Issue an Oral Operations Order

Combat orders capture the commander’s battlefield visualization, intent and decisions. They focus on the end state of an operation --- what the commander expects to achieve. Subordinate leaders must know how to interpret these orders, extract relevant information, and communicate their plans to implement actions to support mission accomplishment. This lesson focuses on the steps necessary to provide the soldier with the skills and knowledge to prepare and issue an oral operations order.

a. Orders. An order is a written or an oral communication directing actions. Orders are based on plans or the receipt of a new mission. There are two general categories of orders - administrative and combat

**TYPES OF ORDERS**

- **Administrative Order**: Covers normal administrative operations in garrison or in the field. They include general, specific, & memorandum orders; courts-martial orders; & bulletins, circulars, & other memoranda.

- **Combat Orders**: Pertain to strategic, operational, or tactical operations & associated service support. Combat orders include operations orders, service support orders, movement orders, warning orders, & fragmentary orders.

- **Standing Operating Procedures**: (SOPs) SOPs are orders that detail how forces will execute unit-specific techniques & procedures that commanders standardize to enhance effectiveness & flexibility.
Administrative orders cover normal administrative operations in garrison or in the field. They include general, specific, and memorandum orders; courts-martial orders; and bulletins, circulars, and other memoranda.

Combat orders pertain to strategic, operational, or tactical operations and associated service support. Combat orders include operations orders, service support orders, movement orders, warning orders, and fragmentary orders.

Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) are orders that detail how forces will execute unit-specific techniques and procedures that commanders standardize to enhance effectiveness and flexibility. The benefits of SOP include:

1. Simplified, brief combat orders.
2. Enhanced understanding and teamwork among commanders, staff, and troops.
3. Established synchronized staff drills.
4. Established abbreviated or accelerated decision making techniques

This lesson focuses on the operation order, warning order, and the fragmentary order.

b. Military leaders use operation orders to synchronize and coordinate military actions. The operation order identifies tasks and activities, constraints and coordinating instructions for the successful completion of a mission. All operation orders convey instructions in a standard, recognizable, clear, and simple format.

c. Common characteristics of all combat orders:
   1. Contain five (5) paragraphs.
   2. Provide task organization and the scheme of maneuver.
   3. Provide a clear, concise mission statement, based on the mission assigned by the higher headquarters, including an execution time and date.
   4. Convey the commander’s intent and concept of the operation.
   5. Usually include an overlay
CHARACTERISTICS OF COMBAT ORDERS

- CONTAINS FIVE (5) PARAGRAPHS
- PROVIDES TASK ORGANIZATION & SCHEME OF MANEUVER
- PROVIDES CLEAR, CONCISE MISSION STATEMENT, BASED ON MISSION ASSIGNED BY HIGHER HQs, INCLUDING EXECUTION TIME & DATE
- CONVEYS COMMANDER'S INTENT & CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION
- USUALLY INCLUDES AN OVERLAY

d. Use the following guidelines when developing/writing orders:

**Use factual information**  Avoid making assumptions.

**Use authoritative expression**  The language used in the order must be direct. It represents what the commander wants his subordinates to accomplish.

**Use positive expression**  State orders affirmatively. For example, “Third squad will remain in the rear.” NOT, “Third squad will not accompany the platoon.”

**Avoid unqualified directives.**  Do not use meaningless expressions like, *as soon as possible*. Indecisive, vague, and ambiguous language leads to uncertainty and lack of confidence. For example, do not use “Try to retain.” Instead use, “Retain until.” Avoid using phrases like “violently attacks” or “delays while maintaining enemy contact.” Army doctrine already requires attacking violently and maintaining enemy contact during delays.

**Balance**  Make sure to decentralize decision authority and execution authority to the lowest practical level.
**Simplicity**  Do not include elements not essential to mission success.

**Brevity**  Be concise, clear and to the point, and include only necessary details using short words, sentences, and paragraphs. Do not include matters already covered in the unit SOP, however, refer to the SOP when appropriate.

**Clarity**  Do not use jargon, use only those acronyms understood by subordinates. Use doctrinal terms and graphics.

**Timeliness**  Issue orders to subordinates in time to allow them to plan and prepare their own actions. When time is short, accept less than optimum products in the interest of timeliness.

**Completeness**  Portray the commander’s intent and end state. Provide the necessary information required for successful execution. Provide control measures that are complete and understandable, clearly establish command and support relationships, and fix responsibilities to carry out the plan according to the commander’s intent.

**Coordination**  Provide for direct contact among subordinates. Fit together all tactical elements for synchronized, decisive action, impose only necessary and doctrinally correct control measures. Help identify and provide for mutual support requirements while minimizing the force’s exposure to danger.

**Flexibility**  Leave room for adjustments, the ideal conditions never exist. Plan for the unexpected, change in weather, re-supply never happens, soldier replacement delayed, scheduled transportation canceled.

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**OPORD Format and Content**

*(Classification)*

Place the classification at the top and bottom of every page of the OPLAN or OPORD.

