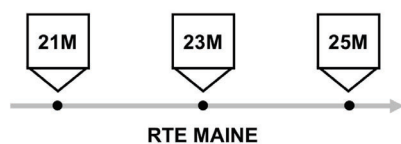
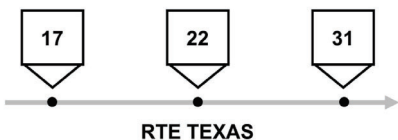
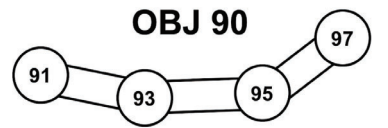
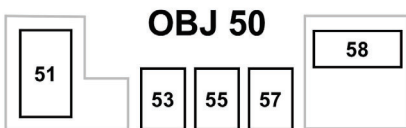
2. ASSIGN **fewer movement** control measures. Phase lines and checkpoints slow momentum and inhibit initiative. Intermediate objectives cause units to pause, regroup, report, and restart.
3. AVOID assigning **redundant** names. If it's already on the map, do NOT rename it. If Objective 20 is TUGOK Village, just say: "*TUGOK Village*." If Objective 50 is Hill 118, just say: "*Hill 118*."
4. AVOID changing **existing** control measures. When your unit relieves another, KEEP the previous unit's control measures. Violate your own SOP and use *their* system. Their control measures are *already shared* across the AO—with fires, MEDEVAC, QRF, and other enablers.
5. ASSIGN **memorable** control measures. USE **logical** naming conventions. What will you remember in the dark, on the radio? Do NOT name or number control measures *randomly*.

When routes are states—RTE MAINE—the northernmost route is the northernmost state.

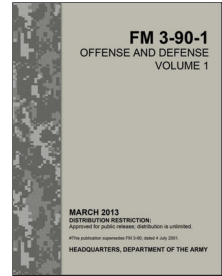
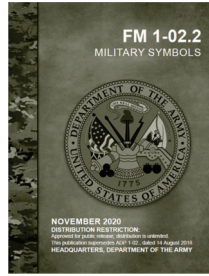
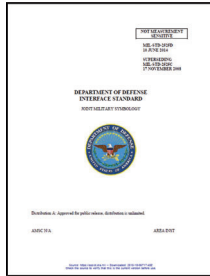
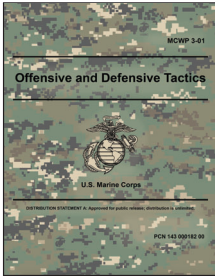
When LZs are birds—LZ WREN—name them alphabetically from west to east.

When objectives, TRPs, or NAIs are two-digit multiples of ten, sub-objectives should be numbered in the same decade. For a cluster of buildings—OBJ 50—each building is designated 51, 53, 55, 57. For a defensive complex—OBJ 90—each position is designated 93, 95, 97.

Checkpoints on a route can be in order, in the same decade, or letter coded.



6. KNOW **control measures**, the language of your profession. KNOW the symbols.



- MCWP 3-01 **Offensive and Defensive Tactics**, 20 Sep 2019. Chapter 2 is control measures.
- MIL-STD-2525D **Joint Military Symbology**, 10 Jun 2014. Appendix H is control measures.
- FM 1-02.2 **Military Symbols**, 10 Nov 2020. Chapter 5 is control measures.
- FM 3-90-1 **Offense and Defense**, 13 Apr 2015. Appendix A is control measures.

7. **Battalion SOP** should define control measure naming conventions.

EA are cats:	EA PUMA
PL are colors:	PL GOLD
AA are names:	AA ANNE
Routes are states:	RTE UTAH
BP are two-digit numbers:	BP 55

Example Battalion SOP. Control measure naming convention.

The battalion Fire Support Coordinator assigns fire support coordination measures (FSCM) for all subordinate companies and attached units. The battalion AirO coordinates airspace coordinating measures (ACM) with the Air Combat Element: LZ, PZ, and RW BP.

In a large AO with multiple battalions, HHQ must enforce a naming convention and assign major control measures such as checkpoints and routes between battalion AOs.

AVOID **multiple** control measures for the same location—one traffic circle with multiple names. AVOID **duplicate** names for different locations: *“Is it the raid force LZ 1 or the QRF LZ 1?”*

8. **Company, platoon, and squad** orders should assign as **few** control measures as needed.

ASSIGN buildings **descriptive** names that your Marines will remember:
*“Left lateral limit is **The Tobacco Factory**. Right lateral limit is **The Red Roof Inn**.”*

ASSIGN natural terrain features **descriptive** names that your Marines will remember:
*“Suppress **Christmas Tree Hill**. Overwatch **The Double Peak**. Cover **The Rocky Field**.”*

ASSIGN target reference point blocks to subordinate units to eliminate confusion.

Do NOT let every echelon name objectives randomly:
“Bypass Platoon Objective 30 toward squad Objective 1 to open fire on Company Objective A.”

Common errors

Not creating an SOP for naming conventions. Companies, platoons, and squads do NOT use their own naming conventions. Standard names enable common understanding.

Naming buildings or terrain features that look different from different directions.

AVOID directional names	<i>"The north bridge"</i>	vs.	<i>"The south bridge"</i>
AVOID order	<i>"The third building"</i>	vs.	<i>"The first building"</i>
AVOID invisible names	<i>"The dip in the road"</i>	or	<i>"The bend in the stream"</i>
AVOID map names	<i>"The clover leaf"</i>		That do NOT match appearances

Perspectives

"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."

— General Gerhard Raus, 1942

2.3 Best Practices for

Tasking Weapons Units

Task weapons units using *MCTP 3-10F Fire Support in the Ground Combat Element* essential fire support task techniques.

HMG: FIX EN INF Reinforcements on trench 2 IOT allow breach of OBJ 20. Meth: Hill 110, MSL.
Effect: EN fixed until trench 2 is clear.

MMG: SUPPRESS EN INF PLT ability to engage ME with direct fire IOT allow 2d PLT to penetrate defense. Meth: TRP 1 PDF Effects: 20 minutes

1. WRITE a weapons task statement.

For weaponeering, the task *may* include enemy formation and enemy function.

Tasks. USE tactical tasks with effects-based definitions. Effects—the result on the enemy—are critical. Examples *may* include: *Fix, destroy, harass, neutralize, breach, delay, suppress, obscure. Attack by fire and support by fire* are standard weapons unit tasks.

Enemy Formation. An enemy unit, category of units, or type of unit: "...*enemy infantry...*"

Enemy Function. The enemy's primary task or expected actions *typically* prefaced with the phrase *ability to*: "...*ability to engage 2d platoon...*"

2. WRITE the purpose. The purpose **is** the intent.
3. WRITE the method. Include Principal Directions of Fire (POF), Final Protective Lines (PFL), MSLs, Target Reference Points (TRP).
4. WRITE effects desired. Writing the effects desired from a weapons section gives a means to measure success. **It frees Marines to apply their specialized training and exercise initiative.**

Best practices

TASK by Time. This is mostly applicable to machine guns and mortars.

"MMGs. Suppress the enemy for 20 minutes."

"Mortars. O/O Suppress AD 2000 for 10 minutes IOT allow MMGs to SBF. O/S Suppress AD 2010 for 10 minutes IOT allow 1st Plt to seize Obj A."

TASK by Effect. WRITE the effect desired from the weapon's section.

"Javelin team, destroy the third vehicle in the convoy."

TASK by Type of Fire. Task by type of fire only when specific effects are desired.

"MMGs, support by fire second platoon with plunging fire for 20 Minutes."

"Javelin team, destroy middle vehicles with volley fire."

TASK by Capability. Some tasks are best suited to specific weapons units. USE tasks that have effects-based definitions:

Weapons Unit	Task
Machine Guns	Suppress, fix, disrupt, ambush, support by fire, attack by fire
Anti-Armor	Ambush, delay, destroy, attack by fire, disrupt
Mortars	Suppress, obscure, disrupt, divert, attack by fire, fix
Engineers	Block, breach, limit, destroy

Common errors

Micromanaging through tasking.

Do NOT say: *"Open at the rapid rate for 10 minutes, then sustained rate..."*

Do NOT say: *"Occupy hot position and clear backblast..."*

Issuing more-of-the-obvious movement techniques:

Do NOT say: *"On Order, occupy by stealth..."*

Do NOT say: *"Occupy cold position in order to occupy hot position."*

Issuing more-of-the-obvious implied tasks.

Do NOT say: *"Occupy a support by fire position IOT..."* Occupy is implied.

The task is *support by fire*.

Mistaking method for task. PDFs and FPLs are methods to accomplish tasks. This is particularly acute with machine guns. *"The two missions of a machine gun are PDF or FPL"* is commonly taught but you wouldn't say *"FPL IOT prevent enemy assault."*

You wouldn't say *"PDF IOT..."*

Describing overly-complicated enemy formations.

DO NOT say: *"Dismounted platoon-sized element from the Carolina National Army."*

DO say: *"Carolina National Army infantry platoon"* or *"Enemy infantry platoon."*

In an infantry company, a weapons platoon is NOT a tactical unit. Weapons sections, if not attached to platoons, work for the company commander. They are NOT tasked through the weapons platoon commander.

Establishing overly complicated direct support (DS) or general support (GS) relationships. Unless attached, weapons units directly support—and respond to the requests of—the main effort.

Timing

In **three hours**, ISSUE task, purpose, method and effects desired.

"MG, limit enemy infantry ability engage 2d platoon with direct fire IOT allow second platoon to envelop. TRP 1 is the PDF. Effect: EN Suppressed for 20 minutes."

In **three minutes**, ISSUE task, enemy formation and purpose. Omit method and effects. The task **is** the effect. *"Machine guns, suppress the DShK in order for 2d platoon to withdraw!"*

When an immediate decision is needed, issue an ADDRAC (alert, direction, description, range, assignment, control) *in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

Perspectives

"A clearly defined task, coupled with an explanation of why the action is being conducted, can make the difference between a successful mission and a lot of wasted effort."

— John F. Antal, *Commander's Guidance for Battle Command*

2.4 Best Practices for

Terrain Models

BUILD a terrain model to help your Marines understand your order.

1. DRAW a rectangle on your **map** or DRAW a **CONOPS** sketch. FOCUS on the objective.



2. DRAW the same rectangle on the **dirt**. ORIENT north. SIZE the terrain model for your needs:



Small Platoon or Squad Terrain Model

Small	Table size	Platoon or Squad	10 Participants
Medium	Room size	Company	30 Participants
Large	Parking lot size	Battalion	90 Participants and walk-thru rehearsal



Medium Company Terrain Model



Large Battalion Terrain Model

3. ADD a north-seeking arrow. If using gridlines, LABEL with index cards on the edge.
Some Marines tie white gridlines, while others avoid this practice as a tripping hazard.



Grids allow accurate depiction of terrain, control measures, and units. If the terrain model is smaller than one grid square, consider 100-meter grids.

CONSIDER using grid lines for terrain model construction then removing them.
ORIENT Marines to the terrain they will encounter, not imaginary lines.

