Commander’s Update
COL Curtis A. Buzzard / JMRC Commander

Leaders, Welcome to the 4th Edition of the JMRC Quarterly Newsletter. It’s been another busy quarter and some great lessons to share from a recent BCT Fire Coordination Exercise (FCX) and a series of other training events and rotations. We appreciated the opportunity to shared overall trends and what we see as fundamentals for success at the BCT level as well as our approach to live fires during the last Infantry Warfighting Forum hosted by XVIII Airborne Corps. We’ve just concluded Swift Response, which was a 2x brigade crisis response rotation. There are some initial lessons included in this edition, but there will be more to follow on Swift Response in the next newsletter.

In this newsletter, you’ll find articles on developing and maintaining a common operational picture (COP) in a multinational environment and success in the offense; effective ways to blend live and constructive training; how to effectively employ coordinated attacks in the deep fight; mission success in a complex operational environment; wet gap crossing TTPs; the role of personal staff officers; and a set of five fundamentals for success for our NCOs. Additionally, there are lessons from our recent Brigade (-) FCX and Live Fire, to include how it was planned that I believe has relevance stateside as units look to conduct large-scale collective live fires on less than ideal range complexes. Turning ranges into maneuver space and effectively employing the live, virtual, and constructive are key lessons. Finally, there is a short article on our OCTs experience supporting the Shared Accord Exercise in Africa and one highlighting the tremendous efforts of our National Guard and Reserve Forces to our mission here at JMRC.

In the next newsletter, expect to see more lessons from Swift Response and from the ongoing Allied Spirit VII rotation. In terms of Swift Response and the ten Nations that participated, there will be lessons across a variety of unique interoperability focus areas – airborne specific, communications, rotary wing, and from combined operations, to include airfield repair, A/DACG, and a NATO noncombatant evacuation operation. We are also seeing units and the OPFOR more effectively employ electronic warfare collection assets and some emerging TTPs. Allied Spirit VII is Lithuanian-led and focused on the readiness of forces aligned with the defense of the Baltics. Maneuver units include forces from the UK, 2/1 ABCT, 2nd Cavalry regiment, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade and a variety of Allies and Partners, and 40th ID from the California National Guard will serve as the HICON. Of note, the Field Artillery Battalion is led by the Italians and will be the first non-US battalion headquarters that is also a member of the Artillery Systems Cooperative Activity (ASCA) that will serve in the lead and function as the backbone for digital fires interoperability. We also anticipate a lot of great interoperability lessons across the human, procedural, and technical domains.

Again, we hope you find this edition useful, please feel free to further distribute, and there is always an open door for units wishing to send guest OCTs, observe or ride along with OCTs or the OPFOR, or just visit to learn about the unique, multinational training environment at JMRC.

Train to Win!
COL Curtis A. Buzzard
Brigade LFX on Non-Standard Ranges
By LTC(P) Larkowich and CPT Shaun Futch—Timberwolf (Maneuver) OCT Team

7th Army Training Command (7ATC) has run some variation of a brigade fire coordination or live fire exercise for a few years now as part of the Regionally Allocated Force Brigade’s training progression while in Europe, but began incorporating emerging Munever Center of Excellence OBJ-T live fire standards this year. Uniquely among the Army’s Combat Training Centers, 7ATC not only runs Rotations, but also maintains the largest US training area in Europe—effectively the home station training location for assigned and allocated brigade combat teams. Much like many home station training areas and live fire range complexes, the resources of land and time are shared between three combat brigades and a host of other units, including multinational Allies and Partners, reducing the amount of time or space any one unit has to meet OBJ-T requirements. Also unique the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) is the lack of a dedicated live fire team. All of that is a long way to say that the 7th Army Training Command Brigade Live Fire challenges mirror precisely what many units experience when incorporating higher echelon collective live fires into their training progression.

The challenges associated with designing and executing such a large-scale live fire event are numerous—designing a longer-duration live fire exercise that allows both day and night fire; dealing with training areas only designed to accommodate company CALFEXs; selective use of temporary impact areas for some munitions and use of other munitions only in designated impact areas; and incorporating elements of a complex operational environment to name just a few. While not the panacea, fully leveraging the live, virtual, and constructive capabilities 7ATC possesses offer a means to overcome these challenges.

