



Research Report 2001

Measuring Command Post Operations in a Decisive Action Training Environment

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May 2017

**United States Army Research Institute
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE					
1. REPORT DATE (dd-mm-yy) May 2017		2. REPORT TYPE Final		3. DATES COVERED (from... to) September 2014 - September 2015	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Measuring Command Post Operations in a Decisive Action Training Environment				5a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER W5J9CQ-11-C-0040	
				5b. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER 622785	
6. AUTHOR(S) Michelle N. Dasse (Consortium Research Fellow, Baylor University); Christopher L. Vowels; Captain Kyle T. Daniels; Sergeant First Class Paul M. Volino				5c. PROJECT NUMBER A790	
				5d. TASK NUMBER 215	
				5e. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Consortium Universities of Washington 1100 H Street, NW Suite 500 Washington, DC 20005				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences 6000 6 th Street, Bldg 1464/Mail Stop 5610 Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5610				10. MONITOR ACRONYM ARI	
				11. MONITOR REPORT NUMBER Research Report 2001	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ARI Research POC: Dr. Christopher L. Vowels; Fort Hood Research Unit					
14. ABSTRACT (<i>Maximum 200 words</i>): In collaboration with members of the Joint Readiness Training Center Warrior Leadership Council, we explored whether a guide on Command Post (CP) Operations could improve performance during Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations. The research design allowed for comparison of a control and experimental group. The experimental group received a CP Operations Guide with the intent of improving performance on CP Occupation, CP Operations and Follow Up Operations. Significant differences between control and experimental groups occurred primarily in terms of having the correct equipment and personnel; differences were small and in favor of the control group. Overall, units performed all the CP Operations tasks at a "minimum standard" or "standard" level only. Minimum performance on the CP Operations Checklist may have resulted from not having a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for such tasks. There were significant differences between units that had an SOP versus those that did not; units with an SOP performed better on all CP-related tasks. As command posts are central to most missions, having an established SOP, prior to a CTC rotation, should increase the likelihood of success in such training environments.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Command Post, Command Post Operations, Training, Joint Readiness Training Center					
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF			19. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited Unclassified	20. NUMBER OF PAGES 29	21. RESPONSIBLE PERSON Dr. Brian T. Crabb 254-288-3833
16. REPORT Unclassified	17. ABSTRACT Unclassified	18. THIS PAGE Unclassified			

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank the members of the Joint Readiness Training Center Warrior Leadership Council and the Observer/Coach/Trainers who collected the data throughout this research. We also want to convey our sincerest appreciation to U.S. Army Research Institute's former Senior Military Research Liaison Officer, SMA(R) Julius W. Gates. SMA(R) Gates provided continued support throughout the entirety of the project and his advocacy ensured that the research was completed successfully.

MEASURING COMMAND POST OPERATIONS IN A DECISIVE ACTION TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Requirement:

This report describes research the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) conducted with the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Warrior Leadership Council (WLC). The research focused on evaluating a guide developed to support Command Post (CP) Operations at the company, platoon, and section levels during multiple rotations at the JRTC. The guide was intended to increase the efficiency of CP Operations in accordance with Field Manual (FM) 3-90.2 *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, FM 3-90.1 *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*, ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, FM 5-0.1, *The Operations Process*, ATTP 5-0.1, *Commander and Staff Officer Guide*, and FM 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization*. The CP Operations Checklist was developed by the WLC as a means for Observer/Coach/Trainers (OCT) to collect data on how well units were carrying out CP Operations. The effectiveness of the guide was determined by examining differences between the control (no guide) and experimental (guide) groups on the checklists collected at the end of each rotation.

Procedure:

The checklists, filled out by OCTs, allowed for assessment of units on four areas: Unit Information, Command Post Occupation, Command Post Operations, and Follow Up Operations. Data was collected from 602 checklists from nine rotations. Six of nine rotations were in the control group, and three of the rotations were in the experimental group. Based on the performance of initial/baseline rotations, a Guide for CP Operations was developed and distributed to the rotations in the experimental group. Performance was statistically compared between the control or baseline group and the experimental group.

Findings:

The significant differences found between control and experimental groups were small and the control group tended to perform better. It is possible that the CP Operations Guide was limited in its impact, partly due to its brevity. However, units typically improved their command posts as the training rotation progressed. Overall, units performed all the CP Operations tasks at a “minimum standard” or “standard” level only. Minimum performance on the CP Operations Checklist may have resulted largely from the lack of having an SOP for CP Operations. In further analyses, units that had an SOP for CP Operations performed better on the majority of CP tasks. Additional analyses revealed there was minimal interaction between the guide and having an SOP, illustrating the presence of an SOP for CP Operations was the primary driver of better performance for such tasks.

Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

Findings were provided to members of the WLC in October 2015. As reported by OCTs, units that performed better on most CP tasks already had an SOP for such operations. Command Post operations are complex and involve numerous individuals working interdependently. The ongoing need to make decisions leads to constantly changing information requirements. Having established procedures in place to handle these challenges would seem requisite for units preparing to participate in a JRTC rotation.

MEASURING COMMAND POST OPERATIONS IN A DECISIVE ACTION TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

CONTENTS

	Page
Command Post Operations	1
Materials and Methods.....	3
Sample.....	3
Command Post Operations Checklist	3
Guide for Command Post Operations	4
Procedure	4
Results.....	5
Control Versus Experimental Group Comparisons	5
Section II: Unit Information.....	5
Section III: Command Post Occupation	6
Section IV: Command Post Operations	6
Section V: Follow Up Operations.....	6
Control versus Experimental Group Discussion.....	6
Additional Analyses.....	9
SOP vs. No SOP	9
Moderation Analysis.....	9
General Discussion	13
Limitations	14
References.....	15

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Command Post Operations Checklist.....	A-1
APPENDIX B. Command Post Operations Guide	B-1

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. Non-parametric Tests: Control Versus Experimental	8
TABLE 2. Parametric Tests: Control Versus Experimental	9
TABLE 3. Non-parametric Tests: SOP Versus No SOP	11
TABLE 4. Parametric Tests: SOP Versus No SOP	12

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups by SOP on CP Task Performance	13
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MEASURING COMMAND POST OPERATIONS IN A DECISIVE ACTION TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

The Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) is one of the U.S. Army's Combat Training Centers (CTC), supporting individual and unit-level training in preparation for the contemporary operational environment. Due to the complexity involved in rotations at JRTC, the Warrior Leadership Council (WLC)¹ has explored a variety of techniques to enhance unit performance (Dasse, Vowels, Thomas, & Getchell, submitted; Evans & Baus, 2006; Evans, Reese, & Weldon, 2007; Vowels, Dasse, Ginty, & Emmons, 2014).