4. SHAPE the **natural terrain**: hills, valleys, vegetation, and water.
LOCATE terrain features accurately. Exaggerate height of terrain for visibility.
USE rocks, sticks, and vegetation to depict natural terrain.
5. ADD the **man-made terrain**: roads, bridges, buildings, and towns.
USE taped boxes for buildings. MRE boxes work well.



6. MARK and LABEL **control measures**: boundaries, phase lines, LZs, checkpoints, and targets.
7. POSITION and LABEL **adversary** and friendly units.

Best practices

SELECT a sunny location for better visibility.

SELECT one Marine to train as the terrain model builder. A navigation Marine or CLIC Marine is ideal. By building the terrain model, that Marine becomes familiar with routes and terrain.

WRITE grids on targets and checkpoint cards so Marines can copy them during the Orientation.

FOCUS on the objective. Only include distant terrain features or control measures if they fit.
CONSIDER building two terrain models, one for the approach and one for the objective.

INCLUDE fire support coordination measures (FSCM).

INCLUDE airspace coordinating measures (ACM) only if they fit.

ORIENT so that North on the terrain model is North.

The terrain model does NOT have to be a square or rectangle but a rectangle is easier to build.

Common errors

Building an overly-small terrain model. The rule of thumb is, "the bigger, the better."

Building an overly-large terrain model with wide areas of irrelevant terrain.

FOCUS on the objective.

Briefing the Orientation and Order from a one-page operations overlay, sketch, or diagram.

A terrain model is always the best option.



Terrain model kit

A squad or platoon terrain model kit fits in a plastic bag. A company or battalion terrain model kit fits in an ammunition can.

- **Index cards.** You can pre-print and laminate cards with units and control measures, but it's easier just to make the ones you need each time.
- **Markers.**
Sharpie markers in multiple colors.
- **String** or yarn. White for grid lines, black for roads, blue for rivers, and green, yellow, and red for phase lines and boundaries.

- **Tape.** Masking tape or clear packing tape for securing index cards and building cardboard buildings.
- **Large nails,** pegs, stakes, or skewers to anchor index cards.
- **Shovel,** trowel, or e-tool for shaping terrain.

Keep it simple. Index cards and a black marker do most of the work. Avoid hazardous spray paints. MCIP 3-10A.4 *Marine Rifle Squad*, 7 Aug 2020, lists a terrain model kit on page F-21.

Perspectives

“Orders were more often than not verbal. We issued... only four written directives.”

— Lieutenant General William Slim, CG XIV Army, Burma, 1944

2.5 Best Practices for Squad Orders

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

3d Squad, 3 Mar 22

S: I think EN mech forces will arrive tomorrow at dawn. Our platoon BLOCKS VIANDEN Bridge IOT GUARD Co (delay and report).

M: 3d Squad ABF into EA LION IOT enable 1st Squad (Plt ME) to destroy EN vehicles exiting bridge.

E: CONOPS-As base of L-shaped ambush, defiladed from far side, squad stops vehicles on bridge. FS—Arty, CAS. NO 60s. NO 81s.

MG + (ME): ABF in EA LION IOT enable 1st Squad to DES EN.

2d Tm: ABF into EA LION IOT support MG ME with PDF.

3d Tm: @ OP on 2d floor provide ISW/security IOT protect flanks.

Coord: Squad sector is (L) and (R) sides of Bridge. NO friendlies on (N) side of EA. MG is base unit (engagement & withdrawal).



1. EXPLAIN the **Situation**.

S: I think EN mech forces will arrive tomorrow at dawn. Our platoon BLOCKS VIANDEN Bridge IOT GUARD Co (delay and report).

START with "I think..." Your EMLCOA *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: 3d Squad ABF into EA LION IOT enable 1st Squad (Plt ME) to destroy EN vehicles exiting bridge.

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-As base of L-shaped ambush, defiladed from far side, squad stops vehicles on bridge. FS—Arty, CAS. NO 60s. NO 81s.

ISSUE the **Fire Support Plan**. Squad leaders usually depend on the platoon to request company or higher-level fires.

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

MG + (ME): ABF in EA LION IOT enable 1st Squad to DES EN.

2d Tm: ABF into EA LION IOT support MG ME with PDF.

3d Tm: @ OP on 2d floor provide ISW/security IOT protect flanks.

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: Squad sector is (L) and (R) sides of Bridge. NO friendlies

on (N) side of EA. MG is base unit (engagement & withdrawal).

CLARIFY times, movements, sectors, contingencies, and other information for all units. During the order, POST any **lists**: manifests, schedules, Rules of Engagement, 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 to ORP (Grand Hotel). No resupply.

C: Withdraw signal—Lt Eisgruber (w/1st squad) WHITE smoke.

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

O: (N). OUR River (obstacle to vehicles).

VIANDEN Bridge = OBJ 20 (58C GH 2177 8132).

TGT AE 2450 (58C GH 2182 8151). NO TGT on Bridge.

EA LION on "GRAN RUE" Street.

Trigger line is near side of bridge. ORP is Grand Hotel.

T/O @ 1900:

MG + 1st Tm (ME)

2d Tm

3d Tm

A: CASEVAC to ORP (Grand Hotel). No resupply.

C: Withdraw signal—Lt Eisgruber (w/1st squad) WHITE smoke.

ORIENT your Marines on the actual terrain or a terrain model *before* you issue your order. Standard maps do NOT have enough detail for squad orders. DRAW a large-scale sketch, or use a gridded reference graphic (GRG) 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 order.

Do NOT write a redundant commander's intent paragraph. Your Purpose = Intent. AVOID multiple intents. There should be no “and” in the intent clause.

BRIEF orientation and coordinating instructions for the individual Marine: information that allows them to prepare and then fight.

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 squad leader 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 squad leader's order is *three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

The squad leader, 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 understand.

2.6 Best Practices for

Platoon Orders

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

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

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 IGW.

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 TQT (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

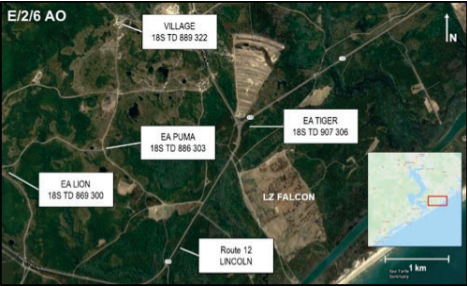
After making an **estimate of the situation** (METT-T), the platoon commander should construct an order in less than 30 minutes. If three weeks, three days, or three hours are available, the process does NOT change. When an immediate decision is needed in combat, nothing is written, and the platoon commander's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

2.7 Best Practices for

Company Orders

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

<p style="text-align: right;">E/2/6, 16 Jan 2022</p> <p>S: EMLCOA—I think EN vehicles will arrive in the morning. Bn blocks coast roads IOT delay EN (S).</p> <p>M: @ 2300 "E" BLOCKS (N)-(S) roads IOT delay EN access (S) on coastal RTE 12 (RTE LINCOLN).</p> <p>E: CONOPS—(3) Plt blocks @ (3) EAs. ME @ RTE 12.</p> <p>FS—(1) TGT. RW CAS O/S 0900. 60s POF to ME.</p> <p>1st Plt+: BLOCK @ EA LION IOT delay EN (S).</p> <p>2d Plt+: BLOCK @ EA PUMA IOT delay EN (S).</p> <p>3d Plt+: ME. BLOCK @ EA TIGER IOT delay EN access (S) on RTE LINCOLN.</p> <p>Coord: Bn and arty will NOT arrive for 24 hours.</p>	
--	--

1. EXPLAIN the **Situation**.

S: EMLCOA—I think EN vehicles will arrive in the morning. Bn blocks coast roads IOT delay EN (S).

START with "I think..." Your *assessment* provides context. Do NOT re-state the obvious. During the verbal 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: @ 2300 "E" BLOCKS (N)-(S) roads IOT delay EN access (S) on coastal RTE 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—(3) Plt blocks @ (3) EAs. ME @ RTE 12.

FS—(1) TGT. RW CAS O/S 0900. 60s POF to ME.

ISSUE the **Fire Support Plan**. During the order, the FIST leader, FAC, and FO can add targeting information.

4. ISSUE concise, single-sentence **Tasks** to your platoon commanders and weapons sections.

1st Plt+: BLOCK @ EA LION IOT delay EN (S).
2d Plt+: BLOCK @ EA PUMA IOT delay EN (S).
3d Plt+: ME. BLOCK @ EA TIGER IOT delay EN access (S) on RTE LINCOLN.

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

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

Coord: Bn and arty will NOT arrive for 24 hours.
--

CLARIFY times, movements, and other information for all units. During the verbal order, share 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. C: Co CP with 3d Plt @ EA TIGER.
--

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

O: (N). AO. Rte LINCOLN = Rte 12. LZ FALCON. (W) to (E): EA LION (18S TD 869 300), EA PUMA (18S TD 886 303), EA TIGER (18S TD 907 306). Village (18S TD 869 322). TGT AD1050 (18S TD 915 311)
--

T/O @ 2130:

1st Plt + MG Sqd + Aslt Sqd.
2d Plt + MG Sqd + Aslt Sqd.
3d Plt + MG Sqd + Aslt Sqd (+ Bn Javelins + CEB).
Co CP, FO, FAC, Mortars.

A: CASEVAC—CCP (§ Resupply § EPW) @ LZ FALCON. C: Co CP with 3d Plt @ EA TIGER.
--

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 order.

Do NOT write a redundant commander's intent paragraph. Your mission 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.*”

AVOID phases at the company level. “*ESTABLISH base of fire*” is NOT a phase. Movement phases should NOT require an order. If HHQ defines three phases, write three orders.

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 company commander constructs a company 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 company commander's order is *three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.*

The company 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.

Perspectives

“An order shall contain all that is necessary for the lower commander to know in order for him to execute independently his task. It should contain no more. Correspondingly, the order must be brief and clear... The commander must never fail to place himself in the place of the receiver.”

— *Truppenführung*, 1933

2.8 Best Practices for

Battalion Orders

Combat Orders inside 1st Battalion, 5th Marines on 19 September 1950. On 15 September 1950, the 1st Marine Division landed at Inchon, Korea and attacked east to seize the capital city of Seoul. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) defended the Inchon-Seoul corridor with multiple infantry battalions reinforced with tanks and artillery. After two weeks of fighting, Seoul was secured.

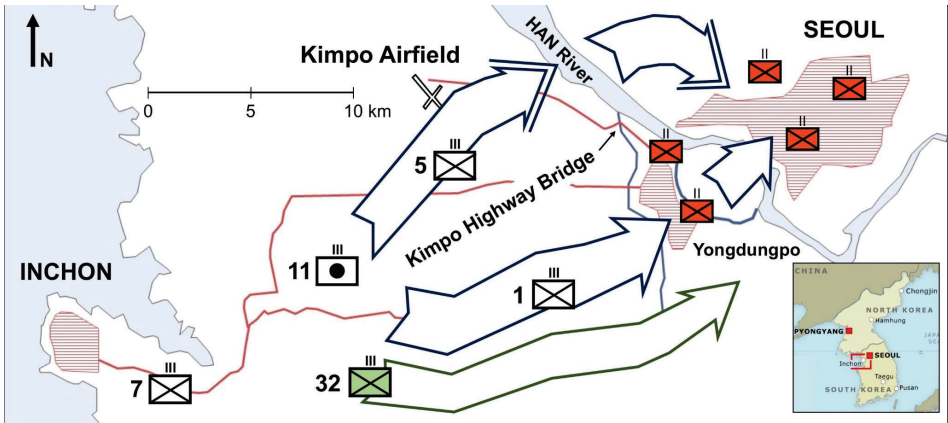


Inchon. 1st Marine Division, 15 September 1950.