*(Change from oral orders, if any)*

This statement is applicable only if an oral order is issued by the commander. The phrases “No change from oral orders” or “No change from oral orders except paragraph __” are necessary.

**Copy __ of __ copies**

**Issuing headquarters**

**Place of issue (coordinates)**
Date-time group of signature

Show the place of issue (location of issuing headquarters) on each copy. Show the name of the town or place in capital letters, coordinates in parentheses, and the country in capital letters. You may encode both.

The effective time for implementing the plan or order is the same as the date-time group (DTG) unless coordinating instructions state otherwise. Use time zone ZULU (Z) unless the order states otherwise. When orders apply to units in different time zones, use ZULU time zone. In operation and service support plans and orders, list the time zone applicable to the operation in the heading of the order following the references. When an order or plan does not specify the actual date and hour for beginning an operation, apply the proper reference designations.

Message reference number

Message reference numbers are internal control numbers that the unit signal officer issues and assigns to all plans and orders. The unit's SOP normally describes the number's allocation and use. Using the number allows an addressee to acknowledge receiving the message in the clear.

OPERATION PLAN (ORDER) __________ (code name) (number)

Plans and orders normally contain a code name and are numbered consecutively within a calendar year.

References:
The heading of the plan or order includes a list of maps, charts, datum, or other related documents the unit will need to understand the plan or order. The user does not need to reference the SOP, but may refer to it in the body of the plan or order. The user references a map using the map series number (and country or geographic area, if required), sheet number and name, edition, and scale, if required. Datum is the mathematical model of the earth used to calculate the coordinate on any map. Different nations use different datum for printing coordinates on their maps. The datum is usually referenced in the marginal information of each map.

Time Zone Used Throughout the Plan (Order):
The time zone used throughout the order (including annexes and appendixes) is the time zone applicable to the operation. Operations across several time zones use ZULU time.

OPLAN or OPORD __________ - ___________________
(Number) (issuing headquarters)
(Place this information at the top of the second and any subsequent pages of the OPLAN or OPORD.)

Task Organization:
Describe the allocation of forces to support the commander's concept. Task organization may be shown in one of two places: preceding paragraph one, or in an annex, if the task organization is long and complicated.

1. SITUATION

   a. Enemy forces. Express this information in terms of two enemy echelons below yours (for instance, corps address brigades; battalions address platoons). Describe the enemy's most likely and most dangerous course of action. When possible, provide a sketch of the enemy course of action in lieu of verbiage (Appendix ___ (sketch) to Annex B (Intelligence)). Include an assessment of terrorist activities directed against US government interests in the area of operations. Refer to Annex B (Intelligence) or the current intelligence estimate or intelligence summary (INTSUM). If you need to reference more sources, use the final subparagraph to refer the reader to the documentation. If no enemy – mark none.

   b. Friendly forces. Include the mission, the commander's intent, and concept of operations for headquarters one and two levels up. Subparagraphs state the missions of flank units and other units whose actions would have a significant bearing on the issuing headquarters.

   c. Attachments and detachments. Do not repeat information already listed under Task Organization or in Annex A (Task Organization). Try to put all information in the Task Organization or in Annex A and state, “See Task Organization” or “See Annex A.” However, when not in the Task Organization, list units that are attached or detached to the headquarters that issues the order. State when attachment or detachment is to be effective if different from when the OPORD or OPLAN is effective (such as on order, on commitment of the reserve). Use the term “remains attached” when units will be or have been attached for some time.

   d. Assumptions (OPLAN only). List all assumptions.
2. MISSION.

State the mission derived during the planning process. There are no subparagraphs in a mission statement. The mission statement will cover on-order missions.

3. EXECUTION

Intent: State the commander's intent derived during the planning process.

a. Concept of operations. The concept of operations may be a single paragraph, may be divided into two or more subparagraphs or, if unusually lengthy, may be prepared as a separate annex. The concept of operations should be based on the COA statement from the decision-making process and, at a minimum, will address close, deep, rear, security, and reserve operations as well as describe the type or form of operation and designate the main effort. The commander uses this subparagraph when he feels he must supply sufficient detail to ensure appropriate action by subordinates in the absence of additional communications or further instructions. The concept statement should be concise and understandable.

b. The concept describes—

• The employment of major maneuver elements in a scheme of maneuver.
• A plan of fire support or “scheme of fires” supporting the maneuver with fires
• The integration of other major elements or systems within the operation. These include reconnaissance and security elements, intelligence assets, engineer assets, and air defense.
• Any other aspects of the operation the commander considers appropriate to clarify the concept and to ensure unity of effort. If the integration and coordination are too lengthy for this paragraph, that integration and coordination are addressed in the appropriate annexes.
• Any be-prepared missions.

When an operation involves two or more clearly distinct and separate phases, the concept of operations may be prepared in subparagraphs describing each phase. Designate phases as “Phase” followed by the appropriate Roman numeral, for example, Phase I.

