

Notes on Orders

1. As far as possible, issue orders verbally, face to face with your Marines.
 - a. Look your men in the eye. Point to them and then to the terrain model.
 - b. Display confidence. Do NOT express any doubts.
 - c. Use *inclusive* language: “You *will* entrench.” “You *are* moving with me.”
Avoid *exclusive* language: “You’re *not* moving with me.”
 - d. Avoid qualified statements: “Try to hold,” “As far as possible...” These lessen responsibility. Avoid needless adverbs: “Attack vigorously.”
 - e. Avoid conditional statements: “If you can get over the bridge...”

2. For deliberate orders, always use a terrain model. A visual aid is very important for clear communication. Terrain models are needed for all types of orders, as well as brief-backs, inspections and rehearsals. Simple is better. Always orient the terrain model.

3. Notes on Mission Statements.
 - a. The simplest and best format for mission statements is the “in order to” format to link mission and intent: “Attack bridge IOT prevent an enemy river crossing.”
 - b. The intent clause after “in order to” ought NOT to have an “and” in it: “Attack bridge IOT deny enemy crossing and eliminate his anti-air capability.” Which is it? Pick one!
 - c. Good intent focuses on the enemy. Adequate intent focuses on the friendly situation. Poor intent refers to terrain.
 - Knock down the water tower IOT to block the road. Refers to terrain. Poor.
 - Knock down the water tower IOT protect our front. Refers to friendly. Adequate.
 - Knock down the water tower IOT deny enemy access. Refers to enemy. Good.
 - d. A good test of a solid mission statement is “Can you replace the mission clause with two other options and still maintain the intent?” This is proof that your subordinate has leeway to take action when the situation changes.
 - Knock down the water tower IOT deny enemy access.
 - Establish an ambush IOT deny enemy access.
 - Mine the approaches IOT deny enemy access.
 - e. An open-ended mission statement reads:
“Do whatever it takes IOT get that convoy to Kinville!”

4. Notes on Commander's Intent paragraph.
 - a. This paragraph is an orphan. It should only appear at battalion level orders and above.
 - "I think the enemy..." material should be in Paragraph 1, MLCOA "I think the enemy will defend the airfield vigorously" Para 1 is NOT the S-2's paragraph. It should reflect the *commander's* view of the enemy.
 - "Critical Vulnerability" material, for the same reasons, should be in Paragraph 1.
 - "Endstate" or "Vision of success" material should be in Paragraph 3, Concept of Ops. "Endstate" is a political phrase with origins in the Weinberger doctrine.
 - Most times the Commander's Intent is the Concept of Ops with "I want" thrown in front of it. This is meaningless. All geographical references are SoM wishful thinking.
 - b. The word "intend" does not define the commander's intent: "I intend to conduct a passage of lines..." is SoM. Commander's Intent paragraph should NOT repeat SoM.
5. Notes on Concept of Operations paragraph. Your subordinates need a collective 'picture' of the overall plan before they are tasked with executing it. "We're going to make a sandwich IOT serve lunch. Tasks: You buy cheese. You buy meat. You buy pickles."
6. Notes on Tasks. The simplest and best format for task statements is the "in order to" format to link mission and intent: "Attack bridge IOT prevent an enemy river crossing." When Tasks are in mission format, your subordinate takes his task directly as his mission. Tasks are like pieces to the jigsaw puzzle. The concept of operations is the cover photo. The idea of 'nested' tasks states that the ME mission remains the same as one moves from regiment to battalion to company to platoon.
7. Summary.
 - a. 'On Order'. Too many 'on orders' is an indicator of a bad order. 'On order' tasks require too much coordination with the commander. In combat, this is the last thing you want.
 - b. Combat Organization. Too many independent units is an indicator of a bad order. Keep it simple. A complex combat organization requires very detailed orders and comms to coordinate multiple moving parts.
 - c. Issuing orders is an acquired skill. Practice is the only path to proficiency. Use non-tactical situations to practice: field day, police call, family day — any tasks that need a team effort. In touch football, the quarterback gives *one hundred* orders in an afternoon.

Terminology

Common tactical terms must be used correctly. Use precise terms precisely. Precision language is often more important than precision weapons.

All terms are *JP 1-02 DoD Dictionary* unless noted. MCRP 5-12C is the *Marine Corps Supplement to the DoD Dictionary*.

Attack: An offensive action characterized by movement supported by fire with the objective of defeating or destroying the enemy. (MCRP 5-12C)

Attrition: The reduction of the effectiveness of a force caused by loss of personnel and materiel.

Assault: The climax of an attack, closing with the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting.

