

# **INITIATIVE AND INTENT: ARE WE HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?**

**A MONOGRAPH  
BY  
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## ABSTRACT

INITIATIVE AND INTENT: ARE WE HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION? by Major John T. Ryan, USA, 57 Pages.

This monograph examines tactical initiative and the types of information the commander's intent should provide to guide it. Initiative became increasingly important beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century as the dispersed, fast-paced nature of the modern battlefield forced commanders to decentralize their decision making. Concurrent with this trend toward decentralization, commanders began using a statement of intent and intentions to clarify their plan and provide direction for initiative. Historically, the doctrinal emphasis on use of the intent statement has varied in proportion to the prevailing thoughts on decentralized command and control. The current swing is toward decentralized operations. Yet, since the commander's intent regained prominence in U.S. Army doctrine in 1982, the content and utility of the intent have been the center of many debates. The utility of the commander's intent has always been to provide guiding information for initiative. However, all of the current debate on intent centers entirely on what information the intent should supply rather than on the information initiative demands. This monograph examines the issue from the demand side. Ultimately, it seeks to determine if the emerging doctrine on the commander's intent supplies the information demands of initiative.

The monograph begins by developing the doctrinal and theoretical framework for initiative to establish the information needs of initiative. A discussion of terms, definitions, and other doctrinal concepts serve to clarify the type of initiative the intent guides. Toward this end, the monograph uses several hypothetical situations help to broadly illustrate the different circumstances requiring initiative and to determine the types of information necessary to guide initiative. Then, doctrinal and historical antecedents validate these categories of information. These antecedents serve not only to confirm the information required to guide initiative, but they provide a greater breadth and depth to the understanding of why initiative and intent became an important part of our approach to warfighting.

Finally, the information needs of initiative become the measures by which to evaluate whether the present day intent meets the information needs of initiative. This analysis includes a discussion of why the writers of the 1997 FM 101-5 included and omitted various components of the intent statement. A look at the future battlefield environment serves to indicate whether initiative and the commander's intent will continue in importance into the future. The monograph concludes by discussing the effectiveness of the 1997 intent and providing recommendations for the clarification of doctrinal terms and issues related to the subject.

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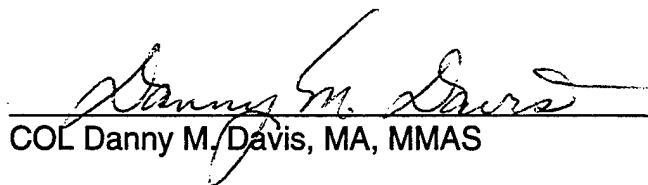
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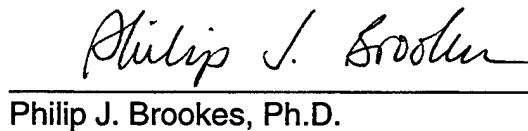
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The monograph begins by developing the doctrinal and theoretical framework for initiative to establish the information needs of initiative. A discussion of terms, definitions, and other doctrinal concepts serve to clarify the type of initiative the intent guides. Toward this end, the monograph uses several hypothetical situations help to broadly illustrate the different circumstances requiring initiative and to determine the types of information necessary to guide initiative. Then, doctrinal and historical antecedents validate these categories of information. These antecedents serve not only to confirm the information required to guide initiative, but they provide a greater breadth and depth to the understanding of why initiative and intent became an important part of our approach to warfighting.

Finally, the information needs of initiative become the measures by which to evaluate whether the present day intent meets the information needs of initiative. This analysis includes a discussion of why the writers of the 1997 FM 101-5 included and omitted various components of the intent statement. A look at the future battlefield environment serves to indicate whether initiative and the commander's intent will continue in importance into the future. The monograph concludes by discussing the effectiveness of the 1997 intent and providing recommendations for the clarification of doctrinal terms and issues related to the subject.

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## I. Introduction.

*"The effective coordination of the means at hand for the accomplishment of some desired end has been a major problem since wars began. Too frequently the problem has not been solved and splendid fighting units have been expended in purposeless effort or have failed to accomplish anything at all by reason of masterly inaction."<sup>1</sup>*

*Infantry in Battle*  
1939

Since appearance of modern warfare in the days of Napoleon, changing battlefield conditions required commanders to exercise their initiative and adapt their actions to achieve the objective of the operation. As military operations grew larger during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the routine requirement for informed action in the absence of orders, initiative, increased dramatically. The scope and complexity modern combat grew beyond the capacity for one commander to control all activities directly. This increase in the physical dimension of the battlefield forced commanders to decentralize the burden of decision making to subordinate commanders at increasingly lower levels. The increased complexity and ever present unpredictability of combat increased the requirement for these leaders to make independent decisions and take action within their understanding of their commander's desires. Therefore, commanders found it necessary to provide their subordinates with a statement, separate from the order, to clarify their plan of actions and the overall aim of the operation. Although the methods commanders used to convey this changed over years, the reasons for this statement remained constant. It ensured unity of action and initiative in the absence of orders or communications.

Within the U.S. Army, this guiding and clarifying statement is the commander's intent. It continues serve as the commander's tool to provide direction for his subordinates. Yet, since the commander's intent regained prominence in U.S. Army doctrine in 1982,

professionals have debated the content and utility of the commander's intent.<sup>2</sup> Why? Has the information required to guide initiative changed; or, have we just looked at the problem from the wrong perspective? Although the utility of the commander's intent is to provide guiding information for initiative,<sup>3</sup> it seems that all of the current debate surrounding the issue centers entirely on the supply side of the equation—what information the intent should provide. If the intent provides direction for initiative, then maybe we ought to examine the issue from the demand side and determine what information initiative needs.

This study takes the latter approach to the problem. It seeks to determine if the emerging doctrine on the commander's intent meets the information demands of initiative. Enroute, the study will touch on the past, present, and future relationships between initiative and the commander's intent. It asks several related questions necessary to find the answer to the research question. First, it asks: what is initiative and what is the difference between intent and intentions? To answer these questions, the study will define initiative, intent and intentions, and discuss other related doctrinal concepts necessary to provide a basis for further discussion. The remainder of the initial discussion serves to establish what types of information initiative needs.

The next section examines how initiative and the intent have co-evolved to meet the changing requirements of the battlefield over the last century. These antecedents serve to illustrate why initiative and intent became an important part of our approach to warfighting. Secondly, the antecedents show historically what information various commanders provided to their subordinates to guide initiative and it examines how U.S. Army doctrine presented the issue in the past. This discussion serves to reinforce the earlier discussion on initiative



and intent. The section concludes with a discussion of the 1997 version of the commander's intent which sets the stage for the analysis that follows.

Next, the study addresses the basic question of whether the emerging doctrine meets the demands of initiative. This includes a synthesis of the information provided in the preceding chapters to determine doctrinally what information the intent should address and what information the subordinate receives through other means. Then an analysis of how well the intent provides the required information and a look at future requirements completes the discussion. Finally, the study provides conclusions on whether the intent statement described in the 1997 FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, meets the needs of initiative. The study will conclude by addressing recommendations for future doctrine on the subject.

## II. Background.

*"...brilliant individualism at the expense of team play will invariably prove more fatal on the field of battle than ever on the field of sport."*

*S.L.A. Marshall<sup>4</sup>*

### Terms and Definitions<sup>5</sup>

Before beginning a discussion about initiative and intent, it is important to define each term and to briefly investigate other related terms central to the study. The first term we will discuss is initiative. Initiative has a little recognized dual definition in both the dictionary and in Army doctrine. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines initiative as both "an introductory step" and a "self reliant step."<sup>6</sup> Likewise, FM 100-5, *Operations*, uses the term in two different ways but it does not overtly make the distinction between the two uses. Similar to an 'introductory step,' FM 100-5, *Operations* states that: "Initiative sets or

changes the terms of the battle by action and implies an offensive spirit in the conduct of all operations.”<sup>7</sup> This form of initiative involves being the first to act in order to gain an advantage over one’s opponent. In this usage, *the initiative* is something that one can “seize” through the acceptance of risk and aggressive action and “retain” over a time by thinking ahead and anticipating events.

The other use of initiative in FM 100-5, and the one that this paper will focus on, applies to individual soldiers and leaders. In this sense, initiative is the act of making informed decisions and taking independent or “self reliant” action to accomplish the mission at hand. According to FM 100-5, it requires “...a willingness and ability to act independently within the framework of the higher commander's intent.”<sup>8</sup> Initiative, as S.L.A. Marshall explains in his book, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War*, “consists in freedom of the choice of means which can be employed to attain the prescribed end.”<sup>9</sup> This second type of initiative is distinctly different but complements the first. Independent action in the absence of direct orders allows the force to quickly adapt to changing situations. This, in turn, facilitates the exploitation of opportunities that will lead to “seizing the initiative” in the first case. This study is about informed decision making and individual action in the absence of orders and the types of guidance required to direct it.

A consistent definition for the next term, intent, is somewhat more elusive than that for initiative. Again, the Merriam-Webster dictionary provides a definition that will suffice for further discussion. It defines *intent* as: “1: PURPOSE 2: the state of mind with which an act is done: VOLITION 3: AIM 4: MEANING, SIGNIFICANCE.”<sup>10</sup> It further defines the term *intention* as: “1: a determination to act in a certain way 2: PURPOSE, AIM, END syn

intent, design, object, objective, goal.”<sup>11</sup> By using the entire definitions of both intent and intention as a guide, we can reduce the definition of each to simpler terms. While intent describes the broad overarching aim of the operation, intentions describes the plan to achieve that aim. Each term is different. While the subtle differences between intent and intentions may seem academic if not superfluous, they are significant as later historical analysis will reveal. Both the intent and the intention provide different types of information that is useful in different circumstances requiring initiative. Unfortunately, commanders and doctrine writers have used the terms interchangeably in since the term *intentions* appeared in the first Army doctrinal manual in 1905.<sup>12</sup> This interchangeable use of terms has led to a continuing confusion over what the present day *intent* statement should say and do.

Continuing this discussion, there are a few other terms germane to the subject of the commander’s intent and its relationship with initiative. These are certainly not inclusive of all of the terms associated with the subject. However, they represent some of the most important tools the commander uses to convey guiding information for initiative. So, a common understanding of each is necessary for further discussion.