If the operation overlay is the only annex referenced, show it after “a. Concept of operations.” Place the commander's intent and concept of operations statement on the overlay if the overlay does not accompany the OPORD or OPLAN.
NOTE: Depending on what the commander considers appropriate, the level of command, and the complexity of any given operation, the following subparagraphs are examples of what may be required within the concept of operations.

(1) Maneuver. State the scheme of maneuver derived during the planning process. Be sure this paragraph is consistent with the operation overlay. It must address the close, deep, and rear battles as well as security and reserve operations. This paragraph and the operation overlay should be complementary adding to the clarity of, rather than duplicating, each other. Do not duplicate information to be incorporated into unit subparagraphs or coordinating instructions.

(2) Reconnaissance and Surveillance. This paragraph should specify the reconnaissance and surveillance plan and how it ties in with the basic concept of operations. It should address how these assets are operating in relation to the rest of the force.

(3) Intelligence. State the intelligence system concept supporting the scheme of maneuver. Describe the priority of effort among situation development, targeting, and mission success assessment. Describe the priority of support to maneuver units and the priority of counterintelligence (CI) effort.

(4) Engineer. Clarify the scheme of engineer support to the maneuver plan paying particular attention to the integration of engineer assets. Indicate priority of effort and provide priority of mobility and survivability aspects as appropriate.

(5) Signal. Annex H (Signal). List organization for combat, if not in the task organization. Assign priorities of effort and support. Address functions or support roles of organic or attached signal units if it is not clear in task organization. Establish priorities of work if not addressed in unit SOPs.

(6) NBC. Annex J (NBC). List organization for combat, if not in the task organization. Assign priorities of effort and support. Address functions or support roles of organic or attached chemical and smoke units if it is not clear in task organization. Establish priorities of work if not addressed in unit SOPs.

(7) Provost Marshall. Annex K (PM). List organization for combat, if not in the task organization. Assign priorities of effort and support. Address functions or support roles of organic or attached MP units if it is not clear in task organization. Establish priorities of support to EPW operations, circulation control plan, and rear area security if not addressed in unit SOPs.
b. **Tasks to maneuver units.** Clearly state the missions or tasks for each maneuver unit that reports directly to the headquarters issuing the order. List units in the same sequence as in the task organization, including reserves. Use a separate subparagraph for each maneuver unit. Only state tasks that are necessary for comprehension, clarity, and emphasis. Place tactical tasks that affect two or more units in subparagraph 3d.

c. **Tasks to combat support units.** Use these subparagraphs only as necessary. Not normally used by TNSG.

d. **Coordinating instructions.** List only instructions applicable to two or more units and not routinely covered in unit SOPs. This is always the last subparagraph in paragraph 3. Complex instructions should be referred to in an annex. Subparagraphs d(1)-d(5) below are mandatory.

1. **Time or condition when a plan or an order becomes effective.**

2. **Commander's critical information requirements (CCIR).** List once only here. Do not list in Annex B (Intelligence).
   
   (a) **Priority intelligence requirements (PIR)**

   (b) **Friendly force information requirements (FFIR).**

3. **Risk reduction control measures.** These are measures unique to this operation and not included in unit SOPs and can include mission-oriented protective posture, operational exposure guidance, troop-safety criteria and injury prevention measures.

4. **Rules of engagement (ROE).** (NOTE: ROE can be addressed within its Annex.)

5. **Environmental consideration**

6. **Any additional coordinating instructions**
4. SERVICE SUPPORT

Address service support in the areas shown below as needed to clarify the service support concept. Refer to annexes, if required. Subparagraphs can include:

a. Support concept. State the concept of logistics support to provide non-CSS commanders and their staffs a visualization of how the operation will be logistically supported. This could include—
   • A brief synopsis of the support command mission.
   • Support command headquarters or support area locations, including locations of the next higher logistic bases if not clearly conveyed in the CSS overlay.
   • The next higher level's support priorities and where the unit fits into those priorities.
   • The commander's priorities of support
   • Units in the next higher CSS organization supporting the unit
   • The use of host nation support.
   • Significant or unusual CSS issues that might impact the overall operation.
   • Any significant sustainment risks.
   • Unique support requirements in the functional areas of manning, arming, fueling, fixing, moving, and sustaining the soldier and his systems.
   • The support concept organized into a framework based on operational phasing, or presented as before, during, and after operations format.

b. Materiel and services.

c. Medical evacuation and hospitalization.

d. Personnel support.
5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

a. Command. State the map coordinates for the CP locations and at least one future location for each command post. Identify the chain of command if not addressed in unit SOPs.

b. Signal. List signal instructions not specified in unit SOPs; identify the specific signal operating instructions (SOI) addition in effect, required reports and formats, and times the reports are submitted.

ACKNOWLEDGE: Include instructions for the acknowledgment of the plan or order by addressees. The word acknowledge may suffice or you may refer to the message reference number. Acknowledgment of a plan or order means that it has been received and understood.

