

Brigade Combat Teams: Designed to Design

**A Monograph
by
COL John A. Kelly
US Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

COL John A. Kelly

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Approved by:

Peter J. Schifferle, Ph.D.

Monograph Director

Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., COL, IN

Director,
School of Advanced
Military Studies

Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,
Graduate Degree
Programs

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Abstract

Brigade Combat Team (BCT): Designed to Design.

A SAMS MONOGRAPH by COL John A. Kelly, US Army, 44 pages.

Should the US Army allocate an Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) graduate to the Brigade Combat Team's plans cell in light of a decade of doctrinal changes and modularity?

This monograph analyzes a decade's worth of change in the US Army, post September 11, 2001. Ten years of combat operations and Army modularity has not only changed the way the Army fights, but how it must think. Modularity changed the Army's structure from division centric army to a brigade combat team centric army. This shift coupled with the lessons learned over past ten years of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq has had a profound impact on US Army doctrine, specifically, the Army's operational construct, the operations process and command and control. These changes recognizes the complexity of operations at the BCT level, and therefore has created a need for a school trained and educated operational planner in the BCT's plans cell in order to provide the required operational problem solving capability at the BCT headquarters level.

Findings, shift from the legacy Army to a modular Army has fundamentally changed the army structure from a division centric army to a BCT centric Army. Capabilities and responsibilities that once resided at the division level now fall on the BCT. This additional capability and responsibility make today's BCT more like a "mini division" then like their legacy Army brigade predecessor. Modularity and a decade of doctrinal changes resulting from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan identify a potential gap in the BCT's ability to conduct operational planning. Current doctrine emphasizes the commanders need to understand the operational environment and the problem in order to visualize a solution and or endstate. Doctrine further states that the Army's design methodology is the conceptual planning that enables the Mission Command conceptual commander's tasks facilitating the simultaneous employment of full spectrum operations. Although a BCT is authorized a Major as the BCT plans officer, most BCTs are filling this position with a Captain Career Course graduate who lacks the experience, training and education of an AMSP graduate that can augment the BCT commander's ability to conduct Mission Command and employ Full Spectrum Operations.

The School of Advanced Military Studies through the Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) has successfully provided operational planners to Division and Corps level headquarters over the past twenty-seven years. It is now time the Army start to allocate AMSP graduates to serve at the BCT Plans Cell in addition to division and corps in order to satisfy this operational need. There are four recommendations on how the Army might consider in order to close the operational planning gap in the BCT plans cell. One, expand the AMSP in order to provide one operational planner per BCT. Two, reallocate the current annual AMPS graduates in order to provide one per BCT. Three, incorporate the Army's design methodology instruction into the Command and General Staff School curriculum, and finally, provide an operational planners course mobile training team to deploying BCTs.

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Introduction

It was the most complex fight, dealing with people, so multifaceted....It was Iraqi security forces. It was building government. All the different ethnicities. The Sunnis, the Shi'ites

COL Todd Ebel.¹

Four years after September 11, 2001 and more than two years since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began, when the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 101st Airborne Division deployed in support of OIF 2005-2006. Commanded by Colonel Todd Ebel, the brigade deployed from Fort Campbell, Kentucky in September 2005 and arrived in Kuwait for final theater specific training before moving to their assigned area of operations. At Fort Campbell the 2BCT, along with the rest of the 101st Airborne Division, had recently completed conversion to the modular force. In their case, 2BCT converted from an infantry functional brigade to a multifunctional infantry BCT. Although this will be explained later in detail in the paper this means 2nd Brigade Combat Team became a multifunctional brigade capable of conducting independent combined arms maneuver, and would be capable of receiving two additional maneuver battalions. Additionally, the BCT has an organic field artillery battalion, brigade support battalion, reconnaissance battalion and a brigade special troops battalion.

Known as South Baghdad, the 2BCT area of operations was some nine-hundred square kilometers with a population of roughly 290,000, with a mixture of primarily Sunnis to the north and Shi'ites southward. The major roadways ran north and south and served as the southern gateway to the capital. Treated as an "economy of force" zone since the 2003 invasion, the area

¹ COL Todd Ebel, Commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 2004-2006.

had been lightly held by a succession of coalition units.² Jim Frederick, the author of the book, Black Hearts, about the soldiers the 2BCT, 101st Airborne Division deployed just south of Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2005-2006, describes the area as having been “dubbed the ‘Triangle of Death’ for its relentless insurgent and sectarian violence, both against Americans and Iraqi on Iraqi.”³ For the past three years, American forces had very lightly occupied the area with no unit staying more than six months. The area had become a deeply entrenched home base for a variety of insurgent groups, criminal gangs, and violent religious partisan insurgent organizations including Al Qaeda.

Until 2BCT was assigned to this area of operations there had been little continuity with units operating in the area. Previously units were concentrated in the major populated areas, and rural areas, like the area south of Baghdad, was occupied when forces were available. The unintended consequence of short duration and lack of continuity of an area of operations created a safe haven for insurgents to operate. Insurgents thrived wherever Americans were absent.⁴ COL Ebel’s mission was to deny insurgents access to Baghdad throughout his AO and to uproot and destroy insurgent safe havens. Simultaneously he would have to help train the 4th Brigade, 6th Division of the Iraqi Army who would one day be responsible for these security operations in which 2BCT would be conducting offense, defense and stability operations.⁵

When COL Ebel met with MG Webster the Multinational Division Baghdad (MND-B) Commander, MG Webster, Ebel was surprised to receive little guidance from his higher

² Economy of force is the reciprocal of mass. Commanders allocate only the minimum combat power necessary to shaping and sustaining operations so they can mass combat power for the decisive operation. This requires accepting prudent risk. *FM 3-0, Operations*, (February 2008), A-2.

³ Jim Federick, Black Hearts. (New York: Random House, 2010), 24.

⁴ Federick, Black Hearts. 24.

⁵ Federick, Black Hearts. 24.

headquarters about his AO. In fact, one of the assistant division commanders said, “no one cares about southern Baghdad.”⁶ This surprised COL Ebel as it contradicted what he had gathered from his reconnaissance of the AO prior to assuming responsibility for the area from the 48th BCT of the Georgia National Guard.⁷

COL Ebel instinctively knew that he was going to be in for the fight of his life based on the threat assessment, the complex nature of the environment, and the fact that South Baghdad had never been a priority. The Multinational Corps Iraq (MNC-I) Commander, LTG Peter Chiarelli, had informed Ebel that “we needed to get South Baghdad under control.”⁸ At least by this statement he understood the impact the lack of security of the area of operations was having on Baghdad. 2BCT, 101st Airborne Division began operations on October 2005.

To make matters more challenging, Ebel’s infantry centric brigade had no infantry-qualified captains and only one infantry major on the brigade headquarters staff.⁹ Therefore, the onus of the conceptual planning was left to the BCT Commander and the BCT Operations Officer, the only infantry major on the staff. Based on the guidance COL Ebel received from higher headquarters and the information collected from his reconnaissance of the AO regarding South Baghdad he interpreted his guidance as the following,

Disrupt Al-Qaeda where we could find them and to try to set conditions conducive to reaching some level of stability and, frankly, to prevent any anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) from entering our area, affecting what was then the main effort and briefed as the center of gravity, which was operations in Baghdad...that intent continued with MG Thurman

⁶ Todd Ebel. Interview by Contemporary Operations Study Team, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, (February 11, 2008).

⁷ Ebel. Interview (February 11, 2008).

⁸ Jim Federick, Black Hearts. (New York: Random House, 2010), 23.

⁹ Federick, Black Hearts, 22. An Infantry qualified Captain is an officer who has graduated from the Captains Career Course and has successfully completed Company Command.

(MND-B CDR) and we sustained that effort over time, while simultaneously trying to build up the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and their capacity to absorb some of our space....We were about a US Brigade short.¹⁰

Despite the fact his mission changed from what he had trained for, Ebel had not received clear guidance from his superiors about his new area of operations. He knew from the MNC-I Commander that there was a problem with security in the area south of Baghdad and that he needed to get it under control. Therefore, he had to rely on his commander's assessment, information gained from the unit he was relieving and interpret the guidance he received from his superiors in order to develop a commander's intent for his brigade. Ebel admitted that due to the lack of experience and AMSP knowledge in the BCT plans cell this process was not as efficient as it could have been.