The 1st Marine Division advanced to Seoul on two axes. The 5th Marine Regiment, the main effort, attacked northeast, seized Kimpo Airfield, crossed the Han River, and entered Seoul.

The 1st Marine Regiment attacked along the Inchon-Seoul Highway, entered the suburb of Yongdungpo, and then crossed the Han into Seoul. The 7th Marine Regiment followed 5th Marines.

An Army regiment, the 32d Infantry, protected the right (south) flank of the Marines.



CONOPS. 1st Marine Division Inchon-Seoul concept of operations.

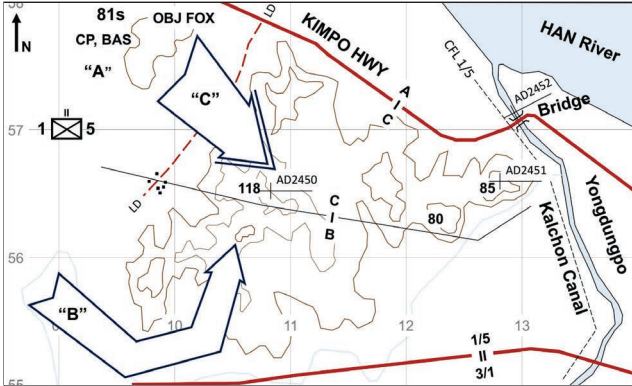
5th Marine Regiment. On the fourth day of combat at 2200, LtCol Raymond Murray, the regimental commander, radioed LtCol George Newton of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (1/5), and passed his orders:

"5th Marines is going to cross the Han River and attack into Seoul. Your 1/5 sector will be turned over to 1st Marines. They need the Kimpo Highway Bridge. At 0700 tomorrow, seize Hills 80 and 85 in order to control the Kimpo highway and bridge. This will give 1st Marines an additional crossing site for their attack into Yongdungpo."



One Hour per Echelon. The time each order was briefed from Regiment to Battalion to Company to Platoon to Squad.

Battalion. At 2210, LtCol Newton radioed a warning order to his company commanders and said, "Meet me at 2315 behind Objective FOX." He then spent almost one hour studying the map and preparing his order. Even though he had no intelligence on any enemy positions, he decided *not* to send a reconnaissance patrol up onto Hill 118.



LtCol Newton sketched a two-company attack on his map board with very few control measures.

The battalion FSC plotted (3) targets, (1) per grid square. He then called these in to 1/11, the 5th Marines' DS battalion.

He scheduled prep fires on Hill 118 for 0645 the following morning.

Since new targets and fire control measures were planned every night, the FSC kept it simple.

1/5, KIMPO EAF, 18 Sep 50
S: I think scattered EN on Hill 118 are dis-organized. MLCOA is delay.
We have NO recon or imagery. 1stMar needs bridge to YONGDUNGPO.
M: Tomorrow @ 0700, 19 Sep 50, 1/5 SEIZES Hill 118 IOT gain control of KIMPO HWY and bridge access into YONGDUNGPO.
E: CONOPS. (2) Co maneuver: ME frontal ATK. SE flank ATK.
Fires. 1/11 arty and FW prep at 0645. 81s @ OBJ Fox, POF to ME.
"C" ME: SEIZE 118, 80, 85 IOT control bridge into YONGDUNGPO.
"B" + HMG: SEIZE (S) finger of Hill 118 IOT SBF ME.
"A" + Tanks: RES @ OBJ Fox. BPT SEIZE Hills 80 and 85.
Coord: Do NOT destroy bridge. BPT RIP with 1/1 after dark.

The **Situation** was LtCol Newton's best estimate of enemy preparations.

He added the entire Hill 118 complex to the **Mission** statement, not just Hills 80 and 85.

The **CONOPS** was explained in detail on his map board. The FSC outlined the **Fire Support Plan**.

The CO made sure the company commanders clearly understood their **Tasks** and **Coordinating Instructions**.

The **main effort** would seize the key terrain: Hills 80 and 85.

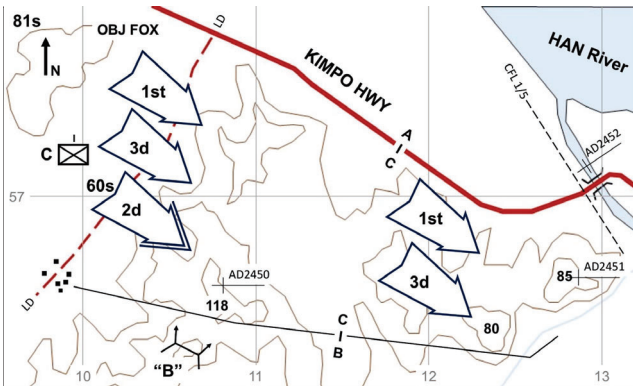
O: (N). SEOUL. YONGDUNGPO. HAN River. KALCHON Canal = CFL.
OBJ Fox = Bn COC, BAS, 81s, "A". LD = dirt road to village.
Company sectors: KIMPO HWY. Line from village to Hill 118 to 80.
Bridge = Point TGT AD 2452 (52S CQ 1295 5715)
Hill 118: (N) finger, (S) finger, (E) finger to Hills 80 and 85. LOS.
Hill 118 = Point TGT AD 2450 (52S CQ 1075 5661)
Hill 85 = Point TGT AD 2451 (52S CQ 1285 5658)
"B" probable SBF (52S CQ 1068 5620).
T/O @ 2400:
RES: "A" + Tank Plt
ME: "C", SE: "B" + HMG
81s
A: CASEVAC to BAS @ OBJ Fox.
C: Bn COC @ OBJ Fox until RIP with 1/1.

Before the order, LtCol Newton conducted the **Orientation** on his map board. Company commanders and the 81s platoon commander recorded the target grids in their notebooks.

The CO's **Task Organization** attached tanks to the reserve. He attached the heavy machine guns to "B" Company, the supporting effort. 81s worked directly for the battalion.

After LtCol Newton finished his order and answered questions, his company commanders returned to their units at 2400.

Company. At midnight on the 18th, Lieutenant Poul **Pedersen**, the CO of "C" Company, took thirty minutes to convert his notes into a company order in his notebook. From his company defensive position on the hill at Objective FOX, Pedersen briefed his platoon commanders and weapons sections around 0030.



Pedersen sketched a frontal attack, echelon left, onto Hill 118, saving his strongest platoon, 1st, for Hill 85.

He added no phases for the follow-on attack on Hills 80 and 85, and no additional control measures

C/1/5, KIMPO EAF, 18 Sep 50
S: I think EN on Hill 118 is disorganized. MLCOA is withdrawal. We have NO information on positions. Bn seizes 118. ME is "C". SE is "B".
M: Tomorrow @ 0700, 19 Sep 50, "C" SEIZES Hill 118, 80, and 85 IOT gain control of HWY and bridge access into YONGDUNGPO.
E: CONOPS. Frontal ATK, echelon (L), up the (N) finger of Hill 118.
Fires. 1/11 and FW fires @ 0645. Use 81s, 60s against EN crew-served.
2d+ (ME): SEIZE Hill 118 IOT control bridge into YONGDUNGPO.
3d: Support 2d and then SEIZE Hill 80 IOT control HWY and bridge.
1st: Support 2d and then SEIZE Hill 85 IOT control HWY and bridge.
Coord: Co CP and 60s with 2d (ME). OOM-2d+, CP, 60s, 3d, 1st.

Pedersen's **Situation** reflected the scarce information that battalion had about the enemy on Hill 118.

His **Mission** statement was almost a word-for-word copy of his task from battalion.

He explained his **CONOPS**, the **Fire Support Plan**, and the "B" Company SBF role.

Each platoon commander briefed back their assigned **Tasks**.

O: (N). SEOUL. YONGDUNGPO. HAN River. KALCHON Canal = CFL. KIMPO HWY. Bridge = Point TGT AD 2452 (52S CQ 1295 5715) Sector boundaries: KIMPO HWY. Village to Hill 118 to Hill 80. Hill 118 = Point TGT AD 2450 (52S CQ 1075 5661) Hill 85 = Point TGT AD 2451 (52S CQ 1285 5658) "B" probable SBF (52S CQ 1068 5620). LD = dirt road.
T/D @ 2400: 1st, 3d Platoons ME: 2d + MG + ASLT 60s DS to 2nd Platoon ME
A: CASEVAC to BAS @ OBJ Fox.
C: SOP signals for "shift fire" with "B" SBF. Comms with "B" SBF on "C" Co Tac net.

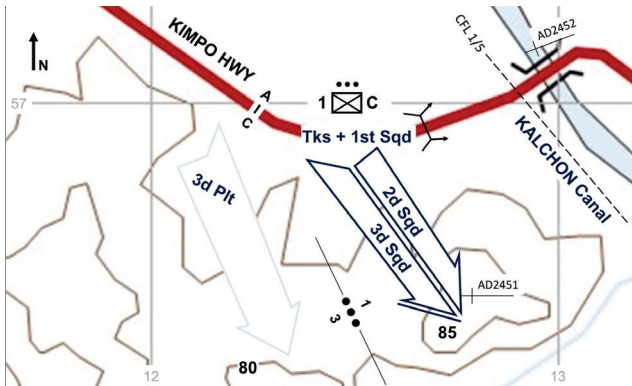
Before the order, Pedersen's **Orientation** included the company sector and target grids.

For **Task Organization**, he attached his machineguns and assault section to 2d Platoon.

Platoon commanders briefed their platoons after 0100. Squad leaders briefed after 0200.

The attack never happened. At 0615, the NKPA attacked "C" Company. Pedersen's Marines repelled this attack.

Platoon. At noon on the 19th, Lieutenant Robert **Corbet**, 1st Platoon, C/1/5, issued a new order for a new 1400 platoon attack. Because "C" Company had been attacked that morning at Objective FOX, "B" Company had taken Hill 118. Now this afternoon, Corbet would seize Hill 85 from the Kimpo highway, supported by a platoon of tanks.



Lt Corbet sketched his **new** attack plan on a cardboard ration box.

To focus his Marines on the details of Hill 85, he did not draw the route from Objective FOX down the Kimpo Highway.

A new sector boundary was added between 1st and 3d Platoons.

1st Platoon, C/1/5, KIMPO EAF, 19 Sep 50

S: EN on 80 was hit by 1/11. I think 85 is under observation. MLCOA is fire from YONGDUNGPO. "B" took 118. "C" takes 80, 85. 1st is ME.

M: @ 1400, 1st Platoon SEIZES Hill 85 IOT control bridge access into YONGDUNGPO.