NAME (Commander's last name)

RANK (Commander's rank)
The commander or authorized representative signs the original copy. If the representative signs the original, add the phrase “For the Commander.” The signed copy is the historical copy and remains in headquarters files.

OFFICIAL:
(Authentication) Use only when applicable. If the commander signs the original, no further authentication is required. If the commander doesn't sign, authentication is required by the signature of the preparing staff officer and only the last name and rank of the commander appear in the signature block.

ANNEXES: List annexes by letter and title in the sequence:
Annex A (Task Organization)
Annex B (Intelligence)
Annex C (Operation Overlay)
Annex D (Fire Support)
Annex E (Rules of Engagement)
Annex F (Engineer)
Annex G (Air Defense)
Annex H (Signal)
Annex I (Service Support)
Annex J (Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Operations)
Annex K (Provost Marshal)
Annex L (Reconnaissance and Surveillance)
Annex M (Deep Operations)
Annex N (Rear Operations)
Annex O (Airspace Command and Control)
Annex P (Command and Control Warfare)
Annex Q (Operations Security (OPSEC))
Annex R (Psychological Operations (PSYOP))
Annex S (Deception) instruction
Annex T (Electronic Warfare) instruction
Annex U (Civil-Military Operations)
Annex V (Public Affairs)

(If a particular annex is not used, place a “not used” beside that annex letter.)

**DISTRIBUTION:** Furnish distribution copies either for action or for information. List in detail those who are to receive the plan or order. If necessary, also refer to an annex containing the distribution list or to a standard distribution list or SOP. When referring to a standard distribution list, also show distribution to reinforcing, supporting, and adjacent units, since that list does not normally include these units.

(Classification)
Place the required classification at the top and bottom of every page of the OPLAN or OPORD.

**Warning Order Format and Content.**

The **Warning Order** (WARNO) is a preliminary notice of an order or action that is to follow. Warning orders help subordinate units and their staff prepare for new missions. Warning orders maximize subordinates’ planning time, provide essential details of the impending operation, and major time-line events that accompany mission execution.

The warning order clearly informs the recipient of what tasks he must do now as well as informs him of possible future tasks. The warning order follows the five-paragraph field order format.
A WARNING ORDER DOES NOT AUTHORIZE EXECUTION UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED

References: Refer to higher headquarters OPLAN/OPORD, and identify map sheet for operation. (Optional.)

Time Zone Used Throughout the Order: (Optional)

Task Organization: (Optional)

1. SITUATION
   a. Enemy forces. Include significant changes in enemy composition dispositions and courses of action. Information not available for inclusion in the initial WARNO can be included in subsequent warning orders.

   b. Friendly forces. (Optional) Only address if essential to the WARNO.
      (1) Higher commander's mission.
      (2) Higher commander's intent.

   c. Attachments and detachments. Initial task organization, only address major unit changes.

2. MISSION. Issuing headquarters' mission at the time of the WARNO. This is nothing more than higher headquarters' restated mission or commander's decisions during MDMP.
3. EXECUTION

Intent:

a. **Concept of operations.** Provide as much information as available, this may be done during the initial WARNO.

b. **Tasks to maneuver units.** Any information on tasks to units for execution, movement to initiate, reconnaissance to initiate, or security to emplace.

c. **Tasks to combat support units.** See paragraph 3b.

d. **Coordinating instructions.** Include any information available at the time of the issuance of the WARNO. It may include the following:
   • Risk guidance.
   • Specific priorities, in order of completion.
   • Time line.
   • Guidance on orders and rehearsals.
   • Orders group meeting (attendees, location, and time).
   • Earliest movement time and degree of notice.

4. SERVICE SUPPORT. (Optional) Include any known logistics preparation for the operation.
   a. Special equipment. Identifying requirements, and coordinating transfer to using units.
   b. Transportation. Identifying requirements, and coordinating for pre-position of assets.

5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL (Optional)
   a. Command. State the chain of command if different from unit SOP.
   b. Signal. Identify current SOI edition, and pre-position signal assets to support operation.

**ACKNOWLEDGE:** (Mandatory)

**NAME** (Commander's last name)

**RANK** (Commander's rank)

**OFFICIAL:** (Optional)
**Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) Format and Content**

The fragmentary order provides timely changes of existing orders to subordinates and supporting commanders while providing notification to higher and adjacent commands. A FRAGO is either written or oral and addresses only those parts of the original OPORD that have changed. The sequence of the OPORD is used and *all five-paragraph headings must be used.* After each heading, state either “No Change” or the new information.

The FRAGO differs from an OPORD only in the degree of detail provided. It refers to previous orders and provides brief and specific orders. The higher headquarters issues a new OPORD when there is a complete change of the tactical situation or when many changes make the current order ineffective.