The current research focused on evaluating a guide developed to support Command Post (CP) Operations at the company, platoon, and section levels during multiple rotations at the JRTC. The guide was intended to increase the efficiency of CP Operations in accordance with FM 3-90.2 *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, FM 3-90.1 *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*, ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, FM 5-0.1, *The Operations Process*, ATTP 5-0.1, *Commander and Staff Officer Guide*, and FM 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization*. The CP Operations Checklist was developed by the WLC as a means for Observer/Coach/Trainers (OCT) to collect data on how well units were carrying out CP Operations. The effectiveness of the guide was determined by examining differences between the control and experimental groups indicated by performance scored on the checklists by the OCTs.

Command Post Operations

Command posts (CP) are the centers of operations for command and control during routine operations, emergencies, contingencies, and increased readiness. The responsibilities of the command post include synchronizing, controlling, and maintaining the current operational situation (Department of Army, 2002; Department of Army, 2003; FM 3-90.2). Specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are required to permit and maintain the continuous and rapid execution of command post operations. According to FM 3-90.2, the SOPs established and rehearsed for each CP should include: (a) the organization and set up, (b) plans for teardown and displacement, (c) physical security plans, (d) loading plans and checklists, (e) techniques for monitoring enemy and friendly situations, and (f) priorities of work during CP operations. Additional emphasis should also be placed on communications, information flow, and understanding maps, graphics, and charts.

At the battalion (BN) level, the primary responsibility of the BN commander is to ensure that command post operations have been communicated to all elements of the staff and to all facilities, including the main command post, the tactical command post, the combat trains command post, and the task force support command post (Department of Army, 2003). Current CPs are occupied by multiple Soldiers and workstations, each working to interpret incoming data about the battlefield and communicate that data upward, downward, and laterally. As a result,

¹Led by the Deputy Commander and Command Sergeant Major of the Operations Group, the Council consists of representatives from each Operations Group division, as well as the 1st Battalion (Airborne) 509th Infantry, and the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI). The primary purpose of the Council is to leverage the expertise of JRTC Observer/Coach/Trainers (OCT) in order to identify and prioritize the most serious small unit leadership and training deficiencies found across rotations (ARI, 2005).

BNs and their commanders may experience negative situational awareness due to an incomplete and inaccurate understanding of the battlefield, and their decisions or actions could be delayed while they wait for more information (Walsh, 2009).

At the next echelon down, the CP at the company (CO) level is just as critical as at BN (Department of Army, 2002). Like its BN counterpart, the CO CP serves as the centralized point through which all company efforts are integrated. Again, multiple personnel with varying degrees of responsibility (Executive Officer (XO), First Sergeant (1SG), Company Intelligence Support Team (CoIST) members) carry out their duties to ensure operations can be conducted effectively. Likewise, CP Operations require consideration of a multitude of dynamic factors to include: (a) location for the post, (b) secure means of communication (with higher and subordinate units), (c) good use of unit graphics, (d) utilization of effective operational security (OPSEC) procedures, and (e) accounting for all personnel.

Command post operations are an important component of mission effectiveness that requires further examination. This is especially the case as the battlefield has continued to increase in complexity (Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2013). Members of JRTC's WLC concluded that studying CP operations during JRTC exercises would inform and possibly improve overall performance for future rotations, particularly in Decisive Action Training Environments (DATE). Decisive action is a fundamental concept of unified land operations that "emphasizes the continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities' tasks" (Department of Army, 2012, pg. 2-2). Command posts are integral for effectively carrying out the three primary tasks of decisive action in that information relevant to offensive, defensive, and stability operations are gathered, analyzed and disseminated within these posts at multiple echelons. In cooperation with the JRTC WLC, we examined CP operations as rotational units conducted training in a DATE at JRTC.

To increase successful Army-wide CP operations in accordance with (IAW) FM 3-90.2, *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, FM 3-90.1 *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*, ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, FM 5-0.1, *The Operations Process*, and FM 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*, data were collected on the effectiveness of CP operations by units at the company, platoon, and section levels for nine consecutive rotations. Units were observed during all phases of their training including, CP Occupation, CP Operations and Follow Up Operations. Performance for all rotations was assessed using the CP Operations Checklist (Appendix A). A pocket sized reference guide (Appendix B) to assist the commander, staff member, or leader in the planning and execution of CP operations was presented to the final three rotations (experimental group). The effectiveness of this tool/aid was examined by comparing the responses on the checklist from the initial six rotations (control group) to the responses of the experimental group. This research examined whether a brief training aid could improve CP operations in units as they completed their training rotations at JRTC.

Materials and Methods

Sample

Data were collected from nine rotational Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). Over the course of the nine rotations, OCTs filled out 602 CP Operations checklists at the respective echelon with which they were embedded. The control group consisted of the initial six rotations; 394 checklists were filled out for those units. The remaining three rotations were in the experimental group; 208 checklists were filled out for those units. The majority of data collected on rotation types in the control group were DATE rotations (49%), consisted mainly of active duty (82%), were either companies (48%) or platoons (28%), were Infantry (28%) or Aviation (8%), were observed during Force-on-Force (43%) or Live Fire (15%), while conducting a Deliberate mission type (61%). The majority of data collected on rotation types in the experimental group were DATE rotations (89%), consisted mainly of active duty (70%), were either companies (48%) or platoons (23%), were Infantry (22%) or Aviation (15%), were observed during Force-on-Force (47%) or Live Fire (7%), while conducting a Deliberate mission type (61%). Over the course all nine rotations, the majority of data was collected on companies (48%) and platoons (26%), while the remaining data were collected on battalions, detachments, sections, and troops. The most common unit types observed were Infantry (26%) and Aviation (11%) and the remaining units consisted of various other types (63%, see Section I, General Information, Appendix A). Force-on-Force (FOF) was the most common phase type observed (44%), followed by Live Fire (12%), and the remaining were marked Situation Training Exercises (STX) (7%), other (7%), multiple (21%), or not indicated (9%). The majority of missions were deliberate (61%), a small percentage were hasty (6%), some missions were both (4%) and 5% of mission type were not marked.

Command Post Operations Checklist

The WLC developed and approved the CP Operations Checklist in order to examine operations across and within rotational units. Measures of interest included general unit information, CP Occupation, CP Operations, and Follow Up Operations. Specific questions were developed from each of the broad topics and organized into five sections (Appendix A). Observer/Coach/Trainers were issued the checklists prior to each rotation through their JRTC Operations Group division leaders. Division members of the WLC were responsible for ensuring the OCT data collection in their respective division provided satisfactory data on the measures of interest. The WLC collected the checklists at the completion of each rotation.