E: CONOPS. Tanks CLEAR KIMPO HWY (E). 1st Plt ATKs on-line.

Fires. No prep. 81s POF to "C". 60s POF to 1st Platoon.

Tanks + 1st Sqd: CLEAR HWY (E). COVER bridge IOT enable ATK.

2d Sqd: SEIZE Hill 85 IOT control bridge access into town.

3d Sqd (ME): SEIZE Hill 85 IOT control bridge access into town.

Coord: All hands ride tanks. Dismount point 500 meters from bridge.

Pltcd, FAC, FO with 3rd Sqd. BPT dig in with Co MG and 60s.

O: (N). HAN River. KALCHON Canal. YONGDUNGPO.
KIMPO HWY. Bridge = Point TGT AD 2452 (52S CQ 1295 5715)
Hill 85 = Point TGT AD 2451 (52S CQ 1285 5658)
Hill 80 (3rd Plt OBJ). Company sectors. Platoon sectors.

T/O @ 1300:

Tank Plt + 1st Squad

2d Squad + ASLT TM

ME: 3d Squad + MG TM

A: CASEVAC - Bn vehicle on KIMPO HWY back to BAS @ OBJ Fox.

C: Tanks on Platoon Tac net.

Corbet's **Situation** stated that the enemy had been seen in the vicinity this morning. "B" Company on Hill 118 had called for fire on enemy soldiers on Hill 80 and the bridge.

His **Mission** was the same as his mission last night at 0130, but the CONOPS with the tanks was new.

The **Coordinating Instructions** stated that Company weapons would be part of the Platoon's defensive position later.

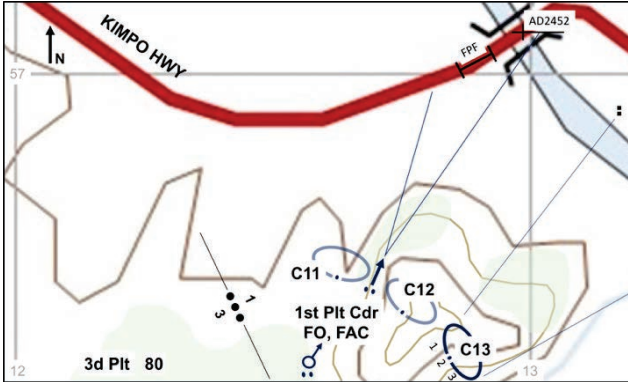
Before the order, Corbet's **Orientation** reviewed the same grids he had issued last night.

For **Task Organization**, he attached 1st Squad to protect the Tank Platoon.

Command and Signal put the attached tanks on the Platoon tactical net.

Finishing his order before 1300, Lt Corbet and his Marines waited at Objective FOX for the tanks to arrive.

Squad. At 1300, Sergeant Velez issued his order to his 3d Squad (reinforced): “At 1400, we seize Hill 85 in order to control the bridge into town. We’re the main effort up the right side of the hill. Machineguns, follow in trace.” Two hours later, when the entire 1st Platoon had reached the top of Hill 85, 3rd Squad was assigned the rightmost sector of the platoon position.



Sergeant Velez, standing on Hill 85, oriented his Marines by pointing out the actual terrain and positions.

C13, Hill 85, 19 Sep 50
S: I think EN MCOA is CATK across bridge after dark. 1st Platoon holds Hill 85 IOT control bridge. MG are ME. 3d Platoon holds Hill 80.
M: C13 DEF platoon's right (E) sector IOT protect unit from EN flank ATK across canal.
E: CONOPS. (L to R) Tms 1, 2, and 3, staggered and entrenched. NO alternate position. Sector is double warehouse to stream-canal junction. Fires. 81s POF to "C". 60s POF to 1st Plt. FPF in front of bridge.
1 Tm (ME): DEF in sector IOT protect Plt from flank ATK.
2 Tm: DEF in sector IOT protect Plt from flank ATK.
3 Tm: DEF in sector IOT protect Plt from flank ATK.
Coord: NO OP. No patrol. BPT move (NW) after dark if RIP by 1/1.

Sergeant Velez explained the **Situation**, focusing on a possible enemy counterattack.

The purpose of his Squad's defensive **Mission** was to protect the right flank of the platoon.

His **CONOPS** assigned each team the entire squad sector from the double warehouse to the stream-canal junction.

O: (N). KIMPO HWY. KALCHON Canal. Bridge = Point TGT AD 2452 (52S CQ 1295 5715) 60s FPF (90 X 30 m) (52S CQ 1290 5706).
Hill 85 reverse slope positions provide defilade from EN in town to (E). Positions (L to R): 60s, Lt-FO-FAC, 1st Sqd, MG, 2d Sqd. 3rd Sqd on forward slope facing town, in defilade from EN on bridge.
3rd Platoon on Hill 80 to our (W). Tank Plt now detached from Co.
Squad T/O: NO attachments. MG Tm is back with section.
A: CASEVAC - Bn vehicle on HWY back to BAS @ OBJ Fox. Ammunition and chow resupply ~1900.
C: FPF brevity code: "FPF".

Before his order, Sergeant Velez gave his Orientation while standing on the actual terrain and pointing out landmarks and the positions that the platoon commander had assigned.

Because the machinegun team had returned to the Company section, the Task Organization was simple.

Sergeant Velez ended his order with, "I'll inspect your sectors and fighting positions in two hours after I draw our fire plan sketch."

Notes on Combat Orders inside 1st Battalion, 5th Marines on 19 September 1950.

Between 2200 on 18 September 1950 and 1400 the next day—sixteen hours—the unit leaders of 1/5, from squad, to platoon, to company, to battalion, all issued multiple orders. They made decisions, issued orders, and led their Marines—fighting, moving, rearming, communicating, and sleeping—like they did every day for fourteen days. Like they had learned during World War II.

There was no Marine Corps Planning Process inside the battalion. Every unit leader, usually at night while their unit dug in, spent less than *one hour* planning and issuing orders for the next day. There was nothing unusual about this. The workaday leader skills of making an estimate, arranging a reconnaissance, making a decision, organizing for combat, preparing an order, and then issuing an order were learned skills—processes that could be taught and practiced.

As shown by 1/5, continuous changes to the situation, unexpected enemy actions, revisions from higher headquarters, and limited preparation times forced Marine leaders in Korea to shorten the orders process to its essential minimums:

One hour per echelon, four hours total, from battalion to company to platoon to squad.

When “C” Company was attacked at dawn, that day’s planned operation was cancelled. How much of their previous night’s planning time was wasted? Just two or three hours. Not much. When “B” Company was ordered to seize Hill 118 instead, the unit was already on the move. How much time did the Company Commander need to issue an updated order? Less than thirty minutes. Not much.



1/5. LtCol George Newton (L), with company commanders.



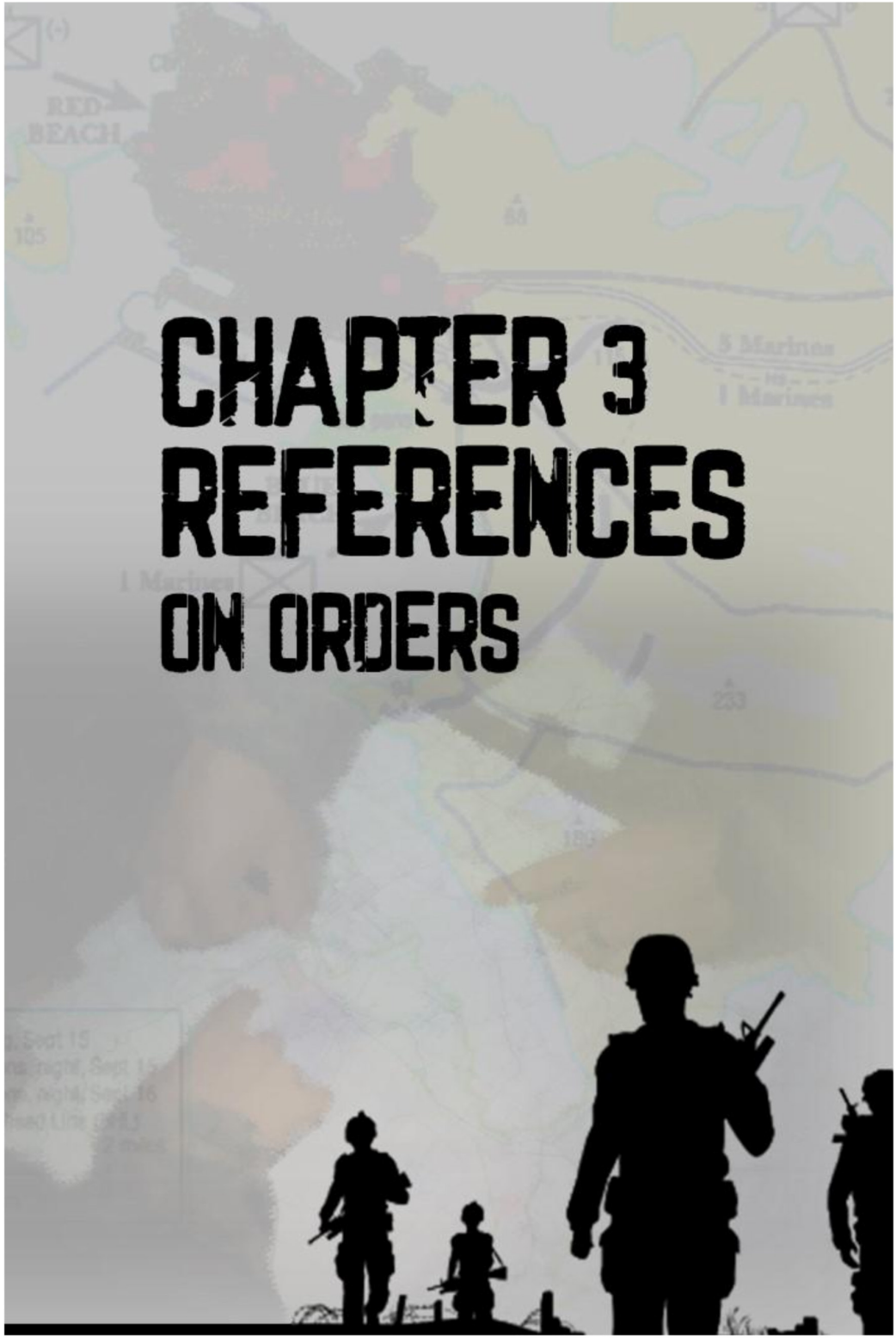
Marine OP overlooking the Han River north of Seoul.

Ten days before the Inchon landing, the 1st Marine Division typed and issued OPORD 2-50. Every unit of the Division then spent more than a week planning and preparing for the first 24 hours of combat. This was the orders process, a legacy of World War II amphibious planning, that was taught by Marine Corps schools.

But the combat orders process was demonstrated by the front-line leaders inside the battalions. Well forward, these commanders issued clear, concise, and direct orders on the actual terrain where they were fighting. LtCol Newton, with 1/5, had insufficient radios for a full CP, so he advanced each day with his leading company, where he could observe, orient, decide, and act. Another Marine commander, pointing to his map, explained his entire orders process, “That’s my CP!”

