Synchronization and the Division OPORD Training Program

A Monograph
by

Major John V. Scudder

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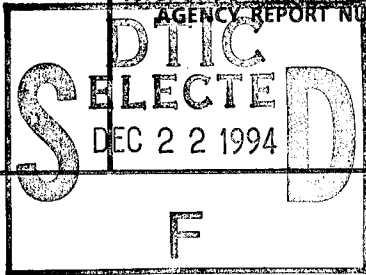
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This monograph examines whether or not a Division Operations Order (OPORD) Training Program would improve task force synchronization in a resource constrained environment. Using doctrinal analysis, historical examples, and current data collected from the National Training Center (NTC) take-home packages, the study focuses on the failure of task forces to synchronize operations. Since the end of Operation Desert Storm, the NTC has identified numerous shortcomings in Mission Analysis, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB), wargaming, and rehearsals. Combining these activities, synchronization was deficient in over 75% of the missions observed.

The monograph proposes a Division OPORD Training Program (DOTP) designed to evaluate and train task force synchronization. The DOTP is a monthly program for selected units to train the OPORD process from division to company level. The DOTP's function is to assess subordinate level synchronization in terms of troop leading procedures, flow of commander's intent, staff integration, quality of OPORDs, and time management. With current resource cutbacks and poor NTC results, the Army needs a cost effective means of training task force synchronization.

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ABSTRACT

SYNCHRONIZATION AND THE DIVISION OPORD TRAINING PROGRAM by Maj John V. Scudder, USA, 48 pages.

This monograph examines whether or not a Division Operations Order (OPORD) Training Program would improve task force synchronization in a resource constrained environment. Using doctrinal analysis, historical examples, and current data collected from National Training Center (NTC) take-home packages, the study focuses on the failure of task forces to synchronize operations. Since the end of Operation Desert Storm the NTC has identified numerous shortcomings in Mission Analysis, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB), wargaming, and rehearsals. Combining these activities, synchronization was deficient in over 75% of the missions observed.

The monograph begins with the importance of synchronized combat operations. This section highlights significant NTC synchronization deficiencies and reviews observer-controller (OC) recommendations for task force improvement. Secondly, the monograph reviews the purpose and importance of synchronization as expressed in current US Army publications. The next section examines selected US Army division's training guidance to determine if the divisions assist in training task force synchronization. The monograph then proposes a Division OPORD Training Program (DOTP) designed to evaluate and train task force synchronization. The DOTP is a monthly program for selected units to train the OPORD process from division to company level. The DOTP's function is to assess subordinate level synchronization in terms of troop leading procedures, flow of commanders intent, staff integration, quality of OPORDs, and time management. Moreover, company execution is assessed to evaluate the results of a synchronized plan.

The monograph concludes with the advantages of such a program outweighing the disadvantages. With current resource cutbacks and poor NTC results, the Army needs a cost effective means of training task force synchronization. The Division OPORD Training Program serves this need by using the division staff as competent OCs who can evaluate the synchronization process.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's resource constrained environment, many Army senior leaders believe the lack of training funds is having an increasingly negative impact on units. Forces Command (FORSCOM) commander, General Dennis Reimer, notes that "most battalion commanders in command for two years...will tell you that training has changed somewhat. There's [sic] probably less emphasis on battalion level training. There's [sic] less chance to do battalion level training."[1] With fewer training opportunities since the end of Operation Desert Storm, it appears that task forces are having difficulties synchronizing combat functions. The National Training Center (NTC) has identified significant synchronization shortcomings within task forces in Mission Analysis, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB), wargaming, and rehearsals. Combining these activities, synchronization was deficient in over 75% of the missions observed.[2]

By definition, synchronization is arranging activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point.[3] Synchronization of operations is necessary to maximize the combat power of a task force at the decisive time and place.[4] One method to train synchronization is to evaluate the task force planning process. An evaluation program would contain procedures that could test key synchronization activities in a stressful environment.

To achieve synchronization, units must train beyond simply executing battlefield tasks to standard. Former Combined Arms

Training Activity (CATA) commander, Brigadier General James Lyle, identified a need to synchronize activites on the battlefield:

> The question of why some units are more successful than others is frequently asked at all levels in today's Army. The intent of the question is to identify and quantify critical aspects of the battlefield on which current and future commanders can focus and train to do well. That a unit is able to execute specific tasks to doctrinal standards does not guarantee success. A commander must be able to not only execute tasks to standard, he or she must integrate or synchronize the tasks to achieve a specific intent.[5]

Attempting to identify a solution to the synchronization problem, this monograph proposes a Division Operations Order Training Program (DOTP) to help improve task force synchronization in a resource constrained environment.

The monograph focuses on the following areas: the importance of synchronization; synchronization in current United States Army publications; synchronization training in US Army divisions; synchronization in a division evaluation training program; the advantages and disadvantages of such a program; and conclusions.

To begin with, the monograph shows the relevance of synchronization in military operations. It highlights significant synchronization deficiencies noted over several years of rotations

at the NTC with the focus on post-Desert Storm rotations. The purpose is to demonstrate the need for units to synchronize combat operations.

Next, the monograph reviews the purpose and importance of synchronization as expressed in current US Army publications. This document seeks to determine if our doctrine helps measure synchronization. The objective is to identify whether specific guidance is given for training and evaluating synchronization at the task force level.

Having identified synchronization difficulties in combat units and based on doctrine and actual training experiences, this paper reviews selected guidances from various US Army divisions. The goal is to determine the division's role in training task force synchronization at home station.

A training method that prepare units for combat is then presented. The purpose is to provide a systematic means for evaluating task force synchronization using the military decision making process as the training vehicle. Using the 3rd Armored Division OPORD Training Program as an historical model, the monograph outlines the purpose of the DOTP and present its objective, timeline, procedure, and lessons learned when implemented in 1990. Recommending future implementation of the same template by the US Army, the monograph offers five significant requirements that can improve program effectiveness.