This historical example serves as just one example of the complexity of BCT operations in today's operational environment. Additionally, the example shows the challenges a BCT is faced with and how critically important it is to understand the influences on the BCT's area of operations, and in the absence for clear guidance from higher headquarters, the necessity for an educated and trained operational planner will enable a BCT commander to lead his organization to solve operational problems. General Martin Dempsey, current US Army Chief of Staff, while serving previously as the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commanding General wrote in the 2010-2011 Association of the United States Army *Green Book*,

Today's uncertainty is the result of persistent conflict with hybrid threats, enabled by technology, that decentralize, network and syndicate. We live in a far more competitive security environment than we did just 10 years ago. In such an environment, we should expect to be surprised more frequently and with potentially greater impact. Our

¹⁰ Todd Ebel, interview by Contemporary Operations Study Team, Combat Studies Institute, (Fort Leavenworth, KS, February 11, 2008).

profession, therefore, demands leaders with greater imagination and increased awareness of the weak signals of impending change.¹¹

Frequently, senior leadership of the US Army speak about the Army's transformation over the past decade. They can be heard speaking about the new normal, an era of persistent conflict, hybrid threats, modularity, the operational environment, mission command, Army Force Generation, Full Spectrum Operations, Design, and complex/ill-structured problems, most of which was not in their lexicon a decade earlier. The US Army has accomplished much in the past ten years. There have been numerous doctrine revisions, the Army has transformed from a division-centric to a Brigade Combat Team (BCT)-centric army where the multifunctional maneuver brigade combat teams have become the primary fighting force (commonly referred to as mini divisions). This is largely due to the capabilities that were previously organic to the division and are now organic to a BCT. In essence the Army redesign concepts for the 21st century, replaced the division as the basic tactical unit with the brigade.¹² These BCTs are smaller than the previous brigades and yet have one and a half times the former combat power, and are designed to be able to operate separate from a division, capable of employing

¹¹ Martin E. Dempsey. "Driving Change Through a Campaign of Learning." *Green Book 2010-2011*. The Magazine of the Association of the United States Army. (October 2010), 66. The Green Book is an annual edition normally coinciding with the AUSA Conference in Washington D.C. It usually is a strategic communications guide for senior Army leaders to provide an update from their respective positions.

¹² John J. McGrath. *The Brigade: A History*. (Combat Studies Institute Press. Fort Leavenworth, KS 2004), 134. TRODOC PAM 525-3-3, *Functional Concept for Mission Command*, (October 2010), defines what the Army's principal tactical echelon formation, the modular brigade headquarters directs subordinate combined arms battalions and supporting battalions to gain advantage through tactical maneuver, win the close fight, and stabilize environments through security force assistance and building partnerships with local authorities and civil populations using decentralized combined arms maneuver. Brigades are trained to employ enablers from higher headquarters units including attack, lift, and reconnaissance aviation, long-range and satellite communications systems, and nonorganic artillery systems. Brigade headquarters provide combined arms air-ground reconnaissance to assist in developing the co-creation of context laterally and vertically from theater to company level. Cyber war operations are typically conducted at brigade level and higher when augmented.

technological advances to accomplish military objectives in a joint environment in the 21st Century.¹³

The US Army is now a BCT centric organization, where the multifunctional BCT is the premier maneuver formation trained to conduct Full Spectrum Operations (FSO) in some of the most complex operational environments in the world. Because of these changes, the US Army would significantly enhance the capabilities of the BCT by requiring an Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) graduate to be assigned to the BCT plans cell. Historically, AMSP graduates have served on operational headquarters staffs at the division and corps levels. Although some graduates go directly to BCTs immediately following graduation from AMSP, they go with no strings attached.¹⁴ These officers' that are assigned directly to a BCT upon graduation from AMSP is to ensure the officer has the prerequisite jobs prior to the convening of their promotion board. The numbers are not important, but the perception by some is that AMSP graduates are allocated to serve as plans officers in the BCT. This is simply not the case today. However, does the perception that AMSP graduates are being assigned to serve as plans officers in the BCT recognize the need for an AMSP graduate in the BCT Plans Cell?

To understand why the Army needs to assign a School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) AMSP graduate to the BCT plans cell as the brigade planner it is necessary to look at the brief history of SAMS and a decade of doctrinal changes resulting from the lessons learned as a result of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. This paper is organized into three parts. The first part addresses the shift in capabilities and responsibilities

¹³ John J. McGrath. *The Brigade: A History*. Combat Studies Institute Press. (Fort Leavenworth, KS 2004), xi, 133, 135.

¹⁴ Army Leader Development Program. Initiative #0-08-001, "SAMS program expansion," Lead Agency: TRADOC CGSC-SAMS, HDDA G3, G1 and HRC. (September 2008).

from the legacy division to the modular BCT. The second part briefly addresses the purpose of the School of Advanced Military Studies, its brief history and the logic behind its establishment in 1983. Third part will examine three doctrinal changes that have had significant impact on Army operations. The three specific doctrinal changes are Mission Command, Full Spectrum Operations, and Design. Finally, in light of these changes, the paper will conclude the Army would benefit by providing the BCT Commander with a school-trained planner capable of conceptual and detailed planning, able to engage in discourse in order to assist the BCT Commander in mission command thus increasing the level of mission success at the BCT level.¹⁵

The paper will identify how the doctrinal changes have place greater capability and responsibility on the BCT as a result of modularity and doctrinal changes which place a greater responsibility on the BCT Commander and staff in order to solve operational problems. Additionally, the paper will demonstrate a new requirement to provide a BCT plans cell with an AMSP graduate in order to enable the BCT Commander to perform Mission Command and conduct operational planning to solve operational problems in the contemporary operating environment.

Modularity: BCT Centric Army

The US Army redesign concepts for the 21st century replace the division as the basic tactical unit with a “brigade-based modular Army.

The Brigade: A History¹⁶

¹⁵ TP 523-3-3. Mission command is currently defined as the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders. Successful mission command demands that subordinate leaders at all echelons exercise disciplined initiative acting aggressively and independently to accomplish the mission within the commander’s intent.

¹⁶ John McGrath. *The Brigade: A History*. Combat Studies Institute Press. (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), 134.

On August 12, 1999, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, GEN Eric Shinseki, announced the commencement of Army force development initiatives designed to transform the Army into a force that would be more responsive, lethal, agile, versatile, survivable and sustainable to meet the needs of the nation.¹⁷ Although this initial vision was more consistent with that of a Stryker Brigade, it marked the beginning of Army transformation and modularity. Over time the concept evolved and like capabilities were distributed across three types of BCTs: Heavy BCT, Stryker BCT and Infantry BCT. Today there are seventy-three BCTs in the total Army in both the active and reserve components.

The BCT is the Army's smallest combined arms organization as well as being the primary close combat force. The BCT includes units and capabilities from every warfighting function.¹⁸ They are task organized to meet specific mission requirements. This section describes the organization, capabilities, and limitations generic to each BCT.

All BCTs include maneuver, fires, reconnaissance, sustainment, military intelligence, military police, signal, and engineer capabilities. Although the pre-modularity brigade received augmentation slices for combat operations and had similar capabilities, these augmentation slices are now organic to the BCT (see figure 1). In some cases, they are more robust and/or technologically advanced. Higher headquarters commanders can still augment BCTs for a specific mission with capabilities not organic to the BCT structure. Some examples of augmentation beyond BCT organic capabilities include aviation, armor, cannon or rocket artillery, air defense, military police, civil affairs, military information support operations

¹⁷ John McGrath. *The Brigade: A History*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), xi,134.

¹⁸ Warfighting function is defined as a group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives. There are six warfighting functions: movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, mission command*, and protectionFM 3-0, (February 2008), 4-1. (*formerly command and control).

elements, combat engineers, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN), and/or additional information systems assets. This organizational flexibility enables BCTs to function across the spectrum of conflict.¹⁹

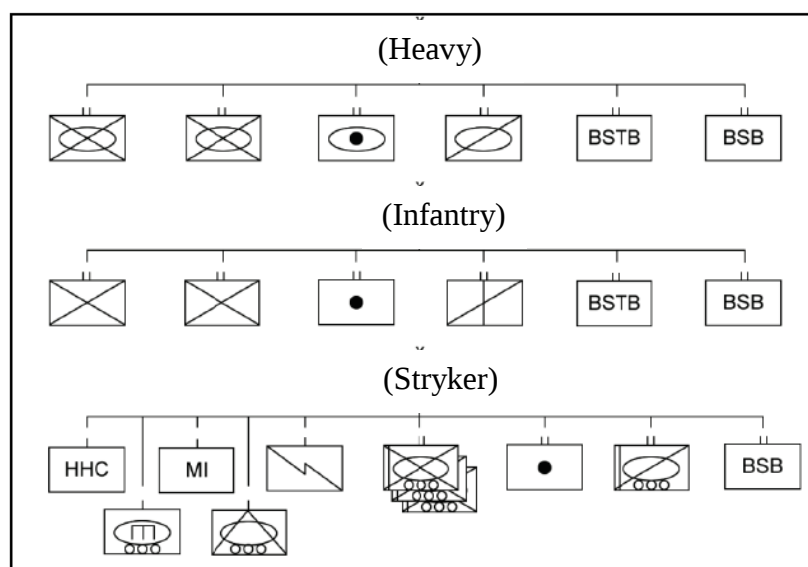


Figure 1- Heavy, Infantry, and Stryker BCT Organizations²⁰

In 2003, the Army implemented a fundamental shift toward a brigade-based force resulting in a stand-alone division and corps headquarters. BCTs, modular support brigades, and functional brigades would be pooled in order to tailor specific expeditionary force packages. The BCT became the centerpiece for Army maneuver.²¹ The BCT was designed to be a complete force package able to operate separately from the division; it is the smallest combined arms unit in the US Army capable of independent operations.²² Modularity resulted in the BCT assuming

¹⁹ US Department of the Army. *FM 3-90.6, Brigade Combat Operations* (September 2010), 1-6.

²⁰ FM 3-90.6 *Brigade Combat Operations* (September 2010), 1-7.