(Classification)
(Change from oral orders, if any) (Optional)
Copy of copies
Issuing headquarters
Place of issue
Date-time group of signature
Message reference number
FRAGMENTARY ORDER _______

**References:** (Mandatory) Reference the order being modified.

**Time Zone Used Throughout the Order:** (Optional)

1. **SITUATION.** (Mandatory) Include any changes to the existing order.

2. **MISSION.** (Mandatory) List the new mission.

3. **EXECUTION**

   Intent: (Optional)
   
   a. Concept of operations. (Mandatory)
   
   b. Tasks to subordinate units. (Mandatory)
   
   c. Coordinating instructions. (Mandatory) Include statement, “Current overlay remains in effect” or “See change 1 to Annex C, Operations Overlay.” Mark changes to control measures on overlay or issue a new overlay

4. **SERVICE SUPPORT.** Include any changes to existing order or the statement, “No change to OPORD xx.”

5. **COMMAND AND SIGNAL.** Include any changes to existing order or “No change to OPORD xx.”

ACKNOWLEDGE: (Mandatory)

NAME (Commander's last name)
RANK (Commander's rank)
OFFICIAL: (Optional)
ANNEXES: (Optional)
DISTRIBUTION: (Optional)

(Classification)
How to Develop (problem solving, military decision making process, plan formulation, troop leading procedures, METT-TC, terrain analysis, and risk assessment) an OPORD.

There are prescribed procedures a leader uses to prepare for combat when he receives plans, prepares for, and executes a mission. The Army’s prescribed problem solving steps, Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) model, troop leading procedures, METT-TC, terrain analysis, and risk assessment are tools a leader uses to develop a plan for successful mission accomplishment. These tools are all related, but their relationships are not fixed because their use varies with the situation and level of command.

**PROBLEM SOLVING.** Military leaders must be able to quickly identify a problem and work towards an immediate resolution. The U.S. Army prescribes a systematic method for solving problems. It involves 6 steps. Although this method is prescribed, there is no requirement for leaders to adhere to it. However, a systematic approach is always more efficient than a disorderly approach to solving problems.

1. **STEP ONE - Recognize the problem.** The essential elements of a problem are the individual (unit), the goal (mission accomplishment) and the obstacle (factors impacting on the ability of the unit to achieve mission accomplishment.)

2. **STEP TWO - Gather data relative to the problem.** Get all available data critical to understanding whether an obstacle (or more) exists that may impede your ability to achieve the goal.

3. **STEP THREE - List possible solutions to the problem.** Identify factors impacting on our ability to reach the goal (mission accomplishment).

4. **STEP FOUR - Test possible solutions to the problem.** When planning actions to overcome obstacles, make sure they are economical, suitable and feasible.

5. **STEP FIVE - Select the best possible solution to the problem.** If you apply the criteria of economy, suitability, and feasibility when selecting actions to eliminate obstacles you can believe your selection is among the best.

6. **STEP SIX - Implement the problem solution.**
Remember, it is important to understand how the mission can become the problem, and how problem solving can help overcome obstacles and meet the goal of accomplishing the mission.

**MILITARY DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

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<tr>
<th>INPUT</th>
<th>RECEIPT OF MISSION</th>
<th>OUTPUT</th>
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<tr>
<td>MISSION RECEIVED FROM HIGHER HQ OR DEDUCED BY CDR/STAFF</td>
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<td>*CDR’S INITIAL GUIDANCE WARNING ORDER 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIGHER HQ ORDER/PLAN/PB STAFF ESTIMATES FACTS &amp; ASSUMPTIONS</td>
<td>MISSION ANALYSIS</td>
<td>INITIAL HFB PRODUCTS *RESTATES MISSION *CDR’S INTENT *CDR’S GUIDANCE WARNING ORDER 2 STAFF PRODUCTS BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK PRELIMINARY MOVEMENT</td>
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<td>RESTATED MISSION CDR’S GUIDANCE CDR’S INTENT STAFF ESTIMATES &amp; PRODUCTS ENEMY COAs</td>
<td>COA DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<td>COA ANALYSIS (WAR GAME)</td>
<td>WAR GAME RESULTS TASK ORGANIZATION MISSION TO SUBORDINATE UNITS CCIR</td>
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<td>WAR GAME RESULTS ESTABLISH CRITERIA</td>
<td>COA COMPARISON</td>
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NOTE 1: * DENOTES CDR’S RESPONSIBILITY

c. **MILITARY DECISION MAKING PROCESS (MDMP)** The MDMP is a single, established, and proven analytical process used at battalion level and above. It assists commanders in developing effective plans for mission accomplishment. The MDMP Model involves 7 steps. Each step of the process begins with certain input that builds upon the previous steps. Each step, in turn, has its own output that drives subsequent steps. It begins with the receipt or anticipation of a new mission.

1. **Receipt of Mission**. The MDMP begins with receipt of the mission. This will usually come as an OPORD from higher headquarters. Key personnel assemble to begin the planning process. The commander issues initial guidance and a warning order. As a general rule, the commander allocates a minimum of two-thirds of available time for subordinate units to conduct their planning and preparation.
Mission analysis. Mission analysis is crucial to the MDMP. It allows the commander to begin his battlefield visualization. The result of mission analysis is defining the tactical problem and beginning the process of determining feasible solutions.