The monograph then analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of using a division-driven evaluation system. The

criteria applied as a measure of training effectiveness stem from FM 25-101, <u>Battle Focused Training</u>. Included are four key principles of training: Train as You Fight; Use Appropriate Doctrine; Train to Challenge; and Train to Sustain Proficiency.[6]

Finally, conclusions and implications are presented. The research culminates by determining that a division OPORD training program can help prepare units for combat by allowing them to synchronize more effectively.

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IMPORTANCE OF
SYNCHRONIZATION

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> The teams and staffs through which the modern commander absorbs information and exercises his authority must be a beautifully interlocked, smooth-working mechanism. Ideally, the whole should be practically a single mind.
>
> -General Dwight Eisenhower[7]

To capture the importance of synchronizing combat operations one should review the situation facing LTC Don Faith's 31st Infantry Regiment when he attempted a desperate breakout on 1 December 1950 from the Chosin Reservoir in Korea. Under attack for virtually 80 straight hours by waves of Chinese, LTC Faith decided to breakout south and link up with the 1st Marine Division at Hagaru-ri. As a result of fatigue and continuous combat, the staff prepared, coordinated, and disseminated unclear plans. In many cases, soldiers never saw the operational plans.

Confusion reigned among adjacent units as Marine close air support accidentally dropped napalm on the front of the breakout column. As several officers admitted later, from the start the battalion virtually lost command and control. Poor staff coordination and lack of synchronizing all available firepower and maneuver forces led to a terrible situation. In the space of four days and five nights of continuous combat, 1000 men, almost 30% unit strength, were killed or captured.[8]

This historical example shows that individual courage could not replace the failure of the commander and his staff to plan, coordinate, and synchronize a complex maneuver in the face of a relentless foe.[9] Today the US Army specifies how task forces should synchronize in Field Manual 71-2, <u>Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force Operations</u>. First, they synchronize their operations by issuing clear, concise orders that describe the mission, commander's intent, and assign critical tasks to subordinates. Inherent in this is the staff's ability to conduct a thorough Mission Analysis. This determines the role of the task force in the higher commander's operation, and the specific and implied tasks necessary for mission accomplishment. Second, synchronization occurs by using the IPB process to determine enemy time lines, named areas of interest (NAI), target areas of interest (TAI), and task force decision points (DP). Third, to achieve synchronization, the commander must wargame contingencies with the staff and subordinate commanders to ensure that maneuvers and corresponding support are understood,

planned, and timed before the battle. Finally, task forces synchronize operations by coordinating and integrating combat support and combat service support assets.[10] This action results when units rehearse their operations prior to execution.

Thus, the Army has established the framework (Mission Analysis, complete IPB, methodical wargaming, and quality rehearsals) through which a task force will synchronize combat operations. When synchronization occurs, the likelihood of mission accomplishment increases significantly.

The NTC evaluates battlefield synchronization in terms of mission analysis, IPB, wargaming, and rehearsals. Based on 157 task force missions from 6 June 1991 to 15 May 1993, synchronization was deficient in over 75% of the cases observed. Specifically, 71% of the task force staffs conducted faulty mission analysis. In addition, 84% task force Intelligence Officers (S-2s) failed to complete the IPB process. Over 84% of the task force staffs did not adequately wargame. Finally, 62% of the task forces conducted ineffective rehearsals. According to NTC observations, these results had a detrimental effect on battle outcome. Based on 108 engagement simulation (non-live fire) missions, 82% of the task forces lost over 50% of their combat power by the end of their mission.[11]

The reasons for these failures of synchronization are noteworthy. Several cases showed that Mission Analysis did not provide the commander with enough information to focus his guidance to the staff.[12] Some task forces never gained an

understanding of how the task force "fit" into the division's scheme of maneuver, or how to support the brigade commander's intent. Many commanders and staff did not conduct Mission Analysis; staffs worked in separate areas and never came together for a common understanding of mission, enemy, terrain, troops and time available (METT-T). Common occurrences featured the task force commander developing a Course of Action (COA) based on a "feeling," and not a thorough understanding of enemy and terrain.[13] Thus, from the onset, poor mission analysis hurt synchronization.

NTC identified S-2 shortcomings in IPB and its detrimental effect on synchronization. On several occasions, S-2s conducted incomplete and unsystematic IPB processes that did not provide adequate focus for collection, maneuver, and fire planning.[14] Furthermore, IPB was incomplete, and S-2s neglected threat integration by failing to show how the enemy would fight against the task force. Situational templates were deficient in the absence of enemy range fans, kill sacks, obstacles, critical points, and time phaselines to focus maneuver planning. One observation directly attributed a lack of understanding the enemy as being the cause of a task force to be overrun. In this case, the enemy was able to achieve its objective with 80% of its combat power remaining.[15]

Several mission observations identified task force staffs as untrained in the conduct of wargaming:

The task force staff's failure to conduct wargaming as part of the tactical decision making process caused integration of combat multipliers to be ineffective. The task force battle staff organizes combat multipliers in a manner that does not support the scheme of maneuver.[16]

In other cases, some staffs conducted superficial wargames in which they never identified the decisive point, established decision points/criteria, nor developed a scheme of maneuver to fight the most probable enemy COA.[17] Most staffs never wargamed at all; the resulting plans becoming complex and unsynchronized.