References

- Newton, George. *Special Action Report*. 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 7 Oct 1950.
- Montross & Canzona. *The Inchon-Seoul Operation: U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953*. Washington, DC: 1955.
- Heintz. *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*. Mount Pleasant, SC: Nautical & Aviation Publishing, 1979.
- Stolfi. “A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted.” *Journal of Military History*, April 2004.



CHAPTER 3 REFERENCES ON ORDERS



Perspectives

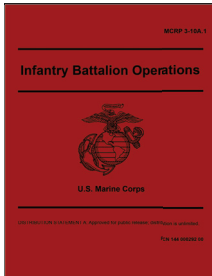
“In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”

— General Dwight D. Eisenhower

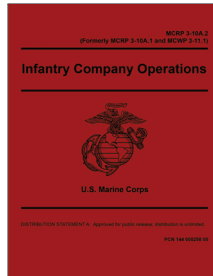
3.0 References

Doctrine on Orders

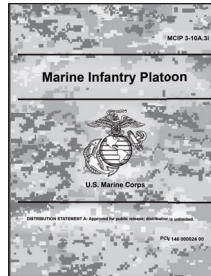
1. **Marine Corps infantry manuals** are terrible at explaining orders. Each of the following manuals *describes* a unit—its organization, equipment, and capabilities—but then fails to explain how to *operate* it, how to *direct* it.



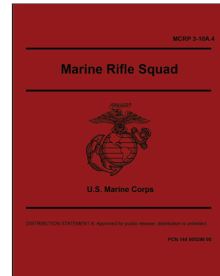
MCRP 3-10A.1
Infantry Battalion Operations
31 Jul 2020



MCRP 3-10A.2
Infantry Company Operations
4 Apr 2018



MCRP 3-10A.3 *Marine Infantry Platoon*
31 Aug 2020



MCRP 3-10A.4
Marine Rifle Squad
7 Aug 2020

- NONE includes an **example** of an order. NONE includes a single sentence of an example.
- NONE specifies **who** does **what** and **when** to produce an order.
- NONE includes guidance on parallel planning and the **orders process** between echelons.
- NONE discusses orders for different types of **operations** or different environments.
- NONE includes a correct orders **template**. The templates provided are filled with errors.

And yet in combat, Marine leaders issue effective orders every day. What are *their* techniques? Where are these techniques explained? Where are they taught?

2. MCRP 3-10A.1 *Infantry Battalion Operations*, contains absolutely NO guidance on orders, no discussion of the orders process or products, and nothing on the roles of the commander and S-3 in producing battalion orders. This manual dodges all responsibility by simply pointing to the MCWP 5-10 *Marine Corps Planning Process*, 10 Aug 2020.
3. MCRP 3-10A.2 *Infantry Company Operations* is worse. The company commander is a key leader on the battlefield—directing and controlling complex tactical evolutions with attached weapons, air, and indirect fires—yet this manual provides almost nothing of value on the critical skill of how to construct and issue a company order.

Instead, the manual is infected throughout with operational-level terms and Marine Corps Planning Process concepts that have NO place in the infantry company. The manual recommends that *OPTs* conduct an unexplained “abbreviated version” of *MCPP*, generating useless *LOEs*, *MOPs*, *MOEs*, *COGs*, *COAs*, and *decision support templates*. Companies are told to produce *battalion-level IPB products*. Eight pages discuss *operational design*.

But the MCWP 5-10 *Marine Corps Planning Process* does NOT apply at the company level. Multiple sentences discuss the distribution of the order “and associated products,” implying that a

published order with appendices is expected from the company. This is wholly unrealistic.

Although rehearsals are recommended and ROC (rehearsal of concept) and CAR (combined arms rehearsal) are both mentioned, there is NO explanation and NO recommended procedures for how to conduct a rehearsal. A terrain model is mentioned with NO explanation.

Appendix D lists tactical tasks, but there is NO appendix with a company orders format, and NO example of a completed company order. If, as the manual states, "The company commander determines the format" of the order (page 2-10), why have a doctrinal manual at all? What do our schools teach?

4. MCIP 3-10A.3i **Marine Infantry Platoon** provides three entire pages (59–61) on the platoon order. Unfortunately, there are NO examples, and no specifics on orders for the offensive and defensive tasks of the platoon. There is one odd mention of a "linkup annex" on page 212, but platoon orders are "normally issued verbally" (page 57).

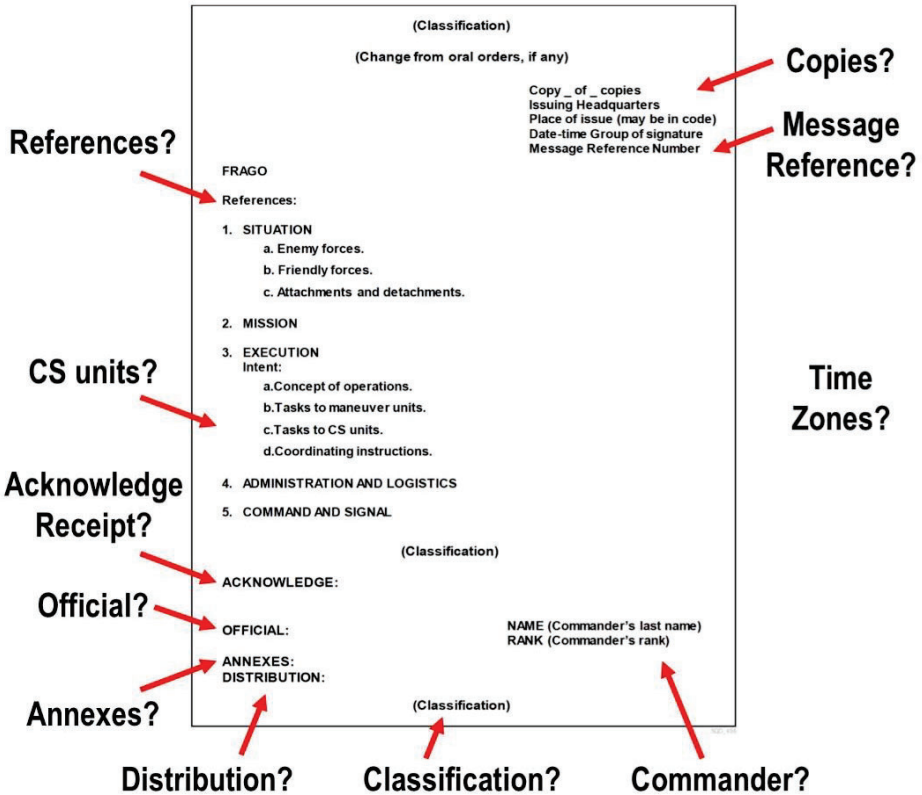
Annex J includes an orders format, with non-standard lettering. Warning orders, terrain models, and rehearsals are mentioned throughout the manual for each type of operation, but there is little instruction on how to execute these procedures.



5. MCIP 3-10A.4 **Marine Rifle Squad** also provides almost NO guidance on orders. In describing the troop leading steps, "issue the order" is directed but not explained. What does the squad leader actually do? What does a squad order look like?

This omission is particularly bad given that the manual is intended for a wider audience—both infantry small unit leaders and "units serving as provisional infantry." Our junior leaders, often with the *least* experience and training, should be getting the *most* guidance and the *clearest* examples of how to issue an order in combat.





Orders Format.

Figure C-4 from MCRP 3-10A.4 *Marine Rifle Squad*, 7 Aug 2020, page C-5.

6. **Templates.** On the recommended orders template, Figure C-4 from *Marine Rifle Squad*, fully half the entries are wrong, do not belong, and should NEVER be included in a squad order—a platoon order—or a company order.

Squad orders do NOT have **references**. Squads do NOT have **combat service (CS) units**.

Squad orders do NOT have **annexes**. Squad orders do NOT have **distribution** lists.

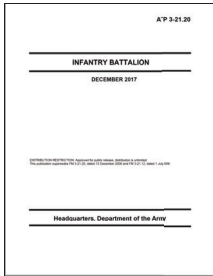
Squad orders are NOT **classified**. A squad leader is NOT a **commanding officer**.

Squad orders do NOT have an **official** signature, signed on behalf of the commanding officer.

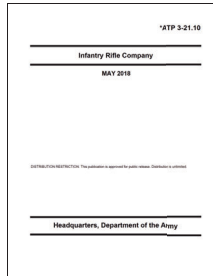
Squad orders do NOT have **time zones**. The previous page of the manual specified: "Time zone used throughout the order." During World War II, when paper copies of orders were distributed by runner, a log book tracked who received **Copy 1 of 12 copies**. When a unit received an order, they were required to **Acknowledge Receipt** by transmitting the six-digit **Message Reference** code over an uncovered radio net.

Squads *never* did this. NONE of this is relevant. ALL of it is wrong. Why is it in our manuals?

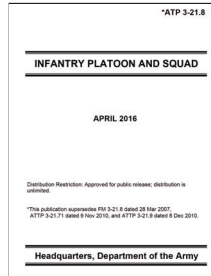
7. **Army** infantry manuals—ATP 3-21.20 *Infantry Battalion* (2017), ATP 3-21.10 *Infantry Rifle Company* (2018), and ATP 3-21.8 *Infantry Platoon and Squad* (2016)—are much better than Marine Corps manuals when explaining orders. The manuals are specific—who does what—and prescriptive. Battalions (with staffs) *plan*, companies, platoons, and squads *execute*.



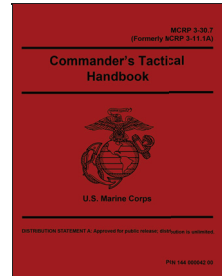
ATP 3-21.20
Infantry Battalion
28 Dec 2017



ATP 3-21.10
Infantry Rifle Company
14 May 2018



ATP 3-21.8
Infantry Platoon and Squad
23 Aug 2016



MCRP 3-30.7
Tactical Handbook
4 Apr 2018

The battalion publishes an operation order with appendices, while companies, platoons, and squads execute troop leading procedures, make estimates, and issue concise verbal orders.

The company manual clearly specifies the troop leading procedures, the orders format, best practices for conducting rehearsals, and checklists for PCCs and PCIs.

8. The best Marine Corps manual for company-level orders is actually the long-outdated MCRP 3-30.7 **Commander's Tactical Handbook**, reprinted in 2018. This publication emphasizes the orders process and recommends orders techniques for multiple different types of operations.

The orders template on page 5 is outdated, but still usable.

9. How do we fight? How do Marine leaders direct units in combat? How do we communicate—issue and receive—clear, concise, and critical orders under pressure? These are important skills for any military organization. The Marine Corps needs better doctrine on orders.

The orders template below, primarily derived from the outdated **Commander's Tactical Handbook**, reflects the best practices extracted from six conflicting and incomplete Marine Corps manuals. And this simple template does not *begin* to address the procedures and best practices for orders and the orders processes.

Area of Operation (AO) appears in the Situation paragraph to conform to MCWP 5-10 *Marine Corps Planning Process* (2018) and MCRP 2-10B.1 *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace* (2014). A best practice during the **Orientation** is to brief the terrain model and then immediately analyze the terrain in the AO.