The CP Operations Checklist asked OCTs to respond to both dichotomous (Yes/No) and continuous (scaled) questions. For the continuous/scaled questions, OCTs reported “how well” the unit performed CP operations tasks on a scale of 0 = *Unsatisfactory/not at all* to 4 = *Exceeds standard/performed all tasks and prepared for contingencies* (see Appendix A). Examining data across multiple response categories rather than just two allows for both the use of different types of statistical tests in the analyses and provides a more specific understanding of unit performance (Dasse, Vowels, Thomas, & Getchell, (In Preparation); Vowels, Dasse, Ginty, & Emmons, 2014).

In the first section of the checklist, OCTs were asked to provide general information on the unit, the mission, and rotation observed. More specific questions about the unit and their SOP followed in the second section of the checklist. The third section of the checklist examined how well the units occupied command posts, established and maintained security, gathered intelligence, and followed-through with communications. The fourth section of the checklist addressed CP Operations. Finally, the fifth section covered Follow Up Operations. The full checklist is presented in Appendix A.

Guide for Command Post Operations

Based on observations from the first six rotations (control group), the guide for Command Post Operations (Appendix B) was developed by members of the WLC as a training aid to enhance CP Operations performance. The pocket-sized guide was designed as a quick reference for the proper planning, execution, and follow up of CP operations. At 5.5 by 4.25 inches, the guide could fit in the pocket of leaders for easy access during exercises. This guide was issued to company/platoon/section leaders in the final three rotations during their initial JRTC rotation briefings (at most, the briefings were a few days prior to the start of the rotation). This guide served as the only independent variable.

The topics covered by the guide were the same topics addressed on the checklist: CP Occupation, CP Operations, and Follow Up Operations. These topics were based on the performance of initial rotations, observations of OCTs, and feedback from council members. Each topic contained several subtopics to assist in conducting CP operations. For instance, the Occupation section addressed setting conditions for Operations, the location of the CP on proper terrain and securing the area and establishing communications and achieving 100% accountability of personnel. The Operations section highlighted the importance of having an effective system for battle tracking, a rehearsed plan for a possible attack on the CP, and a rehearsed plan to move the CP. The Follow Up section emphasized the necessity of debriefing personnel, and identification of friction points. Additional information on the guide focused the user on details of operations such as what personnel are needed in the CP and when, responsibilities of requisite personnel and that important data points (status of routes, current unit strength) need to be displayed/readily available on trackers.

Procedure

Through the JRTC Operations Group divisions, OCTs were issued the checklists prior to each rotation and those were collected upon completion of each rotation. The guide for CP Operations was given to each unit in the experimental group before their rotation. However, there was no verification of who received the guide, how many leaders used the guide during their rotation, or how frequently and to what extent. Further, OCTs were not blind to the purpose of the control versus the experimental groups or the purpose of the manipulation or guide for Command Post Operations. The research developed by the WLC was provided oversight by the Deputy Commander and Command Sergeant Major of the JRTC Operations Group.

Results

Eighteen checklists were excluded from the analyses because the OCTs reported that CP operations were not observed at live fire and as a result, those checklists were missing more than 20% of the responses. The checklists accounted for less than 3% of the total data collected and therefore did not influence later analyses. Additionally, for the scaled items, the “Not Applicable” responses were coded so as to not inaccurately increase the means and possibly the significance of our statistical tests. Not Applicable responses were indicated as a “5” on the checklist, but such responses could have inflated the means. Analyses are discussed in the following sections.

Data were collected to examine CP operations at JRTC as observed by OCTs and the potential effect the guide for CP Operations had on performance. We also examined how use of the guide might moderate the relationship between whether or not units had an SOP for CP Operations and performance.

The overall analysis and additional analyses follow the same structure. First, we examine results for each section of the checklist. Chi-square tests for independence were used to analyze the dichotomous items (Yes or No responses). Independent t-tests were used to analyze scale items (0-4 responses). Throughout the results and discussion, scale items are referred to as “continuous” items because the items ask “how well” the unit performed on a task instead of simply whether the unit performed the task (Yes/No). The magnitude of the differences (effect size) is also reported. We report Phi coefficients (Kotlik & Williams, 2003) for the dichotomous data and Cohen’s *d* for the continuous data (Cohen, 1988). However, effect sizes can be transformed into each other for comparative purposes (See, Vowels et al., 2014, Appendix H; see also Cooper and Hedges [Chapters 16 and 17, 1994] for techniques on how to transform parametric and non-parametric effect sizes).

Results are followed by tables of all non-parametric test results and all parametric test results. The results of the statistical tests for all sections are shown in Tables 1 (dichotomous) and 2 (continuous). A range for interpretation of the effect sizes is included as a note in all tables.

In order to control for possible Type I errors, we adjusted the experimentwise alpha levels to be more conservative. We used an alpha level of $p < 0.01$ to determine statistical significance for all analyses. Though this adjustment decreased the power of the analyses (i.e., failing to find an effect when an effect exists), we thought it prudent given factors about our design and methodology that we could not control (how the guide is introduced to leaders, the extent the guide was used, etc.). Adjusting the alpha reduced the likelihood of mistaking a false result for a true finding.

Control Versus Experimental Group Comparisons

Section II: Unit Information. Chi-square tests for independence indicated no significant differences between groups (control versus experimental) on items 1: Did the unit have a current SOP for Command Post Operations, 4: Did the unit SOP include an example of

forms for operations, 6A: Did the unit have sufficient personnel to operate the CP, 6B: Did the unit have qualified personnel to operate the CP, 8A: Did the unit have the required equipment to operate the CP, or 8B: Was the equipment operational, (all $p > 0.01$). Table 1 displays the results from non-parametric tests.

In regards to the continuous data, there was a significant difference between control ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 1.22$) and experimental rotations ($M = 1.39$, $SD = 1.05$) on item 3: How familiar was the unit with their SOP, $t(346) = 2.99$, $p = 0.003$. A significant difference was also observed between control ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.26$) and experimental rotations ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 1.16$) on item 5A: How well did the unit SOP identify duties and responsibilities of unit leaders, $t(339) = 2.64$, $p = 0.009$. Finally, control rotations ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.12$) were significantly more likely than experimental rotations ($M = 1.68$, $SD = 1.13$) to assign key leaders' duties and responsibilities and make sure they were clearly understood (item 5B), $t(460) = 3.98$, $p < 0.000$. The magnitude of the differences in these means was small (See Table 2 for effect sizes and criteria).

Section III: Command Post Occupation. There were no significant differences between the control and experimental rotations on items 2: Was the CP located on proper terrain and was the area secured, 6A: Did the unit conduct a COMMEX, 6B: Was the COMMEX a unit METL item, 7: Did the unit have a primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) plan, 8: Was CoIST integrated into the CP operations, or 9: Was an OPSEC plan implemented properly by the unit, ($p > 0.01$). Control rotations ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.08$) were significantly more likely to account for personnel (including attachments) than experimental rotations ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.08$), $t(508) = 3.29$, $p = 0.001$ (Item 10). The magnitude of the differences in these means was small.