Battle Position: 1. In ground operations, a defensive location oriented on an enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend. 2. In air operations, an airspace coordination area containing firing points for attack helicopters. Also called **BP**. (MCRP 5-12C)

Bounding Overwatch: A tactical movement technique used when contact with enemy ground forces is expected. The unit moves in bounds. One element is in position to overwatch the other element's move. The overwatching element is always positioned to support the moving unit by fire or by fire and maneuver. This is the slowest but most secure movement technique. (MCRP 5-12C)

Breach: The employment of any means available to break through or secure a passage through an obstacle. (MCRP 5-12C)

Canalize: To restrict operations to a narrow zone by use of existing or reinforcing obstacles or by fire or bombing.

Contain: To stop, hold, or surround the forces of the enemy or to cause the enemy to center activity on a given front and to prevent the withdrawal of any part of the enemy's forces for use elsewhere.

Covering Force: A force operating apart from the main force for the purpose of intercepting, engaging, delaying, disorganizing, and deceiving the enemy before the enemy can attack the force covered. 2. Any body or detachment of troops which provides security for a larger force by observation, reconnaissance, attack, or defense, or by any combination of these methods.

Delaying Operation: An operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged.

Demonstration: An attack or show of force on a front where a decision is not sought, made with the aim of deceiving the enemy.

Destroyed: A condition of a target so damaged that it can neither function as intended nor be restored to a usable condition. In the case of a building, all vertical supports and spanning members are damaged to such an extent that nothing is salvageable. In the case of bridges, all spans must have dropped and all piers must require replacement.

Guard: A form of security operation whose primary task is to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information, and to prevent enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body by

reconnoitering, attacking, defending, and delaying. A guard force normally operates within the range of the main body's indirect fire weapons.

Interdiction: An action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's military surface capability before it can be used effectively against friendly forces, or to otherwise achieve objectives.

Movement to Contact: A form of the offense designed to develop the situation and to establish or regain contact.

Neutralize: 1. As pertains to military operations, to render ineffective or unusable. 2. To render enemy personnel or material incapable of interfering with a particular operation.

Passage of Lines: An operation in which a force moves forward or rearward through another force's combat positions with the intention of moving into or out of contact with the enemy. A passage may be designated as a forward or rearward passage of lines.

Penetration: In land operations, a form of offensive which seeks to break through the enemy's defense and disrupt the defensive system.

Pursuit: An offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it.

Recon, Reconnaissance: A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area.

Reconnaissance in Force: An offensive operation designed to discover and/or test the enemy's strength or to obtain other information.

Release Point: A well-defined point on a route at which the elements composing a column return under the authority of their respective commanders, each one of these elements continuing its movement towards its own appropriate destination.

Relief in Place: An operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit. The responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. The incoming unit continues the operation as ordered.

Screen: 4. A security element whose primary task is to observe, identify, and report information, and which only fights in self-protection. See also **guard**. 5. A task to maintain surveillance; provide early warning to the main body; or impede, destroy, and harass enemy reconnaissance within its capability without becoming decisively engaged.

Sector: 1. An area designated by boundaries within which a unit operates, and for which it is responsible. See also **zone of action**.

Secure: In an operational context, to gain possession of a position or terrain feature, with or without force, and to make such disposition as will prevent, as far as possible, its destruction or loss by enemy action.

Seize: To employ combat forces to occupy physically and to control a designated area.

Strongpoint: A key point in a defensive position, usually strongly fortified and heavily armed with automatic weapons, around which other positions are grouped for its protection.

Supporting Fire: Fire delivered by supporting units to assist or protect a unit in combat.

Suppression: Temporary or transient degradation by an opposing force of the performance of a weapons system below the level needed to fulfill its mission objectives.

Traveling Overwatch: A movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is possible. The lead element and trailing element are separated by a short distance which varies with the terrain. The trailing element moves at variable speeds and may pause for short periods to overwatch the lead element. It keys its movement to terrain and the lead element. The trailing element overwatches at such a distance that should the enemy engage the lead element, it will not prevent the trailing element from firing or moving to support the lead element. (MCRP 5-12C)

Zone of Action: A tactical subdivision of a larger area, the responsibility for which is assigned to a tactical unit; generally applied to offensive action. See also **sector**.

Block: Deny the enemy access to a given area or prevent an enemy advance in a given direction. (TBS reference)

Clear: Eliminate resistance by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces. (TBS reference)

Fix: Actions taken to prevent the enemy from moving. (TBS reference)

Mission Statements: Always contain a task and purpose (intent).
When (time) Who (unit) What (task) Where (location) IOT Why (intent).