²¹ FM 3-0 *Operations* (February 2008), C-1.

²² John McGrath. *The Brigade: A History* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), xi.

many independent roles formerly associated with the division. In essence the Army redesign concept for the 21st century replaced the division as the basic tactical unit with the brigade.²³ LTG Daniel Bolger, Army G-3/5/7, highlighted the capabilities of just what one BCT can provide the Army. In his article “An Enduring Army: Getting it Right” he described the agile, flexible and rapid abilities of the 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division (2/82) while assigned as the Army’s Global Response Force, “In January 2010, 2/82, was in Haiti providing disaster relief in the wake of a devastating earthquake. By May they were in Afghanistan, helping train new elements of the local security forces. A few months from now (October 2010) they will return to Iraq to oversee stability operations. This is what one brigade can do...there are 72 more.”²⁴ LTG Bolger’s example demonstrates both the current extreme operational tempo of the Army and the capabilities of the modular BCT.

The 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division example is just one example of what BCTs have been doing over the past decade. As operations have become increasingly distributed in space while more simultaneous in time, it is not often today that BCTs are massing effects at a specific point on the battlefield. Rather they are conducting simultaneous full spectrum operations (FSO) throughout their area of operations. Simultaneous FSO is the recognition that army units at BCT and below will have to conduct offense, defense and stability operations simultaneously. In the 2001 version of *FM 3-0 Operations* the divisions conducted simultaneous FSO, and brigades and below did not. Brigade and below units would only conduct offense, defense or stability operations individually. Army doctrine today recognizes the need for echelons at the BCT and

²³ John McGrath. *The Brigade: A History* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), 134.

²⁴ Bolger, Daniel P. “An enduring Army: Getting it Right.” 2010-2011 Green Book. The Magazine of the Association of the United States Army (October 2010), 165. Seventy-three BCTs is the sum total of the active and reserve component.

below need to be able to conduct simultaneous FSO in order to be successful in today's operating environment.

Additionally, the requirement of BCTs to conduct simultaneous FSO is compounded with operational and tactical units operating routinely in noncontiguous areas of operations.²⁵ Noncontiguous areas of operations mean that adjacent units do not share common boundaries and therefore add to the complexity of coordinating and controlling operations immediately outside your AO (see figure 2).

The cumulative effect of simultaneous FSO, noncontiguous areas of operations is exasperated with twelve to fifteen month deployments. BCTs have had to produce their own versions of campaign plans (long range plans) in order to articulate a broad set of ideas about how to solve operational problems in complex environments over extended period of time.²⁶ A campaign plan as defined by FM 5-0 is, "A campaign plan is a joint operation plan aimed at achieving strategic or operational objectives within a given time and space. Developing and issuing a campaign plan is appropriate when the contemplated simultaneous or sequential military operations exceed the scope of single major operation."²⁷ According to Army doctrine only joint force commanders develop campaign plans, but due to the complexity of BCT operations in the past decade BCTs have been developing long range plans (referred to as campaign plans) in order to maintain focus on their operations over the course of their twelve to fifteen month deployment.

²⁵ FM 3-0 Operations, (February 2008), C-1.

²⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Functional Concept for Mission Command 2016-2028*. TRADOC Pam 523-3-3. Fort Monroe, VA. (October 2010), 19. Ill-structured problem as defined by the following FM 5-0, para 2-20, 2-23, 2-46, 3-1, 3-3, and 3-6 to 3-10.

²⁷ FM 5-0 *The Operations Process*, (March 2010), E-2.

According to *The Department of the Army's Functional Concept for Mission Command*, mission success in uncertain and complex environments will rest more and more on the ability of lower echelons to frame their own unique mission problem.²⁸ A BCT Commander utilizes the warfighting function of Mission Command in order to communicate his commander's intent to his staff for detailed planning and coordination, to his subordinate commanders, as well as adjacent and higher headquarters. Ultimately, it is the operational planner who will have to write the detailed orders for subordinate commanders and elements will have to execute. There is a small plans cell on the BCT staff that performs this function for the BCT.

According to *Army Field Manual Brigade Combat Operations 3-90.6* the BCT plans cell is responsible for planning operations for the mid- to long-range planning horizons. It is responsible for preparing operations beyond the scope of the current order by developing plans, orders, branches, and sequels using the military decision making process (MDMP). The plans cell consists of a core group of planners and analysts led by the plans officer. The BCT is authorized a plans officer in the rank of a Major. The modified table of organization and equipment codes the position as a combat arms generalist. The code for a combat arms generalist is 02A.²⁹ *Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* defines combat arms generalist as an officer the branch of Infantry, Armor, Field Artillery, Air Defense Artillery, Aviation, Special Forces and Engineers.

²⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *Functional Concept for Mission Command 2016-2028*. TRADOC Pam 523-3-3. Fort Monroe, VA. (October 2010), 12.

²⁹ MTO&E. Unit Identification Code: WJJPAA. Headquarters, 4th BCT, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (October 16, 2011), 3.

While the BCT has a small, dedicated plans element, the majority of its staff sections balance their efforts between the current operations and plans cells.³⁰

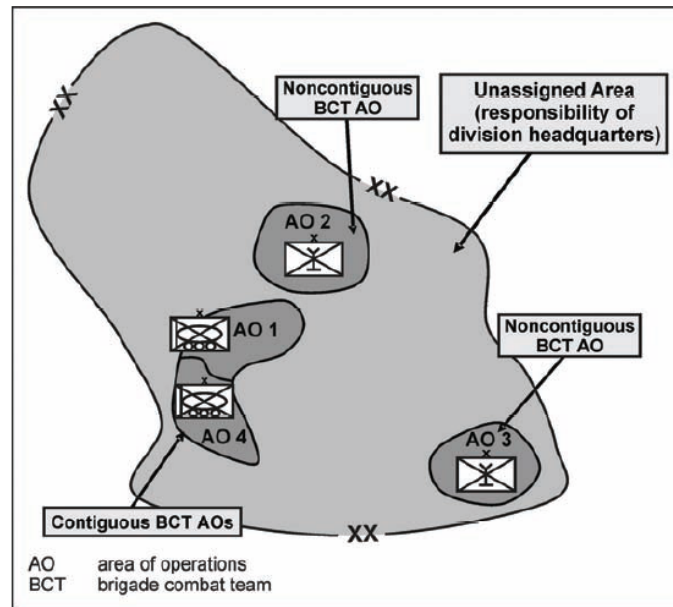


Figure 2 Contiguous, Noncontiguous and Unassigned Area³¹

The plans cell normally develops plans for the next operation or the next phase of the current operation. In addition, the plans cell also develops solutions to complex problems resulting in orders, policies, and other coordinating or directive products. In some situations planning teams form to solve specific problems and will dissolve when no longer necessary.

The BCT Plans Cell authorization is only different from its predecessor in that the MTO&E authorizes a Major instead of a Captain. However, due to current operational requirements and shortage of CCC graduates BCTs prioritize CCC graduates to command positions and qualified captains usually departed a unit following redeployment leaving a BCT

³⁰ DA Pamphlet 600-3 Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management, (February 2010), 429.

³¹ FM 3-0 Operations. (February 2008), 5-15.

without branch qualified captains. A branch qualified captain would be better to serve as BCT plans officer but this is usually not the case.³² A comparison of skills, experiences and abilities of the current BCT plans officer verses the AMSP graduate will be addressed later in this paper, which is significant when considering the magnitude of doctrinal changes the increased capabilities of the BCT in the modular force.

The Purpose of SAMS

SAMS could rightly be called the most brilliant education for critical thinking in military history, and the most revolutionary change in the planning structure of standing armies since the creation of the Prussian General Staff in the mid 1800s.

LTG David H. Huntoon³³

Recently the School of Advanced Military Studies celebrated its 25th Anniversary since its first class of AMSP students graduated in 1984. A former SAMS Director, Colonel (retired) Kevin Benson, published a commemorative history of the school's maturation and growth over the years reflecting the school's adaptation in order to meet the demands of the operating force. Benson highlighted LTC Huba Wass de Czege's 1983 report that outlined the changes in warfare since World War II, in which he noted that the pace of change was growing rapidly. A school that educated officers in the operational art was needed.³⁴ Part of Wass de Czege's argument for a course like AMSP was a result of the doctrinal changes in the revised 1982 *Army Field Manual*

³² Jim Federick, [Black Hearts](#). (New York: Random House, 2010), 22.

³³ LTG David Huntoon. Speech. Commandant's Reception, SAMS 25th Anniversary Celebration, (May 20, 2009). <http://www.cgsc.edu/Events/SAMS25th/HUNTOON%2025th%20SPEECH.pdf>

³⁴ Kevin Benson. "School of Advance Military Studies Commemorative History 1984-2009." <http://www.cgsc.edu/Events/SAMS25th/SAMS25YearsHistory.pdf> Operational art, as defined by Joint Publications 5-0, is the application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs — supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience — to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces. Operational art integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war.

100-5 Operations. He recognized the Army needed officers who could lead large formations and plan comprehensive campaigns.³⁵ This is still applicable today. However, the demand for AMSP graduates has increased due to modularity and the doctrinal changes in the last decade.