Section IV: Command Post Operations. Significant differences between the control and experimental rotations were not observed on any of the dichotomous items in this section (all $p > 0.01$). In regards to the continuous data, there was a significant difference between control ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.05$) and experimental rotations ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.99$) on item 7D: How well was the plan/SOP information analyzed, $t(452) = 2.63$, $p = 0.009$. The magnitude of the differences in these means was small.

Section V: Follow Up Operations. There was no significant difference between the control and experimental rotation on item 2A: Did friction points exist between the unit, lower and higher echelons ($p > 0.01$). However, CP personnel were debriefed significantly better in the control rotations ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.75$) than in the experimental rotations ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(379) = 3.32$, $p = 0.001$. This effect size is considered small when using *Cohen's d*.

Control versus Experimental Group Discussion

As in past research (Dasse, et al., Submitted); Vowels, et al., 2014), guides showed little to no effect on performance. This is not surprising, as the topics covered by the guide are complex and likely require more intense and focused training and resources than brief guides. Moreover, as in previous research, the control group slightly outperformed the experimental group. However, those differences are somewhat small and probably do not represent practical differences.

The CP Operations Guide covered the same primary mission phases as we measured using the checklist, CP Occupation, CP Operations, and Follow Up Operations. There was an additional introductory section that covered pre-planning such as the type of CP that would be operated and personnel required. The final section provided details such as the primary responsibilities of the required personnel, necessary equipment, and what charts and graphics should indicate.

As noted earlier, Command Posts at any level are complex, requiring multiple personnel carrying out interdependent responsibilities, several pieces of equipment, multiple graphics and displays and a constant flow of information to and from the CP. Thus, we would expect a brief guide on such operations to have minimal to no impact on performance. However, as seen in previous research, units that had existing procedures in place (and probably had practiced those) typically performed better at their Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations.

Additional Analyses

SOP vs. No SOP

In prior research, whether units had an SOP or not was a strong predictor of performance; units with an SOP performed better on the majority of tasks. Thus, we conducted a series of chi-square and t-tests to determine whether units that had an SOP for CP operations performed better as indicated on the CP operations checklist compared to units that did not have an SOP. The results of the statistical tests for all sections are shown in Tables 3 (non-parametric) and 4 (parametric). Units who had an established SOP performed better on all checklist items, whether scored dichotomously or continuously, and most of those differences were statistically significant. As might be expected, the presence of an established SOP was beneficial throughout the rotation.

Moderation Analysis

In our past research, we took the opportunity to explore relationships within the data beyond the primary analyses and to offer suggestions for future research (Dasse, Vowels, Thomas, & Getchell, (In Preparation); Vowels, Dasse, Ginty, & Emmons, 2014). We conducted a moderation analysis² that further examined possible influences on performance. Conducting a moderation analysis allowed us to examine whether the relationship between having a CP SOP and performance on the CP Operations Checklist was influenced by the guide for CP Operations. Based on the primary results, there is certainly an effect of having an SOP versus not. Though the guide is brief and the likely impact of it small, as it points directly to items that were measured via the checklist, we wanted to confirm whether not the possible effects of the guide could be seen between units with established CP procedures versus those without.

²Holmbeck (1997) describes a moderating variable as a third variable that influences the relationship between two other variables such that the relationship varies with regard to the level of the moderator.

Table 1

Non-parametric Tests: Control Versus Experimental

Checklist Item	Sample Size	Pearson's χ^2	<i>p</i>	Phi Coefficient
II 1 SOP	566	1.78	0.182	0.056
II 4 Form for Ops	270	0.39	0.544	-0.037
II 6A Sufficient Personnel	501	0.20	0.653	-0.020
II 6B Qualified Personnel	497	0.99	0.318	0.045
II 8A Required Equipment	487	0.70	0.403	0.038
II 8B Operational Equipment	463	1.91	0.167	-0.064
III 2 CP Area Secured	467	0.64	0.424	0.037
III 6A COMMEX	491	1.54	0.215	0.056
III 6B COMMEX METL	369	2.43	0.119	0.081
III 7 PACE	430	0.03	0.870	-0.008
III 8 CoIST Plan	362	3.24	0.072	0.095
III 9 OPSEC Plan	423	2.10	0.147	0.070
IV 1 Necessary Resources	546	0.26	0.609	0.022
IV 2A Discipline Enforced	535	0.15	0.699	0.017
IV 2B OPSEC Enforced	515	0.52	0.472	0.032
IV 3A Battle Tracking	544	5.94	0.019	0.100
IV 3B Battle Tracking Used	541	3.19	0.074	0.077
IV 3C Analog Systems	539	1.01	0.316	-0.043
IV 4A Attack Plan	525	2.13	0.145	0.064
IV 4B Attack Plan Rehearsed	515	4.62	0.032	0.095
IV 5B Messages Sent	489	0.97	0.325	0.045
IV 6 Timely Spot Reports	520	0.15	0.697	0.017
IV 7A Practiced Info Management	456	4.36	0.037	0.098
IV 7B Plan for Info Management	519	1.26	0.262	0.049
IV 8 Log DA Form 1594	455	0.25	0.617	-0.023
IV 9 Enablers	516	1.54	0.214	0.055
IV 10A Rest Plan	531	0.00	0.973	-0.001
IV 11A Move Plan	533	1.14	0.285	-0.046
IV 11B Rehearsed Move Plan	515	1.62	0.203	0.056
IV 12 Deviation	526	0.31	0.576	0.024
IV 13A Enhancement	522	0.28	0.596	0.023
V 2A Friction Points	445	0.43	0.511	-0.031

Note. For *Phi* coefficients, associations range from 0.00 to 0.01 for *negligible associations* to 0.80 to 1.00 for *very strong associations* (Kotrlík & Williams, 2003).

*Indicates a statistically significant difference at the alpha level of 0.01.