TURNING RANGES INTO MANEUVER SPACE
Turning ranges into maneuver space requires creative planning by unit Master Gunners and an adaptation of the standard dry-blank-live progression followed for live fire events. First, planners maximized the amount of targetry, and therefore maneuver options, available by combining as many discreet ranges as possible and built engagements between ranges using a variety of lifter and static mobile targetry. Designated training area dig sites were used for large-scale breaching operations and tank ditches. In order to allow the brigade to execute a Coordinated Attack, a constructive enemy was maneuvered through a main impact area to locations with pre-positioned hulks to increase the realism for both the artillery observers and aviators. Personnel external to the firing units are positioned to observe ‘unobserved fires’ to further increase realism. Selective use of Short Range Training Ammunition, particularly for heavy machine guns, increase options for live fire behind the ‘forward line of troops.’ Finally, the ‘dry’ fire is executed as a Fire Coordination Exercise with live artillery, close air support, and attack aviation to provide leaders an additional repetition to perfect timings and triggers for key events.

Executing an Armored Brigade Combat Team live fire in about 5 by 10 kilometers worth of space would not be possible without use of Army simulations capability. Below is a representation of a brigade combat team with units participating constructively outlined in blue. By restricting live maneuver to two battalions and enablers, a smaller training area becomes a brigade training area. Reutilizing similar terrain and targetry to sequence the two battalions further expands the training area. The remaining battalions maneuver in the constructive environment on the flanks of the live units—transparent to the brigade as they are visible on Army Battle Command Systems and reporting on organic mission command systems. The artillery battalion headquarters and one or two of its batteries participate live, with the option of the remaining batteries being constructive. Through the design of the exercise the FA battalion is able to execute both live and constructive counter fire missions, while the Brigade’s Targeteers are focused on the Brigade Deep Fight in the constructive realm. The adjudication in the deep fight is then mirrored in the targets that enter into the close fight. The BSB participates live with their headquarters and whatever element they task organize to execute a live-fire resupply. The BEB participates constructively as a headquarters to
Continued from Page 2.

allow integration of some of the complexities of the Operational Environment leveraging simulations, with live Sappers attached to maneuver battalion. Finally, attached aviation elements execute live in support of the brigade.

REQUIRED TRAINING DAYS
To provide the brigade a 72 hour targeting cycle, a 12-14 hour continuous live event with a dry (FCX)-blank-live progression, time for planning and rehearsals, and a window to refine surface danger zones or objectives based on a brigade’s plan, about 10 total training days are necessary. During the execution window, each iteration begins at about 0001 with constructive enemy initiating movement out of assembly areas and towards their march objectives. As the enemy enters into the brigade’s deep area, the unit can engage with one or more constructive artillery batteries or requested Joint assets through their Targeting Process. Maneuver units begin to make contact with live (targetry) elements of the enemy reconnaissance, advanced guard or special purpose forces. Enemy movement into the range complex impact area provides the brigade its first opportunity to execute a Coordinated Attack. As the constructive enemy reaches areas where live targetry exists observable to maneuver formations we raise applicable targets in numbers reflective of what the brigade was able to affect forward of the maneuver units. To ensure a brigade staff exercises all of its targeting systems and processes, inclusion of a limited Division MCE or HICON is critical. Participation of a higher headquarters staff allows the brigade to leverage Division assets in the constructive fight based on the High Payoff Target List and repetitions of target handover from the higher to lower echelon. Following a dry-blank-live progression allows brigade and battalion staffs to review friction points and adjust systems and processes between each iteration.

THE BENEFITS OF A BRIGADE COMBINED ARMS LIVE FIRE
Building a Live-Virtual-Constructive CALFEX provides opportunities for a unit to make decisions as opposed to being forced into the left and right limits of a pre-planned range. Expanding ranges into maneuver area also created complexity at the battalion level. Having two or more battalions live forces deconfliction generally ignored during force on force events with blank munitions. The picture below depicts three objectives a recent rotational brigade was tasked with securing, with no prescribed order in which to do so.