Wass de Czege envisioned this new school providing specially selected and educated majors to Army divisions and corps. In doing so, their skills would raise the Army's understanding of the increasing complexity of warfare, and improve planning operations across the Army.³⁶ These graduates are allocated by the Army G3/5/7 annually to tier one utilization tours to division and higher headquarters across the Army.³⁷ The graduates of the new school were received with open arms. The operational Army pushed to expand SAMS in order to meet the operational army's demand. As LTG David Huntoon, AMSP Graduate, stated during his remarks at the school's 25th Anniversary celebration, "SAMS graduates are consistently the one commodity called for by combatant commanders around the world today."³⁸ Between 1996-2000, the school expanded from four seminars to six in order to meet the requirement to include Reserve Component officers in the program (previously only active duty officers attended).³⁹ This expansion facilitated the need to provide reserve component operational planners to the equivalent reserve component headquarters as provided in the active component. SAMS seminars generally consist of sixteen officers each, so the initial school had a capability of

³⁵ Benson. "SAMS Commemorative History." 16.

³⁶ Benson. "SAMS Commemorative History." 17.

³⁷ Daniel Bolger. Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7. Memorandum dated December 27, 2010, SUBJECT: 2011AMSP Tier One Distribution Policy.

³⁸ David Huntoon. Speech, SAMS 25th Anniversary Celebration. During Commander's reception, (May 20, 2009), 4. <http://www.cgsc.edu/Events/SAMS25th/HUNTOON%2025th%20SPEECH.pdf>

³⁹ Benson. "SAMS Commemorative History." 46.

graduating eighty-four AMSP students. Following the second expansion, which added thirty-two additional slots, SAMS was able to graduate one hundred and sixteen AMSP students.

Additionally, Benson referenced two tensions that have existed almost since the school was established. Due to the great success, the graduates were having and providing in their operational assignments there were request from the field to provide AMSP graduates in greater numbers. The tension would rise whenever someone wanted to discuss SAMS expansion. The first tension surfaced from within the SAMS faculty, as they were concerned about an expansion to increase the number of graduates at the expense of quality. The other tension came from outside SAMS, from the operational army. Benson's report stated that the field preferred to have doers in the operational force rather than thinkers spending another year in the institutional Army.⁴⁰ This tension is healthy and speaks to both the quality of the AMSP graduate which is a direct reflection of the program, the curriculum and how growing operational planners, critical and creative thinkers and future army leaders takes time.

The second expansion in the school's history came during the years of 2006-2009. This expansion was instituted in order to better support Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN).⁴¹ There had been occasions where students were pulled early from the course in order to meet the demands of ARFORGEN. Therefore, the school established a second-start approach, mirroring

⁴⁰ Benson, "SAMS Commemorative History." <http://www.cgsc.edu/Events/SAMS25th/SAMS25YearsHistory.pdf>, 34.

⁴¹ ARFORGEN, as defined in the 2010 Army Posture Statement, is to provide combatant commanders (CCDR) and civil authorities with a steady supply of trained and ready units that are task organized in modular expeditionary force packages and tailored to joint mission requirements. These operational requirements focus the prioritization and synchronization of institutional functions to recruit, organize, man, equip, train, sustain, mobilize, and deploy units on a cyclic basis. ARFORGEN's adaptability addresses both emerging and enduring requirements. Simultaneously, Army institutional adaptations to ARFORGEN maximize potential efficiencies while ensuring effective capabilities are built to support operational requirements. [https://secureweb2.hqda.pentagon.mil/vdas_armyposturestatement/2010/addenda/Addendum_F-Army%20Force%20Generation%20\(ARFORGEN\).asp](https://secureweb2.hqda.pentagon.mil/vdas_armyposturestatement/2010/addenda/Addendum_F-Army%20Force%20Generation%20(ARFORGEN).asp)

the Command and General Staff College's (CGSC) solution to meet ARFORGEN requirements.⁴² Three seminars were added during the second expansion. Two seminars were added as the second-start approach and one seminar was added to the summer start. Following the second expansion SAMS had nine AMSP seminars providing 144 AMSP graduates annually.

If the rationale to establish SAMS was based on doctrinal changes and a need for operational planners at the division and corps headquarters in the early 1980's, and the school expanded on two different occasions due to the operational army's demand for more AMSP graduates, then it is possible a third expansion is required. Due increased responsibilities and capabilities of the BCT (mini-divisions) due to modularity and doctrinal changes over the past decade it is possible a third expansion is necessary in order to meet a requirement for an AMSP graduate to be assigned to the BCT plans cell. Therefore, like LTC Wass de Czege recognized the need for division and corps planners in 1983, the army needs to begin allocating an AMSP graduates to the BCT plans cell.

Army Doctrinal Changes and the BCT

The Operational environment (OE) is fluid with continually changing coalitions, alliances, partnerships, and actors. Interagency and joint operations will be required to deal with a wide and intricate range of players occupying the environment. Science and technology, especially information technology, transportation technology, and global economic activity influence the OE. Other trends affect the environment in which the BCT operates. These include demographic changes, movement of populations to urban centers, the global proliferation of electronics and wireless transmissions, climate change, natural disasters, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their effects.

⁴² Benson. "SAMS Commemorative History." 52.

There are numerous doctrinal changes that have occurred since September 11, 2001 and far too many to address in this paper. However, three doctrinal changes specifically affect the fundamental way in which a BCT operates in the contemporary operating environment. These three doctrinal changes are Mission Command (MC), Full Spectrum Operations (FSO), and Design. Consistent with all three of these doctrinal changes is they are commander centric and staff supported in order to perform them effectively and achieve BCT mission success. Their cumulative effects of the three specific changes are examined.

Mission Command

Mission command replaces command and control's hierarchical organizational model with a more collaborative process between commanders and their staffs at each echelon, enabling improved understanding of the operational environment....

*Functional Concept for Mission Command 2016-2028, TRADOC Pam 525-3-3*⁴⁴

In the latest update of *Field Manual (FM) 3-0 Operations*, mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to ensure disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to accomplish full spectrum operations. "Mission command employs the art of command and the science of control to enable commanders, supported by staffs, to integrate all the warfighting functions in order to enable agile and adaptive commanders, leaders and organizations."⁴⁵ Importantly, mission command supports our

⁴³ FM 3-90.6, Brigade Combat Operations. (September, 2010), 1-1.

⁴⁴ *Functional Concept for Mission Command 2016-2028. TRADOC Pam 525-3-3*, Fort Monroe, VA. (October 2010), 15.

⁴⁵ TRADOC Pam 525-3-3. (October 2010), 49. Warfighting function is a group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives. There are six warfighting functions: movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, command and control (replaced by mission command), and protection.

drive towards operational adaptability by requiring a thorough understanding of the operational environment.⁴⁶ Mission command, however, is not a new concept. Mission command in the U.S. Army traces its roots back to the German concept of Auftragstaktik, which translates roughly to mission-type tactics. Auftragstaktik held each German commissioned and noncommissioned officer duty bound to do whatever the situation required, as he personally saw it.⁴⁷ The U.S. Army adopted mission command into its doctrine in the early 1980s to provide subordinates the freedom to find and employ unique and innovative solutions to mission problems.⁴⁸ Mission command defined by TRADOC PAM 525-3-3, as a warfighting function, however, is the new concept (see figure 2). GEN Martin Dempsey says, “This change to mission command is not merely a matter of rhetoric. It represents a shift to emphasize the centrality of the commander.”⁴⁹

Mission command replaces command and control as a warfighting function. The Army has done this in recognition of the need to adapt to the emerging operational environment. Current Army doctrine states mission command describes how future Army forces must operate in an environment of complexity, uncertainty and increased competitiveness. The commander, supported by staffs, is the central figure in mission command, and therefore reinforces the importance of leadership and the leader’s assessment of the operational variables in FSO.⁵⁰ The commander cannot conduct mission command alone; through the use of subordinate commanders, battle field circulation, his staff, high headquarters, subject matter experts, government and non-government organizations he is enabled to execute his mission command

⁴⁶ Martin Dempsey. “Mission Command.” *ARMY* (January 2011), 44.

⁴⁷ TRADOC Pam 525-3-3. (October 2010), 9.

⁴⁸ TP 525-3-3. (Fort Manroe, VA, October 2010), 9.

⁴⁹ Martin Dempsey. “Mission Command.” *ARMY* (January 2011), 44.

⁵⁰ TP 525-3-3. (Fort Manroe, VA, October 2010), 13.

commander tasks. During an interview with COL (R) Todd Ebel, Commander, 2BCT, 101Airborne Division, OIF 2005-06, he stated, “The ability of the BCT commander to speak with an operational trained planner like an AMSP graduate would make the planning process much more efficient.”⁵¹ Ebel a former AMSP graduate, understood operational planning and he understood the benefits of having an trained operational planner in the BCT plans cell. He recognized by having a AMSP graduate as a BCT planner, they could achieve a shared understanding quicker and move from conceptual planning to detailed planning much more efficiently. The planning staff plays a vital role using design and the operations process in assisting the commander in their ability to understand, visualize, and describe the operations. This is now defined as the Commanders Conceptual Tasks under Mission Command.