Regarding rehearsals, various mission observations highlighted them as doing little to give the task force leadership a feel for time, space, and distance relationships resulting in a failure to synchronize combat multipliers.[18] Often rehearsals were a wargame for the commander and S-3, resulting in tactical decision making by committee, usually without analysis of the enemy COA. Some rehearsals reviewed the battle rather than updated enemy information or integrated battle operating systems (BOS). Other rehearsals discussed the integration of combat multipliers separate from the scheme of maneuver. Finally, one comment captured the true depiction of an inadequate rehearsal:

the rehearsal was not a rehearsal...but an opportunity to include implied tasks overlooked in mission analysis. Actions and orders were developed during the

> rehearsal...not all BOS were addressed and combat service support was forgotten.[19]

Naturally, with an ineffective rehearsal conducted during the preparation phase of an operation, synchronization will suffer.

These synchronization failures greatly contributed to the disintegration and defeat of task forces against the NTC Opposing Force (OPFOR).[20] The most salient recommendations in take-home packages were for task force staffs to practice obtaining information, processing it, making a decision, and then issuing an order. The take-home packages emphasized that the task force staffs not concern themselves with the time to complete this process. Instead, the take-home packages stressed focusing staff efforts on understanding the process and developing an understanding of operational terms.[21]

Another recommendation to improve synchronization suggests that task force leadership needed to understand the development of a scheme of maneuver and an integrated plan.[22] Likewise, to improve synchronization, task forces should read current doctrinal manuals and practice developing numerous plans. While developing these plans, task force staffs could conduct Mission Analysis, commander's guidance, COA development, and wargaming within the tactical decision making process.[23]

DOCTRINAL REVIEW

To gain a better understanding why units fail to synchronize one must review current US Army doctrinal literature. Although synchronization is a key tenet, our doctrine gives little guidance for its training and evaluation. The following fundamental Army doctrinal manuals concern themselves with the synchronization process and will merit analysis and review: FM 100-5, Operations, FM 101-5 (Coordinating Draft), Command and Control for Commanders and Staff, FM 71-2, The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force, FM 71-2 Mission Training Plan (MTP), Mission Training Plan for The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force, and FM 25-101, Battle Focused Training.

FM 100-5 is the Army's keystone warfighting doctrine. It states that synchronization takes place first in the minds of commanders, and then in the actual planning and coordination of movements, fires, and supporting activities. To achieve synchronization requires the anticipation that comes with depth, mastery of time-space-purpose relationships, and a complete understanding of the ways in which friendly and enemy capabilities interact. Above all, synchronization requires a clear statement of the commanders intent.[24] However, even though

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FM100-5 tells you to synchronize activities, it does not specify the "How-to" aspect of synchronization.

FM 101-5 outlines the importance of synchronization during a discussion of the military decision-making process. It emphasizes that to be effective, the commander must horizontally synchronize all battlefield operating systems within a staff. Moreover, staffs also help commanders effect horizontal synchronization by focusing effort on vertical synchronization within a given battlefield operating system.[25] This manual's chief merit is that it doctrinally links the decision-making process to a synchronized plan. Codifying Command and General Staff College (CGSC) Student Text (ST) 100-9, FM 101-5 highlights four factors of synchronizing operations. First, by conducting Mission Analysis, the staff identifies the enemy's "center of gravity" for unequivocal destruction, thus optimizing the friendly commander's ability to produce the desired effect on the enemy. Second, through IPB, the entire staff must anticipate the enemy's objectives and intentions. Third, wargaming by the staff records results in a synchronization matrix that synchronizes the course of action across time, space, and purpose in relation to the enemy's most likely course of action. Finally, rehearsals teach or confirm unit techniques by which to gain agility, ensure synchronization, and aid in gaining or regaining the initiative throughout the area of operations during the mission.[26] In effect, FM 101-5 provides a useful guide to synchronize activities through the military decision-making process.

FM 71-2 is the doctrinal foundation for training, and governs the development of equipment, training, and structure for tank and mechanized infantry battalions. It emphasizes synchronization of the battalion task force fight through integrated planning and coordinated employment of combat support and combat service support assets.[27] As stated in section II of this monograph, FM 71-2 describes synchronization as the process of integrating the activities on the battlefield to produce the desired result. It gives eight steps the task force staff must use to synchronize operations. Altogether, these measures describe what must be done, but they do not tell "How-to" to do it. To add to this complexity, the procedures outlined describe many processes which provide more steps. Unfortunately, FM 71-2 does not adequately discuss these measures. For instance, IPB contains five steps: battlefield area evaluation, terrain analysis, weather analysis, threat evaluation, and threat integration. The first three can be completed early in the planning process by the S-2. The last two are a function of the commander and the full staff, completed at the end of the planning process.[28] Knowing this fact can help units synchronize operations. In effect, this example shows the difficulty one experiences when finding "How-to" synchronize.

FM 71-2 MTP provides units with a descriptive, mission-oriented program to train the battalion task force to perform its critical wartime missions/operations.[29] Using training and evaluation outlines (T&EOs), this manual prescribes that the task

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force controls and synchronizes subordinate and supporting elements so that it accomplishes the mission and preserves the force. Additionally, it identifies key training programs to help units train and evaluate synchronization. To illustrate, FM 71-2 MTP offers the use of a Command Post Exercise (CPX) to train synchronization and to conduct an After Action Review (AAR) as a method of evaluation. Unfortunately, FM 71-2 MTP simply lists required standards and designates specific programs that one can use to train and evaluate synchronization. What becomes difficult to understand is the linkage between the various expected standards and the synchronized plans. Reviewing the earlier comments from Brigadier General Lyle, if a unit is able to execute specific tasks to doctrinal standards, it does not guarantee plan synchronization.