The brigade tasked one battalion to execute an initial breach, seize the westernmost objective, and secure the near side of the obstacle in the northern objective. The second battalion was tasked with executing a passage of lines, breaching the mine-wire obstacle in the north and seizing key restrictive terrain in the southeastern objective. Prioritizing speed over other considerations, the battalions planned on simultaneously securing the two southern objectives. They quickly realized a company from one battalion would be shooting into the backs of a company from their sister battalion as evidenced by the 7.62mm surface danger zone depicted in the red shaded area. As a result, staffs got a repetition planning for weapons effects that normally don’t make the mission analysis brief. Other lessons learned at the battalion level included the importance of moving at the speed of your infantry for a mechanized formation – clearing restrictive terrain with dismounted infantry takes time, but is critical when that terrain is occupied by an enemy with dismounted anti-armor systems. The Restricted Operating Zones (ROZ) over mortar and artillery positions gained importance absent from force on force events as shooting one’s own UAS out of the sky became a legitimate concern. By design, units execute live fires ahead of force on force phases of a Rotation, facilitating units continuing to take weapons effects into consideration beyond the live fire event.

In summary, the JMRC brigade CALFEXs offer units a unique opportunity to hone their warfighting skills not only with live munitions, but also with a density of units and enablers not generally incorporated into home station training events. The lessons the OCTs at JMRC have learned designing and executing the CALFEXs offer solutions to units looking to expand their home station training events beyond the company CALFEX level. Finally, the incorporation of Army simulations systems to ‘expand’ the training area can hopefully inform continued development of this critical capability and increase the readiness of our combat brigades.
Common Operational Picture in a Multinational Environment
By MAJ Durward Johnson – JMRC Senior Legal Observer Coach Trainer

“An Army ready for combat is the most effective tool to continually assure allies and deter or defeat adversaries.” – Chief of Staff of the Army General Mark A. Milley

Readiness is the U.S. Army’s number one priority. Our ability to fight and win the next war is predicated on being ready. Future operational environments (OE) will likely consist of complex urban terrain, dense populations, and an increasingly adaptive adversary employing a mix of traditional, unconventional, and hybrid strategies. The Army must prepare for challenges across the breadth and depth of the battlefield to operate against near-peer threats leveraging multi-domain anti-access and area denial capabilities and contesting all domains. Recognizing the growing complexity of future conflict, U.S. Army forces will need to operate as part of a Joint Force, to include multinational alliances and coalitions, to conduct decisive action as part of Unified Land Operations. Decisive action has evolved from the linear concept of massing combat power at a specific time and place to “the continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks.”

At the focal point of this transition is the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). BCTs remain the Army’s primary tactical fighting formation for the near future and are organized to conduct decisive action. Regardless of the construct, BCTs or its multinational equivalent will need to integrate and synchronize joint, interorganizational, and multinational capabilities across multiple domains while simultaneously leveraging resources at echelons above brigade (EAB). The Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), the Army’s forward-deployed Combat Training Center, is postured to train Army Forces the way we will fight in the future as an integrated force. Strategically and centrally located in Europe at Hohenfels, Germany, JMRC brings together multiple allied and partner nations to train with U.S. Army forces for decisive action, joint, and combined operations. This article discusses the importance of the common operational picture (COP) within a multinational task force environment and provides some best practices to reinforce maintaining a COP.

Given the context of the future fight described above, all JMRC exercises are multinational and are designed to replicate operational realities. The foundation is the Decisive Action Training Environment-Europe (DATE-E). The DATE-E scenario creates an operational environment – blending live, virtual, and constructive components – to replicate an adaptive, near-peer adversary employing a mix of traditional, unconventional, and hybrid strategies. In this complex and uncertain operational reality, maintaining an accurate, timely, and relevant COP is essential for situational understanding. In organic U.S. units, maintaining a COP is a challenge. However, in a multinational task force composed of numerous allies and partners, this friction is even more apparent. Overall success may hinge on interoperating across human, procedural, and technical domains. Enabling situational understanding is a baseline across all these domains. A COP is a tool that directly supports situational understanding by enhancing commanders’ abilities to visualize and make decisions during operations. It also promotes a shared understanding among staff and throughout the command. Situational understanding is essential throughout the operations process, whether it is the U.S. operations process – plan, prepare, execute, and continuously assess – or a multinational operational planning process. Success in operations demands timely and effective decisions based on applying judgment to available information and knowledge. As the focal point of multinational operations, BCTs or its multinational equivalent are required to maintain a shared understanding with higher, lower, adjacent, supporting units, supported units, and with allies and partners. Only through shared understanding can multinational forces integrate and synchronize actions across multiple domains in time and space.