**MISSION:** “The commander’s expression of the task the unit must accomplish and for what purpose.”<sup>13</sup> Commanders define their mission through an analysis of the mission statement, concept and commander’s intent starting two levels above. In this manner, the battalion commander and his staff receive the information contained in the mission and intent of the division commander.

**OBJECTIVES:** “With end state defining the conditions sought in the commander’s operational design, he devises objectives – clearly defined, decisive, and attainable aims – to

direct military operations. The successful accomplishment of several objectives or a sequence of objectives may be necessary to achieve the end state.”<sup>14</sup>

**END STATE:** “At the operational and tactical levels of war, end state refers to the conditions that achieve higher-level objectives.”<sup>15</sup>

**CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:** “The operational or tactical concept of operations describes how Army commanders visualize the major battle, or engagement unfolding. It is a creative act – a design that coordinates all activities in pursuit of the end state. The concept is based on the commander’s selected course of action and expresses how each element of the forces will cooperate to accomplish the mission. Whereas the focus of the commander’s intent is on the end state for the forces as a whole, the focus of the commander’s concept of operations is on the method by which all elements of the force will cooperate to generate complementary and reinforcing effects.” “Throughout the echelons of command, the concepts of operations are vertically and horizontally integrated to ensure unity of effort and purpose.”<sup>16</sup>

Now that we have a clearer picture of the nature of initiative, the distinction between intent and intentions, and some working definitions related to the subject, we can take a more detailed and informed look at the subject of initiative. This object of discussion is to arrive at some conclusions about the types of information initiative needs to direct it along a useful course. First, a look at the type of climate that must exist within the command to foster initiative.

### **Conditions Necessary to Exercise Initiative.**

Although the situation may call for the subordinate's use of initiative, the higher commander must have established three basic conditions necessary for its use. 1) Individual soldiers and leaders must have to have both the willingness and the ability to exercise their initiative within the commander's intent. 2) The commander must decentralize the authority to make decisions and take initiative to his subordinates. 3) Most importantly, the commander must provide the subordinate useful information to direct his actions in the absence of orders.

The willingness and ability of a subordinate to exercise his initiative is a function of a senior/subordinate relationship that fosters initiative and a training philosophy that promotes it. Multiple-shared training or combat experiences, rehearsals, and other informal exchanges can provide an opportunity for commanders to clarify their intentions. In this way the commander can describe what he would want the subordinate to do in a given situation. Further, repetitive use of standardized drills, techniques, or procedures also convey the commander's intentions through generic descriptions of roles and relationships in different situations. However, this inculcation of generic intentions through training is not always possible. S.L.A. Marshall points out that in times full scale war, the frequent replacement of personnel makes the "automatic response" that drill brings difficult to achieve. He said that:

"...the battlefield's reality makes clear to us that we need men who can think through their situation and steel themselves for action according to the situation. Under the conditions of national service, there is not time to instill in the infantry soldier that kind of discipline which would have him move and fire as if by habit... (even if it were possible) it would be unsuited for an age of warfare which throws him on his own responsibility immediately (after) combat starts."<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, commanders must provide guidance beyond that required for an “automatic response.”

Next, the commander must empower the subordinate leader with the authority necessary to make the decisions and take action. This requires the delegation of specific authorities within a command. It also involves development of an environment where subordinates become accustomed to making independent decisions. The commander may take a detailed approach and specifically delegate authority to subordinates in orders by assigning tasks; or he may use a directive approach like a mission order to delegate authority. Mission orders focus subordinates on what they must accomplish without telling them how to accomplish their mission – they also give them maximum freedom to adapt to changing circumstances.<sup>18</sup>

However, as Peter Senge points out in *The Fifth Discipline*, there is no guarantee that energetic, committed local decision makers will be wise decision makers.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the third condition necessary for initiative: subordinates must have information that provides direction. A leader may have the willingness and ability, and the authority to take action, but if he does not know which direction to take, it is likely that little good will result. Without the proper information, the actions of subordinates may become eccentric rather than concentric and serve no constructive purpose.<sup>20</sup> This is because, according to Senge, local decision making can become myopic and short-term; local decision makers fail to see the interdependencies by which their actions affect others outside their local sphere.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, the commander must provide them with information that shapes their actions in a

manner that is useful to the larger organization. Commanders have traditionally conveyed this information with a statement of commander's intent or intentions.

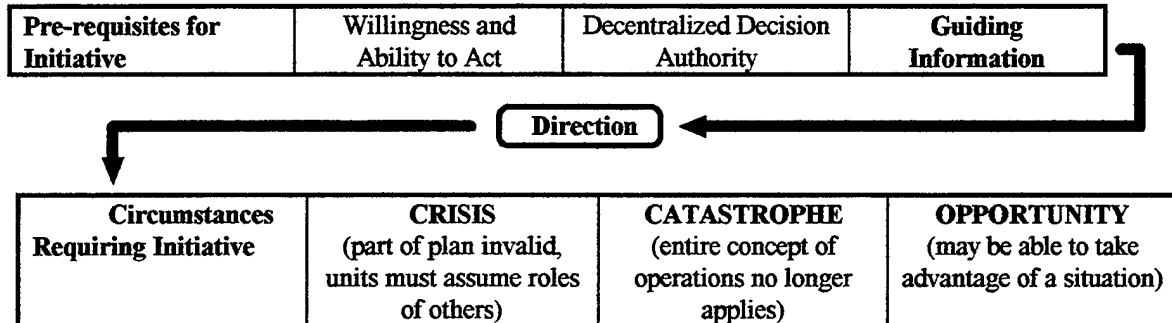


Figure 1.

### **Circumstances that require the use of Initiative.**

To come to a better understanding what types of information initiative requires, and therefore what the intent should provide, we need to understand the circumstances that call for the use of initiative. Generally, initiative usually becomes necessary as a result of one of three situations: crisis, catastrophe or opportunity.

While we often imagine only using initiative when the entire plan fails, the crisis situation occurs when conditions invalidate only part of the original plan. It requires subordinates to use their initiative and assume the roles of others in the basic plan or to compensate for the loss of their own or a sister unit's capabilities. We can use a task force deliberate breaching operation as an example to illustrate the crisis situation. Doctrinally, a breaching operation calls for forces to serve in one of three roles: the support force (supporting fires), the breach force, and the assault force. During the movement to the planned point of penetration, in this hypothetical situation, enemy action delays the team designated as the breach force. The remainder of the task force continues to move to the

breach site and arrives intact. The support force is the first to arrive, and he recognizes that the task force must begin breaching immediately or the changing enemy situation will force them to completely abort the mission. Still, the breach force has not arrived, but the support force has the limited capability to breach. Without further instructions, the support force commander uses his initiative begins to breach. Similarly, the assault force assumes the support role begins to provide supporting fires, the engineers shift assets and so forth. In this situation, the crisis required leaders to use their initiative, but the situation still allowed for execution within the same general framework outlined their original plan and doctrine. Thus, knowledge of the mission specific time, space, and purpose relationships between each player in the plan allows subordinates to use their initiative to compensate for unexpected losses or changes during execution.

The second situation that requires commanders to exercise their initiative is after a catastrophe. In such a situation, the unexpected occurs, the enemy appears from a completely unexpected direction or the conditions change drastically, etc., and the original concept no longer applies. We can examine an illustration of a catastrophe using the breach scenario described above. As in the earlier example, the task force is enroute to the breach site. However, in this case, a large enemy force appears on their flank and they must completely reorient to the new threat. The original plan to breach no longer applies but the task force can still contribute to the overall success of the brigade. Normal communications are still intact but the situation demands that subordinate commanders take positive action before the commander can assess the situation and give guidance. The actions the subordinates take in the first few minutes will define the shape of the battle for the next 8-12



hours. What actions should the subordinates take? Before answering, let us look at a positive situation where all or part of the plan may no longer apply.

The third case is when an unexpected opportunity presents itself. Strangely enough, seizure of an opportunity often makes the current plan irrelevant, just as a catastrophe does. Therefore, the information the commander provides to guide initiative in this situation should look beyond the scope of the original plan. An understanding of the overall direction of the operation and the essential results required to achieve the overarching aim allows subordinate leaders to operate outside the framework of the original plan. Using the breaching example once again, the lead team arrives at the breach site and the team commander realizes that there is an opportunity to completely bypass the enemy's defenses. He also realizes that there is window of opportunity for him to continue seize a bridge a few kilometers away that is key to the ultimate success of the brigade. Should he remain near the originally anticipated breach site or make a dash for the bridge? Assuming the enemy situation allowed for it, the answer appears obvious. He should go for the bridge. However, the commander may not recognize this opportunity and take advantage of it if he does not realize the bridge is important. In this case it may not even be the bridge that is important—it is the *result* of getting forces to the other side of the river. Therefore, commanders should articulate what those key results are, so the subordinate stays focused on the result and not the object itself. One might recall the bridgehead at Remagen, where a similar situation occurred and an opportunity was almost lost. Subordinate leaders became so involved in trying to take the heavily defended bridge they were ordered to seize, that they nearly

ignored a second bridge that was free for the taking. The immediate result that was important was getting forces across the river, not the specific bridge itself.

Since in both circumstances of catastrophe and opportunity, the original plan often no longer applies, subordinate commanders need guiding information that provides direction beyond the scope of the plan. Therefore, the subordinate must understand the overarching purpose the commander intended the operation to serve and the results required to achieve it. This purpose addresses aim for the force as a whole and provides the subordinate a broader understanding and the direction needed to exercise initiative.

What is the 'the purpose of the force as a whole' and how does it provide direction for subordinates? Since no Army doctrinal manual specifically defines the term purpose, we must rely on the dictionary once again. Merriam-Webster defines purpose as: "an object or result aimed at: INTENT."<sup>22</sup> As a part of the intent, the purpose serves a larger, more encompassing function than the 'why' part of the mission statement. It "expands why he [the commander] has tasked the force to do the mission in paragraph 2."<sup>23</sup> An overarching purpose provides direction beyond the scope of the mission. By focusing on the purpose, defined by Peter Senge in *The Fifth Discipline* as the larger explanation of why the organization exists and where it is trying to head, leaders add an additional dimension of meaning to their actions. "They provide what philosophy calls a 'teleological explanation' (from the Greek *telos*, meaning 'end' or 'purpose') – an understanding of what we are trying to become."<sup>24</sup> This unites the members of an organization in a common destiny which provides for a sense of continuity and identity not achievable in any other way.<sup>25</sup> From a

military perspective, the purpose provides continuity because it links the purpose of the local action, the mission, to the long term goal and ultimately to the political aim.