Table 2

Parametric Tests: Control Versus Experimental

Checklist Item	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
II 3 Familiarity with SOP	Control	226	1.78	1.22	2.99	0.003*	0.34
	Experimental	122	1.39	1.05			
II 5A SOP Responsibilities	Control	218	2.02	1.26	2.64	0.009*	0.30
	Experimental	123	1.66	1.16			
II 5B Key Leader Duties	Control	292	2.11	1.12	3.98	0.000*	0.38
	Experimental	170	1.68	1.13			
II 7 Leader Understanding	Control	305	2.21	1.06	2.52	0.012	0.24
	Experimental	186	1.97	0.97			
II 8C Equipment Proficiency	Control	301	2.53	0.99	0.71	0.474	0.06
	Experimental	177	2.47	0.94			
II 8D Equipment Maintenance	Control	296	2.65	0.95	1.86	0.063	0.18
	Experimental	175	2.49	0.86			
III 1 Situation	Control	292	2.32	1.03	1.78	0.077	0.17
	Experimental	184	2.15	1.00			
III 3 Timely CP set-up	Control	201	2.39	1.18	2.32	0.021	0.26
	Experimental	129	2.09	1.14			
III 4 Communications	Control	304	2.29	1.09	-0.36	0.719	0.03
	Experimental	186	2.32	1.08			
III 5 CP Location	Control	295	2.53	1.17	.212	0.833	0.02
	Experimental	175	2.51	1.16			
III 10 Account for Personnel	Control	325	2.71	1.08	3.29	0.001*	0.31
	Experimental	185	2.38	1.08			
IV 7D Information Analysis	Control	282	2.16	1.05	2.63	0.009*	0.25
	Experimental	172	1.90	0.99			
IV 10B Rest Plan Implementation	Control	298	2.63	1.10	.85	0.396	0.08
	Experimental	168	2.54	1.07			
IV 11C CP Move Execution	Control	88	2.07	1.14	1.09	0.277	0.18
	Experimental	61	1.85	1.25			
IV 13B CP Ops Enhancement	Control	190	2.49	1.03	2.43	0.016	0.29
	Experimental	121	2.19	1.04			
V 1 Debrief	Control	229	1.86	1.14	3.32	0.001*	0.34
	Experimental	152	1.48	1.09			
V 3 Mission Requirements	Control	301	2.47	0.93	1.65	0.101	0.16
	Experimental	175	2.32	0.93			

Note. For *Cohen's d* 0.20 = small effect, 0.50 = medium effect, and 0.80 = large effect (Cohen, 1988).

*Indicates a statistically significant difference at the alpha level of 0.01.

Both Item 1, did the unit have a current SOP for Command Post Operations (Yes/No) and whether units received the guide for Command Post Operations (Yes/No) were used as predictor variables. The questions selected from the CP Operations Checklist to assess performance were the continuous variables or those where the OCT responded to questions about how well units performed various tasks important for CP operations. From the primary analyses, we knew that the control group tended to outperform the experimental group; most of those results were not statistically significant. Further, we found that units with an SOP outperformed units without an SOP, with most results at a statistically significant level. Through a moderation analysis, we explored whether or not there was an interaction between the SOP and the guide. The question was whether or not the guide could have a moderating effect on the direct relationship between the SOP and CP operations performance. More specifically, we wanted to know, for units *without* an SOP, was the CP Operations Guide beneficial or deleterious (improve performance) and if units already had an SOP, did the guide prove beneficial or deleterious.

In the first step, whether units did or did not have an SOP and whether units did or did not receive the CP Operations Guide were included in the model. We regressed these on all the scaled/continuous checklist items; as most of these results followed a similar pattern, we provide an example below rather than reporting all results from the regression analyses. For instance, the predictor variables accounted for a significant amount of variance on how well conditions were set for CP Operations, $R^2 = 0.209$, $F(2, 469) = 10.73$, $p < 0.0001$. Next, we added the interaction term to the model which did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in this task, $\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $\Delta F(1, 468) = 0.052$, $p = 0.820$. The coefficient for the interaction term was not significant, $b = 0.046$, $t(468) = 0.228$, $p = 0.820$. Thus, the slope that predicts change in this task performance (setting conditions) by whether or not units had an SOP did not differ significantly across those units who did or did not receive the CP Operations Guide.

In the majority of analyses, whether units had an SOP or not, the guide did not appear to improve performance for units proved. However, in the seven comparisons where the guide improved performance, five of those were from units without an SOP across the control and experimental groups. Thus, there were situations in which the guide proved useful and that was for units whom did not already have an established SOP. Nevertheless, the majority of these comparisons mirror that reflected in Figure 1; units whom received the guide performed worse than those whom did not, whether they had an SOP or not.

Table 3

Non-parametric Tests: SOP vs. No SOP

Checklist Item	Sample Size	Pearson's χ^2	p	Phi Coefficient
II 4 Form for Ops	267	60.07	0.000*	0.474
II 6A Sufficient Personnel	496	0.28	0.594	0.024
II 6B Qualified Personnel	492	22.12	0.000*	0.212
II 8A Required Equipment	483	10.60	0.001*	0.148
II 8B Operational Equipment	456	0.98	0.323	0.046
III 2 CP Area Secured	463	0.71	0.400	0.039
III 6A COMMEX	484	28.13	0.000*	0.241
III 6B COMMEX METL	365	56.42	0.000*	0.393
III 7 PACE	422	15.23	0.000*	0.190
III 8 CoIST Plan	357	13.36	0.000*	0.193
III 9 OPSEC Plan	419	22.86	0.000*	0.234
IV 1 Necessary Resources	521	4.11	0.043	0.089
IV 2A Discipline Enforced	524	15.72	0.000*	0.173
IV 2B OPSEC Enforced	504	13.65	0.000*	0.165
IV 3A Battle Tracking	533	41.35	0.000*	0.279
IV 3B Battle Tracking Used	530	29.08	0.000*	0.234
IV 3C Analog Systems	529	19.04	0.000*	0.190
IV 4A Attack Plan	516	22.20	0.000*	0.208
IV 4B Attack Plan Rehearsed	505	8.72	0.003*	0.131
IV 5B Messages Sent	481	78.37	0.000*	0.404
IV 6 Timely Spot Reports	511	37.09	0.000*	0.269
IV 7A Practiced Info Management	448	25.67	0.000*	0.239
IV 7B Plan for Info Management	505	106.89	0.000*	0.460
IV 8 Log DA Form 1594	450	18.58	0.000*	0.203
IV 9 Enablers	507	50.41	0.000*	0.315
IV 10A Rest Plan	522	5.41	0.020	0.102
IV 11A Move Plan	524	39.92	0.000*	0.276
IV 11B Rehearsed Move Plan	506	28.56	0.000*	0.238
IV 12 Deviation	518	10.35	0.001*	0.141
IV 13A Enhancement	513	33.36	0.000*	0.255
V 2A Friction Points	440	7.33	0.007*	-0.129

Note. For *Phi* coefficients, associations range from 0.00 to 0.01 for *negligible associations* to 0.80 to 1.00 for *very strong associations* (Kotrlík & Williams, 2003).

*Indicates a statistically significant difference at the alpha level of 0.01.