In order to integrate and synchronize joint, interorganizational, and multinational capabilities across multiple
Continued from Page 4.

domains, BCTs or its multinational equivalent must leverage both digital and analog COPs to maintain a shared understanding up and out, down and in, and with adjacent units. Given EABs use digital mission command information systems (MCIS), BCTs or its multinational equivalent must employ MCIS to combine real-time situational awareness across multiple domains. However, in the event MCIS is degraded, inoperable, or completely unavailable, analog battle tracking must be continuously and simultaneously maintained to continue operations. Additionally, digital capabilities and information release authority between and among multinational allies and partners may further degrade the effectiveness of sharing a digital COP.

However, generating and maintaining a digital COP provides unprecedented situational awareness across the breadth and depth of the battlefield that cannot be replicated by an analog COP. Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2), blue force tracking (BFT), and joint capabilities release (JCR) provide commanders at all levels real-time situational awareness of position location information, target identification, and graphic combat area displays. Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) provides automated decision support for mortars, field artillery cannons, rockets, missiles, close air support, attack helicopters, and Naval Surface Fire support systems. The Artillery Systems Cooperation Activity (ASCA) must be leveraged to allow sharing of digital fires between and among multinational units. The Air and Missile Defense Workstation (AMDWS) provides MCIS real-time air and missile defense situational awareness. The Tactical Airspace Integration System (TAIS) supplements AMDWS by integrating location and movement of aircraft across the operational area against airspace control measures. The Distributed Common Ground System-Army (DCGS-A) provides geospatial, weather, single, multi, and all-source information and intelligence on the threat from the joint intelligence community. Add in full motion video, the Tactical Ground Reporting System, digital radios, and share point, digital COPs offer a more comprehensive and accurate COP. The Command Post of the Future (CPOF) combines feeds from different mission command systems to provide real-time situational awareness and enable sharing with battalions through corps. U.S. forces must continue to leverage technical capabilities with multinational allies and partners to capitalize on available digital systems. Information sharing and limitations must be understood across the multinational force, to include what can be passed, in what format, and how that information is passed.

On the other end of the spectrum, analog battle tracking requires manual updating using tangible tracking tools. These tools normally consist of standardized map boards, imagery, overlays and graphics, markers and whiteboards, push pins and sticky notes, battle boards and status charts, and frequency modulated radios. What an analog COP lacks in integrating multiple digital platforms, it makes up for it with simplicity and endurance. Using proper COP management tailored to the commander’s requirements, based on common data and shared information, an analog COP can enable shared understanding throughout the entire operations process. In a multinational task force environment, proper use of liaison teams to
communicate both vertically and horizontally is critical to address the required combination of digital capabilities and analog requirements.

Besides maintaining a digital and analog COP, standard operating procedures must be in place to manage the COP. For BCTs and multinational equivalents, establishing a COP manager should be a bottom line requirement. In U.S. doctrine, the current operations integrating cell (COIC) is the focal point for controlling execution of operations. At the center of the COIC is the Battle Captain (BC), who is responsible for communication, coordination, and information management inside the COIC. Updating the COP is normally an overall responsibility for the BC inside the COIC. However, given the multiple responsibilities of the BC, designating a COP manager is an effective technique for managing the COP. A COP manager’s duties can consist of being responsible for all information displayed, updating unit locations and events on both the digital and analog COP, and manipulating the COP for staff briefings or for situational understanding. The COP manager can also be responsible for sharing with higher, lower, adjacent, supporting units, supported units, and work with liaison teams from multinational allies and partners to ensure a single, identical display of relevant information.