There are multiple tasks the commander has to perform within the mission command warfighting function (see figure 3). The focus of this paper is just the commander’s conceptual mission command planning tasks. These tasks are critical for developing the commander’s intent, a critical step in the planning process.⁵² There are six elements of the commander’s mission command tasks: understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead and access.⁵³ These elements are identified as commander’s tasks under the art of command within mission command.

Specifically, three of these elements: understand, visualize and describe are what enable a commander to develop their commander’s intent, which drives the planning process. Essentially

⁵¹ Interview with Todd Ebel, US Army Retired Colonel, former commander of 2nd BCT, 101st Air Assault Division during combat operations south of Baghdad 2005-2006. Mr. Ebel is currently assigned as the primary instructor of the Brigade Commander’s Development Program in the School of Command Preparation, Command and General Staff College. (Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 15, 2011).

⁵² *FM-3-0 Operations* (February 2008), Glossary-4. Commander’s intent is a clear, concise statement of what the force must do and the conditions the force must establish with respect to the enemy, terrain, and civil considerations that represent the desired endstate.

⁵³ Previously, Army doctrine identified these 6 elements as battle command. Although not called battle command anymore, they are known as the commander’s conceptual tasks under mission command.

it is what commanders do. This development of commander's intent is a collaborative process between the commander and the staff. This collaborative process generates a shared understanding through discourse of the environment, the problem, and ultimately a solution.

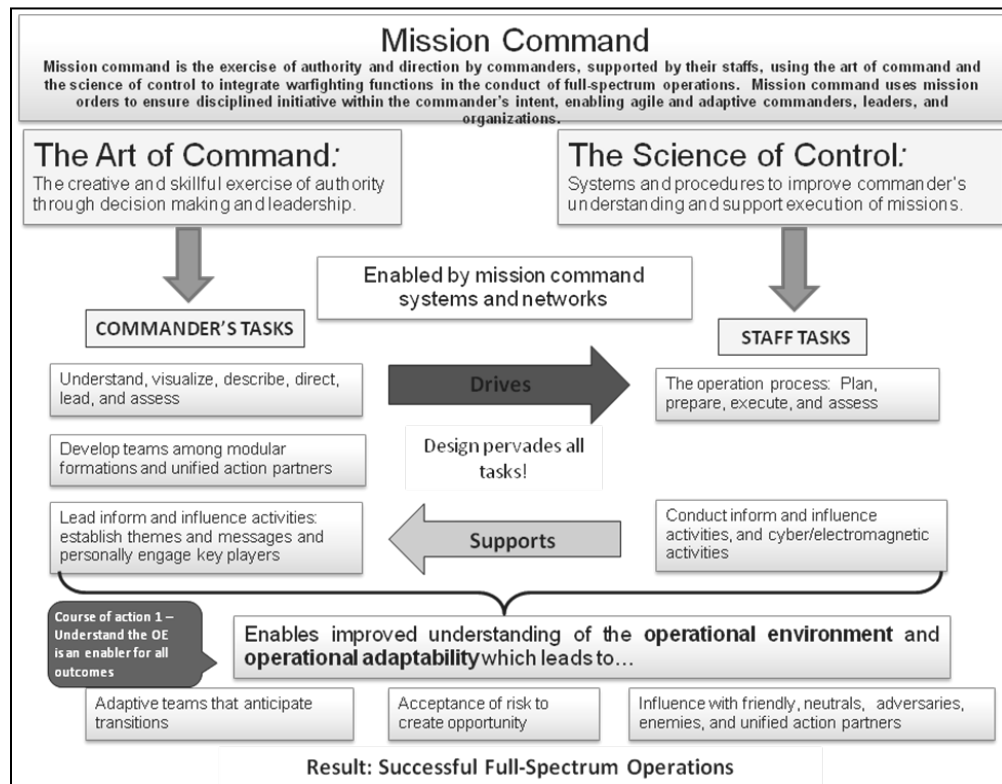


Figure 3 Mission Command⁵⁴

Mission command provides no rigid formula for success, although if done properly it will provide commanders and staffs a shared understanding of the operational environment. An AMSP graduate is educated to think critically and creatively, and knows how to use the Army's design methodology that enable a commander to conduct the art of command and execute the

⁵⁴ TRADOC PAM 525-3-3. (October 2010), 14.

commander's tasks in mission command. According to TP 525-3-3, mission command enables a commander to determine the employment of forces across the full spectrum operations.⁵⁵

Full Spectrum Operations

The complex nature of the operational environment requires commanders to simultaneously combine offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support tasks to accomplish missions domestically and abroad.

Chapter 3, Field Manual 3-0, Operations.⁵⁶

The Army's operational concept is full spectrum operations. FSO has been the Army's operational concept since the publication of *Field Manual 3-0 Operations*, dated June 2001. The operational construct is not new to Army doctrine however, what is new is the level at which simultaneous FSO is conducted. The June 2001 version of FM 3-0 stated that simultaneous FSO was conducted at the division or higher level. In light of a decade of combat operations, lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan have identified the need for BCTs and below to conduct simultaneous FSO due to the complexity of the operational environments. According to a senior doctrine

⁵⁵ TP 525-3-3. (October 2010), 16.

⁵⁶ Department of the Army. *FM3-0 Operations*. (February 2008), 3-22.

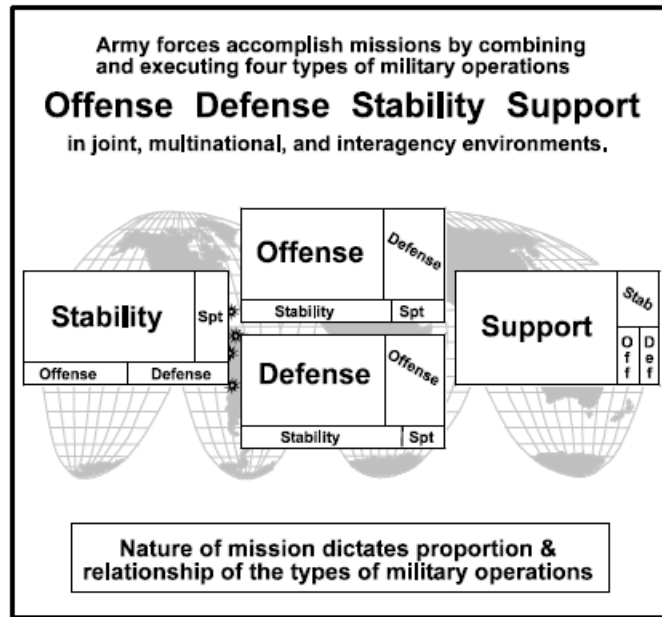


Figure 4. Full spectrum operations, FM 3-0, 14 June 2001⁵⁷

writer at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas during a monthly presentation to future battalion commanders in the Tactical Commanders Development Program, from August 2009 through May 2010, the operational concept of full spectrum operations in June 2001 was overshadowed by the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001.⁵⁸(see figure 3) According to the 2001 version of FM 3-0, large units division and higher are likely to conduct simultaneous offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations. The 2001 version of FM 3-0 further stated that lower echelons would usually perform only one type of operation at a time and provided the following example:

⁵⁷ *FM 3-0. Operations*. On the surface FSO looks remarkably similar/ This version identifies 4 major operations: Offense, Defense, Stability and Support operations, while the 2008 version identifies 3: Offense, Defense and Stability. Additionally, in the 2001 version the division was the level of command that would simultaneous FSO, while in the 2008 version BCTs as well as functional brigades will have to be able to conduct simultaneous operations. (June 2001), 1-17.

⁵⁸ John A. Kelly, author, notes from U.S. Army Doctrine Update lectures given throughout the year 2009-2010 while he was serving as a facilitator for the Tactical Commanders Development Program in the School of Command Preparation, Command and General Staff College, (Fort Leavenworth, KS).

an Army corps acting as the joint force land component may allocate two divisions to attack (offense) while a third division secures a port and airfield complex (defense). The defending division may order one brigade to eliminate small pockets of resistance (offense) while two others prepare defenses in depth. Around the airfield and port, designated units distribute food and provide medical support to refugees (support). Still other corps units and ARSOF equip and train host nation forces (stability).⁵⁹

This example demonstrates a significant change concerning the echelon at which simultaneous full spectrum operations occur. The change in doctrine between 2001 and 2008 is not the FSO operational construct, but the recognition at which levels simultaneous execution of FSO is needed in order to be successful in today's operational environment. That change from 2001 to 2008 is simultaneous FSO is directed down to the BCT level and below. This change in doctrine occurred because of the lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan post September 11, 2001. The February 2008 version of FM 3-0 directs simultaneous FSO operations to the brigade level.⁶⁰ The following passage is just one example of the combat operations that brought about this change.

In March 2004, the Soldiers of the 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment (2-5 CAV), a part of the 1st Cavalry Division, arrived in Iraq and began taking over responsibility for the Sadr City section of the Iraqi capital from the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. By April 4, the battalion's units were conducting full spectrum operations throughout the densely populated neighborhood dominated by Shia Iraqis. In the short time they had spent in Sadr City, most Soldiers in 2-5 CAV had conducted what many labeled as stability operations—those noncombat missions designed to enable local government, reconstruct infrastructure, and give humanitarian assistance to local populations. This was precisely the type of operation that the Soldiers of C Company, 2-

⁵⁹ FM 3-0. *Operations*. (June 2001), 1-17.