Finally, FM 25-101 applies training doctrine and assists leaders in the development and execution of training programs. It stresses synchronization of the battle operating systems to ensure total combat power is coordinated and directed toward accomplishing the wartime mission.[30] This manual's strength is presenting a training planning process that links a unit's METL (Mission Essential Task List) and the execution of battle focused training. Although there are other training requirements, battle focus allows the leader to narrow his scope of planning to wartime tasks.[31] Although this document can assist in developing coherent training plans, it falls short in addressing the level of training required to synchronize plans effectively.

In retrospect, these doctrinal manuals have specified the importance of synchronization and have provided detailed guidance. They have collectively presented training guides and recommendations to achieve synchronization. Our manuals have offered many training instruments that can help synchronize operations, but what is lacking is how to apply these devices to effectively synchronize operations. Melding our manuals may help the reader glean the essential aspects of training synchronization.

CURRENT DIVISION TRAINING PRACTICES

> You can't teach synchronization in the
> classroom...it takes physical training
> against a formidable enemy!
> -NTC Armor Trainer[32]

Having identified synchronization difficulties in combat units based on doctrine and actual training experiences, this section reviews selected command guidances from various US Army divisions which are presented on the following pages. The goal is to determine the role of the commander and staff in training task force synchronization. Research of these practices will demonstrate the degree to which units train synchronization at home station.

Division synchronization training falls into three categories: total decentralization, decentralization with some amount of guidance, and centralized practices. In a resource constrained environment, many divisions opt to use the Brigade/Battalion Simulation System (BBS) rather than deploy large units in a full-

scale training scenario. BBS provides units the opportunity to exercise decisionmaking skills in a realistically simulated, multi-threat, time-stressed combat environment. Task force commanders and staff must be able to develop, correlate, and assess large quantities of tactical and logistical data, formulate situational estimates, and plan tactical/support operations for all BOS.[33] In essence, it trains synchronization by testing the task force decision-making process, preparation of combat orders, and command and control.

The first training category includes divisions that follow a decentralized approach. Here brigades and task forces receive very little guidance on conducting synchronization training. It appears the division places more emphasis on exercising the use of BBS equipment rather than setting an expected standard of training. For instance, the 10th Mountain Division identifies the importance of synchronizing the BOS by stressing that each brigade execute an external evaluation of their battalions using the BBS system. The division also "offers" a division-supported and evaluated BBS Command Post Exercise (CPX).[34] On the other hand, the 3rd Infantry Division simply orders subordinate commanders to plan "additional battle staff training during brigade and battalion level exercises."[35]

The second training category incorporates divisions that give specific guidance, yet still execute in a decentralized manner. The 82nd Airborne and 24th Mechanized Divisions specify that maneuver battalions will receive an external evaluation by the

higher headquarters every 18 months. These divisions give BBS as an option to conduct evaluations.[36] The 1st Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions are more specific, stressing that brigades and battalions will conduct or participate in four CPXs annually. Furthermore, the 1st Infantry Division directs that each brigade will conduct at minimum of two internal BBS exercises.[37] The 1st Armored Division is more directive in nature. It emphasizes staff training through comprehensive evaluation and assessment programs conducted annually with BBS. Additionally, they offer events such as staff rides and terrain walks as "excellent vehicles" to accomplish the goal of staff synchronization.[38]

Finally, the third category is the division centralized training concept. From the research conducted, the 4th Infantry Division appears to be the most prescriptive and detailed of those units sampled. Two training programs highlight 4ID's synchronization effort. First, the Iron Point III program focuses on battalion command and control. This program consists of battalion and brigade level training using Fire Coordination Exercises (FCX) and Command Field Exercises (CFX). Normally, another brigade superimposes its battle staffs as controller-trainers (C/T) on the participating units for both the FCX and the CFX. The division staff provides a support cell which assists in exercise planning and provides a response cell during both exercises.[39] 4ID's second training program is the division's quarterly-executed Integrated Battle Staff Program (IBST). This is a four-phased operation in which battle staffs use orders developed by their next higher

headquarters to perform orders drills. To illustrate, the division staff prepares and presents a division OPORD to the Commanding General (CG). Once the CG approves the OPORD, the division staff issues the order to the brigades, who in turn prepare their orders for presentation to their battalions. Brigades backbrief their orders to the CG. Upon receipt of the brigade OPORD, battalions prepare orders and then backbrief their plans to the brigade commander. The exercise concludes with a division "rock drill" to rehearse the plan with brigade and division staffs. [40]

A perceived difficulty with 4ID appears to be over-centralization in training synchronization. Although Iron Point III and the IBST programs help units prepare for the NTC, there is a large overhead associated with it. Using C/Ts from the superimposed brigades to evaluate those units going through the NTC cycle can hurt overall division readiness. With the large C/T overhead, many leaders from the superimposed brigade do not have time to train their own unit. Furthermore, since 4ID is only a two active maneuver brigade post, units that return from NTC immediately turn around to prepare the next brigade for its NTC train-up. This demanding cycle appears to encompass division involvement only in providing support/response cells or writing orders. There is no requirement for the division quality control of training C/Ts, maintaining combat readiness for the evaluator brigades, or sharing of resources. In effect, the division increases unit field time to the point that subordinates lose their ability to pace themselves.

In summary, the majority of divisions show interest in synchronization training at subordinate levels. Although some division training programs are more aggressive than others, the majority place emphasis on practicing and synchronizing the staff planning process. However, with the exception of 4ID, the majority of units do not stress doctrinal horizontal and vertical synchronization from division down through lower command levels. What may be lacking is a training program that consolidates synchronization evaluation at division level and uses observer-controllers trained by the same standards.

DIVISION OPORD TRAINING PROGRAM

In combat, a predominant interest of a division commander is the flow of his intent and concept of operations to subordinate units through the chain of command to the lowest levels. Equally important is the ability of division staffs to prepare estimates and produce quality OPORDs/graphics which communicate the commander's intention in a timely manner. Accordingly, training troop leading procedures assists the division commander in accomplishing this goal.