1. **Situation**
 - a. Area of operations (AO)
Terrain (KOCO A)
Weather
 - b. Adversary forces
Composition (SALUTE)
Capabilities (DRAW-D)
Most likely course of action (EMLCOA)
 - c. Friendly forces
Higher unit mission
Adjacent units' missions
Supporting units' missions
 - d. Attachments and detachments
2. **Mission**
3. **Execution**
 - a. Concept of Operations: Scheme of maneuver and fire support plan
 - b. Tasks
 - c. Coordinating Instructions
4. **Administration and Logistics**
 - a. Administration
 - b. Logistics
5. **Command and Signal**
 - a. Signal
 - b. Command

Orders Format for Company-Level Operations.

Derived from MCRP 3-30.7 **Commander's Tactical Handbook**, 4 Apr 2018, page 5.

Perspectives

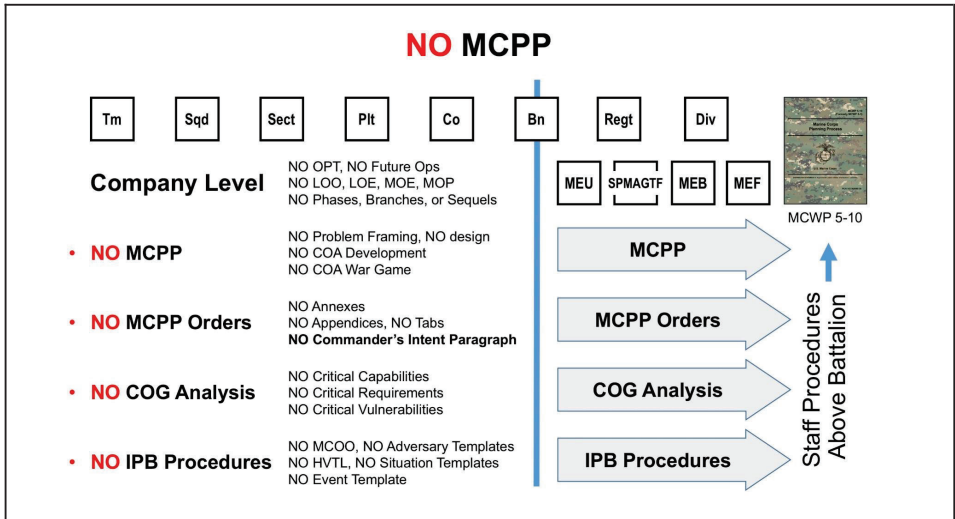
"In France in 1918, a Division... order was sometimes fifteen or twenty pages long. After the war... efforts were made to cut down this verbosity, but... as late as 1927... I still found a battalion order three and four pages in length."

— General George Marshall, 1942

3.1 References

NO Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP)

1. There is **NO MCPP** for companies, platoons, or squads. MCWP 5-10 *Marine Corps Planning Process*, 10 Aug 2020, does NOT apply at the company level. Page 1 states that MCPP is “for... units with staffs.” Company-level leaders do NOT conduct problem framing, COA development, or COA wargaming. They make estimates, make tactical decisions, and issue orders.



2. There is **NO MCPP Orders** format for companies, platoons, or squads. The orders templates in Annex J of MCWP 5-10 *Marine Corps Planning Process* do NOT apply. Company-level leaders do NOT publish annexes, appendices, tabs, or exhibits.
3. There is **NO Commander's Intent Paragraph** for companies, platoons, or squads. In company-level mission statements, the purpose is the intent. By Marine Corps definition:

commander's intent — A commander's clear, concise articulation of the **purpose(s)** behind one or more tasks assigned to a subordinate. It is **one of two parts of every mission statement** that guides the exercise of initiative in the absence of instructions.

— MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary*, 31 May 2018

On order "G" Co SEIZE Fort CAPUZZO IOT isolate EN reserves

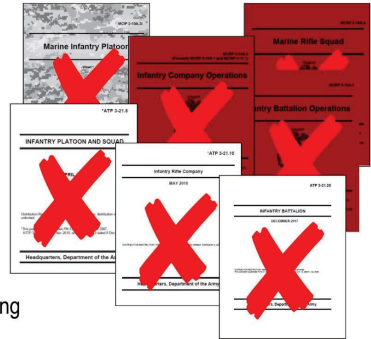
TASK and PURPOSE
MISSION and INTENT

Since the commander's intent is *in* the mission statement, a separate commander's intent paragraph is redundant. The Army added this paragraph years ago so commanders could write their own portion of a staff-produced order. But often, the commander's intent paragraph—purpose, method, key tasks, and end state—repeats or contradicts existing portions of the order.

4. There is **NO Center of Gravity (COG) Analysis** for companies, platoons, and squads. COG analysis is done by the MAGTF or the JTF. The center of gravity is "an element of operational art," for headquarters designing campaigns at the operational level. A MEU or higher MAGTF *may* conduct operational-level planning, but battalions and regiments are *tactical* units.

Who Does NOT conduct COG Analysis?

- **Companies, Platoons, and Squads do NOT conduct COG Analysis:** There is no "Company COG"
- Our manuals do **NOT** explain COG Analysis:
 - MCRP 3-10A.4 *Marine Rifle Squad*, 7 Aug 2020
 - MCIP 3-10A.3i *Marine Infantry Platoon*, 10 Jun 2019
 - MCRP 3-10A.2 *Infantry Company Operations*, 4 Apr 2018
 - MCRP 3-10A.1 *Infantry Battalion Operations*, 31 Jul 2020
 - ATP 3-21.8 *Infantry Platoon and Squad*, 23 Aug 2016
 - ATP 3-21.10 *Infantry Rifle Company*, 14 May 2018
 - ATP 3-21.20 *Infantry Battalion*, 28 Dec 2017
- Center of gravity is an "element of operational art" for planning



"A battalion commander...is... not concerned with an enemy's center of gravity."

— ADP 5-0 *The Operations Process*, 31 Jul 2019, and ADP 3-0 *Operations*, 31 Jul 2019

5. There are **NO IPB** products required by companies, platoons, or squads. Companies, platoons, and squads *receive* and *consume* IPB products and *report* information that may be used to update battalion IPB products, but they do **NOT** *conduct* IPB.

MCRP 2-10B.1 *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace* states on page 1-1 that IPB is a battalion-level procedure: "The S-2 leads this staff effort." Company-level intelligence cells (CLIC) contribute to battalion S-2 IPB procedures.

6. There is **NO Operational Approach** for companies, platoons, and squads: There are NO operational planning teams (OPT) and NO operational design.

Company-level leaders do **NOT** plan at the operational level, even in EABO, so there is **NO end state** or **conditions**, **NO LOO** or **LOE**, **NO phasing**, **branches** or **sequels**, and **NO future operations**. There is **NO center of gravity analysis** and **NO formal assessment MOP** or **MOE**.

<p>OPERATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>2-46. The operational level of warfare is the level of warfare at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives.</p>										
<p>OPERATIONAL ART</p> <p>2-52. Operational art is the cognitive approach... to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means.</p>										
<p>ELEMENTS OF OPERATIONAL ART</p> <p>2-57. Elements of operational art... help commanders understand, visualize, and describe operations and help to formulate their... operational approach.</p> <p>2-58. Not all elements of operational art apply at all levels of warfare. A battalion commander... is not concerned with an enemy's center of gravity.</p>										
<p>ELEMENTS OF OPERATIONAL ART</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>• End state and conditions</td> <td>• Centers of gravity</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Decisive points</td> <td>• Line of operations and lines of effort</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Tempo</td> <td>• Phasing and transitions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Operational reach</td> <td>• Culmination</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Basing</td> <td>• Risk</td> </tr> </table>	• End state and conditions	• Centers of gravity	• Decisive points	• Line of operations and lines of effort	• Tempo	• Phasing and transitions	• Operational reach	• Culmination	• Basing	• Risk
• End state and conditions	• Centers of gravity									
• Decisive points	• Line of operations and lines of effort									
• Tempo	• Phasing and transitions									
• Operational reach	• Culmination									
• Basing	• Risk									
<p>— ADP 5-0 <i>The Operations Process</i>, 31 Jul 2019, pages 2-8 through 2-11</p>										

7. **Doctrine.** The vast majority of Marines in the FMF serve inside battalions and squadrons. Few Marines serve on HHQ staffs. Very few have operational-level planning responsibilities. Yet our planning manuals, procedures, and formats are all tailored for HHQ staffs, mandating one doctrine for every echelon. This is unrealistic.

The 2018 *Infantry Company Operations* manual is full of HHQ operational-level planning baggage. The company commander, who should be ruthlessly focused on tactical excellence, is instead overwhelmed with guidance on forming an OPT, conducting MCPP and COG analysis, assessing MOP and MOE, conceiving future operations with branches and sequels, and producing printed annexes. In combat, this would be a disaster.

8. **Combat in Korea 1950.** During the advance to Seoul in September, 1950, twenty battalions of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division fought the North Korean People's Army for two weeks. Inside the U.S. units, there was NO MCPP, NO printed MCPP orders, and NO daily COG analysis. There was one Corps-level COG analysis which identified one enemy CV. All operations and all units were then concentrated against this CV.

Combat in Iraq 2003. During the advance to Baghdad in March and April, 2003, twenty battalions of I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) fought the Iraqi Army for four weeks. Inside the Marine units, there was NO MCPP, NO printed MCPP orders, and NO daily COG analysis. There was one MEF-level COG analysis which identified one enemy CV. All operations then focused against the enemy's selected CV.

3.2 References

Training on Orders

1. PRACTICE issuing concise, effective orders. **Repetition** is the only way to improve.
 REQUIRE your Marines to issue orders. Leaders need reps and sets to improve their understanding and confidence, reduce their confusion, and increase their tempo and flexibility.
 CRITIQUE orders. DISCUSS orders. IDENTIFY best practices for orders.
2. PRACTICE issuing orders for **all training events**. LOIs should be orders.
 ISSUE orders for non-tactical garrison events: field days, weapons cleaning, PT, and sports.
 ISSUE orders for administrative events: safety, dental, liberty, and maintenance stand-downs.
 ISSUE orders for field training events: ranges, convoys, and tactical exercises.

Perspectives

“In the field...there is no time to practice giving orders. Therefore no one should neglect to set himself problems on a map at home, and to set down in writing the orders..which would be required on actual service. It is interesting to see how many corrections have to be made...”

— Colonel von Spohn, *The Art of Command*, 1907

3. PRACTICE issuing orders at **PME**.
 CONDUCT battle-study, wargame, or tactical decision game (TDG) PMEs.
 REQUIRE all decisions to be issued as orders on index cards. Collect, distribute, and edit orders.
 BRIEF selected orders so that leaders can learn from each other and share best practices.
4. PRACTICE issuing orders during **wargames**.
 FIGHT against your peers. FIGHT online. FIGHT against a thinking adversary. The best way to learn to write flexible orders is to be repeatedly surprised by the adversary. Only when the enemy has the capability to disrupt our plans do leaders internalize solid lessons on the criticality of reconnaissance, the benefits of a simple task organization, and the importance of a main effort.
 FIGHT as part of a team—commanding multiple units—to coordinate and learn from each other.