Commanders link the actions of their subordinates to purpose of the higher commander by “nesting” their concepts of operation within the higher plan. In his article “Concepts of Operation: The Heart of Command, the Tool of Doctrine,” former TRADOC Commander William DuPuy said that: “cascading concepts carry the top commander’s intentions to the lowest levels...”<sup>26</sup> FM 100-5 continues this idea by stating: “The means to achieve unity of purpose is a nested concept whereby each succeeding echelon’s concept is nested in the other.”<sup>27</sup> The idea of ‘nesting’ the purpose of one action to another is not a new one. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, French military theorist Antoine Jomini described building a “system of operations” through the use of a series of engagements and battles. In his system, the purpose of each battle linked it to the achievement of the overall war aim or purpose. Like Jomini, FM 100-5 stresses that there must be a clear linkage between the objectives and actions at all levels of war.<sup>28</sup> The means to do this is the broad statement of purpose in the intent statement. When commanders understand the broad or overarching purpose of the operation they can recognize and exploit opportunities that will contribute to the overall operation, not just the immediate mission. Likewise, when the immediate mission and concept no longer have any relevance, subordinate commanders have something to provide them direction.

Where the broad statement of purpose provides the overall direction, the second element of information the subordinates need to exercise initiative are the results or ends required to achieve the purpose. Recalling the definition of purpose as “an object or result

aimed at...,” the results are the pre-requisites for achieving that that aim. Unlike the concept, which describes the specifics of the commander’s plan of action, these results are broader and remain essential even if the original plan of action becomes irrelevant. They are those things that, after studying the entire situation, the commander might say: “if the whole plan goes out the window, and all else fails, these are the essential results we must do to achieve the overall purpose of the operation.”

As we can see from this discussion of initiative, subordinate commanders must have both the willingness and ability to use their initiative and the decentralized decision authority that allows for independent decision making. Most important, the commander must provide the proper information to focus the subordinate’s actions in a purposeful direction. The information the commander provides to direct initiative comes in many forms, only one of which is the operations order. The bulk of the guidance results from personal contact during training and at rehearsals, etc. What remains for the operations order is information specific to the mission. This information should accomplish three things. It should facilitate each subordinate's understanding of the roles and relationships between each unit in the plan. It must provide for a clear understanding of the overall purpose of the operation and it should describe the essential results or ends required to achieve the purpose. It should, as S.L.A. Marshall stated, “keep them [the men] informed of the general situation, the object, and the role of all elements.”<sup>29</sup>

Continuing, if we pair these categories of information with the general circumstances that require subordinates to exercise their initiative, shown in Figure 2, we can draw some conclusions about their utility in different situations. First, the roles and relationships

described in the mission and concept provide the framework for initiative in crisis situations. These situations are local—when only part of the plan has gone awry—thus subordinates can exercise their initiative within their understanding of the original plan. Next, the guidance the intent provides to guide initiative in situations of catastrophe or opportunity must be broad enough to look beyond the local mission and concept of operations.

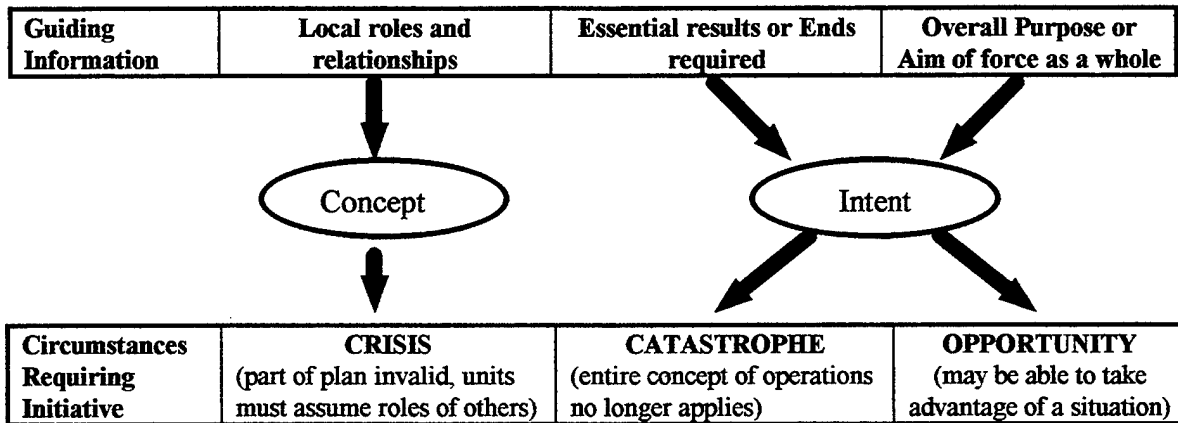


Figure2.

Finally, most discussions about initiative assume that the commander has lost all communications with his subordinates and the subordinate must use his initiative as a result. This is not always true. Initiative probably happens with greater frequency when the radio works just fine. Most initiative is not as heroic as the seizure of a bridge. It comes in the form of the many small decisions a subordinate makes during the preparation for and the execution of a fight. Each decision must have positive direction as its basis. The decisions the subordinate commander makes at each subtle fork in the road, can have large outcomes over time. Therefore, each subordinate must have a clear understanding of the direction the commander intends for the force to take and the results required to get there. This allows them to use their initiative in both small and large ways to accomplish the mission.

### III. Historical and Doctrinal Antecedents.

*“Good looking operation orders are immaterial. What is counts are clearly stated intentions which can be executed with all of one’s heart and determination.”*

*Heinz Guiderian*<sup>30</sup>

Now that we have examined the subject of initiative in general, we can look at how initiative and the intent co-evolved as parts of a philosophy of command. Many of the U.S. Army’s current ideas on the initiative and intent have German roots that some date as far back as the American Revolution.<sup>31</sup> However, the most significant German influence began a century later. From the 1870’s to the 1940’s, there was probably no other army that incorporated the use of intent and initiative as a part of decentralized command and control system better than the German Army. Many armies, including the U.S. Army, adopted the German techniques. So, it is with this German influence that this section begins to chronicle the evolution of initiative and intent.

#### **German Roots.**

After the tragedy of the American Civil War, the U.S. Army turned back to Europe for solutions to the problems of modern warfare. Before 1865, the U.S. Army relied almost exclusively on French doctrine. But the German victories of the 1860’s and 1870’s, engineered by Prussian General Graf Helmut von Moltke, led the Army to take a closer look at the emerging German doctrine and techniques. In 1871-72, General William T. Sherman, General in Chief of the Army, made an official visit to Europe specifically to study how the Germans used their general staff. As a result of Sherman’s visit and one that followed by Emory Upton in 1876, the American military began to rely less on the French model and more on the Prussian Staff system.<sup>32</sup>

By 1895, an Army officer named Eben Swift, who had taken note of the Prussian system, began to write extensively on the subject of intentions and initiative. Swift was a member of the faculty at the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth and is credited with the development of the five-paragraph field order still in use today. It was during his explanation of the new orders format when Swift first emphasized the importance of conveying intentions to subordinates.<sup>33</sup>

In 1905, the Army published its first formal doctrine in the *Field Service Regulations*. This manual clearly reflected Swift's notions on the function and form of the commander's intentions. Developed and conveyed before the battle and updated as necessary thereafter, the commander's intentions provided direction and "a common *purpose* [emphasis added] regardless of the operating level."<sup>34</sup> The commander's intentions conveyed his vision for the operation. This vision was not a condensed version of the operations order, but an overarching view of what he saw as the direction for the battle.<sup>35</sup>

The U.S. Army was not alone in their adoption of the German methods. By the time the U.S. published the 1905 Field Service Regulation, the Japanese Army was confirming the utility of the intent as a tool to guide initiative on the modern battlefield. Soviet specialist Jacob Kipp noted that during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1907), the Japanese adopted German mission-oriented tactics to address the problem of troop control in modern combat. "Japanese junior officers understood their commander's intent, responded to unexpected developments by exercising their own initiative and accomplished their tactical missions."<sup>36</sup> This gave the Japanese an initial advantage over the Russians. By 1909, considering their defeats in the East, Russian military leaders also began to incorporate the

German mission orders concepts into their thinking. The Russian version of the concept stressed the role of the commander in imposing order from above on initiative through by clarifying his plan of action or his *intentions*. "Initiative among junior commanders became subject to the limits imposed by their *understanding of each of their units' role in that plan* [emphasis added] and the subordination to their actions to its needs"<sup>37</sup> "Initiative no longer meant shouting hurrah and leading the troops forward into battle but the application of professional skills to the persistent development of the attack in the necessary direction."<sup>38</sup>

At the outset of World War I, Allied observers of the outcomes of the Russo-Japanese War recognized that the increased lethality and dispersion of the modern battlefield had increased the need for initiative. However, ineffective communications, a lack of training and known doctrine in the mass conscript armies of the time, and the inherent chaos of war made many commanders reluctant to relinquish the reins of control. They believed that they could force their armies to overcome these problems through the absolute control of the sheer mass of men and materiel that the industrial age made possible. In his book *Command in War*, Martin Van Creveld described British Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig's system of command in World War I as "an attempt to turn battle itself into an industrial type of operation,"<sup>39</sup> one in which men and materiel were efficiently paired and pressed into action on a large scale. However, Van Creveld alleges, Haig "did not possess the communications system that alone makes industrial production possible."<sup>40</sup> The inflexibility of the telephone communication and the poor visibility inside the trenches made control from the front almost impossible. Therefore, long delays ensued while advancing units sent runners and



telephone messages up the chain of command and waited for decisions to return down the same chain.<sup>41</sup>

Considering these problems, Van Creveld stated that there were two ways commanders could have overcome the confusion that had prevailed on every battlefield since the American Civil war. The first was to force order on disorder [as the British and French attempted to do] through tactics based on pre-established drill and the second was to decentralize. The first method presupposed that a well drilled and well-trained unit, once briefed on the plan, would continue to execute “automatically” in the planned direction without further orders. One inherent flaw in this approach was that it assumed the plan would not change once execution began. This assumption proved quite wrong in combat.