Troop leading procedures are essential tools for making sound decisions. They consist of actions used for planning, coordinating, executing, and supervising tactical operations. Specifically an eight step process, troop leading procedures help manage time efficiently. They entail receiving the mission, issuing

the warning order, making a tentative plan, starting movement, reconnoitering, completing and issuing the order, and supervising actions to accomplish the mission.[41] Thus, by training troop leading procedures, a unit should enhance unit decision-making capability. Furthermore, by observing mission receipt (i.e., conducting Mission Analysis), developing a tentative plan (i.e., exercising IPB and wargaming), and completing the order (i.e., conducting rehearsals), a Division OPORD Training Program can enhance synchronization.

The purpose of this section is to outline a Division OPORD Training Program that focuses on evaluating task force synchronization. The methodology involves explaining the 3rd Armored Division (3AD) program prior to Desert Storm, and then discussing key requirements of this model that can be applied to other units today.

The 3AD OPORD Training Program's purpose was to develop increased troop leading skills and enhance synchronization. It was a tool that allowed the division commander to monitor the flow of his concept of the operation to subordinate units. This cost-efficient program attempted to replicate the NTC system by using the division staff as observer-controllers (OC). Moreover, the program served to provide realistic training executed at home station. Overall, the intention was to codify an evaluation procedure that gave useful and honest feedback, rather than hide mediocre performance under a veil of secrecy. The program provided constructive comments for units to improve.

The proposed training program originated in December 1989 when the 3AD commander, Major General (MG) Paul E. Funk, ordered a program that typified the ideas presented by General DePuy in August 1988:

> Although the...commander could not direct various platoons toward their objectives, he is content to know that their actions will derive from his concept as it cascades down through his command and as each commander, in turn, embraces and articulates that concept in one of his own, which is adapted to the unique circumstances in his zone of sector. The concepts are nested like mixing bowls in a kitchen. Each must fit within the confines of the larger and accommodate the next smaller...down to the squad, the tank, and the brave soldier himself who eventually executes the...commander's concept.[42]

MG Funk knew that cascading concepts carry the top commander's intentions to the lowest levels, and the nesting of those concepts traced the critical path of concentration and priorities.[43] He felt he could influence synchronization at all levels by developing a program that observed and evaluated the flow of his concept from division to platoon level.

The 3AD DOTP was a monthly program for selected units to train the OPORD process from division to platoon level. Initiated in conjunction with a division alert, the program began with the

notification of one brigade. This procedure kept units honest; any brigade could be called upon to fulfill it's requirement. Conducted over a 48-hour period, the program evaluated a unit's ability to accomplish essential warfighting tasks. The training objectives for the program were:

- Assess the training status of all units

- Monitor the flow of the commander's intent

- Assess troop leading procedures

- Assess brigade and task force staff integration

- Review the quality of operations orders

- Assess plan synchronization

- Ensure adherence to doctrinal terms and graphics

- Assess time management

- Assess platoon preparation and execution

The training objectives ranged the spectrum of watching the flow of the commander's intent two levels down, to reviewing and improving OPORD quality. The thrust of the training program was to improve the mechanics of the orders process. Division placed emphasis on procedures by which units were evaluated on their ability to conduct thorough estimates. Moreover, the division reviewed OPORD quality in terms of subordinate understanding. Finally, since there was normally a premium on local training areas in Europe, the division ordered the deployment of only command

posts and platoon level units, and then evaluated their mission execution.

Before its evaluation of subordinate units, the division staff prepared staff estimates and published a detailed OPORD with graphics. This required total division staff involvement; it had to set aside routine administration and focus on warfighting. Division orders changed each month to stimulate interest and gain familiarization with planning the broad range of missions a division would be required to perform in combat.

When ready, the OPORD was provided to a designated brigade. This unit was given advance notification of the required training, but not of OPORD specifics. The brigade then conducted its own analysis and issued the appropriate orders to its subordinate units (battalions). At this point the division decided which task force it wanted to evaluate. All task forces within the brigade analyzed the brigade order, developed their own orders, and issued them to the line companies. Within the evaluated task force, all companies developed and issued an operations order to platoons, but again, only one company was evaluated. Finally, the division tasked one platoon of the evaluated company to deploy from garrison, move to a local training area, and perform the assigned mission. This training event was a force-on-force exercise with MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) equipment against a formidable opposing force (OPFOR). Normally this company-size OPFOR element came from another battalion, and was controlled and evaluated by the division G-2.

To summarize the complete program, the exercise began early on the first day by issuing the division order to the brigade at the same time the division OCs arrived at the unit. The brigade, battalion, company, and platoon all developed their orders during the remainder of the day and throughout hours of darkness. Early on the second day a division alert signaled the commencement of the execution phase, with the platoon to be evaluated moving out a short time later. This event was immediately followed by the most important part of the program, the AAR. Units conducted After Action Reviews at every level, culminating with all players participating in the brigade AAR. Later, the division OC team departed, but followed up the training by providing detailed written AAR comments back to the player units in the form of a take-home package. This was accomplished within 72 hours of the end of the exercise. An overview of the DOTP time-phased sequence of events is as follows:

<u>Phase I (0600, Day 1)</u>

- 24 Hour Pre-Alert [to notify division staff and units of impending exercise]

- Division Issues OPORD to a selected Brigade

- Division Team Monitors Brigade Process and Order Issuance

- Division Team Monitors Task Force Process and Order Issuance

<u>Phase II (0400, Day 2)</u>

- Division Alert

- Division Team Monitors Company Process and Order Issuance

- Division Team Monitors Platoon Process and Order Issuance

Phase III (0500, Day 2)

- Platoon Moves to the Local Training Area

Phase IV (1100, Day 2)

- Platoon Executes Assigned Mission

Phase V (1400, Day 2)

- Division Team Conducts AARs at All Levels

Phase VI (within 72 hours after exercise)

- Written AAR Comments (Take-Home Package) Provided To Unit

By March 1990 the program was fully developed and had its first successful implementation. Many lessons learned evolved from this initial experience which provided all units in the division a unique opportunity to benefit from the first unit evaluation. Some lessons were the same as those discovered by NTC OCs, while others highlighted specific aspects of the 3AD missions. Fortunately, the CG set the standard for the program by using it to train the leaders of the division- not for information to use for or

against people on efficiency reports. The program was designed to train synchronization to standard so that feedback would enhance leader development and preparation for combat. Due to the perceived and actual success of the program, 3AD used this system until its deployment for Desert Storm in November 1990.