**STEPS IN MISSION ANALYSIS**

1. **Analyze Higher HQs Order**
2. **Conduct Initial Intelligence Preparation of Battlefield (IPB)**
3. **Determine Specified, Implied, & Essential Tasks**
4. **Review Available Assets**
5. **Determine Constraints**
6. **Identify Critical Facts & Assumptions**
7. **Conduct Risk Assessment**
8. **Determine Initial CDR’s Critical Information Requirements (CCIR)**
9. **Determine Initial Reconnaissance Annex**
10. **Plan Use of Available Timex**
11. **Write Restated Mission**
12. **Conduct Mission Analysis Briefing**
13. **Approve Restated Mission**
14. **Develop Initial CDR’s Intent**
15. **Issue CDR’s Guidance**
16. **Issue Warning Order**
17. **Review Facts & Assumptions**

It doctrinally involves 17 steps, not necessarily sequential, and results in the staff formally briefing the commander.

Course of Action Development. Leaders must develop courses of action to support mission accomplishment. Commanders at all levels must be proficient in this area. For the sake of this lesson, we will focus on the criteria of COAs. In future courses, you will undoubtedly spend a great deal more time in this area. Each COA considered must meet the criteria of-

- **Suitability**. It must accomplish the mission and must comply with commander’s guidance.
- **Feasibility**. The unit must have the capability to accomplish the mission in terms of time, space & resources.
• **Acceptability.** The tactical/operational advantage gained by executing the COA must justify the cost in resources, especially casualties.

• **Distinguishability.** Each COA must differ significantly from each other. Significant differences may result from use of reserves, task organizations, day or night operations, or a different scheme of maneuver.
  • Completeness. It must be a complete mission statement (who, what, when, where, and why)

(4) **Course of Action Analysis (war game).** The COA analysis identifies which COA accomplishes the mission with minimum casualties while best positioning the force to retain initiative for future operations.

(5) **Course of Action Comparison.** A comparison of each COA identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each COA. This allows the commander to select the one that has the highest probability of success.

(6) **Course of Action Approval.** The commander selects the COA he believes to be the most advantageous. This COA becomes the plan to execute the actions required to accomplish the mission. The staff should issue a warning order with essential information so that subordinates can refine their plans.

(7) **Orders Production.** Based on the commander’s decision and final guidance, the staff refines the COA and completes the plan and prepares to issue the order.

d. **TROOP LEADING PROCEDURES (TLP).** Troop-leading procedures are a series of inter-related overlapping processes that are often accomplished concurrently and do not follow a rigid sequence. Small unit leaders (Company Commanders/sergeants, platoon Leaders/squad/team leaders) use the procedure as outlined, if only in abbreviated form to ensure that nothing is left out of planning, preparation, and the execution of their assigned mission. Use TLP to develop a plan and issue an OPORD for a combat operation that your soldiers understand.
(1) **RECEIVE THE MISSION.** Ensure you understand what the mission is and begin to analyze it immediately using the factors of METT-TC:

- What is the **MISSION**?
- What is known about the **ENEMY**?
- How will **TERRAIN** and weather affect the operation?
- What **TROOPS** are available?
- How much **TIME** is available?
- What are **CIVILIAN** concerns?

(2) **ISSUE A WARNING ORDER.** Provide initial instructions to subordinate leaders so they can begin preparation. Address those items. not already covered by unit SOP, that you know or assume must be done to prepare for the mission. Use the 5 paragraph format.
(3) MAKE A TENTATIVE PLAN. This plan will become the basis for the OPORD, it must be as complete as possible. Conduct an estimate of the situation based on the factors of METT-TC.

(a) ANALYZE THE MISSION. Analysis of your assigned mission ensures that you know what is required and that you are performing as the commander intends.

(i) Extract the mission and concept of the battalion commander from paragraph 1b(1) of the company commander’s order.

(2) Extract the mission and concept of the company commander from paragraph 2 of his order, and his concept from paragraph 3.

(3) Determine all specified tasks. Specified tasks are specifically assigned to a unit by its higher headquarters. They are found in Paragraph 2 and 3 of the company commanders.

(4) Determine Implied tasks. These are tasks that are not stated in the company commander’s order but may have to be performed because of the situation, mission, purpose, terrain, or unit SOP.

(5) Determine mission essential tasks. These are tasks that must be executed to accomplish the mission. They are derived from an analysis of specified and implied tasks that determine specific requirements.

(6) Determine limitations. Identify all constraints that restrict your unit’s freedom of action. They are found in the scheme of maneuver or concept of operation.

(7) Construct a restated mission. After determining the mission essential task(s) and purpose, study the battalion and company commander’s missions, concepts, limitations, and restate your unit’s mission. The mission should be a clear and concise statement of your task and purpose expressed in terms of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY.