Table 4

Parametric Tests: SOP vs. No SOP

Checklist Item	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
II 3 Familiarity with SOP	SOP	188	2.23	0.99	12.23	0.000*	10.33
	No SOP	154	0.93	0.96			
II 5A SOP Responsibilities	SOP	184	2.45	1.01	10.35	0.000*	10.15
	No SOP	149	1.21	1.14			
II 5B Key Leader Duties	SOP	186	2.24	1.09	4.63	0.000*	0.44
	No SOP	266	1.75	1.13			
II 7 Leader Understanding	SOP	185	2.48	0.97	6.19	0.000*	0.59
	No SOP	301	1.90	1.01			
II 8C Equipment Proficiency	SOP	181	2.73	0.88	4.08	0.000*	0.38
	No SOP	290	2.37	0.99			
II 8D Equipment Maintenance	SOP	180	2.69	0.81	2.04	0.042	0.19
	No SOP	285	2.52	0.98			
III 1 Situation	SOP	175	2.52	0.92	4.42	0.000*	0.44
	No SOP	297	2.09	1.05			
III 3 Timely CP set-up	SOP	164	2.65	1.00	6.19	0.000*	0.69
	No SOP	163	1.88	1.22			
III 4 Communications	SOP	177	2.49	1.01	3.13	0.003*	0.29
	No SOP	307	2.18	1.12			
III 5 CP Location	SOP	173	2.79	1.05	4.08	0.000*	0.38
	No SOP	293	2.36	1.21			
III 10 Account for Personnel	SOP	178	2.76	0.95	2.89	0.004*	0.26
	No SOP	325	2.49	1.15			
IV 7D Information Analysis	SOP	168	2.38	0.95	5.05	0.000*	0.50
	No SOP	279	1.88	1.04			
IV 10B Rest Plan Implementation	SOP	176	2.69	0.98	1.58	0.115	0.14
	No SOP	285	2.54	1.14			
IV 11C CP Move Execution	SOP	70	2.29	1.18	3.12	0.002	0.52
	No SOP	78	1.69	1.13			
IV 13B CP Ops Enhancement	SOP	132	2.59	0.87	3.41	0.001*	0.39
	No SOP	174	2.20	1.13			
V 1 Debrief	SOP	149	2.21	1.09	7.38	0.000*	0.78
	No SOP	228	1.38	1.05			
V 3 Mission Requirements	SOP	174	2.64	0.83	4.14	0.000*	0.40
	No SOP	297	2.28	0.96			

Note. For *Cohen's d* 0.20 = small effect, 0.50 = medium effect, and 0.80 = large effect (Cohen, 1988).

*Indicates a statistically significant difference at the alpha level of 0.01.

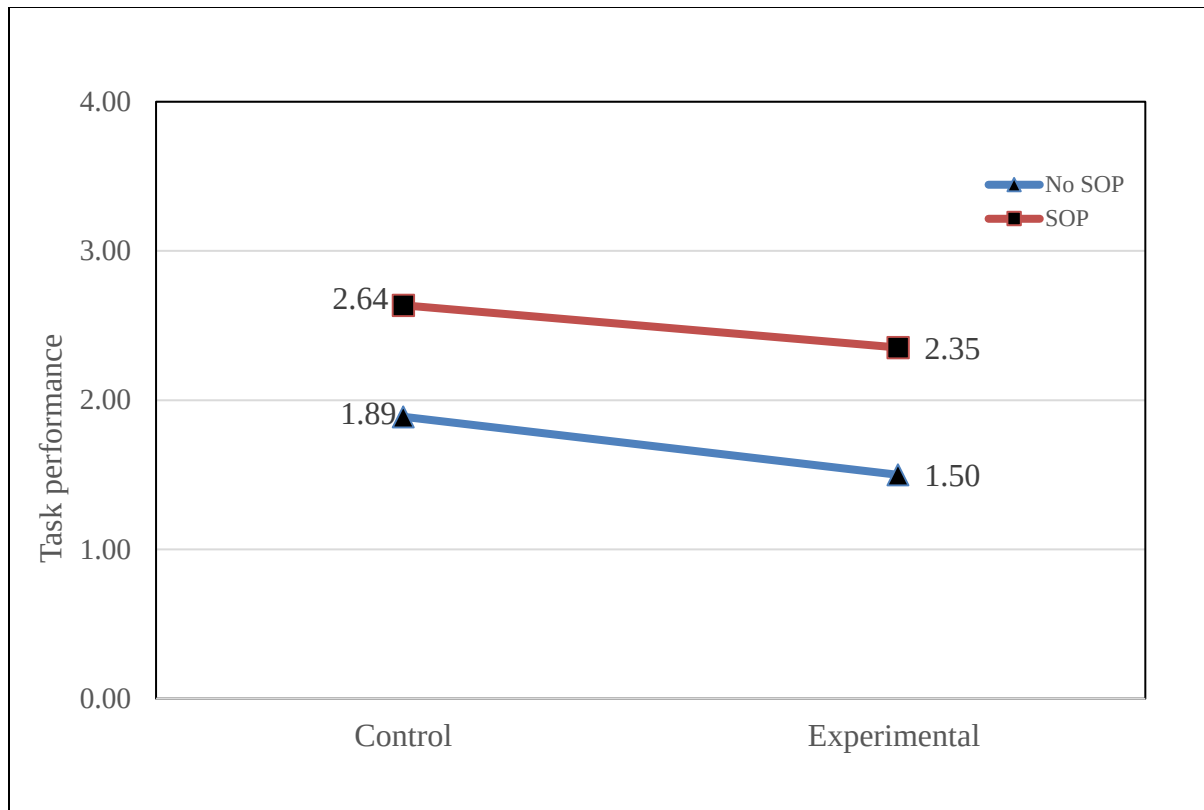


Figure 1. Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups by SOP on CP Task Performance.

General Discussion

In this research, we examined CP Operations in units completing training rotations at JRTC. Based on performance of initial rotations taking part in the research, a brief guide for CP Operations was developed by the council. This guide was distributed to the remaining rotations in order to examine if the guide could improve performance on tasks critical to CP operations.

The primary analysis revealed that the guide had minimal to no impact on task performance. Further, units that received the CP Operations Guide tended to perform worse than units who did not receive the guide. However, those differences in task performance between control and experimental groups was rarely significant and, when it was, the difference was small. Though the intention of guide was to improve performance, based on previous research, we did not anticipate enormous effects, if any. Often the research topics investigated, such as CP Operations, are complicated and would likely require enhanced and prolonged training in order to see improvements in performance. Thus, a brief training guide would likely have only minor improvements, if any, on task performance.

In past research, we have found that comparing units with an established SOP to units without an SOP provided more differences. In fact, units that had an SOP for CP Operations performed better on all tasks compared to units without an SOP. Perhaps, this is not surprising, as units with established procedures have likely trained using those procedures at home station

prior to their combat training center rotation. In further analyses, we examined whether the guide for CP Operations could moderate the effect of having an SOP or not. **In general** we found that having an SOP remained the primary indicator of better CP task performance.

Limitations

Previous research (Vowels, Dasse, Ginty, & Emmons, 2014) has identified the limited impact of brief training guides on performance during a JRTC rotation. Likewise, our limited ability to control the use of any guide during a training rotation impacts the results. Further, we do not have control over the units (nor the individual or collective experience) that take part in training rotations at JRTC. Thus, a number of uncontrolled variables can impact research in this applied setting. Nevertheless, the ability to gather large amounts of data, synthesize it, and return it to the WLC provides a comprehensive view across units, and OCTs, of the operations under question.