Analyzing the 3AD program in hindsight shows that programs must be tailored to fit future adoption by US Army units. Using the same template, a division commander must focus on five significant requirements to solidify program effectiveness and improve task force synchronization. These requirements include producing a clear division OPORD, developing a competent OC team, teaching effective AAR techniques, writing useful take-home packages, and evaluating to company rather than platoon level.

The staff must produce a division OPORD that is clear and simple. To maintain credibility with subordinate commanders, the staff must be able to completely integrate and coordinate the OPORD. In the 3AD, the division staff once lost credibility when a brigade commander found that the division targeting plan did not match the enemy situation template. Another key point is that the division OPORD must change with each brigade. On one occasion, the staff attempted to streamline the process by issuing one brigade the same order given to another. Unfortunately, the evaluated brigade found this out early and began the process before the OCs could link up with them. Finally, to test unit information flow, the staff can place a significant event in the

Division OPORD to see if it comes out in subordinate OPORDs. For instance, using a passage of lines requirement, the staff can "hide" this task in the OPORD by making it an "implied" rather than a "specified" task. This technique can determine whether or not units identify key requirements during their mission analysis. Furthermore, the commanding general can see if the specifics of his concept of operation actually reach the lower command levels.

Developing a competent OC team is another DOTP requirement. The program demands a large team composed of the G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, fire support, engineer, air defense, and chemical staff sections. Headed by the CG and Chief of Staff, the division evaluation team divides into three groups, consisting of 20 officers and Noncommissioned officers (NCOs). The first group evaluates the performance of the brigade staff using training and evaluation outlines (T&EO) from ARTEP 71-3, Mission Training Plan (MTP). The second group assesses the performance of the task force staff using T&EO from the ARTEP 71-2, MTP. The third group surveys the performance of the company using the T&EO from the ARTEP 71-1, MTP. Additionally, the company evaluation team measures the performance of the designated platoons within the company. Understandably resource intensive, the cost in time is made up in experience gained from researching doctrine and observing exercises.

Rather then sending out evaluators with a clipboard and checklist to test units, the staff goes through a rigorous training program to become competent OCs. Division trains OCs to maintain

credibility by becoming doctrinal experts and applying the relevant field manual or MTP in the correct situation. Second, OCs must understand what happened during an event. They do this by asking pertinent questions of counterparts, continuously observing in order not to miss critical events, and identifying key issues to link cause and effect. Next, OCs must interact with other evaluators, including both horizontal and vertical OC coordination. In order for a task force fire support OC to know why targets were not tied to the S-2 template, he coordinates with the brigade fire support OC and task force S-2 OC to research the problem. Fourth, OCs must follow up unanswered questions before making a final judgment. Fifth, OCs should use doctrinal checklists. Not all soldiers have the mental capacity to memorize field manuals, and thus the use of checklists or guides relieves the OC of this burden. Finally, OCs must innovate and share techniques and ideas. Video taped evaluations, checklist examples, specific field manuals, and doctrinal formation picture boards may be good ideas that OCs must share among themselves. In effect, the OC becomes a professional trainer, rather than a 1970s-style evaluator from the Division Inspector General's (IG) office.

The third DOTP requirement is teaching effective After Action Review techniques. The Army's Chief of Staff, General Gordon Sullivan, recently commented on the AAR process:

> The payoff for conducting any training is in the lessons that we learn and the resultant influence on future

performance.   The AAR is the most significant development to come out of the entire creative process.[44]

He further noted that AARs and take-home packages capture the tactical essence of our Army, providing snapshots of the state of training. In providing unit feedback, no other method has been so successful in giving the Army a clear assessment of its potential.[45]

FM 25-101, Battle Focused Training, defines an AAR as a review of training that allows soldiers, leaders, and units to discover for themselves what happened during training and why. The manual stresses that AARs must guide discussions toward achieving learning objectives, stimulating soldier interest, and controlling the AAR to involve all participants.[46] However, our doctrine is unclear on how to guide, stimulate, and control the AAR process.

Most new OCs have difficulty learning procedures and techniques to give good AARs.[47] They tend to critique soldiers rather than help coach, guide, and mentor. The most effective methods to produce competent AAR leaders are by: reading existing manuals, watching others in an actual AAR, or conducting a trial and error method.   Although reading, watching, and conducting trial and error are methods commonly used, focusing on group dynamics is key to success.[48]

To be effective, an OC must enhance his communication skills by understanding the group dynamics of how to conduct a

meeting, to provide feedback, and to use questioning techniques.[49] The OC must skillfully guide, stimulate, and control a meeting (AAR). He guides the group by outlining an agenda, requesting participation, and not allowing participants to stray from the discussion topic. Next, he stimulates the group by creating a "nonthreatening environment." For instance, the OC may positively manipulate the environment by carefully selecting the AAR site in-doors and out of bad weather. He can use the word "we" when providing feedback to give the impression that the OC is part of the group. Finally, the OC controls the group by exercising his authority as leader and not allowing excuses for training failures.