The alternative to this automatically fighting army was to “extend Moltke’s principle of free cooperation at the highest level downward, place greater responsibility on the shoulders of commanders down the line, and take disorder in stride.”<sup>42</sup> This is the approach the German Army took. Their use of a decentralized command system exaggerated the difference in decision cycles between the Germans and the Allies. The Allied attackers had to wait for orders and reinforcements from their corps or army commander located miles to the rear. In contrast, the defending German battalion commander could exercise his initiative to direct a regimental counterattack on the spot.<sup>43</sup> The American Army, entering the war late as it did, had the luxury of drawing lessons from both sides. As a result, by the end of World War I, verbiage encouraging subordinate initiative and the requirement for commanders to clearly state their intentions was firmly embedded in Army doctrine.

Shortly after the war, an instructor at Fort Leavenworth named Herbert Brees wrote a book entitled *Combat Orders*. His book is important because was to become the text for teaching orders to the future leaders of World War II. In his book, Brees outlines some of the key characteristics and outcomes for the statement of intent, its relationship with initiative, and the field order.<sup>44</sup>

“A field order is faulty if it does not convey to the recipient the meaning and intention of the author...Field orders should not attempt to arrange matters too far in advance...[as] changes injure morale and are apt to impose unnecessary hardship on the command...The rule is to give sufficient [detail] to make the plan clear and insure *teamplay*; to give to each subordinate a general understanding of the whole and a picture of the part he is to play...”[emphasis added]<sup>45</sup>

The inter-war years saw a tremendous effort directed toward the restoration of mobility to the battlefield through mechanization. Although America was the most motorized nation in the world at the time, the most notable mechanization theorists of the time were not Americans. While the U.S. Army was suffering from tremendous force reductions and meager budgets during the inter-war years, Europeans continued to develop techniques for mobile warfare. British theorists B.H. Liddel-Hart and J.F.C. Fuller and Russians A.A. Svechin and Tukhachevskii developed theories for the use of mechanized forces that included combined air and ground arm and deep maneuver. The Germans drew upon these theories and coupled them with their decentralized infiltration tactics from World War I. What emerged was a doctrine of combined arms formations that could achieve a quick decision. Later termed by the American press as *Blitzkrieg*,<sup>46</sup> this doctrine relied heavily on the use of initiative. Its essence was to move faster than the enemy could respond, thereby “getting inside his decision loop.”<sup>47</sup> This is shown in a translation of the 1933 German Army

Field Service Regulation *Truppenführung*. It states that: "The panzer leader must decentralize the chain of command and rely on intelligent initiative at every rank, beginning with the lowest, in order to seize every fleeting opportunity and exploit it to the hilt."<sup>48</sup>

The command and control process the Germans used to facilitate this approach was known as "*Auftragstaktik*," literally, mission tactics. This decentralized command philosophy had its roots reaching continuously back to von Moltke and the Prussian Staff system. The Germans founded the idea the commander on the ground was best suited to determine how to accomplish the mission. After conducting his analysis of this system in his book *Fighting Power, German Military Performance, 1914-1945*, Martin Van Creveld said that uniformity of thinking and reliability of action; common knowledge of tactical command and operations doctrine; and complete confidence of superiors in their subordinates and vice versa were necessary for decentralization.<sup>49</sup> However, as John T. Nelson II points out in his 1987 article "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle," the German concept embodies much more than decentralization and mission orders. It was, according to Nelson, an "extraordinarily broad concept, holistically embracing aspects of what today would be called a theory of the nature of war, character and leadership traits, tactics, command and control, senior-subordinate relationships, and training and education."<sup>50</sup> In short, it was a comprehensive approach to warfighting.

In 1939, the Germans put this decentralized command philosophy to use with devastating effects. The successes of decentralization did not go unnoticed in the U.S. After many years of doctrinal neglect following the end of World War I, the U.S. Army quickly began develop and institute a decentralized command philosophy suited for the

widespread use of mechanized forces. With mechanization, subordinate leaders were more mobile, more lethal and more likely to have to use their individual initiative than ever before. Thus, commanders had to decentralize decision making and to rely on intelligent initiative at every rank, beginning with the lowest.<sup>51</sup> In his Third U.S. Army Standing Operating Procedures, 1944, LTG George S. Patton, Jr. outlined the method that he and his commanders would use to establish the framework for initiative.

“Formal orders will be preceded by letters of instruction and by personal conferences. In this way the whole *purpose* [emphasis added] of the operation will be made clear, together with the mission to be accomplished by each major unit. So that if during combat, communication breaks down, each commander can and must so act as to attain the general objective.”<sup>52</sup>

Despite its auspicious beginnings, by the end of World War II the U.S. Army had learned many lessons about decentralized command and control and had beaten the Germans at their own game. Americans became renowned for their ability to adapt to rapidly changing situations and use their initiative to accomplish the mission. With such successes, one would think that the U.S. Army would remain committed to a philosophy of decentralization. This was not to be.

### **The Cold War**

As the Army moved from World War II and into the fifties, the threat of nuclear weapons and the problems they posed began to change the way we looked warfighting. Survival on the nuclear battlefield required forces to remain widely dispersed until committed, at which point they would have to rapidly concentrate and execute. One of the main issues that Army leaders and doctrine writers debated over, was whether these imperatives necessitated more or less control of subordinates. Those who advocated more

control believed that the need to quickly concentrate necessitated close control of subordinates to reduce risk. This type of control required commanders to minimize individual initiative. In contrast, those who favored decentralization, argued that the predominately dispersed nature of the nuclear battlefield and the unreliability of radios in a nuclear environment required more individual initiative than ever before. In the end, the proponents for control won out. As a result, the 1949 edition of *FM 100-5* reflected a doctrine of increased control over subordinates.<sup>53</sup>

This new doctrine of centralization received an unexpected field test when war broke out on the Korean peninsula. Commanders quickly found, as their predecessors did in World War II, that the most effective way to overcome the confusion and uncertainty of the battlefield was to decentralize and rely on the initiative of their subordinates. Soon, the Army had two doctrines, one in practice in the war it was fighting and one in theory for the war it planned to fight. However, through the 1950's the Army continued to believe that conventional wars would be an anomaly in the nuclear age. Thus, the Army retained a control oriented doctrine that was best suited for the nuclear battlefield for the remainder of the decade.<sup>54</sup>

The requirements of the nuclear battlefield were not the only factors that lead to a climate that did not encourage initiative. The transient nature of the Army of the 1950's and experimentation with new force structures may have demanded increased control over subordinates. By the mid-1950's, the door into the Army had become a revolving one with personnel coming and going at an amazing rate. In FY 1955, for example, the Army discharged 800,000 soldiers and brought 500,000 new recruits on active duty. At the same

time, it reduced its overall strength from 1.4 million to 1.1 million.<sup>55</sup> The massive personnel turnover did not provide for an environment that bred mutual trust and confidence. Couple this with many leaders' discomfort with the Army's new tactical formation, the Pentomic Division, and the result was a climate that caused many leaders to discourage initiative.<sup>56</sup>

By 1962, the Army began to realize that it had to prepare for not only nuclear, but conventional war as well. This led to a doctrine of "dual capability," which was suited for both contingencies. The return of the conventional component to Army doctrine also brought a returned emphasis on decentralization and subordinate initiative in the 1962 FM 100-5.<sup>57</sup> So, after more than a decade of a control oriented approach to warfighting, the Army started to loosen the reins. However, an entire generation of leaders developed their approach to leadership during this era of control and a change of doctrine was not enough to change their behavior. This would shape the way the Army would operate over the next decade.

Soon the U.S. Army found itself involved in Vietnam where the control legacy of the 1950's would manifest itself. The war in Vietnam was not characterized by large engagements. As such, commanders of large units seldom had more than one of their subordinate units engaged with the enemy at any one time. Ordinarily, this would have allowed each commander to achieve a larger span of control, more decentralization and a flattened hierarchical structure. Instead, the reverse was true. According to Martin Van Creveld in *Command in War*, the availability of the helicopter as a command and control platform, and the limited nature of the war, caused many commanders to take a more centralized approach to command. As a result, the "hapless company commander engaged

in a fire fight on the ground was subjected to direct observation by the battalion commander circling above, who was in turn supervised by the brigade commander circling a thousand or so feet higher up...<sup>58</sup> *et cetra*. With the helicopter and the radio, the commander could see the battlefield and directly control his subordinates once again. This may explain why Army doctrine largely ignores the idea of intent or intentions between 1962 and 1968.<sup>59</sup> Many may have believed that the original reasons that caused Eben Swift to call for a clarification of intentions back in 1895 no longer existed given modern command and control methods.<sup>60</sup>

As the Army moved out of Vietnam in the early 1970s, the threat posed by the Soviets in Central Europe caused a doctrinal reassessment. The Army had to reorient from a predominately infantry-airmobile war in Vietnam to an arena of potential high intensity conventional mechanized warfare in Europe. The fact that Soviets had achieved nearly a generational gain in conventional weapons and doctrine while the U.S. was in Vietnam spurred these efforts.<sup>61</sup> Since the U.S. Army had not fought a large-scale, unlimited conventional war in over 25 years, it needed a recent example from which to draw lessons. The Mideast Wars of 1967 and 1973 fulfilled this role and provided much of the basis for U.S. doctrine, equipment and force structure during the 1970's.

The Middle East Wars provided a useful example for the Army because the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) had fought outnumbered, using primarily U.S. equipment and won against its Soviet equipped Arab neighbors. Some of the most important lessons learned from the Israeli experience were that wars of the future against Soviet armed opponents would be short notice, high intensity and exceptionally lethal. The IDF also found that the

speed and complexity of modern armored warfare made decentralization and use of an intent to foster initiative imperative.