⁶⁰ FM 3-0: *Operations*. (February 2008), 3-1.

5 CAV found themselves doing on the late afternoon of Sunday, 4 April. One platoon from the company had spent the day in their HMMWVs escorting waste trucks through Sadr City in an effort to remove sewage from the streets. Before returning to their forward operating base (FOB), the platoon leader received orders to lead his soldiers and vehicles past the headquarters of the Sadr Bureau, Muqtada al Sadr's radical political organization that dominated the neighborhood. Near the bureau, the platoon found a large number of young men in the streets and on the buildings. Suddenly, the Soldiers came under fire from small arms and rocket propelled grenades. The platoon fought back fiercely but quickly suffered a number of casualties and had to move off the main avenue into a building where they established a hasty defense. 2-5's commander mounted an immediate rescue but the units sent into the city were also ambushed and took casualties. Only after nightfall, when a column of M1 tanks penetrated deep into Sadr City was 2-5CAV able to extricate the besieged platoon from C Company. By that time, six Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division and one Soldier from the 1st Armored Division had been killed. Over 60 other Soldiers had been wounded, many severely. The ambush and subsequent rescue efforts in Sadr City reveal the complexities underlying the Army's doctrine of full spectrum operations.⁶¹

Shortly after the Army directed BCTs and below to be proficient at conducting simultaneous FSO the Army recognized the predicament it put brigade commanders in when attempting to determine which tasks of FSO they needed to be proficient at. The Army developed a directed brigade mission essential task list (METL) in order to simplify their training strategies.⁶² Since 2010 the Army G-3/5/7 has developed 41 approved unit METLs from Corps

⁶¹ Wright and Reese. *On Point II*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS June 2008), 40.

to functional brigade. Three of these unit directed FSO METLs are for the Infantry, Stryker and Heavy BCT (see figure 5). Not only is it challenging to determine which tasks to train to a level of proficiency, but also to determine when and where to apply them based on the commander's understanding of the environment. The Army's effort to alleviate the ambiguity for brigade commander's demonstrates the complex nature of the environments in which BCTs will be expected to perform simultaneous operations.

The decision to direct BCTs to train for simultaneous FSO is based on the understanding of the complexity of the operational environments in which the U.S. Army has operated in the last ten years of combat. However, according to GEN George Casey, the 36th Army Chief of Staff, "while our understanding of FSO has evolved and matured, we still do not have an adequate understanding of how we will conduct FSO across the spectrum of conflict."⁶³ As a result, he continues in the article to encourage leaders to think about how we must adapt in order to succeed in an era of persistent conflict. One possibility is to expand the number of AMSP graduates per year. As mentioned earlier, LTG Huntoon believes no other program produces the quality of critical and creative thinkers like SAMS.

⁶² *FM 7-0 Training for Full Spectrum Operations*. (December 2008), Glossary. <https://atiam.train.army.mil/soldierPortal/atia/adlsc/view/public/8000-1/fm/7-0/glos.htm>. Mission-essential task list is defined as a compilation of mission-essential tasks that an organization must perform successfully to accomplish its doctrinal or directed missions. A mission-essential task is a collective task a unit must be able to perform successfully in order to accomplish its doctrinal or directed mission.

⁶³ George w. Casey. "The Second Decade." 2010-2011 *Green Book*. (October 2010), 27.

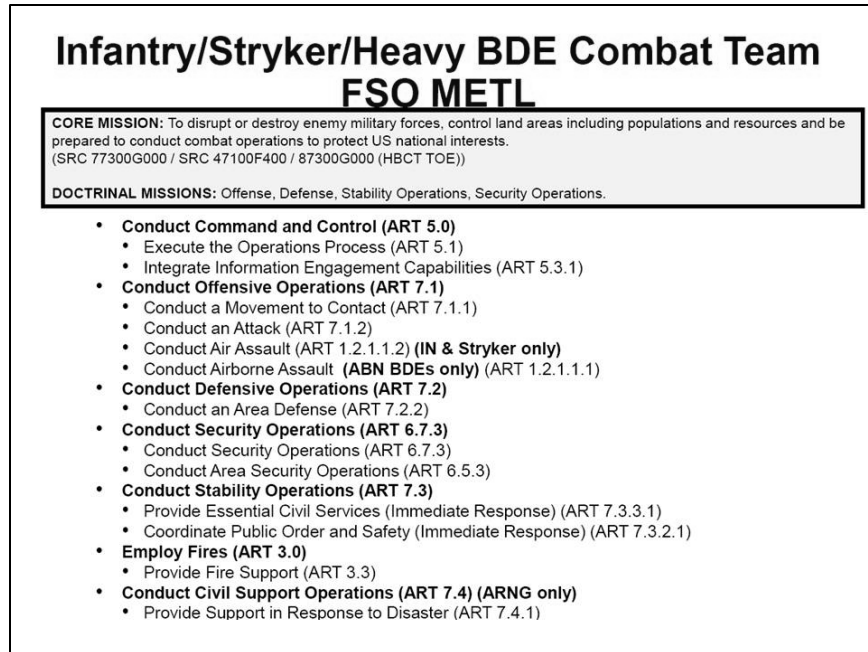


Figure 5. BCT FSO METL⁶⁴

Design

A book by itself cannot teach students of design the artistry of problem framing, nor the artistry of applying theory to a unique problem situation. It cannot provide rules for how to improvise and create workarounds when the problem has novel characteristics....

ART of Design⁶⁵

Army forces conduct full spectrum operations within an operational environment characterized by complexity, uncertainty and continuous change. In operations, commanders face thinking and adaptive enemies. It is difficult for commanders to predict with certainty how

⁶⁴ Army Training Network (ATN). Is a product developed by the Combined Arms Center-Training, Collective Training Directorate which serves as a “one stop shop” for Army Training Management. One of the products on the site is a link to the Army G-3/5/7 approved unit FSO METLs. There are 41 in total.
https://atn.army.mil/act_searchResults.cfm?searchtermDotNet=BDE%20FSO%20METL

⁶⁵ SAMS. *Art of Design Student Text*, version 2. School of Advance Military Studies, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (2010), 27.

adversaries or civilian populations will act or react. Through the iterative process of mission command and the ability of the commander to build and maintain situational awareness throughout an operation will influence operational success. The process which enables commanders to be successful in operations is found in the U.S. Army's FM 5-0 *The Operations Process*. On March 26, 2010 the Army published the current version of FM 5-0. The biggest change to the manual is the addition of an entirely new chapter on the Army's design methodology.⁶⁶ This chapter is a result of lessons learned from ongoing operations, transformation to the modular force, and recent revisions to Joint and Army doctrine.⁶⁷ Design is defined as a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them.⁶⁸ Today's operational environment presents situations so complex that understanding them is beyond the ability of a single individual.⁶⁹ General Dempsey, when the Commander of TRADOC, stated in The Association of the United States Army annual publication of *The Green Book*, "Design is a leader centric tool that develops leaders who understand problems before seeking to solve them."⁷⁰ Design enables commanders to solve the complex ill-structured problems presented in persistent conflict. A commander's experience, judgment, knowledge and intuition play a vital role in understanding complex, ill-structured problems. However, as mentioned above, these complex ill-structured problems are beyond the scope of any one individual, and therefore, require members of the staff and subject matter experts, both inside and outside the organization,

⁶⁶ FM 5-0: *The Operations Process*. Chapter 3, Design. (March 2010), 3-1 through 3-13.

⁶⁷ FM 5-0: *The Operations Process*. (March 2010), vii.

⁶⁸ FM 5-0: *The Operations Process*. (March 2010), 3-1.

⁶⁹ FM 5-0: *The Operations Process*. (March 2010), 3-4.

⁷⁰ Martin E. Dempsey. "Driving Change Through a Campaign of Learning." (October 2010), 68.

to conduct environmental framing and problem framing in order to develop adequate, feasible and acceptable courses of action.⁷¹

The School of Advanced Military Science (SAMS) produced an *Art of Design Student Text* that states that the practice of design is not exclusive to a particular level of command. Design simply requires a headquarters and a staff, therefore design can be found useful at levels all the way down to the battalion level. Both BG(R) Huba Wass De Czege and FM 5-0 support the use of design at levels as low as the battalion level of command.⁷²

Commanders are the central figure in both design and mission command.⁷³ Commanders use design in order to understand complexity. Design supports and reinforces the application of mission command, supporting the commander's ability to understand and visualize the operational environment.⁷⁴ Commander personal attributes enhance the cognitive components to design, and ultimately enhances a commander's understanding of the complexity of the environment in which they are conducting operations. It enables them to visualize the operation and share their understanding and visualization through discourse generated in the design process. This shared understanding of the environment and the commander's visualization enable the staff's detailed planning of the operation.

⁷¹ *JP 5-0: Joint Operation Planning*. (December 2006), III-50. Uses adequacy, feasibility, acceptability as three plans review criteria and defines each as follows: Adequacy is the scope and concept of planned operations can accomplish the assigned mission and comply with the planning guidance provided. Feasibility is the assigned mission can be accomplished using available resources within the time contemplated by the plan. Acceptability is the plan is proportional and worth the expected costs.