The OC must understand the principles for useful feedback. Feedback is worthwhile when it is descriptive, specific, and can be fixed in a reasonable amount of time.[50] There are many instances when evaluators give vague feedback that is confusing and covers every item in the ARTEP manual. Feedback must be clear, useful, and well-timed. To do this, the OC must know the unit's mission essential task list (METL) in order to provide accurate feedback.

The OC must understand the use of questioning techniques. Some AARs have the evaluator monopolizing the conversation for great lengths of time.[51] Obviously, when this occurs, the AAR degenerates into a critique. To be successful, the OC must know when to talk, and when to let the unit talk. There are many times when the OC misses certain key events that only the group knows. The OC must recognize that he is not all knowing and that the

group is a wealth of knowledge. Therefore, he must master the art of asking leading questions. Since he is basically aware of both the friendly and enemy situation, the OC must shape his AAR by asking those questions designed to "pull-out" pertinent information from the group. In essence, the AAR tenet of discovery learning relies on the OC's ability to talk less while allowing group participation with questioning. The OC can then effectively funnel key training objectives in lessons learned that the group identified themselves. The mark of a good AAR is when the group is on "auto-pilot"- that is, group members discuss issues among themselves with only periodic involvement by the AAR leader.[52]

The ability of the staff to write useful take-home packages is the fourth DOTP requirement. Within 72 hours after conclusion of the exercise, the staff provides the brigade commander a take-home package which he and his subordinate commanders may use to assess the status of their training. Additionally, they use the take-home package to develop training strategies and plans to improve or sustain proficiency. The take-home package is written on each evaluated battle operating system, staff section, or unit.

The division presents the take-home package in a standardized format describing a summary of execution and the key lessons learned for the exercise. It outlines the operation by covering the plan, preparation, and execution phases in great detail. When writing a take-home package, OCs must emphasize causal relationships by linking training failure to doctrinal requirements. Equally important, OCs must emphasize learning

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points by quoting doctrinal publications when applicable. Consequently, units receive a document that is specific enough to guide them in their future training.

The final DOTP requirement is adjusting division emphasis on the company rather than the platoon. Acknowledging that the 3AD was constrained by Europeon training space, Continental US Army (CONUS) units own their post training areas and have access to large acreage. Maintaining the doctrinal spirit of evaluating two levels down, the DOTP would be more effective focusing at the company level. This procedure would allow a division to scale back its OC requirement. Additionally, company OCs would still be able to sample platoon-level leaders to verify if the division commander's concept has reached their level.

The Division OPORD Training Process is a valuable tool that inculcates current doctrine to enhance troop leading procedures and effect synchronization. The program's key to success is issuing an integrated division OPORD, using curious OCs who constantly observe and follow up, executing thorough AARs, issuing useful take-home packages, and focusing on the company level. Moreover, this program evaluates the military decision-making process at every level. Besides testing staff planning, the program also scrutinizes company planning and execution to verify if the task force plan is truly synchronized. Hence, by incorporating the OPORD flow through the chain of command, a competent division OC team is able to verify both horizontal and vertical task force synchronization.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES
OF THE DIVISION OPORD TRAINING PROGRAM

The purpose of this section is to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using a division-driven evaluation system to improve task force synchronization. The criteria applied as a measure of effectiveness include: Train as You Fight; Use Appropriate Doctrine; Train to Challenge; and Train to Sustain Proficiency.

Applying the principle "Train as You Fight," the Division OPORD Training Program offers several advantages to improve task force synchronization. It replicates some battlefield conditions in demanding high standards, creating a realistic environment, and presenting complex situations. Hence, unit command posts must deploy to conduct the planning process. Likewise, units quickly disseminate OPORDs under time constraints, staffs are pressured to perform a myriad of tasks, and companies must fight a formidable OPFOR using MILES. To make situations more realistic, continuous OC presence stresses units by ensuring they adhere to doctrinal standards.

The DOTP inculcates the principle, "Use Appropriate Doctrine," by having OCs legitimately evaluate task force synchronization through the use of MTPs. By a thorough training program, new OCs will be able to understand and apply current doctrine. Furthermore, to gain and maintain credibility with the

units they evaluate, OCs will come to master doctrine. This ability gives impetus to the program.

The principle, "Train to Challenge," is key to the DOTP. The program stresses that task force staffs synchronize operations under the observation of trained OCs, able to check horizontal and vertical information flow. Compressing the process through four command levels in a 48 hour period, training becomes mentally and physically challenging. Equally important, the existence of the DOTP encourages staffs to train independently. Unit pride and initiative forces commanders and staff to avoid unpreparedness when alerted. The reward is well-trained staffs who can issue clear and simple orders that are doctrinally sound. Demanding OCs challenge staffs to develop new skills and enhance unit teamwork. To maintain program viability, the CG challenges the division staff to be highly competent and correct in their feedback. This, of course, guarantees all parties work to their full potential.

Finally, the principle, "Train to Sustain Proficiency," is a fundamental DOTP tenet when training in task force synchronization skills. Primarily, task forces remain proficient through monthly practice. With higher headquarters involvement, the division creates an NTC analog system that replicates combat training center (CTC) procedures. The DOTP develops OCs who know doctrine and give useful AARs, and assist unit skill development. Additionally, the DOTP allows OCs to codify lessons learned in take-home packages to help units assess their training

status. Above all, it prepares companies in the planning, preparation, and execution of tactical missions.

Taking all four criterion into account, a potential disadvantage is that the program could be more demanding. Many training challenges could evolve if an entire task force could deploy to the field. In this case, OCs could evaluate task force synchronization at many horizontal and vertical levels during execution. Granted, company deployment may check some synchronization aspects, but nothing replaces the effect of a fully operational exercise. Unfortunately, due to actual resource constraints, the inability to deploy task forces may not sufficiently challenge the combat support and combat service support aspects of the program.