**RESTATED MISSION**

- **WHO:** 1st PLATOON
- **WHAT:** DESTROY ENEMY FORCES (TASK) (BY AMBUSH)
- **WHERE:** VIC AB 123456
- **WHEN:** FROM 1530 29 NOV 97 UNTIL 0600 30 NOV 97
- **WHY:** TO PREVENT ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS FROM MOVING SOUTH ON HIGHWAY 127 (PURPOSE)

This restated mission becomes paragraph 2 (MISSION) of your OPORD. It is the final product of the mission analysis and guides you through the rest of the TLP. Starting from the time of execution, work backward to develop a timetable that allot time for crucial activities and sufficient time for subordinates to conduct their planning (usually two-thirds of the available planning time).
(b) ANALYZE THE SITUATION. Using the restated mission to provide focus, analyze the situation using the other factors of METT-TC. The first factor is mission and the second is Terrain—not the enemy. Consider the terrain from both your viewpoint and the enemy’s.

(I) TERRAIN AND WEATHER. Analyze the effects of terrain and weather on enemy and friendly forces using the mnemonic OCOKA (apply the task: Analyze Terrain). Consider them in the following sequence:
Obstacles.
Avenues of approach.
Key terrain.
Observation and fields of fires.
Cover and concealment.
Weather. Due to the effect of weather, consider it as you analyze each aspect, especially visibility, mobility, and survivability.

(2) ENEMY. Consider the capabilities, identification, location, disposition, strength, size, tactics, and weapons and equipment of the enemy you expect to encounter (found in paragraph 1a of the higher commanders order). Identify the enemy’s greatest threat to your mission and the enemy’s greatest vulnerability.
(3) TROOPS AVAILABLE. Consider troops available to you to accomplish the mission, characteristics of assigned weapons, and the capabilities of attached elements as you assign tasks to subordinate units.

(4) TIME AVAILABLE. Continue to analyze time available, you may have to revise your initial allocation of time (given in the initial WARNO) based on the tentative plan and any changes to the situation.

(5) CIVILIAN CONCERNS. Consider all civilian concerns and any special instructions identified in the commanders order and develop a plan to ensure they are known and complied with.

**b. DEVELOP COURSES OF ACTION (COA).** A COA is a possible plan that accomplishes the platoon’s mission. It is as brief as possible with only the details needed to clearly describe how the unit will accomplish the mission and to allow effective war-gaming to determine its advantages or disadvantages. A COA is a scheme of maneuver that describes the employment of the squads and other assets, such as attached units, weapons, or other support. Normally two or three COAs are developed; however, planning time may limit you to one. Each COA must be-

- Feasible. It must accomplish the mission and must support the commander’s concept
- Reasonable. The unit must have the capability to execute the COA in terms of time, space & resources and remain an effective force after completing the mission.
- Distinguishable. Each COA must differ from each other to allow for considerations of options. Significant differences may result task organizations, day or night operations, or a different scheme of maneuver.

(1) Determine crucial facts and deductions for the mission to provide focus to the COA development. Examples-
- Potential decisive points determined from integration of the terrain and enemy analysis.
- Limited planning time that requires an immediate decision and quick execution.
- A critical shortage of machine gun ammunition.
- An identified mistake in positioning of enemy weapons, resulting in a weakness in his defense.
- Lack of information on the enemy forces.

(2) Develop each COA starting at a potential decisive point. Orient on the terrain, enemy, or friendly force. If one has not been identified, consider the focus of the platoon’s mission statement. If it focuses on—
- Gaining or retaining ground, then determine what terrain is most important.
- Destroying the enemy, then determine the enemy’s weakness. This may result from his organization, doctrine, or disposition.
- Securing a friendly force, then determine the most vulnerable part of the friendly force. Consider how the enemy may attack the unit.
(3) Once you have identified the potential decisive points for your mission, develop your Courses of Action (COAs). They may begin with a different decisive point, or they may concentrate combat power at the same time using different tasks, purposes, positions, etc. you must-
- Determine decisive points and times to focus combat power.
- Determine the results that must be achieved at the decisive points to accomplish the mission.
- Determine the purpose to be achieved by the main and supporting efforts.
- Determine essential tasks for squads.
- Complete a generic task organization by assigning all organic and attached units.
- Establish control measures that clarify and support the accomplishment of the platoon’s assigned mission.
- Conduct Risk Assessment. Consider both tactical and accident risk. Identify hazards that can cause injury, illness, or death of personnel; damage to or loss of equipment or property; or mission degradation. Develop controls to reduce the risk, and decide where tactical risk can be taken to weight the main effort.
- Determine assets needed for subordinates to achieve their specific mission.
- Ensure mutual support is achieved.
- Determine freedom of action for subordinates.
- Prepare a COA statement.