⁷² *SAMS Student Text ver 2*. quoted Hub Wass De Czege and FM 5-0 with the need and usefulness of design at command levels down and through to the battalion level.(2010), 22.

⁷³ *FM 5-0: The Operations Process*. (March 2010), 3-6.

⁷⁴ *FM 5-0: The Operations Process*. (March 2010), 3-6.

When it comes to complex, ill-structured problems in Army doctrine, there is both a conceptual and detailed planning process. Design is the methodology used for conceptual planning, and Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPP) or the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) is the detailed planning process. GEN James Mattis, Commander, CENTCOM said about design, “design does not replace planning, but planning is incomplete without design.”⁷⁵ This means that the devil in any plan will always be in the details and for detailed planning to begin before conducting conceptual planning could increase the potential of solving the wrong problem.

A challenge for the Army is figuring out where and when to educate and train the force on design. Design is about a year old to Army doctrine and is not taught anywhere else in the institutional army like it is at SAMS. According to a former SAMS director, COL(R) Steve Banach, just reading a book cannot teach design.⁷⁶ SAMS design instruction includes eighteen lessons taught over a six-week period. The instruction includes critical thinking, foundations for design, design methodology, communication and leading design.⁷⁷ Throughout the student’s instruction they are exposed to a wide range of theorists, specialists, and experts in related disciplines. Additionally, students will participate in practical exercises where they further develop their design skills and practice leading plans teams through the design methodology.⁷⁸ During the design practicum, faculty members serve several roles. They will participate as decision makers and take briefings from the student operational plans teams throughout their

⁷⁵ SAMS. *Design Student Text ver2*. (2010), 1.

⁷⁶ SAMS. *Design Student Text ver2*. (2010), 27.

⁷⁷ Stephan Banach. “Educating by Design.” *Military Review*, (March-April 2009), 98.

⁷⁸ Stephan Banach. “Educating by Design.” *Military Review*, (March-April 2009), 98.

practical exercises, and serve as coaches, which is possibly the most important role throughout the instruction.⁷⁹

The faculty coaching role is important for several reasons. First it provides an opportunity to generate ideas with an experienced military designer and they serve as a role model for the future role the AMSP graduate will fulfill in the field. AMSP graduates will not only serve as the conceptual and detailed planners, they will also serve as design team coaches in the field where they will teach, mentor and lead plans teams throughout the design methodology. Therefore, AMSP graduates not only learn the skills and techniques associated with design, but they learn how to lead planning teams through the process in order to generate discourse and ultimately facilitate shared understanding between commanders and their staffs. This in the end will better enable detailed plans and the operations process. Allocating an AMSP graduate to the BCT is essential. If design enables understanding and understanding enables mission command, and mission command enables FSO, and the challenge of FSO is knowing how to use operations in a complex environments to achieve desired outcomes. The Army must provide an AMSP graduate to the BCT plans cell in order to conduct operational planning and better enable the BCT commander to conduct mission command and employment of forces across the full spectrum of operations.

The cumulative effect of the doctrinal changes since September 11, 2001 of Mission Command (MC), BCT simultaneous Full Spectrum Operations (FSO), and adding Design have fundamentally changed the way in which a BCT operates in the contemporary operating environment. Consistent with all three of these doctrinal changes is they are commander centric

⁷⁹ Donald Schon. *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. Josey Bass, (San Fransico, CA, 1987), 105.

and staff supported, and therefore, it is critical to provide a AMSP graduate as a BCT plans officer in order to enable BCT mission success.

BCT Plans Officer vs. AMSP Graduate

“AMSP educates members of our Armed Forces, our Allies, and the interagency at the graduate level to become agile and adaptive leaders who are critical and creative thinkers who produce viable options to solve operational problems.”⁸⁰ There are five specified outcomes the AMSP graduate will attain upon graduation: 1) they will be able to lead teams in support of military operations, 2) be an effective planner who applies operational art and science, 3) demonstrates critical and creative thinking in developing solutions to contemporary operational problems, 4) understands the complexities of past and future operational environments, and 5) communicates effectively verbally, graphically, and in writing.⁸¹ The school’s ability to produce an AMSP graduate year after year with these credentials has received numerous accolades and is what the operational army comes to expect annually from SAMS.⁸²

Acceptance into AMSP is competitive. Each year officers compete for one of 144 slots, of which 108 are dedicated for U.S. Army officers. Officers are accepted twice a year, summer and winter, with the greater capacity (108) in the summer start program. The prerequisite for attending AMSP is to have successfully completed Intermediate Level Education (ILE).⁸³

⁸⁰ Wayne Grigsby, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies. Power point presentation briefing to Commander, Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS. “Advanced Military Studies Program Curriculum Review.” (March 2011), slide 4. Graduates receive a Masters degree in Military Arts and Sciences (MMAS).

⁸¹ Grigsby. “Advanced Military Studies Program Curriculum Review.” (March 2011), slide 4.

⁸² Huntoon. Speech from the SAMS 25th Anniversary Celebration. Commandant’s reception, (May 20, 2009), 4.

⁸³ Intermediate Level Education (ILE) is the Army’s formal education program for majors. It is a tailored resident education program designed to prepare new field-grade officers for their next 10 years of service. It produces field-grade officers with a warrior ethos and joint, expeditionary mindset, who are grounded in warfighting doctrine, and

Although the majority of students attend immediately following graduation from ILE, officers can attend from operational assignments as long as they have completed ILE. The officers who come from operational assignments are usually branch-qualified majors. On average, the AMSP applicant has ten years of operational experience at the tactical, and demonstrates strong potential for promotion and increased responsibilities for continued service in their respective service. Additionally, AMSP applicants must complete a three-part entrance exam consisting of a writing assignment, exam and an interview.⁸⁴

The AMSP education is a career long learning process. It builds on an officer's college education and operational experiences where an officer is likely to have commanded at the company level and served as a staff officer at the battalion, brigade and an assignment possibly the division level. After ten years of experience, the officer attends ILE and then competes for AMSP. Upon graduation will serve a one year utilization tour which serves as an internship as an operational planner at the division or higher headquarters.⁸⁵

Contrast the experience and education of an AMSP graduate plans officer with the current brigade combat team (BCT) plans officer. Although the Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTO&E) authorizes the BCT with a plans officer in the grade of O-4, a major, (Maneuver, Fires and Effects operational career field (O2A)); most brigades are filling this position with a captain. Odds are today's operational tempo, captain's attrition rate, and need to send captain's to the Captains' Career Course (CCC) upon redeployments most BCTs are filling

who have the technical, tactical, and leadership competencies to be successful at more senior levels in their respective branch or functional area. (DA PAM 600-3 , February 2010), 9.

⁸⁴ Wayne Grigsby. Briefing to CAC Commander, March, 14 2011.

⁸⁵ Daniel Bolger. Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7. Memorandum dated December 27, 2010, SUBJECT: 2011AMSP Tier One Distribution Policy.

this major's slot with a captain that has not been to the CCC.⁸⁶ If a unit is fortunate to have a surplus of CCC graduates, they will likely assign him to the plans officer position. Regardless, in either situation their experience and education is limited. Therefore, their experience level at this point of their career consists of commanded at the platoon level, company executive officer, and probably has twelve months experience as a battalion staff officer in their five years of commissioned service. The difference between a CPT waiting for command and a CPT who has commanded at the company level is significant. It is difficult to compare the attributes of a CPT, with or without company command experience to a MAJ AMSP graduate because there is nearly twice the operational experience plus two years of institutional education, ILE and AMSP. In both programs, they have had the opportunity to reflect on their previous experiences and learn new concepts and methods about organizational leadership. In AMSP the curriculum has prepared them to become operational planners who are able to think critically and creatively in order to produce viable options to solve operational problems. Thus, the difference is significant.

The CPT with only 5 years of experience as a BCT plans officer is able to execute some of the staff tasks assigned by the BCT Operations Officer. These tasks include writing fragmentation orders, operations orders, coordinating with the brigade staff members, and taking notes from the BCT plans meetings for the BCT Operation's officer. In essence, this junior officer becomes an execution arm of the BCT Operations Officer verses an additional organizational school trained and educated operational planner. A Captain plans officer on a BCT staff is simply a staff assistant. The AMSP graduate has been trained and educated as an operational planner serve as an integral part of the BCT operations process. The AMSP graduate

⁸⁶ MTO&E. Unit Identification Code: WJJPA. Headquarters, 4th BCT, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (October 16, 2011), 3.

also has the unique experience of having been on the receiving end of brigade and battalion operations orders, and therefore, understands the importance of effective unambiguous communications to subordinate units. Finally, the AMSP graduate, due to their unique training and education, better enabled to communicate with the commander, the BCT staff, subordinate units and higher headquarters staffs.