One option to overcome this disadvantage is for commanders to prioritize training events so that the division can exercise this program quarterly. Linking the DOTP with a major home station event (such as a combined arms live fire exercise) can force synchronization training prior to any deployment. Brigades and task forces that know they are succeptible to the DOTP will ensure they are prepared for the event. This practice will improve combat readiness along all command echelons.

In retrospect, despite a shortcoming in realism, the Division OPORD Training Program forces unit level synchronization. By stressing leaders, evaluating to standard, using doctrine, and maintaining constant pressure on staffs, task force synchronization can improve with this program.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this paper was to determine if a Division OPORD Training Program can significantly improve task force synchronization in a resource constrained environment. Reviewing the importance of synchronization at the NTC, in doctrine, and in current division practices, the DOTP is essential to training horizontal and vertical synchronization.

This monograph examined the importance of synchronization at the task force level. The Army has established that task forces synchronize their operations by issuing clear orders that describe the mission, commander's intent, and assign critical tasks to subordinates. Inherent in this is the staff's ability to conduct a thorough Mission Analysis, complete IPB, methodical wargaming, and quality rehearsals. Based on 118 of 157 missions from post-Desert Storm NTC rotations, units did not effectively synchronize operations to standard. The most prominent recommendation for improvement is to practice developing integrated plans.

In reviewing current Army doctrinal literature, only FM 101-5 (Coordinating Draft) provides a guide to synchronize activities in the military decision-making process. By conducting effective Mission Analysis, IPB, wargaming, and rehearsals, FM 101-5 states that units can enhance synchronization of their operations. Although this manual provides a framework, there is

no training methodology that tells how to link, train, or evaluate division horizontal and vertical synchronization.

An analysis of current US Army division synchronization training reveals that units adopt one of three approaches: decentralized; decentralized with minimum guidance; or centralized approaches. Most place emphasis on practicing and synchronizing the staff planning process. Except for the 4ID, most units currently do not stress horizontal and vertical synchronization from division down through lower command levels. Without emphasis from higher headquarters, this could be a most perishable skill.

In view of poor synchronization execution at the NTC, incomplete doctrinal training methodology, and inconsistent training practices, the Division OPORD Training Program must be used by the US Army. The DOTP is a monthly program for selected units to train the OPORD process from division to company level. Its function is to assess subordinate level synchronization in terms of troop leading procedures, flow of the commander's intent, staff integration, quality of OPORDs, and time management. Moreover, the division assesses company level execution by evaluating the results of a synchronized plan. Contrary to the 4ID practice, one key aspect of this low cost program is that it involves the entire division staff, rather than isolate one brigade for evaluator duties. By centralizing evaluation at the division staff level, the commanding general controls subordinate performance

feedback rather than risk skewed assessments that may be subject to significant bias.

The division prioritizes the maintenance of a qualified OC team in which every member masters doctrine, gives quality AARs, and writes user-friendly take-home packages. A thoroughly trained OC team gives superior feedback to the division commander. The team also constitutes the same people each time to ensure consistency and feedback. In this way, the division commander can be confident that he has unbias information to enhance his overall training assessments. Furthermore, he can verify if his intention is reaching lower level units.

As a result of reduced Army funding to divisions, task force training has been curtailed with significant cuts in numerous activities. Although most units continue to maintain the normal 12-18 month rotation cycle through the NTC, many shortcomings in synchronization have continued to plague the best task forces. As shown by the standards expressed in our doctrine, division commanders have high expectations of those units that deploy to the NTC. To assist the units, the Division OPORD Training Program will train task force synchronization prior to NTC deployment. Furthermore, this program allows the division commander to check the synchronization of his entire unit. By observing the flow of his concept down the chain of command, he can evaluate the horizontal and vertical synchronization process.

In light of enhancing unit synchronization, General DePuy once reflected on the effect the commander's concept stating:

The complexity and diversity of modern military forces, the enormous combat power that is inherent within them, the potential for creative initiative, which resides in the hierarchy of subordinate leaders, and all the professional reservoirs of doctrine and training can only be mobilized and focused upon the enemy in victorious action through the medium of a unifying commander's concept.[53]

To ensure a unifying commander's concept, a division staff issues a clear division order, supervises by checking subordinate unit staff integration, and gives feedback through the AAR command and control system. Such a methodology is the basis of the Division OPORD Training Program. This training instrument inculcates current Army doctrine by using division assets to check that subordinate units execute synchronization to standard.

One must keep in mind the words of the Director of the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) when training task forces: "The philosophy is to train vigorously, to push leaders, soldiers and units as hard as they can be pushed, until they learn to cope with the pressures and perform to standard. Then push them harder."[54] If we are to be effective in tactical level command and control, we must train our units in the planning process. To effectively train our soldiers, divisions must adopt a

training tool that tests subordinate units in peacetime so they can withstand the pressures of combat.

In conclusion, MG Funk once observed that a US armored division is organized to wreak violence upon our enemies when ordered to do so. He felt US armored divisions possess more firepower than any like military formation in the world. Therefore, the primary purpose as leaders must be to train our soldiers to effectively unleash this great combat power - and to win! American soldiers are not subtle and do nothing (except for the medics) "surgically." What they are best organized for is defeating our enemies, but to do so requires precision in warfighting.[55]

The Division OPORD Training Program gives the US Army such precision in warfighting. The DOTP trains commanders and staffs to be capable of planning and synchronizing operations. It focuses training to army standards and guarantees task forces will be able to win on the future battlefield. Above all, the DOTP is a valuable training exercise that enhances troop leading procedures so that units can achieve effective command and control.

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