To establish an effective and relevant COP, units should develop a checklist for items to be displayed on both the analog and digital COP. These items may include significant activities; unit boundaries; friendly locations within the area of operations; maneuver graphics; known and templated threats, hazards, and enemy locations and activities; protection priorities; sustainment nodes and supply routes; active and planned fire support coordination measures; and airspace control measures. Critical to this checklist is the actual information that feeds the COP. These items should be fed by outputs from warfighting function (WfF) running estimates and synchronization meetings that are part of the battle rhythm. More specifically, targeting, logistics, and intelligence synchronization meetings should feed the operations synchronization (OPS Sync) meeting. The OPS Sync should be the key battle rhythm event designed to synchronize all WfF functions and activities for current operations and short-term planning horizons. The outputs from the OPS Sync should provide updated guidance for future working groups and boards, fragmentary orders, and an updated COP. In turn, an accurate, timely, and relevant COP can provide indicators to inform anticipated decisions based on the decision support template, decision support matrix, and execution matrix.

The COP is the end product of knowledge and information activities, running estimates, and battle tracking. It is the key to each step within the operations process for U.S. forces or within a multinational task force environment. A shared COP, both analog and digital, helps achieve a shared understanding across the operational area, which promotes parallel planning. It also allows for rapid response to emerging tactical situations while informing commanders’ critical information requirements. This, in turn, enables rapid decision making through enhanced situational understanding. Multinational operations necessarily require interoperating across three dimensions – human, procedural, and technical domains. To achieve successful interoperability across all domains, shared understanding must be achieved. An accurate, timely, and relevant COP is a fundamental requirement to promote a shared understanding.
Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) is a unique Combat Training Center (CTC) that blends both live and constructive training into one consistent and synchronized scenario. At JMRC, we often train a Brigade HQs, several battalions, and enablers live “in the box” and can expand to multiple brigades and battalions by leveraging constructive operations in Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulations (JCATS). Blending both live and constructive environments together can be challenging and requires effort from both live and constructive units. All units that train at JMRC should ensure they are conducting planning, combat rehearsals, and executing operations the same no matter the environment.

Although operations conducted in JCATS are constructive, it is critical units do not forego the same fundamental basics used during planning and execution of live operations. A rehearsal is a session in which the Commander and staff or unit practices expected actions to improve performance during execution (ADRP 5-0, 3-17). Ensuring that full dress rehearsals occur begins during planning conferences leading up to JCATS exercises. The rotational unit (RTU) needs to identify resources and requirements that are necessary while conducting JCATS training. Communications equipment, digital systems, and vehicles are all requirements that must be considered. Units operating in JCATS often have to communicate with other units in both live and virtual environments. Conducting a Communications Exercise (COMMEX), with both live and constructive units, prior to execution is vital to mission success in JCATS. This communications rehearsal ensures that the battalion can communicate with their maneuver units and live higher headquarters operating in Hohenfels Training Area (HTA).

Another important rehearsal that units must plan for is a full combat rehearsal in JCATS. There are often “warm start” days where the JCATS systems are started and rotational units have the opportunity to move their units around the virtual battlefield. This time should be allocated to help train CUOPs on battle tracking in JCATS, teach Commanders or their representatives (often referred to as “pucksters”) how to maneuver and fight their units within the JCATS system, and assist the battalion refine their internal SOPs. Often, this is the first time a unit has executed an exercise in JCATS and it takes multiple repetitions for all echelons to feel comfortable executing in a constructive environment. The emphasis on these rehearsals should not stop at the battalion level, but continue down to the companies as well.

Having an enemy force operating in JCATS further assists the unit during these rehearsal days. Opposing Force (OPFOR) “pucksters” should be allowed to maneuver against the friendly forces (BLUFOR) during the “warm start” combat rehearsals. Contact with OPFOR helps the RTU refine their reporting requirements, verifies SOPs, and maneuver. Observer Coach/Trainers (OC/Ts) can further assist the rehearsal by acting as the unit’s higher headquarters or brigade. Reporting can occur via FM radio or face-to-face with the battalion staff. This allows operational injects and information to be passed to the RTU without causing confusion with the true higher headquarters. Units that are tasked with conducting JCATS should not underestimate the value of rehearsals in a constructive environment.