Common Tasks:

Enemy Focus: *Attrit, Delay, Destroy, Fix, Interdict, Neutralize, Suppress, Canalize, Contain, Disrupt, Block*

Terrain Focus: *Seize, Retain, Secure, Breach, Clear, Isolate, Recon*

Friendly Focus: *Cover, Guard, Screen, Overwatch*

Common Purposes:

Allow, Cause, Create, Deceive, Deny, Divert, Enable, Envelope, Facilitate, Influence, Open, Prevent, Protect, Support, Surprise

Four Types of Offensive Operations: *MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations Movement to Contact, Attack, Exploitation, Pursuit*

Forms of Maneuver: *Frontal Attack, Flanking Attack, Envelopment, Turning Movement, Infiltration, Penetration*

Two Types of Defensive Operations: *MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations Mobile Defense, Position Defense*

Six Other Operations: *MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations*

Retrograde (Delay, Withdrawal, Retirement), Passage of Lines, Linkup, Relief in Place, Obstacle Crossing (Breach, River Crossing), Breakout from Encirclement

Control Measures:

Strong Point, Battle Position, Sector, Battle Handover Line (BHL), Passage Point, Objective, Axis, Direction of Attack, Engagement Area, Phase Line, Attack Position, Blocking Position

Notes on

Frag Orders

Combat Orders Series

21 April 1998

Frag Order. The ability to make a tactical decision is meaningless without the ability to communicate it clearly. Your ability to issue a clear, concise Frag Order is an essential combat skill. Frag Orders, usually issued verbally on scene, should be well-understood in order to be well-executed. When time permits, a commander might prepare written notes and use a terrain model. In contact, a commander issues his Frag Order off the top of his head, while pointing out terrain features directly.

There is no format. The following 5-paragraph format is recommended:

Situation. Give a quick assessment of what you *think* the enemy is trying to do. Start with “**I think...**”: “I think they’re trying to trap us against the river!” An assessment is important. Your orders make more sense if your Marines know what you are thinking. Do *not* restate the obvious: “We’re under fire!”

Mission. State a collective unit mission *before* assigning tasks. Start with the word “**We.**” Use the IOT format to link Mission and Intent: “We’re going to attack that machinegun IOT relieve the pressure on the road.”

Execution. Give a Concept of Operations — a description of how you’re going to accomplish the mission. This lets everyone know the plan: “While our guns set up a BOF here, we’ll flank left and trap them.”

Tasks. Task each of your units. Choose a ME and task him first. The ME task should parallel the unit’s mission. Issue Tasks in the IOT format: “Suppress the windows IOT prevent enemy fire.”

Coordinating Instructions. Complete the Frag Order with coordinating information for all hands.

Comments:

Admin and Logistics & Command and Signal is usually unchanged. Don’t mention anything that isn’t needed.

Orientation. Point out features that are not obvious. Designate any control measures on the fly: “Designate this side of the building as Side 1!”

Task Organization. Reorganize *before* the order: “Guns attach to Team 3!”

Frag Order Example

“Six, this is Three-One.
Contact! Wait-out.”

S

“I think the rest of the company is blocked by those guns. I don’t think the enemy knows we’re here!”

M

“We’re going to seize that draw in order to enable our platoon to get behind those guns.”

E

“We’ll move up along this finger, cross and then secure both ends.”

“Shoup, you’re ME. Seize the draw IOT enable our platoon to pass. Janson, recon the far side IOT find a route. Myers, secure the near side IOT protect our flank.”

“No illumination, no noise! I’ll tell the Platoon what’s going on. Let’s go!”

Recommended Frag Order Format

S: "I think..."

M: "We..."

IOT...

E:CoO

Task 1: "Main Effort..."

IOT...

Task 2:

IOT...

Task 3:

IOT...

Coord:

Squad Frag Order Example

A rifle squad on an urban patrol is hit by sudden sniper fire. One man is wounded.

Radio: "Kilo, this is Three-One. Contact! Wait-out."

S: "I think they're in the gray three story building! Probably a single position."

M: "We're going to pull Canby out of there IOT treat and evacuate him".

E:CoO "While one team takes security, one team will suppress, and one will grab Canby."

Task 1: "Jones. You're ME. From that wall, pull Canby out of there IOT treat and evacuate him."

Task 2: "Hammes. When Jones is ready, suppress the building IOT prevent the sniper from firing."

Task 3: "Donohoe. Security. Watch those two buildings IOT protect our west flank."

Coord: "I'll get Cobras and MedEvac on the radio. Any questions?"