Todd Ebel, retired Army Colonel and former 2BCT, 101 Airborne Division commander during an interview at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas reflected on his combat command experience in Iraq during 2005 recognizing the benefit of assigning a AMSP graduate to the BCT plans cell. He stated, “This would provide efficiency to the operations planning process within the BCT that you cannot achieve with a non AMSP graduate serving as the plans officer.”⁸⁷ He recognized the efficiency would be gained due to the common language and understanding shared among the BCT senior leaders that would free the BCT commander to command the organization and allow the BCT operations officer to both run the operations of the organization and guide the BCT planning process verses developing viable solutions to operational problems as well.⁸⁸

Conclusion

The School of Advanced Military Science has provided the force with AMSP graduates for over twenty-five years. Annually these newly educated and trained operational planners continue to serve with distinction at the division and corps level headquarters as critical and creative thinkers, who are innovative, skilled leaders, and are willing to recommend risks in

⁸⁷ Interview with COL (R) Todd Ebel. (Fort Leavenworth, KS. March 2011).

⁸⁸ Interview with COL (R) Todd Ebel. (Fort Leavenworth, KS. March 2011).

order to provide viable solutions to operational problems. They are adaptive, excel at the art of command, and skillfully anticipate the future operational environment. Repeatedly AMSP graduates demonstrate mastery of Operational Art and Doctrine, synthesize the elements of US national power, and demonstrate effective communications.⁸⁹ It is no wonder these officers continue to be in high demand and are managed closely by the Army G3/5/7 and Human Resources Command (HRC).

The creation of the school resulted from Huba Wass de Czege's report which demonstrated a need for a school that would educate officers in the operational art. These requirements he attributed to the doctrinal changes of the time and the need for officers who could lead large formations and plan for comprehensive campaigns.⁹⁰ Additionally, he recognized that these graduates, educated and trained in the operational art, would raise the Army's understanding of the increasing complexity of warfare, and improve planning operations across the Army. His argument then is similar to the Army's situation today. A decade's worth of doctrinal changes (Mission Command, FSO and Design) since September 11, 2001 combined with modularity, where BCTs are more like mini-divisions than they are like their predecessor, have generated the need for the AMSP graduate to serve as the operational planner in the BCT plans cell.

There is always a concern for losing quality when seeking an increase in quantity. This holds true for any production system, even if producing SAMS planners. However, the school has demonstrated on two different occasions their ability to expand the program without losing

⁸⁹ Advanced Military Studies Program Outcomes. <http://www.cgsc.edu/SAMS/about.asp>

⁹⁰ Benson. "SAMS Commemorative History." (Fort Leavenworth, KS), 16.

significant quality. Since its beginning, SAMS has more than doubled its output while never decreasing the demand of the force for its graduates.

The 2011 AMSP Tier One Distribution Policy identifies the Army requirements for 108 AMSP graduates.⁹¹ It further directs SAMS to produce 105 graduates for FY 2012-2014, and the Air Force's School of Advanced Air and Space Studies will produce one AMSP graduate and the Marine Corps' School of Advanced Warfighting will produce two. According to the enclosure of this same document, the 2011 AMSP Global Distribution plan identifies 141 required slots at predominantly the division headquarters level and higher. The only slot below the division is the allocated to the ranger regiment. However, the distribution plan only identifies 96 slots that the Army will fill outright while leaving the balance in reserve based on Centralized Selections and emerging forward requirements. There are no allocations to BCTs at this time.⁹² The only AMSP graduates going to a BCT are those officers who are at risk for promotion and therefore need to get into a key billet in order to be eligible for their upcoming promotion board.

According to the Army Leader Development Program initiative titled "SAMS Program Expansion," the goal for the expansion was to ultimately provide SAMS assignments to BCTs, Divisions, Corps and Army Service Component Commands (ASCC) with the intent to reach full-operating capability by FY10. Although this expansion was completed in 2010, there are no allocations to BCTs. Again, the only officers going directly to BCTs upon graduation from AMSP are those officers whose career time lines put them at risk for promotion, and therefore,

⁹¹ Memorandum for CDR, HRC and CDR TRADOC, Subject: 2011 AMSP Tier One Distribution Policy with enclosure. (December 27, 2010).

⁹² Memorandum for CDR, HRC and CDR TRADOC, Subject: 2011 AMSP Tier One Distribution Policy with enclosure. (December 27, 2010). The enclosure is UNCLASSIFIED/FOUO produced by the Army G3/5/7.

they must be assigned to a key billet in order to be considered for promotion.⁹³ This allows the Army to meet key billet shortages as units are preparing for deployments. It is time the Army start allocating AMSP graduates to serve in the BCT plans cell.

Recommendations

The four recommendations that follow are conceptual. They describe a way the Army might consider fulfilling this requirement. These will require additional analysis to determine their adequacy, feasibility and acceptability before implementation. These concept recommendations may also be combined in order to serve as an interim capability until a more permanent solution is possible.

The first and possibly the optimum recommendation is to increase the AMSP output. As the school has done in its recent past, increasing the output of the program would call for a third expansion. This expansion would require an additional six seminars in order to provide the required additional seventy-three seats in order to provide a BCT with an AMSP graduate annually. If this recommendation were acceptable, it would be necessary to adjust the *Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, Officer Development and Career Management* to code the BCT Plans Officer position as a key position (SAMS utilization) to be consistent with coding for division and corps plans officers, and not disadvantaged the officer when it comes to promotion and selection boards.⁹⁴ Additionally, this assignment would satisfy the internship year requirement as part of the third year of the AMSP education (ILE, AMSP and utilization tour). Additionally, there should be an MTO&E change from the current description of the plans cell, “responsible for matters pertaining to the organization, training, and operation of the battalion

⁹³ Key Billet is either a Brigade or Battalion Operations Officer (S3) or Executive Officer (XO).

⁹⁴ DA PAM 600-3, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management. (February 2010), 59.

and attached units” to read, “responsible for developing viable options to solve operational problems of the BCT and attached units.”⁹⁵ The impact this recommendation would have on the Army personnel system is unknown, and this recommendation would likely be the most contentious due to cost, concern for loss of quality, and the need for more majors in the operational army. Regardless, the Army needs to view this as an investment in the future. Invest today and your return will pay out in spades operationally and professionally as more AMSP graduates return to the operational Army. The increased number of graduates who are grounded in doctrine, skilled at critical and creative thinking, and can provide viable options to operational problems for the Army down and including the BCT.

The second concept would be to maintain the current output of AMSP graduates and have the Army G3/5/7 relook the annual allocation of the 108 AMSP graduates. Under this concept, fewer AMSP graduates would be assigned to the Division and Corps headquarters, and would add an allocation of an AMSP graduate to deploying or BCTs in the ready pool in ARFORGEN. Annually, the Army G3/5/7 approves the allocation of AMSP graduates. The most recent allocation slated AMSP graduates to Corps, Division and theater headquarters (OIF/OEF). Each of these headquarters received three or four AMSP graduates depending on where the unit falls in the ARFORGEN model. Instead of filling these units with the traditional numbers (three and four AMSP graduates a year) reduce the allocation by one in order to reallocate approximately twenty or so graduates to the training and deploying BCTs in ARFORGEN. The Army would have to look at the implications of fewer AMSP graduates at the traditional operational headquarters as well as how best to allocate the surplus of AMSP graduates, one per BCT. The impact on the generating force would be zero, however, there would be some risk assumed with

⁹⁵ IBCT HQs, MTOE, (October, 2011), Paragraph 6.

stripping the operational headquarters of this capability. However, due today's operational environments and complex missions the Army's gain at the BCT level would outweigh the initial growing pains of the higher headquarters.

The third concept does not affect SAMS or the current Army G3/5/7 allocation of AMSP graduates. This concept is a testament to the AMSP curriculum and method of instruction that could be migrated into the current ILE curriculum as either part of the core instruction or offered as an ILE elective. Whether this is a one-course solution or several needs to be further developed, however, the SAMS method of design methodology instruction is nonnegotiable; it has to be one of the courses offered. This recommendation would provide the operational army and BCTs with all ILE graduates with an understanding of conceptual planning enabling the BCT and the Army. This concept is not an optimum solution, however it will provide an understanding of design methodology that will lead to an increased capability of operational problem solving at the BCT level and below.

The fourth and final concept recommendation would be for TRADOC to resource a Army design methodology Mobile Training Team (MTT). Throughout SAMSS history, Operational Headquarters have reached back for a planning capability to assist in their operational planning efforts. The most recent example of this is when the Army Chief of Staff, GEN George Casey, instructed the Combined Arms Center Commander, LTG Robert Caslen to assemble a SAMS plans team to deploy an assist Africa Command (AFRICOM) in developing viable solutions to 2011 Libyan operational problem.⁹⁶ This concept would essentially export the design curriculum and educate BCT plans officers and BCT staffs on the Army's Design

⁹⁶ John A. Kelly. Author and witness to LTG Caslen's remarks to the officers assigned to SAMS following the morning's physical fitness session. LTG Caslen was using this as an example of the reputation of a SAMS educated officer. (April, 2011).

Methodology. This would be consistent with the many MTT the institutional Army has put together in order to meet the needs of commanders in the field.

These four conceptual recommendations are elevated in order to begin the thought process on how the Army might begin to fulfill this requirement. The possibilities are not limited to these recommendations although the optimum solution would be the SAMS expansion in order to produce enough AMSP graduates to serve in 73 BCT plans cells annually. However, each requires additional analysis to determine their adequacy, feasibility and acceptability.

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