Perspectives

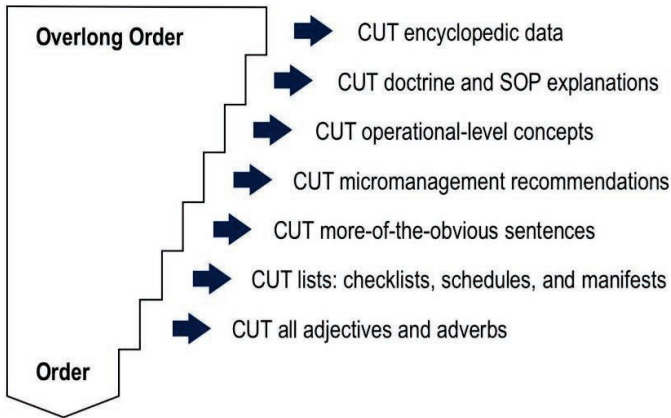
“An officer of considerable seniority had just given his first order for action, in the presence of the general...”

The general officer commanding said to him, ‘It is a pity... that you did not give that order in writing. If I were to repeat it to you now, word for word, you would think I was joking, and you would never admit that you had given the order in the style you did.’”

— Colonel von Spohn, *The Art of Command*, 1907

5. PRACTICE issuing orders by **cutting** overly long orders down to size. Less is more.

Professionals *subtract*. A memorable speech or an effective advertisement has *less* text, not more. Anyone can add, but it takes courage to cut and knowledge to know what is superfluous. The higher the level of command, the shorter the order. Competent subordinates need *less* guidance. Regiments and brigades have *very* competent subordinates.



Encyclopedic: *"The enemy speaks Bahasa Indonesia ~~which is the official language of...~~"*
 Doctrine: *"3/5 will penetrate, ~~a form of maneuver which seeks to break through the...~~"*
 Operational: *"~~Commanders using casualties as a measure of performance (MOP)...~~"*
 Micromanagement: *"~~It is recommended that platoons use satellite patrolling to maintain security...~~"*
 Obvious: *"~~Ensuring Marines have adequate chow and water is a priority for all team...~~"*
 Lists: *"~~The following PGG/PCI checklists will be used by all Marines prior to...~~"*
 Adverbs: *"3/5 will ~~aggressively~~ secure routes to ensure the ~~smooth and seamless~~ flow..."*

6. PRACTICE issuing orders on the **radio**.

During field exercises, make notes of your radio orders and the orders of your subordinates. During the after action review (AAR), discuss good and bad orders you heard.

Perspectives

"Leaders at all levels should train and work on improving their radio procedures.

During training, the issuance of orders, conduct of rehearsals, and receipt of brief-backs should be conducted over the radio.

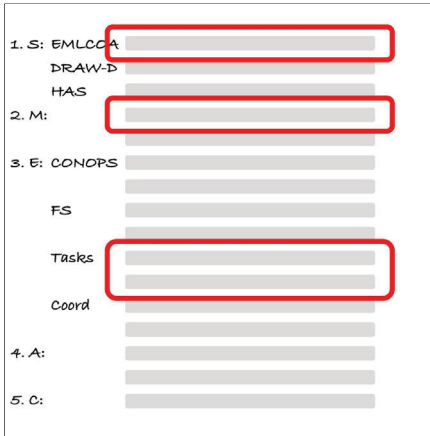
Tactical decision game training for scenarios at the company level or above should require the solution to be briefed in the form of a FRAGO over the radio."

— 3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Report, 2003

CONDUCT tactical decision game PME or wargame training where solutions and orders must be transmitted to subordinates over the radio.

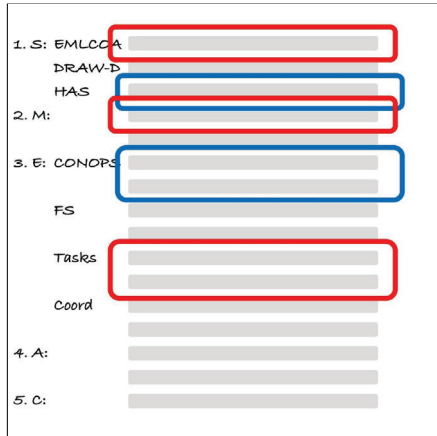
PRACTICE orders in garrison using cell phone apps—iMessage, Voxer—to transmit orders.

7. PRACTICE issuing orders by focusing on the three **priority** sentences. Of the dozens of sentences in an order, three are critical:
 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?”



1. S: EMLCOA [red box]
 DRAW-D [red box]
 HAS [red box]
 2. M: [red box]
 3. E: CONOPS [red box]
 FS [red box]
 Tasks [red box]
 Coord [red box]
 4. A:
 5. C:

First priority: EMLCOA, mission, and tasks.



1. S: EMLCOA [red box]
 DRAW-D [red box]
 HAS [red box]
 2. M: [red box]
 3. E: CONOPS [blue box]
 FS [red box]
 Tasks [red box]
 Coord [red box]
 4. A:
 5. C:

Second priority: HHQ intent and CONOPS.

After that, the second priorities are **HHQ intent** and **CONOPS**.

Perspectives

“Towards the end of offensive operations, the Battalion Staff had gained significant skills in rapid development, issuance, and executions of simple, decentralized, violent plans.

These FRAGOs were issued entirely over the radio with the necessary questions and brief-backs all conducted over the same medium.

Of interest is that precision, speed, integration of fires, and overall effectiveness against the enemy was significantly better than that experienced during the meticulously planned and rehearsed ‘opening gambit.’”

— 3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Report, 2003

Notes on training on orders

Schools shape how real-world Marine Corps orders are issued. Marines learn wordiness, excessive detail, and micro-management in school. Long orders should be an embarrassment, not a boast: “*I wrote a fifty-page order!*”

The training goal should not be a *complete order*—which implies a checklist and encourages

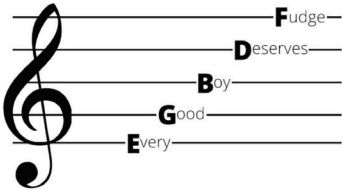
Marines to add irrelevant material—but an *effective* order, which requires tactical judgement on the part of the instructor.

Templates are for beginners. No template can cover the 1200 possible sentences of an order.

Acronym mnemonics—SMEAC, METT-T, DRAW-D, SALUTE—are for beginners.

Acronyms are good for multiple-choice tests, but NOT sufficient for combat.

Children at piano lessons repeat “every good boy deserves fudge” when learning to read music, but real musicians do NOT.



Perspectives

“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... are useless.”

— General Bernard Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 1958

Perspectives

“Order no more than is absolutely necessary and... avoid planning beyond the situations one can foresee. These change very rapidly in war. Seldom will orders that anticipate far in advance and in detail succeed completely to execution.”

– Field Marshal Helmuth Graf von Moltke, *Instructions*, 1869

3.3 References

Glossary on Orders

The following **acronyms and initialisms** are used in this guidebook *without* explanation. References, in priority order are: (1) *DOD Dictionary*, Nov 2022, (2) *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary*, 10 Sep 2020, and (3) *FM 1-02.1 Operational Terms*, 21 Nov 2019.

AA — Assembly area. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

AA — Avenue of approach. (*DOD Dictionary*)

AAR — After action report; after action review. (*DOD Dictionary*)

ABF — Attack by fire. (*FM 1-02.1 Operational Terms*)

ACM — Airspace coordinating measure. (*DOD Dictionary*)

ADDRAC — Alert, direction, description, range, assignment, control. (*MCRP 3-10A.4 Marine Rifle Squad*, 7 Aug 2020) An acronym mnemonic for a fire command.

AO — Area of operations. (*DOD Dictionary*)

AOI — Area of interest. (*DOD Dictionary*)

AP — Attack position.

Aslt — Assault.

ASR — Alternate supply route. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

BAS — Battalion aid station. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

BMNT — Beginning of morning nautical twilight. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

Bn — Battalion. (*MCRP 1-10.2 Marine Corps Supplement*) DOD and Army is "BN."

BP — Battle position. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

BPT — Be prepared to.

Btry — Battery. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CAR — Combined arms rehearsal. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CAS — Close air Support. (*DOD Dictionary*)

CASEVAC — Casualty evacuation. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CATK — Counterattack. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CC — Critical capability. (*DOD Dictionary*) A product of COG analysis.

CCP — Casualty collection point. (*FM 1-02.1 Operational Terms*)

CEOI — Communications-electronics operating instructions. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CFL — Coordinated fire line. (*DOD Dictionary*)

CLIC — Company level intelligence cell. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

Co — Company. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CO — Commanding officer. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

COA — Course of action. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

COG — Center of gravity. (*DOD Dictionary*) A product of COG analysis.

CONOPS — Concept of operations. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

CP — Command post; contact point. (*DOD Dictionary*)

CP — Checkpoint.

CR — Critical requirement. (*DOD Dictionary*) A product of COG analysis.

CRP — Combat reconnaissance patrol. Russian doctrine.

CV — Critical vulnerability. (*DOD Dictionary*) A product of COG analysis.

DEF — Defend.

DES — Destroy.

Det — Detachment. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

DOF — Direction of fire.

DRAW-D — Defend, reinforce, attack, withdraw, and delay. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
An acronym mnemonic for enemy capabilities.

DS — Direct support. (*DOD Dictionary*)

DTG — Date-time group. (*DOD Dictionary*)

EA — Engagement area. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

E&E — Evasion and escape. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

EENT — End of evening nautical twilight. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

EFST — Essential fire support task. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

EMDCOA — Enemy most dangerous course of action.

EMLCOA — Enemy most likely course of action.

EN — Enemy.

EPW — Enemy prisoner of war. (*DOD Dictionary*)

ETA — Estimated time of arrival. (*DOD Dictionary*)

FA — Field artillery. (*DOD Dictionary*)

FAC — Forward air controller. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

FARP — Forward arming and refueling point. (*DOD Dictionary*)

FIST — Fire support team. (*DOD Dictionary*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

FIT — Follow in trace.

FO — Forward observer. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

FOF — Follow-on forces.

FPL — Final protective line. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

FRAGO — Fragmentary order. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

FRAGORD — Fragmentary order. (*DOD Dictionary*)

FS — Fire support. (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

FSC — Fire support coordinator. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

FSCL — Fire support coordination line. (*DOD Dictionary*)

FSCM — Fire support coordination measure. For aircraft. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

FSE — Forward security element.

FW — Fixed-wing. For aircraft. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*) Aircraft.

GS — General support. (*DOD Dictionary*)

HN — Host nation. (*DOD Dictionary*)

HHQ — Higher headquarters. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

HMG — Heavy machine gun. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

HWY — Highway. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

I&W — Indications and warning. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

IAW — In accordance with. (*DOD Dictionary*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

IOT — In order to.

IOTA — In order to allow.

IPB — Intelligence preparation of the battlespace. (*DOD Dictionary*)

IR — Intelligence requirement. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

JTAC — Joint terminal attack controller. (*DOD Dictionary*)

JTF — Joint task force. (*DOD Dictionary*)

KOCSA — Key Terrain, observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, and avenues of approach. (*Marine Corps Supplement*) An acronym mnemonic for terrain analysis, part of mission analysis.