**COA STATEMENT**

**PLATOON MISSION STATEMENT:**

1st PLT ATTACKS AT 190600 OCT 97, TO SIZE HIGH GROUND VICINITY NB 450265 (OBJ TOOL) TO ALLOW 2d PLT (MAIN EFFORT) TO PASS THROUGH & SIZE THE DECISIVE TERRAIN VICINITY NB 453267 (OBJ BOX)

**COA STATEMENT:**

THE PLT CROSSES THE LD AT 0600 ALONG DIRECTION OF ATTACK BLUE & OCCUPIES THE ORP. AFTER LEADER'S RECON, ONE SQD, WITH BOTH PLT MACHINE GUN TEAMS ATTACHED, OCCUPIES SUPPORT POSITION VIC NB 449267 TO SUPPRESS ENEMY ON OBJ TOOL TO ALLOW ANOTHER SQD WITH ATTACHED ENGINEERS TO BREACH THE ENEMY’S OBSTACLES & SIZE A FOOTHOLD ON THE OBJ. A THIRD SQD (PLT MAIN EFFORT) ASSAULTS THROUGH THE BREACH TO CLEAR ENEMY TRENCH LINE TO ALLOW THE 2d PLT TO PASS THROUGH & SIZE THE DECISIVE TERRAIN (OBJ BOX). THE SUPPORT SQD THEN THE BREACH SQD, IN ORDER, ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST CLEARING THE TRENCHES.
c. **ANALYZE COURSES OF ACTION.** Conduct an analysis by war-gaming (mentally fighting the battle as you expect it to occur) the friendly COAs against the enemy’s most probable courses of action. From this war-gaming, determine where the platoon is taking risks, when and where decisions may be required, and the advantages and disadvantages of each course of action.

d. **COMPARE COURSES OF ACTION.** Develop a COA decision matrix by listing the significant factors that provide the basis for comparing each COA.

**COURSE OF ACTION DECISION MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNIFICANT FACTORS</th>
<th>COURSE OF ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MISSION-SPECIFIC FACTORS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. CASUALTY EVACUATION</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SOLDIER'S LOAD</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. STEALTHY MOVEMENT</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. TIME USAGE</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. ---</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL FACTORS</th>
<th>COURSE OF ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. KEY WEAPONS EMPLOYED TO BEST ADVANTAGE</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PLATOON DISPOSITION PROVIDES MUTUAL SUPPORT</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. COVERAGE OF MAIN ENEMY AVENUES OF APPROACH</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ---</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There are two basic type of significant factors:
- Mission specific factors. These are generated by the requirements for a specific mission. Examples include:
  - *Casualty Evacuation.*
  - *Soldier’s load.*
  - *Stealthy movement.*
  - *Time usage.*
- General factors. These apply in all tactical operations, you must determine which of these are significant to your mission, and list them as significant factors for this mission. Examples include:
  - *Security.*
  - *Simplicity.*
  - *Surprise.*
  - *Exploitation of enemy weaknesses.*
  - *Disruption of the enemy attack.*
  - *Concentration at the decisive point.*
  - *Employment of key weapons.*
e. **MAKE A DECISION.** Select a COA that supports each factor the best based on your comparison. This COA must support the commander’s intent (concept of the operation) and the mission statement. This COA becomes your plan to execute the actions required to accomplish the mission. Complete the tentative plan by expanding the COA into a five-paragraph OPORD. The plan remains tentative until completion of the leader’s reconnaissance.

(4) **INITIATE MOVEMENT.** Your unit may need to begin movement while you are still planning or reconnoitering. This step could occur at any time during TLP. If necessary, designate a subordinate leader to begin movement.

(5) **RECONNOITER.** Conduct a leaders reconnaissance of the area of operations.  
- If the reconnaissance reveals a change in the situation, even after a mission has begun, the plan may be adjusted to exploit enemy weaknesses or unforeseen opportunities.  
- If time or the situation does not allow for reconnaissance of the actual area of operations, conduct a map reconnaissance and rely on enemy information from the commander’s order.

(6) **COMPLETE THE PLAN.** Based on results from your reconnaissance, make adjustments to the tentative plan.

(8) **ISSUE THE OPORD.** Issue the Complete Order. OPORD’s can be written or oral, but must include all 5-paragraphs of the basic combat order format. Your order must include all the essential information necessary to ensure mission accomplishment.

(8) **SUPERVISE.**  
- Inspect. Conduct a pre-combat inspection to ensure soldiers have the prescribed equipment for the specific mission and that it is serviceable. Check soldiers’ knowledge and understanding of the mission and their specific responsibility.  
- Rehearsal. Conduct rehearsals to ensure complete coordination and subordinate understanding. A full-scale rehearsal is always the goal, if this is not possible, rehearse the critical actions.  
- Brief-back. Conduct a brief-back with sub-leaders to ensure they understand their instructions.  
- Coordinate. Make continuous coordination with subordinates, adjacent units, and for necessary support or a change in the situation. Throughout the preparation phase of an operation, opportunity exists for minor adjustments and refinement to plans.

**End of Course, submit exam**