The command system the IDF developed to foster initiative was known as “optional control.” It allowed maximum independence to subordinate commanders while giving superior headquarters the ‘option’ of interfering at any time. This system demanded excellent junior commanders and more important, mutual trust between them and their superiors. General Mordechai Gur, then the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, stated that the “...balance between human and material resources being what it was, a heavy premium had to be put on compensating factors of a spiritual nature: individual daring, maintenance of the aim (objective), improvisation, and resourcefulness...”<sup>62</sup> Although the Army studied the IDF’s command system at length, it would take ten more years to fully implement it into our doctrine.<sup>63</sup>

In 1973, the Army created its Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and appointed General William DePuy as its first chief. DePuy, who served as a platoon through battalion commander in World War II and a division commander in Vietnam, brought a very control oriented mid-set into the doctrine of the 1970s. DePuy believed that real initiative was rare in human beings and that an organization functioned best when its members were frequently told in simple terms *what* [emphasis added] to do.<sup>64</sup> This led him to insist that manuals “focus on realities rather than theoretics which led to concrete doctrinal specifics.”<sup>65</sup> In his guidance to the doctrine writing team for the 1976 edition of FM 100-5, DuPuy told them not to “get too lofty or philosophical... wars are won by draftees and reserve officers. Write so they can understand.”<sup>66</sup> The result of this work, known as the



“The Active Defense,” is important because it represents a departure from a general, theoretical approach in the capstone manual to a “deliberate intent to depict a corpus of tactics bound by the concrete.”<sup>67</sup>

The doctrine, although not as defensively oriented as its name would imply, stressed the commander’s substitution of firepower for manpower and required rapid concentration to defeat the numerically superior Soviets. This concentration called for the execution of a “precisely choreographed series”<sup>68</sup> of movements that necessitated a disciplined and drilled force under centralized control. Therefore, the manual emphasized the need for standardized training and training standards. Through this standardization and prescriptive application doctrine, DePuy believed that a relatively untrained Army could win wars on short notice. Again, the Army had returned to a detailed versus a directive approach to control as this doctrine was similar in many ways to the methods of the Pentomic era.<sup>69</sup>

In 1977, General Don Starry succeeded General DePuy at TRADOC and immediately began work on a more decentralized doctrine. The resulting manual, the 1982 version of FM 100-5, was entitled “AirLand Battle” and was radically different from its predecessor. It represented a decidedly flexible, offensively oriented doctrine that relied heavily on the initiative of the subordinate commander to overcome the chaos and unpredictability of the modern battlefield. Many note this new doctrine as a landmark in our doctrinal evolution after the doldrums of the 1950’s, 60’s and 1970’s. It also signaled the decline of the systems analysis “management” view of battle and replaced it with “a renewed emphasis on leadership, initiative, and a sense of time and maneuver.”<sup>70</sup>

During development of the manual, Starry made sure that his writers made it compatible with NATO Allied Tactical Publication, ATP-35 and the German Army doctrinal manual, Army Service Regulation HDv 100-100. This collaboration with the Germans and the doctrine's offensive orientation led the Army to adapt some aspects of the German conception of mission tactics – *Auftragstaktik* and mission orders to our command philosophy.<sup>71</sup> Mission orders tell subordinates what to accomplish but leave the details of how to accomplish it to the subordinate commander. In order for this style of orders to work effectively, the subordinate commanders must clearly understand what the commander's intent and intentions are. The 1982 FM 100-5 said that mission orders needed only to cover three points:

- They should clearly state the commander's objective, what he wants done, and why he wants it done.
- They should establish limits or controls necessary for coordination.
- They should delineate the available resources and support from outside sources.<sup>72</sup>

While the 1982 FM 100-5 may have signaled the re-emergence of mission orders and one of their key components, the commander's intent,<sup>73</sup> it also marked the beginning of the confusion about specifically how one expresses that intent. The problem was that the intent remained without a clear definition or description for six years after its re-inception. Worse, no description of intent appeared in any FM 100-5 until 1993.

However much ballyhooed, the emergence of the term intent in the 1982 manual was quite subtle in comparison to its importance. An examination of the index of the manual will show only three references to the term intent, none of which is a description of its contents.

The manual merely states “Mission orders require commanders to determine *intent*—what they want to happen to the enemy.” This vagueness was no accident. After the Army published initial draft of the 1982 manual, General Starry tried to clarify the issue by sharing his views on the process associated with the commander's intent with leaders all over the Army.<sup>74</sup> However, several key leaders in the Army did not share his views. When Starry left TRADOC before the final publication of the 1982 FM 100-5, the working definition of intent formerly included in the draft was removed and not replaced.<sup>75</sup>

Two years later, in 1984, when the Army published the companion to FM 100-5, FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, it did not include a definition of intent either. It did indicate that an understanding of the commander's intent (probably better stated as *intentions*) was a by-product of an understanding of the concept of operations.

“The commander's concept is the visualization of the operation from start to completion and it provides to subordinates the commander's intent so that mission accomplishment is possible in the absence of communications or further instructions.”<sup>76</sup>

By the mid-1980's, the seeds that General Starry and the 1982 doctrine writers planted concerning the intent were beginning to grow in many different directions. An examination of the professional literature at the time shows a wide variety opinion of how the commander should convey his intent and what it should contain. Commanders in the field were equally confused. Their intents included everything from a summary of the scheme of maneuver to lengthy guidance on the use of combat multipliers. Much of the verbiage was bravado that did little to provide the consistent direction necessary for the initiative that AirLand Battle relied on.<sup>77</sup>

In May of 1988, the commander of TRADOC sent a message to the force that addressed the content of the intent. Finally after six years of debate, a description of how the commander should frame his intent had finally arrived.

“Para 3a, Concept of Operation, is a statement of the commander’s intent which expands why he has tasked the force to do the mission stated in para 2 [broad purpose]; it tells what results are expected, how these results help future operations [end state], and how (in broad terms) the commander visualizes achieving those results (force as a whole)[concept in today’s terms]. State the concept in sufficient detail to ensure appropriate action by subordinates in the absence of additional communications or further instructions... The next higher commander’s intent is incorporated in para 1b... by including both the mission of the higher unit and a verbatim statement of the higher commander’s concept of operation statement.”<sup>78</sup>

Aside from being the first complete description of what the commander’s intent should contain since Herbert Brees’ description 65 years earlier, this statement represented a departure from the past in several ways. First, it was presented in a separate paragraph within the concept of operations. More importantly, it specifically defined what items the commander should address concerning intent and intentions. The commander provided his subordinates with his intent by stating the purpose of the larger operation and the how the results expected facilitated future operations. Much as Eben Swift had described in 1895, the commander conveyed his intentions through his description of his vision of the major events of the battle unfolding.

Unfortunately, the 1988 message referred to this statement as the “concept of operation statement” rather than the intent. As a result, even more confusion ensued as many commanders were already writing separate statements nominally referred to as an “intent.” This new directive led many to write a separate concept of operations statement in addition to the “intent.” The two statements were largely redundant or purely superfluous. To make

matters worse, during the period between 1988 and 1992 nearly every proponent school wrote their implementing doctrinal manuals. Nearly every one has a slightly different version of the statement of intent. Most of these manuals are still in use, so the legacy of confusion continues. (See appendix A, Components of Commander's Intent)

### **Post Desert Storm.**

In 1993, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and success in the Persian Gulf, the Army left the old AirLand Battle doctrine for a new force projection oriented "Army Operations Doctrine." Still reliant on decentralized execution and initiative, this manual is the first capstone manual to specifically define the ingredients of the intent—purpose and end state. The June 1993 version of *FM 100-5, Operations*, describes the commander's intent in the following manner:

"The commander's intent describes the desired end state. It is a concise expression of the purpose of the operation... It must clearly state the purpose of the mission. It is the single unifying focus for all subordinate elements. Its purpose is to focus subordinates on the desired end state. Its utility is to focus subordinates on what has to be accomplished in order to achieve success, even when the plan and concept of operations no longer apply, and to discipline their efforts toward that end. It is not a summary of the concept of the operation."

Later, in the glossary, the same manual adds to the overall function of the statement. It says that besides the purpose and end state, the intent should describe, "the way in which the posture of that goal [end state] facilitates transition to future operations."<sup>79</sup>

Unlike the 1988 concept statement, this approach only conveys a statement of *intent* without the inclusion of the *intentions*. However, the 1993 manual makes provisions for the commander to clarify his intentions in a concept of operations paragraph if he deems necessary. This manual differentiates between the function of the intent and the concept of

operations. The purpose of the commander's intent is to "focus subordinates on the desired end state." In doing this, it focuses subordinates on "what has to be accomplished to achieve success, even when the plan and concept of operations no longer apply..."<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, the concept of operations takes its traditional role of conveying intentions as it "describes how Army commanders visualize the major operation and battle unfolding...(it expresses) what where and how the force will affect the enemy."<sup>81</sup> The difference here in the use of the term concept operation from the 1988 message is that this use, the concept of operation refers to the entirety of paragraph 3a. Concept of Operation (scheme of maneuver, fires, etc.), not just the concept statement.

Although the 1993 FM 100-5 finally defined intent, many TRADOC schools, most notably the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Ft. Leavenworth, had already adopted different techniques for the intent. The CGSC used a technique similar to the 1988 "concept of operations statement" through academic year 1997-98. It defined "the purpose of an operation, acceptable risk he will assume, the end to be achieved, and in general terms, how the force as a whole will achieve that end state."<sup>82</sup> Like the 1988 concept of operations statement, it conveyed both intent and intentions in the same statement.<sup>83</sup> However, this text also continued the requirement for the commander to provide a clarifying statement at the beginning of paragraph 3a. Concept of Operation. This "concept of operation statement," described in broad terms "where, when, and how (the commander) will concentrate combat power."<sup>84</sup> This statement often duplicated the "how the force will achieve the end state" in the intent. The result was extraordinarily long intent statements.

In another effort to clarify the issue, Lieutenant General Miller, then the commander, Combined Arms Center, published The "Commander's Intent" White Paper in March of 1995. This document retains the same *force as whole* orientation as the 1993 FM 100-5. It says that the intent, as the cornerstone of mission tactics,

"(facilitates) subordinate leader's initiative and coordinated actions... (and) unifies all elements of the force. It provides an overall frame work within which subordinate commanders may operate, even when a plan or concept of operation no longer applies, or circumstances require subordinates to make decisions supporting the ultimate goal of the force, as a whole, rather than a set of sequenced events."<sup>85</sup>

The White Paper further states that the commander, by issuing his intent, "provides subordinate leaders the freedom to operate within the larger realm of the mission, rather than an explicit method with in a concept of operation or scheme of maneuver."<sup>86</sup>

Unfortunately, many years of neglect in defining intent had already sown the seeds of confusion and the problems with long unfocused intent statements continued.