Limitations noted above also open up opportunities for future research. For instance, even though the research topic changes from project to project, certain trends have begun to emerge. Not surprising, **a consistent trend** across projects is that units with an established SOP perform better on the tasks than those units without. Future research may also begin to examine the experience level of the OCT and the impact that such experience has on evaluating performance. Further exploration of the data both across different projects and within the same project using contemporary statistical techniques could prove invaluable.

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Command Post Operations Checklist

COMMAND POST OPERATIONS CHECKLIST
Disclosure: Data collected with this form will be used for routine research purposes only. Information will not be used in whole or part in making any determination about an individual or unit. Information gathered will be used for statistical control purposes only and will not be disclosed to any unit undergoing rotations at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

DATES OBSERVED: FROM _____ **TO** _____ **ROTATION NUMBER:** _____
ROTATION TYPE: MRE DATE HYBRID **COMPONENT:** AC RC NG
SIZE UNIT OBSERVED: CO BTRY TRP PLT SECT DET TYPE UNIT OBSERVED: IN AR SF
 CAV FA EN OD ADA AVN SC MI MP MS RSTA CHEM QM TC CA
 PSYOP Multiple Types Other
ROTATION PHASE: STX FOF FE DEF ATK LF **TYPE OF MISSION:** DELIBERATE HASTY
TYPE OF COMMAND POST: MAIN ASSAULT TAC (Please Circle Size, Type Unit, Phase,
 Type Mission, Type CP)
SCALE: 0 = Unsatisfactory/Not at all 1 = Sub-standard/Performed some tasks 2 = Minimum standard/Performed most tasks 3 =
 Standard/Performed all tasks 4 = Exceeds Standard/Performed all tasks and prepared for contingencies N/A = Not applicable

SECTION II: UNIT INFORMATION

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-----|-------------|
| 1. Did the unit have a current SOP for Command Post (CP) Operations? | _____ | Yes | No |
| 2. What references did the unit use to establish the SOP? | _____ | | N/A |
| 3. How familiar was the unit with their SOP? | _____ | 0 | 1 2 3 4 N/A |
| 4. Did the unit SOP include an example of forms for operations? | _____ | Yes | No N/A |
| 5A. How well did the unit SOP identify duties and responsibilities of unit Leaders? | _____ | 0 | 1 2 3 4 N/A |
| 5B. Were key leaders' duties and responsibilities assigned and clearly understood? | _____ | 0 | 1 2 3 4 N/A |
| 6A. Did the unit have sufficient personnel to operate the CP? | _____ | Yes | No N/A |
| 6B. Did the unit have qualified personnel to operate the CP? | _____ | Yes | No N/A |
| 7. How well did leaders understand how to perform CP tasks? | _____ | 0 | 1 2 3 4 N/A |
| 8A. Did the unit have required equipment to operate the CP? | _____ | Yes | No N/A |
| 8B. Was the equipment operational? | _____ | Yes | No N/A |
| 8C. How proficiently were leaders and Soldiers able to operate the equipment? | _____ | 0 | 1 2 3 4 N/A |
| 8D. How well was the required equipment maintained? | _____ | 0 | 1 2 3 4 N/A |

SECTION III: COMMAND POST OCCUPATION

- | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|---|---|-----|
| 1. How well was the situation identified and conditions set for CP operations? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A |
| 2. Was the CP located on proper terrain and was the area secured? | Yes | No | N/A | | | |
| 3. How timely did the unit set up the CP in accordance to the SOP? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A |
| 4. How well was communications established and checked with higher, lower echelons and adjacent units? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A |
| 5. How well were higher, lower echelons and adjacent units informed of the CP location? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A |
| 6A. Did the unit conduct a COMMEEX? | Yes | No | N/A | | | |
| 6B. Was the COMMEEX a unit METL item? | Yes | No | N/A | | | |
| 6C. When was the COMMEEX conducted? | | | | | | NA |
| 7. Did the unit have a PACE plan? Yes No N/A If yes, describe: | P | A | C | E | | |
| 8. Was ColST integrated into the CP operations? | Yes | No | N/A | | | |
| 9. Was a OPSEC plan implemented properly by the unit? | Yes | No | N/A | | | |
| 10. How well did unit account for personnel (including attachments)? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A |

Comments:

SECTION IV: COMMAND POST OPERATIONS

1. Did unit have necessary resources to accomplish the mission? Yes No If no, explain _____

2A. Was discipline enforced in the CP? _____ Yes No

2B. Was OPSEC enforced in the CP? _____ Yes No

3A. Did the unit have an effective system for battle tracking all units in the Area of Operations? _____ Yes No

3B. Was the unit's system for battle tracking effectively used? _____ Yes No

3C. Were analog systems utilized during CP operations? _____ Yes No

4A. Did the unit have a plan for a possible attack on the CP? _____ Yes No

4B. Was the unit's plan for a possible attack on the CP rehearsed? _____ Yes No

5A. What systems were used to send messages? _____

5B. Were sent messages formatted in accordance to the unit SOP? _____ Yes No

6. Were timely spot reports communicated to other units? _____ Yes No

7A. Did the unit practice proper information management (i.e receive, analyze and disseminate to lower, higher and adjacent units)? _____ Yes No NA

7B. Did the unit have a plan/SOP to conduct information management? _____ Yes No

7C. Who analyzed the information? _____ OIC, NCOIC, ColST, RTO (Circle all that apply)

7D. How well was the information analyzed? _____ 0 1 2 3 4 N/A

8. Was a log DA Form 1594 maintained? _____ Yes No N/A

9. Were enablers coordinated for and used during the CP operations? _____ Yes No

10A. Did the unit have a rest plan for the CP personnel? _____ Yes No

10B. How well was the unit rest plan implemented? _____ 0 1 2 3 4 N/A

11A. Did the unit have a plan to move the CP? _____ Yes No

11B. Was the plan to move the CP rehearsed? _____ Yes No

11C. If rehearsed, how well was the unit plan to move the CP executed? _____

_____ 0 1 2 3 4 N/A

12. Did CP operations cause the unit to deviate from the mission? _____ Yes No

13A. Did CP operations enhance the unit mission? _____ Yes No

13B. If CP operations enhanced the unit mission, to what degree did they enhance the mission? _____ 0 1 2 3 4 N/A

Comments: _____

SECTION V: FOLLOW UP OPERATIONS

1. How well were CP personnel debriefed? _____ 0 1 2 3 4 N/A

2A. Did friction points exist between the unit, lower and higher echelons? Yes No N/A

2B. What were the most common friction points _____
(Please identify points)