JMRC’s utilization of JCATS provides relevant and successful training for brigades, battalion staffs, and CUOPs. It also forces training brigades to coordinate across adjacent unit boundaries that would not normally exist in the live environment. Additionally, JCATS provides multiple enablers that are often difficult to leverage in a live scenario. These enablers allow division and HICON to focus on the “deep fight” and accomplish specific training objectives. Units that leverage operations in both live and constructive environments will depart JMRC better trained to fight and win in future conflicts.
Achieving Mission Success in a Complex O.E.

By Mark Mason, Eric Kotouc, & Dr. Jim Derleth - JMRC O.E. Team

As an integral part of realistic and challenging training to exercise Unified Land Operations (ULO), the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) creates a robust Operational Environment (OE). Experience has shown that mission success in today’s complex environments requires at least three things: a comprehensive understanding of the OE; incorporating this understanding into the targeting process; and identifying and prioritizing the targets in order to focus on those most likely to impact combat power and mission end states. As the recent JMRC exercise Combined Resolve VIII (CbRVIII) demonstrated, all three are necessary to achieve mission success. The rotational training unit (RTU) in CbRVIII did an excellent job of understanding the OE, and a reasonable job of incorporating that understanding into their targeting process. They struggled, however, to prioritize among the many targets they identified, which ultimately undermined overall mission success.

Understanding the OE is the critical first step. The key to success is getting the unit’s “eyes and ears” out into the population centers, establishing relationships with local leaders, and ensuring a reliable flow of relevant information back to the headquarters. The RTU in CbRVIII did an excellent job in this area. For example, the unit set up a Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) in the county capital. This allowed them to maintain constant liaison with local leaders, participate directly in the county government’s daily Emergency Management meetings, and – through the county commissioner – maintain secondary contact with the mayors of all six subordinate municipalities. The unit also embedded a Civil Affairs (CA) team with Special Operations Forces (SOF) operating beyond the Forward Line of Troops, thereby gaining direct access to population centers that would otherwise have been inaccessible. These steps gave the RTU an excellent understanding of key OE information, including: the locations of mine fields and improvised explosive devices found by the local population; early knowledge of internally-displaced person (IDP) and refugee movements; the disposition of enemy forces and Unified Action Partners (UAPs); and humanitarian conditions across the region.

A second major contributor to mission success is ensuring that OE-related information is incorporated into the targeting process. Among other things, this requires having a conduit for OE data on the brigade staff, as well as a command climate that understands the value of non-lethal activities in support of mission endstates. The RTU in CbRVIII achieved this in part by appointing the commander of their attached CA company as the brigade S9, thereby establishing a natural source and advocate for OE-related data among the primary staff. The RTU Targeting Warrant Officer also worked diligently to incorporate non-lethal effects into the targeting process. This led the brigade to better understand and develop plans to mitigate OE-related challenges. For example, by coordinating early with the Bavarian Red Cross to define humanitarian routes for IDPs and refugees, the RTU minimized disruptions to MSRs. Similarly, by leveraging relationships and reporting from the local population, the unit identified and removed an enemy weapons cache from a contested city. Still later, the unit located a civilian computer specialist who was able to counter the enemy’s cyber-attack on the local banking system. This re-established public access to personal funds and thereby to food, fuel, and other essential supplies that might otherwise have become a unit responsibility.

A third important factor for success is the ability to prioritize among multiple challenges. In the contemporary OE, there are typically far more problems than a unit can or should attempt to address. Achieving success requires a disciplined analytical process to distinguish mission critical issues from less important or superficial...
ones. The RTU in CbRVIII struggled with this task, as evidenced by complaints from unit members at the mid-rotation AAR that they were unable to address all the emerging OE challenges. Inconsistent analysis also prevented the unit from identifying that poor soldier-level understanding of the Rules of Engagement and Positive ID requirements were underlying causes of their multiple CIVCAS incidents. Likewise, the unit did not identify that a bacterial illness was the root cause behind public sanitation fears, or that insecurity in some towns was driven by the local government’s misallocation of police personnel.