The writers of the 1997 FM 101-5 took a slightly different approach to their description of the commander's intent than those that penned the 1993 FM 100-5. This was not necessarily because they disagreed with the "purpose - end state" content of the 1993 intent. Instead it was because observations in the field indicated that commanders were not adhering to intent in FM 100-5. Rather, the preponderance of commanders in the field used the "purpose, method, end state, risk" approach outlined in CGSC Student Text 100-5. The resulting intent statements were too long and unfocused, in the opinion of LTG L.D. Holder, Commander, Combined Arms Command and one of the writers of the 1982 FM 100-5. In the "method" portion of their intent, many commanders provided a summary of their concept of operations. To clarify the issue and to remove the redundancy, LTG Holder

directed an effort to rewrite the discussion of intent in 1997 FM 101-5 since it was going to be published before the updated FM 100-5.<sup>87</sup> The essentials of the resulting discussion in FM 101-5 are as follows:

“The commander’s intent is the commander’s clear, concise statement of what the force must do to succeed with respect to the enemy and the terrain, and the desired end state. It provides the link between the mission and the concept of operations by stating key tasks that, along with the mission, are the basis for subordinates to exercise initiative when unanticipated opportunities arise or when the original concept of operation no longer applies. If the commander wishes to explain a broader purpose beyond that of the mission statement, he may do so.”<sup>88</sup>

Later in the discussion, the manual states that “The commander’s intent does not include the ‘method’ by which the force will get from its current state to the end state. The method is the concept of operations.”<sup>89</sup> Further, it states that the commander’s intent does not contain the “acceptable risk.” Risk is part of the commander’s guidance and therefore should be included in all courses of action already.<sup>90</sup> These things considered, the 1997 version of the intent essentially consists of two parts: a broad statement of purpose, and key tasks. In combination, they provide a “concise statement of what the force must do to succeed with respect to the enemy and terrain and the desired end state.”<sup>91</sup> With this we come to the end state for current doctrine concerning the commander’s intent.

So, what can we draw from these antecedents? Over the last century the pendulum of centralized versus decentralized control has swung from one extreme to the other. However, the need for the commander to supply guiding information to direct subordinate initiative has remained constant. Traditionally, the commander has provided this information through his commander’s intent and intentions. According to the dictionary definition and the historical usage, intentions refers to clarification of the plan of action, while intent



describes ends or purpose. Although once contained in single statement, the Army doctrine made provisions to split the intent and intentions up into two separate statements in the late 1980's. The commander provides the overall purpose and the results required to achieve that purpose through his intent statement. Intent means "purpose" or "result aimed at" literally and links the subordinate organization to the goals of the higher commander. The commander conveys his *intentions*, or how he wants to accomplish his intent, by describing his scheme of maneuver, scheme of fires, etc., in his concept of operation paragraph. If he needs to provide further clarification, the commander can use a concept of operations *statement*.

Finally, the intent as the U.S. Army views it today, is but one aspect of a total warfighting philosophy known as *Auftragstaktik*. Although the U.S. and German approaches are different for cultural reasons, they are both driven toward the goal of quick, decisive action on a fluid battlefield. This requires uniformity of thought and reliability of action; common knowledge of tactical command and operations doctrine; and complete confidence of superiors in their subordinates in order for the intent to serve as a properly functioning agent in the absence of orders. This philosophy promotes initiative in subordinate leaders and uses the intent as the focusing agent for that initiative.

#### IV. Analysis.

*"In every operation there must run from the highest to the lowest unit the sturdy life-line of a guiding idea; from this will be spun the intricate web that binds an army into an invincible unit embodying a single thought and a single goal."<sup>92</sup>*

*Infantry in Battle, 1939*

The previous sections provided some insight into the circumstances requiring initiative, the types of information meet the demands of initiative and what information commanders

intents in the past supplied toward that end. Still, the question remains whether the 1997 commander's intent meets the demands of initiative. To fully answer this question, we will begin by synthesizing the information drawn from the past, then analyze the present intent and look at what the future will require concerning initiative and intent.

Before beginning an analysis of the present, it is necessary to draw two preliminary conclusions from the antecedents presented thus far. We must confirm the three categories of information used to guide initiative and establish specifically which of these three the intent should address and which the concept covers. After reviewing the last 92 years of published doctrine on initiative and how commanders historically expressed their intent and intentions, there is some general consistency in what they used to guide initiative. The various elements commanders used clearly fall into one of the three categories identified in the previous section. These categories were: a description of the purpose or aim of the force as a whole. Second, the results or ends required to achieve the purpose. Third, a clarification of the role and relationship of each subordinate unit within the larger plan. This

<b>Guiding Information</b>	<b>Local roles and relationships</b>	<b>Essential results or Ends required</b>	<b>Overall Purpose or Aim of force</b>
<b>Reason and Method of Expression</b> (from historical intent and intention statements)	Clarify concept, clarify roles/ relationships, Broad visualization of plan, ensure teamplay, ensure coordination	Results necessary for success, End state, Essential elements of the operation, Key tasks	Provide direction, Purpose of the force as a whole, Broad Purpose,
<b>Intent or Intentions?</b>	<i>Intentions</i>	<i>Intent</i>	<i>Intent</i>

Figure 3.

information is shown in Figure 3. This essentially confirms that commanders throughout history and up through the present have found these three types of information useful for guiding initiative. This is consistent with the earlier discussion of initiative.

Second, it is necessary to determine what of these three categories the intent should address since the intent and the concept are separate statements. The commander establishes the local roles and relationships between units, within his concept of operations *paragraph*. He defines the roles of each element in his plan by assigning each subordinate a mission consisting of a task and a purpose for accomplishing that task. These purposes define the supporting or supported relationship between each subordinate unit in the command, the main effort, and the accomplishment of the purpose of the commander's mission. In this way, he clarifies his *intentions*—his visualization of how the battle will unfold—and ensures unity of effort. In very large organizations or if the concept is complex or of long duration, the commander may opt to use a separate concept of operations *statement* in addition to his concept of operations to clarify the broad *intentions* of his plan. This concept of operations *statement* fulfills the same need that the “method,” did in previous versions the intent statement. The remaining two categories, the essential results and the overall purpose, clearly fall into the realm of the commanders intent statement as shown in Figure 4. Therefore, if the 1997 intent is to meet the needs of initiative it must supply these two elements of information.

<b>Guiding Information</b>	<b>Local roles and relationships</b>	<b>Essential results or Ends required</b>	<b>Overall Purpose or Aim of force as a whole</b>
<b>Intent or Intentions?</b>	<i>Intentions</i>	<i>Intent</i>	<i>Intent</i>
<b>Addressed in:</b>	Unit Mission Statement, Concept of Operations, Concept Statement (if used)	Immediate Commander's intent, Two up Commander's Intent	Intent: Purpose in higher mission statement plus link to purpose of force as a whole.

Figure 4

With these established, we can now begin our analysis of the current version of the intent. As noted earlier, the intent, as outlined in the 1997 version of FM 101-5, consists of

two parts: a broad statement of purpose and key tasks. One of the major differences between the 1997 version of the intent and its predecessor in 1993, is the de-emphasis of the use of an overarching statement of purpose in the intent statement. Where the 1993 intent “[was]... a concise expression of the purpose of the operation,”<sup>93</sup> the 1997 intent includes a statement of “broader purpose” only as an optional component.

This change was the result of the effort by the FM 101-5 writing team to shorten and focus the intent. They debated the usefulness of each element of the intent and eliminated those that seemed redundant or were better said elsewhere in the order. The statement of purpose came into question because many involved in the project saw the inclusion of the purpose in the intent as redundant with the “why” portion of the mission statement. In their mind, it made little sense to state the purpose as the last part of the mission in paragraph 2 and then begin paragraph 3.a. with the same statement. In contrast, others argued that the purpose in the intent was inclusive of but much larger than that contained in the mission statement. They said that there are “two levels of purpose,”<sup>94</sup> the first level of purpose is the reason for conducting the assigned task and the second, is the overall purpose of the operation. In the end, the arguments for and against retention of the purpose balanced each other out and purpose remained in the intent, but only as an optional part.<sup>95</sup>

In view of the evidence presented in this study, those that argued that there are two levels of purpose got it right concerning the needs of initiative. An overarching aim or purpose is probably the most important piece of information a commander can provide and it is the one item that commanders throughout history consistently included in their intent. If

commanders choose to eliminate the overarching purpose, they remove the link between local actions and the force as a whole.

The second element of information the new intent statement provides are “key tasks.” According to FM 101-5, key tasks describe “what the force must do to succeed, with respect to the enemy and the terrain, and the desired end state.”<sup>96</sup> It says that:

“Key tasks are those tasks that must be performed by the force, or conditions that must be met, to achieve the stated purpose of the operation (paragraph 2 of the OPORD or OPLAN). Key tasks are not tied to a specific course of action; rather, they identify what is fundamental to a force’s success. In changed circumstances, when significant opportunities present themselves or the course of action no longer applies, subordinates use these tasks to keep their efforts supporting the commander’s intent. The operation’s tempo, duration, and effect on the enemy or terrain that must be controlled are examples of key tasks.”<sup>97</sup>

Reducing this statement to derive its essential aspects, we find that key tasks are: tasks that must be performed by the force to accomplish the issuing headquarters’ purpose (as stated in paragraph 2); links between the mission and the concept; the basis for subordinates to exercise initiative. Additionally, the characteristics of key tasks are that: they are independent of any particular course of action; they are fundamental to the overall success; and they provide direction for initiative when opportunities arise or the concept of operation no longer applies.

The definition of key tasks shown here looks very similar to that of “the results or ends required to achieve the purpose” noted in the earlier discussion on initiative. But are “key tasks” and “results” the same thing? The term “task” as used here is potentially misleading. When used as the “what” portion of the mission statement, a task represents a very limited, precise description of a terminal effect of fire designed to achieve the purpose stated. These

tasks, such as “seize,” “block,” “fix,” and “destroy,” among others, are known as tactical tasks. (See appendix B) Similarly, FM 25-100 Training the Force, 1988, defines a task as a “clearly defined and measurable activity accomplished by individuals and organizations. Tasks are specific activities which contribute to the accomplishment of encompassing missions or other requirements.”<sup>98</sup> Since the discussion of key tasks in FM 101-5 does not include a concrete example of what key tasks are, one might conclude that they are tactical tasks.