2C. Who resolved the friction points? _____ CDR, XO, 1SG, OIC, NCOIC, ColST, RTO (Circle all that apply)

3. To what degree did the unit meet the standards/mission requirements? _____
_____ 0 1 2 3 4 N/A

4. Identify CP operations tasks that the unit should sustain: _____

5. Identify CP operations tasks that the unit should improve: _____

O/C/T COMMENTS:

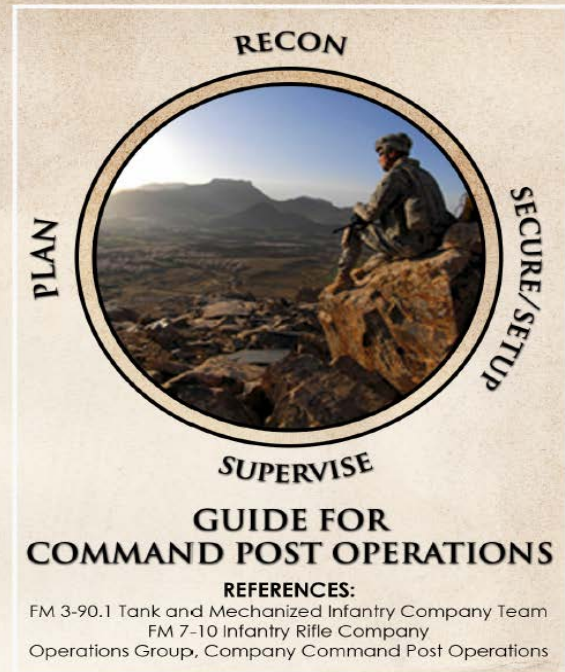
O/C/T Initials _____ O/C/T Call sign _____ Division/Task Force _____

Number of rotations O/C/T has observed _____

Appendix B

Command Post Operations Guide

LEADERS NOTES



1. UNIT INFORMATION

- What Type of CP are you preparing to operate?
- Do you have a current SOP for CP operations?
- Are all of your personnel who operate your CP fully trained on and understand your SOP?
- Do you have adequate personnel to operate your CP?
- Have your personnel been trained to operate your CPs and do they understand their duties and responsibilities?
- Who is in charge of your CP operations? XO, ISG, FSO?
- Do you have the necessary equipment to operation your CP 24/7? Is your equipment operational?

2. OCCUPATION

- Set the conditions prior to establishing your CP.
- Conduct a recon of your CP location.
- During your recon establish a location for your CP.
- Establish security of the location, move your equipment and personnel to the location and set up your CP.
- Establish communications.
- Ensure that your unit practices OPSEC.
- Conduct a COMMEM.
- Establish a PACE.
- Maximize the use of your ColST and ensure the team has a work station in your CP
- 100% accountability of your personnel.

3. COMMAND POST OPERATIONS

- Have on hand the resources to operate your CPs
- Enforce discipline and OPSEC.
- Establish a usable system for battle tracking of your unit, attachments, adjacent units and higher units. Keep your battle tracking charts up to date.
- Prepare for, rehearse and prevent enemy attacks on your CP position.
- Practice information management.
- Maintain a Log DA Form 1594.
- Establish a plan to move your CP.
- Establish and enforce a rest plan.

4. FOLLOW UP OPERATIONS

- Debrief personnel.
- Identify and fix friction points.
- Identify tasks to sustain.
- Identify tasks and responsible person to fix tasks that require improvement.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The Company CP is the hub that all information must pass through in order to properly synchronize and facilitate sustained operations at the company level.
- Tasks that a CP will execute daily
 - Coordinate with higher and subordinate units to receive/send/track daily and reoccurring information requirements.
 - Track friendly unit locations

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (CONT.)

- Track times for planned patrols or upcoming combat operations
 - Track current manning status and task organization of unit
 - Track current status of key weapon systems, vehicles, and equipment
 - Accurately record and verify any messages needing the attention of the CO, ISG, or XO when they are not available
 - Update CP Tracking Charts, Maps, and any other products specified by the commander
- c. Who do I need to man the CP?
- 2 x NCOIC's
 - 1 x NCO Day Shift and 1 x NCO Night Shift
 - Those to choose from: Communications NCO, Chemical NCO, separate HQ PSG (if you have one)
 - Key is to have a responsible NCO that needs no supervision to accomplish missions
 - RTOs
 - 2 total (1 x PAX Day Shift and 1 x PAX Night Shift)
 - This allows for the RTO to accomplish tasks while the NCOIC monitors the FM Nets
 - Coordinate with higher if co-located with BN
 - Distribute products to subordinate units
 - Receive products from BN
 - Act as a runner if radio communication is not established or operational
- d. Who does what?
- XO
 - Responsible for the running and SOPs in the CP
 - Monitors Sustainment with the ISG
 - Operates the CP when the CO is not present
 - ISG
 - Ensures the CP is manned properly
 - Monitors sustainment with the XO
 - Ensures personnel and combat power figures are correct
 - Advise the commander on MC functions
 - Master Gunner/Commo SGT/ NBC SGT
 - Acts as NCO on duty and runs individual shifts
 - Maintains situational Awareness and Common Operating Picture
 - Ensures all information is current and briefs the CO upon arrival
 - Ensure reporting accurate and timely
 - FO/FSO
 - Monitors Indirect Fires
 - Deconflicts airspace
 - Works future OPNs with the CO
 - Maintains Asset requests
 - Oversees the ColST
 - COIST SGT
 - Maintains Company Intel Picture
 - Assists with predictive analysis during Contact
 - Responsible for Briefs prior to Patrol and debriefs on return
- Maintains "Enemy Area "of CP
- d. CP Equipment/Tracking Products/Tools
- Dual FM Nets at a minimum
 - Battalion and Company
 - Establish an A+L net if you have the assets
 - Put up the OE-254 if you have to
 - FBCB2 if available
 - Military map with current unit graphics posted on it
 - Shows location of company forces
 - Graphic control measures
 - Shows previous enemy activity
 - Direct fire
 - Indirect fire (POO and POI)
 - IEDs
 - Routes and status of the routes (updated daily)
 - Charts showing:
 - Current unit strength
 - Current available combat power
 - Slant of vehicles and key weapons systems
 - Grid location of company CP
 - Grid locations of all level 1-3 medical facilities in the area of operations and routes to them
 - All critical FM Frequencies (MEDEVAC Net, all companies in BN, adjacent units, Sheriffs Net and Platoon Nets)
 - Nine line MEDEVAC request posted
 - Grid to planned HLZ's in the AO that could be used for a MEDEVAC missions
- e. Battle Tracking
- FBCB2 and analog (in case FBCB2 goes down)
 - Computer
 - Military Map with graphics
 - Show friendly unit locations
 - Use colored pins
 - Sticky notes / Icons
 - Colored alcohol markers
 - Show enemy locations
 - Don't make it too complicated