LD — Line of departure. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

LOE — Line of effort. (*DOD Dictionary*)

LOO — Line of operation. (*DOD Dictionary*)

LZ — Landing zone. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

MAGTF — Marine air-ground task force. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

MCPP — Marine Corps Planning Process. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*)

ME — Main effort. (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

METT-T — Mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available - time available. (*DOD Dictionary*) (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*) An acronym mnemonic for the **estimate of the situation**.

MG — Machine gun.

MHP — Mission has priority.

MMG — Medium machine gun.

MOE — Measure of effectiveness. (*DOD Dictionary*)

MOP — Measure of performance. (*DOD Dictionary*)

MSR — Main supply route. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

NAI — Named area of interest. (*DOD Dictionary*)

NET — No earlier than.

NLT — No later than. (*DOD Dictionary*)

OBJ — Objective.

O/C — On call.

O/O — On order.

OOB — Order of battle. (*DOD Dictionary*)

OOM — Order of movement.

OP — Observation post. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

OPORD — Operation order. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

ORP — Objective rally point. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

O/S — On station. On signal.

PCC — Precombat check. (*Marine Corps Supplement*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

PCI — Precombat inspection. (*Marine Corps Supplement*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

PDF — Principal direction of fire. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

PIR — Priority intelligence requirement. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

PL — Phase line. (*DOD Dictionary*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

Plt — Platoon. (*Marine Corps Supplement*) DOD and Army is "PLT."

POF — Priority of fires. (*DOD Dictionary*)

PZ — Pickup zone. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

QRF — Quick reaction force. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

RES — Reserve.

RIP — Relief in place. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

RO — Radio operator. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

ROC — Rehearsal of concept. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

- ROZ** — Restricted operations zone. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- RP** — Release point. (*Marine Corps Supplement*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)
- RTE** — Route.
- RW** — Rotary-wing. For aircraft. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- S-2** — Intelligence officer. (*DOD Dictionary*) Battalion or brigade intelligence staff officer.
(FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)
- SA** — Situational awareness. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- SALUTE** — Size, activity, location, unit, time, and equipment. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
(FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*) An acronym mnemonic for an enemy report.
- SBF** — Support by fire. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- SE** — Supporting effort. (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)
- Sect** — Section.
- SMEAC** — Situation, mission, execution, administration and logistics, and command and signal.
(*Marine Corps Supplement*) An acronym mnemonic for the orders format.
- SOP** — Standard operating procedure. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- SP** — Start point. (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)
- Sqd** — Squad. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- SSP** — Scout sniper platoon.
- TACP** — Tactical air control party. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- TGT** — Target.
- THP** — Time has priority.
- Tm** — Team.
- T/O** — Table of organization. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- TOS** — Time on station. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- TOT** — Time on target. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- TPME** — Task, purpose, method, endstate. An acronym mnemonic for essential fire support tasks (EFST).
- TRP** — Target reference point. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- TTLODAC** — Target, trigger, location, observer, delivery asset, attack guidance, communications net.
An acronym mnemonic.
- UAS** — Unmanned aircraft system. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- vic** — vicinity.
- WTH** — Withdraw
- WX** — Weather. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- XO** — Executive officer. (*DOD Dictionary*) (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

The following **orders-specific terms** are used in this guidebook *without* explanation. References, in priority order are: (1) *DOD Dictionary*, Nov 2022, (2) *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary*, 10 Sep 2020, and (3) FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*, 21 Nov 2019.

area of operations (AO) — An operational area defined by a commander for land and maritime forces that should be large enough to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. (*DOD Dictionary*)

avenue of approach (AA) — An air or ground route of an attacking force of a given size leading to its objective or to key terrain in its path. (*DOD Dictionary*)

battlespace — The environment, factors, and conditions that must be understood to successfully apply combat power, protect the force, or complete the mission. This includes the air, land, sea, space, and the included enemy and friendly forces; facilities; weather; terrain; the electromagnetic spectrum; and the information environment within the operational areas, areas of interest, and area of influence. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*)

commander's intent — A clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned. (*DOD Dictionary*)

A commander's clear, concise articulation of the purpose(s) behind one or more task assigned to a subordinate. It is one of two parts of every mission statement that guides the exercise of initiative in the absence of instructions. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

concept of operations (CONOPS) — A verbal or graphic statement that clearly and concisely expresses what the commander intends to accomplish and how it will be done using available resources. (*DOD Dictionary*)

course of action (COA) — 1. Any sequence of activities that an individual or unit may follow. 2. A scheme developed to accomplish a mission. (*DOD Dictionary*)

fire support plan — A plan on how indirect fires and target acquisition will be used to support an operation. It should include a portion for each means of fire support involved. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*)

five-paragraph order — An order, formatted in the standard five paragraphs.

fragmentary order (FRAGO, FRAGORD) — An abbreviated operation order issued as needed to change or modify an order or to execute a branch or sequel. (*DOD Dictionary*) An abbreviated form of an operation order, usually issued on a day-to-day basis, that eliminates the need for restating information contained in a basic operation order. It may be issued in sections. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

key terrain — Any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant. (*DOD Dictionary*)

main effort (ME) — The designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. It is usually weighted with the preponderance of combat power. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*) (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

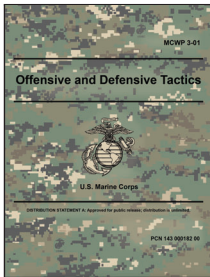
mission — 1. The task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore. (*DOD Dictionary*)

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*)

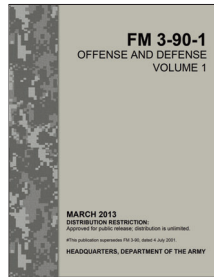
on-order mission — A mission to be executed at an unspecified time in the future. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*)

- operation order** — A directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the purpose of effecting the coordinated execution of an operation. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- phase** — In planning, a definitive stage of a campaign or operation during which a large portion of the forces and capabilities are involved in similar or mutually supporting activities for a common purpose. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- support by fire (SBF)** — To engage the enemy by direct fire to support a maneuvering force using overwatch or by establishing a base of fire. The supporting force does not capture enemy forces or terrain. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*)
- supporting effort (SE)** — Designated subordinate unit(s) whose mission is designed to directly contribute to the success of the main effort. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*) A designated subordinate unit with a mission that supports the success of the main effort. (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)
- tactics** — The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- tactical tasks** — The defined actions, based on unit capabilities, that a commander may take to accomplish the mission. Tactical tasks may be specified, implied, or essential. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)

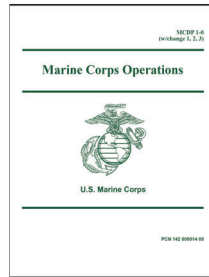
Lists of tasks are NOT exhaustive. Different lists of tactical tasks are published in various manuals:



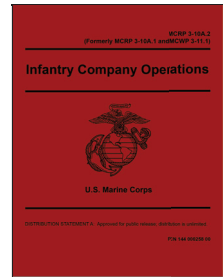
MCWP 3-01 **Offensive and Defensive Tactics**,
20 Sep 2019.
Tasks are Appendix C.



FM 3-90-1 **Offense and Defense**,
13 Apr 2015.
Tasks are Appendix B.



MCDP 1-0 Ch 1-3 **Marine Corps Operations**,
29 Mar 2019.
Tasks are Appendix C.



MCRP 3-10A.2 **Infantry Company Operations**,
4 Apr 2018.
Tasks are Appendix D.

- target** — An entity or object that performs a function for the threat considered for possible engagement or other action. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- task** — A clearly defined action or activity specifically assigned to an individual or organization that must be done as it is imposed by an appropriate authority. (*DOD Dictionary*)
- task organization** — An organization that assigns to responsible commanders the means with which to accomplish their assigned tasks in any planned action. (*DOD Dictionary*) A temporary grouping of forces designed to accomplish a particular mission. Task organization involves the distribution of available assets to subordinate control headquarters by attachment or by placing assets in direct support or under the operational control of the subordinate. (*Marine Corps Supplement*)
- techniques** — Non-prescriptive ways or methods used to perform missions, functions, or tasks. (*DOD Dictionary*) The general and detailed methods used by troops and/or commanders to perform assigned missions and functions; specifically, the methods of using equipment and personnel. (MCRP 1-10.2 *Marine Corps Supplement*)

troop leading procedures (TLP) — A dynamic process used by small-unit leaders to analyze a mission, develop a plan, and prepare for an operation. (FM 1-02.1 *Operational Terms*)

Notes on Marine Corps jargon

Use plain language to communicate clearly. Although acronyms save space and time, and brevity codes are designed to be unambiguous, confusion on the battlefield is often caused by miscommunications.

Studies have shown that even well-trained professionals make mistakes with technical language, even when using terms they have known for years. This is especially true when they are exhausted or under stress.

Misunderstandings in combat can be deadly. Misunderstandings with government officials and local civilians are common. We shouldn't have to take a course to learn the terms to communicate with each other.

Make it easy for your Marines and others to understand you. *Increase* their understanding. *Reduce* confusion. *Speak in plain language.*

"The fact that we teach it means we believe it. If we teach it and don't believe it, we're all frauds."

— General William E. DePuy

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Dedication: Iraq 2005

“I’ve made five combat deployments since 9/11. Twice as a rifle company commander in Iraq and later as a task force commander. I led two advisor teams in Afghanistan in 2014 and 2018.

“During my first combat tour, our ability to impose our will on the insurgency in Al Anbar was slowed by our cumbersome orders process. We worked hard to make ourselves faster. I had taught at TBS, so I understood our orders process decreased our ability to react, decide, and communicate effectively. I started training my Marines on TDGs—actual combat scenarios with real-world timelines. We wrote our orders in notebooks. Our standard was ‘three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.’ We prepared for combat by issuing orders rigorously and often, sometimes daily.

“In June 2005, I attended an RCT-2 orders brief in Al Asad, Iraq. The regiment was executing Operation SAID (SWORD). As I listened to the brief, I wrote my company order on an index card. Outside at the vehicles, I issued my order to my platoon commanders over the radio.

“One hour later, when I arrived back at Camp Hit, the AAVs, tanks, and Marines were staged and ready. Platoon orders, pre-combat checks, and backbriefs had all been completed. The platoon commanders were waiting on me and the unit was ready to execute. We crossed the line of departure on time, cleared our assigned objectives, and our Marines performed exceptionally well.



“Our success was the direct result of our orders training. The professionalism and cohesion of our platoon, squad, and team leaders was built on a shared understand of how to direct, prepare, and execute combat operations. We had put our small unit leaders into difficult situations to increase their ability to operate with initiative and meet the commander’s intent. We developed orders and communications habits that reduced misunderstandings. We had even trained junior Marines on TDGS to insure we had replacement leaders when Marines were wounded.

“As combat leaders, you need to train yourself and your Marines to write fast and accurate orders. In combat, you don’t have 30 hours, you have 30 minutes.”

– Colonel C.J. Douglas

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