However, the use of “task” in the context of the intent has a broader more general meaning. FM 101-5 says that “the operation’s tempo, duration, and effect on the enemy or terrain that must be controlled are examples of key tasks.”<sup>99</sup> So, instead of being limiting in the same manner that a tactical task like “breach” is, key tasks are more representative of the overall results or effects that the force as a whole must achieve. Rather than defining specific tasks in his intent, such as: “we must breach the enemy’s defenses, destroy his reserve, and pass the (higher commander’s) main effort,” the commander would couch these tasks more as results required. An intent for the same situation might sound like: “we must create an open flank for the main effort to attack into the enemy’s rear area (condition, terrain and enemy) and deny the enemy’s ability to counterattack from the west (condition, enemy and terrain).” By using the desired result to frame the actions of the force as a whole in this situation, the commander clarifies what is universally important. These key tasks broaden the possibilities available for initiative when the concept no longer applies. In this hypothetical situation, it may not be necessary to breach through the enemy’s defenses. In the end, what the commander really needs is to get friendly forces into the enemy’s rear and

to protect those forces from counterattack. Thus, the types of information that the key tasks addresses are congruent with the articulation of the “results expected” that are necessary to guide initiative.

Considering this discussion, the intent in the 1997 FM 101-5 does fulfill the information needs of initiative when viewed holistically with the concept of operations, other informal forms of guidance, training, etc. However, the decision to reduce the importance of the purpose from an integral element of the intent to an “optional” one is a serious mistake with regard to initiative. The purpose is the most important piece of information that the intent provides to guide initiative. If the commander chooses not to include an overarching statement of purpose, the intent will lose much of its usefulness to provide broad direction. Furthermore, while the key tasks meet the demands of initiative by describing the results expected to achieve the overall purpose, use of the term “task” is very misleading. Many already interpret the term “task” as a tactical task, which is almost the antithesis of what it really means. It will not be surprising if misuse of this particular term takes the understanding of the commander’s intent farther off the mark than it is today. This may not matter in the future anyway. Many argue that emerging technologies will give the commander such a clear picture of the battlefield and all of his subordinates that the requirement for the intent and initiative will diminish in the future anyway.

So what does the future portend for initiative and intent? A little more than a year after publishing the 1993 FM 100-5, the Army published a future concepts document entitled: TRADOC Pam 525-5, *Force XXI Operations*. This document and the research behind it project threats, doctrine and equipment development into the future to determine

requirements. Later, in February 1996, the Army established the Army After Next (ANN) Project to assist in the development of this vision of future Army requirements into the year 2025 and beyond. The results of both of these efforts indicate that the battlefields of the future will be even more complex than ever before.<sup>100</sup>

According to TRADOC Pam 525-5, *Force XXI Operations*, the conflicts of the future will run the gamut from general war to OOTW. Battle between mechanized forces will be similar to armored operations of the past three decades. However, combat involving advanced, complex, adaptive armies will take the trends of Desert Storm forward to transform the battlefield. These complex adaptive armies will use emerging communications systems that allow nonhierarchical dissemination of information to all levels to “alter, if not replace, traditional, hierarchical command structures with new, internettted designs.”<sup>101</sup> This, in turn, will allow units, key nodes and leaders to be more widely dispersed leading to the continuation of the *empty battlefield* phenomenon. The document continues by stating that “to win on future battlefields, future leaders of all armies must be skilled in the art of military operation, capable of adjusting rapidly to the temporal and spatial variations of new battlefields.”<sup>102</sup>

So, does this infusion of technology and the reduction of the number of troops on the battlefield mean that the requirement for initiative will pass into the history books? Not according to TRADOC Pam 525-5, which states that:

“Leaders will be schooled and skilled in...planning and executing independent operations within the commander’s intent—characterized by showing versatility and initiative, taking calculated risks, and exploiting opportunities... Performance standards will include requirements for leaders to: rapidly grasp changes in situations and conditions, exercise initiative by independently planning, and executing doctrine-based actions (within the



commander's intent) that maintain a steady focus on accomplishing the assigned operational mission."<sup>103</sup>

To meet these challenges of the future, the Army After Next study asserts that the Army will have to rely on initiative more than ever before. To accomplish this "will require nothing less than a cultural change within the Army that embraces a philosophy of decentralized action based upon a high degree of professional trust and confidence between leaders and lead."<sup>104</sup>

## V. Conclusions and Recommendations.

*"Small plans miscarry because the wrong man happens to be hit at the critical moment or the guns which were counted on are knocked out of action."<sup>105</sup>*

*S.L.A. Marshall*

What can we conclude from all of this? Over the last century, the increasing scope and complexity of the modern battlefield caused an increased need for decentralized execution and subordinate initiative. However, during this course of events, many technological innovations such as the radio, nuclear weapons, and the helicopter among others, brought about a return to a more centralized approach to warfighting. As the emphasis on control increased, the focus on initiative diminished. Contrary to expectations, no technology in the past, or present has eliminated the need for decentralized execution supported by focused initiative. The indications are that this trend will continue into the future.

Initiative does not just happen, however. To promote it, the commander must create an atmosphere that develops the willingness and ability of his subordinates to exercise their initiative. Subordinates need the authority to take action when the situation calls for it. Most importantly, the commander has to provide the information necessary to guide subordinate

initiative. Knowledge of the purpose of the organization as a whole, an understanding of one's unique contribution to that organization and relationship to those around, the larger results required to accomplish the purpose all provide the direction necessary for independent action. The commander supplies this information through a multitude means from guidance during training and rehearsals, to his articulation of his plan of action. The commander's intent statement is not intended to do it all. By the current doctrinal approach, the intent provides the results and the overall purpose and the concept describes the roles and relationships. Given this, the 1997 version of the commander's intent does supply the demands of initiative when viewed in its proper place in the command system.

However, there are some issues that future doctrine writers should address that will help to clarify the issues related to initiative and the commander's intent. First, they should clarify the distinction between the two types of initiative. One type of initiative involves taking independent action in the absence of direct orders. Whereas the other type is focused on gaining and maintaining an advantage over an opponent. Next, doctrine should differentiate between the terms intent and intentions and amplify the use of the "expanded" or "broader purpose" in the intent statement. This will show the linkage of the unit to the purpose or objective of the force as a whole. Third, writers should change the term "key tasks" to "results or ends expected," as a means of differentiating these actions from tactical tasks. Finally, future doctrine should retain the term "Concept of Operations" as the title for paragraph 3a. in the operations order. However, if the commander uses a separate statement of intentions to clarify the overall plan, he should call it an "Intentions Statement"

and not the concept statement. The name "concept statement" carries too much doctrinal baggage.

If the Army After Next Study and DA Pam 525-5 portray an accurate picture of the future, then the battlefields of tomorrow will be even faster paced and more chaotic than ever before. Therefore, initiative will continue to be an important part of our warfighting philosophy and the intent will continue to serve as its focusing agent. Although electronic means will speed the dissemination of orders and information to commanders, all of this supply will do no good if it does not meet the demands of the commander.

## VI. End Notes.

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<sup>1</sup> The Infantry Journal, Incorporated. *Infantry in Battle* (Richmond, VA: Garrett & Massie, 1939), 138.

<sup>2</sup> Fastabend, David A., "The Application of Commander's Intent," *Military Review* 67 (August 1987): 51; and Filiberti, Edward J., "Command, Control and Commander's Intent," *Military Review* 67 (August 1987): 54; as quoted in Patterson, J.S. "Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army." Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, May 1995.

<sup>3</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations*. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1993), 6-6.

<sup>4</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Gloucester, MS: Peter Smith, 1978), 134.

<sup>5</sup> This study will primarily use the doctrinal terms and relationships as the 1993 FM 100-5, *Operations* and or the 1997 version of FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, describes them, except where noted. It is the position of the author of this study that the Army reflects its central position on doctrinal matters in the text of the capstone manual, FM 100-5. Since the most recently updated version of FM 100-5 (to be released in 1998) is still in draft form, the study will use its recently released companion manual FM 101-5, 1997, to define the emerging definition of commander's intent. Although there are many variations of the definition and use of the commander's intent in current Army doctrinal manuals and student texts, analysis and discussion of each are beyond the scope of this monograph. For additional definitions, see FM 101-1-1/MCRP 5-2A, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 1997.

<sup>6</sup> *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 367.

<sup>7</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations*, 1993, 2-6.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Marshall, S.L.A. *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War*, 134.

<sup>10</sup> *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 372.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Army, *Field Service Regulations*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1905; as quoted in Patterson, "Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army," 1. Although there is some debate about when the U.S. Army published its first official doctrine, the 1905 Field Service Regulations was the first doctrine, approved by the Headquarters in Washington, that codified many operational procedures.

<sup>13</sup> United States Army. FM 100-5, *Operations* (Final Draft) Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1997, 9-9; and FM 100-5, *Operations*, 1993, 6-6.

<sup>14</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations* (Final Draft), 1997, 9-4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall, 40.

<sup>18</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations* (Final Draft), 1997, 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1990), 294.

<sup>20</sup> Marshall, 132; Also the 1997 FM 100-5 has similar verbiage. It states, "If subordinates are to accept risk and seize the initiative without degrading the overall effort of the force, they must understand the commanders intent." (p. 10-1)

<sup>21</sup> Senge, 294.

<sup>22</sup> *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 565.

<sup>23</sup> Message from CDR TRADOC. "Concept of Operation of OPORDs/OPLANs" May 1988, referred comments to Deputy Cmdt., USACGSC, Fort Leavenworth, POC: Center for Army Tactics.

<sup>24</sup> Senge, 354.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Dupuy, William E., GEN (RET). "Concepts of Operation: The Heart of Command, The Tool of Doctrine." *Army* (August 1988), pp. 28-40.

<sup>27</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations*, 1993, 2-5. It states: "each operation must contribute to the ultimate strategic aim. Actions that do not contribute to achieving the objective must be avoided."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

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- <sup>29</sup> Marshall, 128.
- <sup>30</sup> From a photocopied Ft Leavenworth briefing slide. Original source unknown.
- <sup>31</sup> Walter von Lossow, "Mission-Type Tactics versus Order-Type Tactics," *Military Review* (June 1977: Vol. LVII, No. 6), 87; and Mark H. Ayers, "Azimuth Check: Where Are We With Commander's Intent?" Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, December 1996.
- <sup>32</sup> Timothy K. Nenniger, *The Leavenworth Schools and the Old Army: Education, Professionalism, and the Officers Corps of the United States Army 1881-1918* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 36; and Peter Skirbunt, "Prologue to Reform: The 'Germanization' of the U.S. Army 1865-1898" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Ohio State University, 1983), 6-9: as noted in Patterson, 4.
- <sup>33</sup> Eben Swift. "The Lyceum at Fort Agawam," *Journal of the Military Service Institution* 10 (March 1897), 242; as noted in Patterson, 5.
- <sup>34</sup> Patterson, 6.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Svechin, Aleksandr A. *Strategy* Kent D. Lee, ed. (Minneapolis, MN: East View Publications, Inc, 1991), 27.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 28.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> Martin Van Creveld *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 186.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Jonathan M. House *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Tactics, Doctrine, and Organization* Combat Studies Institute Research Survey No. 2 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1984), 182.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> House, 26.
- <sup>44</sup> Patterson, 19.
- <sup>45</sup> Herbert J. Brees. *Combat Orders* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: The General Service School Press, 1920), 3.
- <sup>46</sup> Paul F. Gorman. *The Secret of Future Victories* IDA Paper P-2653. (Ft. Leavenworth: CGSC Press, 1992), II-5.
- <sup>47</sup> Richard A. Simkin. *Race to the Swift, Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), 27.

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<sup>48</sup> German Field Service Regulation. *Truppenfuhrung* (Troop Leading), 17 October 1933 (Translated and reprinted at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1935), paragraphs 10 and 13: "The emptiness of the battlefield demands independently thinking and acting warriors who exploit each situation in a determined bold way...from the youngest soldier upward, the independent commitment of all spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties is demanded."

<sup>49</sup> Martin Van Creveld *Fighting Power: German Military Performance, 1914-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1980), 46-84.

<sup>50</sup> John T. II. Nelson "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle," *Parameters* (September 1987), 27.

<sup>51</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 191; and Anthony Kellett *Combat Motivation* (Hingham, MS: Kluwer Boston, Inc., 1982), 226.

<sup>52</sup> George S. Patton, Jr. "Third Army Standing Operating Procedures, 1944," (Headquarters Third United States Army APO 9563, 6 March 1944).

<sup>53</sup> A.J. Bacevich *The Pentomic Era, The U.S. Army Between Korea and Vietnam* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1986), 86-110; and Patterson, 29-30.

<sup>54</sup> Robert A. Doughty *The Evolution of U.S. Tactical Doctrine 1946-1976* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1979), 1-19; and Patterson, 34.

<sup>55</sup> Bacevich, 120.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-135.

<sup>57</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations*, June 1962, 20-21: "The successful commander avoids over supervision. He fosters initiative and self confidence in subordinate commanders... Modern warfare demands prompt action, decentralization, and a high degree of individual initiative."

<sup>58</sup> Van Creveld *Command in War*, 255.

<sup>59</sup> Patterson, 42.

<sup>60</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 238-260; and Patterson, 43; Van Creveld asserts that the military information system in Vietnam was "impossibly complex and in the end often unable to cope, [therefore] decision makers not unnaturally responded by attempting to cut through by any and every means that presented themselves (p. 258).

<sup>61</sup> John L. Romjue "From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982," TRADOC Historical Monograph Series (Ft Monroe, VA: United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, June 1984), 2-3.

<sup>62</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 196.

<sup>63</sup> George W. Gawrych *Key to the Sinai: The Battles for Abu Ageila in the 1956 and 1967 Arab-Israeli Wars* Combat Studies Institute Research Study No. 7, (FT Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command

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and General Staff College, 1990); \_\_\_\_\_, "The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: The Albatross of Decisive Victory," Leavenworth Papers, No. 21, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1990); and Van Creveld, *Command in War*.

<sup>64</sup> Paul H. Herbert, "Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations." Leavenworth Papers, No. 16, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988), 54.

<sup>65</sup> Romjue, 10.

<sup>66</sup> J.W. Nicholson, General DePuy's Comments on How to Fight Manual Content, Memorandum for Record, 28 February 1975, THO Files as quoted in Herbert, "Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations."

<sup>67</sup> Romjue, 6.

<sup>68</sup> William S. Lind, "FM 100-5, Operations: Some Doctrinal Questions For the United States Army," *Military Review*, March 1977, 63; and Romjue, 19.

<sup>69</sup> Romjue, 8. Included in this doctrine was a clear delineation of responsibilities: "Generals, commanding corps and divisions, concentrate the forces. Colonels and lieutenant colonels, in brigades and battalions, control and direct the battle. Captains, in companies, troops, and batteries, fight the battle."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>72</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations*, 1 July 1982, 2-7.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., i. In the introduction, the manual states, "It emphasizes tactical flexibility and speed as well as mission orders, initiative among subordinates and the spirit of the offense." The 1986 version uses the same phrase.

<sup>74</sup> Patterson, 47.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>76</sup> United States Army, FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, May 1984), 5-10.

<sup>77</sup> Observations made the author during the period.

<sup>78</sup> Message from CDR TRADOC, "Concept of Operation of OPORDs/OPLANs" May 1988, referred comments to Deputy Cmdt., USACGSC, Fort Leavenworth, POC: Center for Army Tactics.

<sup>79</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1993), Glossary-2.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 6-6.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>82</sup> United States Army Command and General Staff College, ST 101-5, *Command and Staff Decision Processes* (FT Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, February, 1996), 2-5.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-6.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> "Commander's Intent." White Paper. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 23 March 1995), 1.

<sup>86</sup> "Commander's Intent." White Paper. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 23 March 1995), 3.

<sup>87</sup> Clinton J. Ancker III, COL. MEMORANDUM FOR CDR, CAC, "Information Paper on Commander's Intent," 10 September 1996.

<sup>88</sup> FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, May 1997), 5-9.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Infantry in Battle*, 139.

<sup>93</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations*, 1993, 6-6.

<sup>94</sup> From an un-signed and un-dated copy of E-mail correspondence between COL Ancker, LTG Holder and the various writers involved with the 1997 FM 101-5.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Colonel Clinton J. Ancker III, Director, Corps and Division Doctrine Division, 29 October, 1997; CDD, USACGSC, 684-4887; also Clinton J. Ancker III, COL. MEMORANDUM FOR CDR, CAC, "Information Paper on Commander's Intent," 10 September 1996, and numerous un-signed and un-dated copies of E-mail correspondence between COL Ancker, LTG Holder and the various writers involved with the 1997 FM 101-5.

<sup>96</sup> FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, 1997, 5-9.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> United States Army. FM 25-100, *Training the Force*, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 15 November 1993, Glossary-7.

<sup>99</sup> FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, 1997, 5-9.

<sup>100</sup> "Annual Report on The Army After Next (AAN) Project, July 1997." Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army, 1 August 1997, 23.



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<sup>101</sup> United States Army Training and Doctrine Command. TRADOC Pam 525-5, *Force XXI Operations*. FT Monroe, VA: Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1 August 1994, 4-4 - 4-5.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> ANN, 27.

<sup>105</sup> Marshall, 116.

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## COMPONENTS OF COMMANDER'S INTENT

	Key Tasks	Purpose	Method	End State	Risk	Nested two levels up	Understood two levels down	Linkage	Purpose of the Intent Statement
FM 100-5 (Final Draft) (1997)	X			X			X	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>
FM 100-5 (1993)		X		X			X	X <sup>3</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>
FM 101-5 (1997)	X	X <sup>5</sup>		X		X <sup>6</sup>	X		
FM 101-5-1 (1985)									X <sup>7</sup>
FM 100-15 <sup>8</sup> (1996)									
FM 71-100 (1996)		X		X				X <sup>9</sup>	X
FM 71-3 (1996)		X		X	X	X	X		
FM 71-2 (1988)		X	X <sup>10</sup>		X				
FM 7-30 <sup>11</sup> (1995)							X		X <sup>12</sup>
FM 7-20 (1992)		X		X		X	X		

## Appendix A (Components of the Commander's Intent)

- <sup>1</sup> Provides linkage between mission and concept of operations by stating key tasks.
- <sup>2</sup> Basis for initiative.
- <sup>3</sup> Focuses subordinates on what has to be accomplished in order to achieve success even when plan and concept no longer apply.
- <sup>4</sup> Focus subordinates on the desired end state.
- <sup>5</sup> If the commander wishes to explain a broader purpose beyond that of the mission statement he may do so.
- <sup>6</sup> The intent statements of next two higher echelon commanders are contained in OPLAN or OPORD.
- <sup>7</sup> Describes how the commander expects to fight and what he expects to accomplish
- <sup>8</sup> Does not give a definition or description of commander's intent.
- <sup>9</sup> Links commanders vision to concept of operations.
- <sup>10</sup> Described as "essential information on how to get to the end state."
- <sup>11</sup> Refers reader to FM 101-5 for more complete discussion of the intent.
- <sup>12</sup> Describes future state.

## Appendix B (Task and Purpose)

### A. PURPOSE In order to...

Prevent	Open	Influence	Support	Divert	Facilitate
Enable	Surprise	Cause	Allow	Envelope	
Deny	Create	Draw	Deceive	Permit	

### B. TACTICAL TASKS

Enemy	Terrain	Friendly
Assault	Clear	Follow and Support
Block	Retain	Displace
Bypass	Secure	Guard
Canalize	Seize	Cover
Contain	Recon	Screen
Demonstrate		Exfiltrate
Destroy		Occupy
Exploit		Overwatch
Feint		Breach
Fix		Support By Fire
Interdict		
Neutralize		
Pursue		
Penetrate		
Suppress		
Attack By Fire		
Recon		
Rupture		

### C. TYPES of OPERATIONS.

Attack	Counterattack	Defend
Move to Contact	Retrograde	Mobility
Countermobility	Survivability	River Crossing
Relief in Place	Raid	Pursuit
Exploitation	Breakout	

### D. CONTROL MEASURES/TECHNIQUES/PROCEDURES.

Strong Point	Battle Position	Sector
Battle Handover	Passage Point	Passage of Lines
Objective	Axis	Direction of Attack
Ambush		