As a result of these shortcomings, RTU personnel consumed precious time and resources attempting to address every symptom on a long and undifferentiated list of problems, rather than dealing decisively with a handful of prioritized root causes. In the end, this limited mission success. Over time, the RTU’s multiple CIVCAS incidents undermined cooperation and information-sharing with the local population and consumed both commander and staff time dealing with investigations and conducting damage-control with local leaders and the media. The unit also tried in vain to counter public perceptions of poor sanitation, but ultimately left the local populace just as fearful as before, since the underlying bacterial illness was never identified or addressed. This in turn degraded local stability and government legitimacy. Finally, the ongoing misallocation of police resources led to continued insecurity even after municipalities were liberated from enemy occupation, with at least one town experiencing significant looting after the RTU drove enemy forces away.

As a result of these shortcomings, although the RTU successfully defeated the enemy, it is doubtful whether they left the environment sufficiently stable or the government adequately strengthened to maintain peace and security after coalition forces departed.

Success in contemporary operating environments requires gaining and maintaining a comprehensive understanding of the OE, incorporating this understanding into the targeting process, and prioritizing targets in order to focus on those issues most likely to impact combat power and mission end states. As CbRVIII demonstrated, all three are necessary for mission success. In this exercise, the unit’s struggle with just the last of these tasks resulted in the misallocation of key leader time and resources, decreased cooperation and information-sharing with the local populace, perpetuated health-related fears and instability among the population, and left a security vacuum in key population centers. To mitigate these outcomes in future deployments, RTUs must continue training to operate effectively in realistic, dynamic operational environments.
Multinational Success in the Offense
By MAJ Scott Basso, CPT Michael Cain - Warhog (Maneuver) Observer, Coach, Trainer Team

Task Force Folgore, (ITA) 5th BN, 186th Airborne Regiment
During Swift Response XVII, executed at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) during the final offensive phase of the rotation, TF Folgore, (ITA) was able to successfully execute a movement to contact with a rapidly assembled multinational task organized unit. This vignette will discuss the key reasons that made TF Folgore successful and key takeaways for future multinational elements at JMRC. TF Folgore succeeded through a clear establishment of chain of command, sound span of control, mounted mission command, fires planning, and operational simplicity.

Establish a Clear Chain of Command with Feasible Span of Control
The first point of focus is span of control and how it pertains to the establishment of the chain of command. In this operation TF Folgore consisted of a US Infantry company, a US EN Company, a US Heavy Weapons Company, a mobility section from the BSB, a Role 1 and TF Folgore’s organic Infantry Company. Considering TF Folgore normally only has three organic maneuver companies with a minimal battalion level staff, these attachments presented a considerable challenge. TF Folgore easily could have become overburdened and incapable of effective mission command due to the increased number of maneuver elements.

The TF Folgore’s Battalion Commander chose to combat the complexity by keeping the task organization as pure as possible. Furthermore he assigned key leaders to specific tasks that would be performed during the operation. He also chose to keep the US and ITA dismounted infantry companies pure under their assigned Company Commanders. He created two ground assault convoys (GACs) to move in trail and in support of the dismounted companies on two separate avenues of approach to the north and south. Each of these ground assault convoys had heavy weapons vehicles, engineers, and casualty evacuation capabilities. The Battalion Commander placed these GACs under the command of the EN and WPNs Company Commanders. Finally the Combat Service Support Package was led by the IN Company Executive Officer. By doing so, the TF Folgore’s BN CDR ensured each element was led by a suitable Commander able to complete the mission.

Mission Command during Execution
The next step of this operation was the establishment of an effective communications plan across the TF. The TF Folgore’s first step was to conduct face to face planning methodology. He believed that a collaborative planning session with his subordinate commanders would give them buy in and shared understanding of the mission. This face to face planning methodology would also allow for the complete understanding of the TF Folgore’s BN CDR’s intent and decrease misunderstanding due to language and doctrinal differences between the US and Italians.

The BDE decision to operate over Single Channel Cypher Text, further contributed to effective mission command. TF Folgore was not capable of Frequency Hop, which in turn created duplicate command nets over FH and SC. Creating a common command net was essential to effective mission command.

The TF Folgore’s BN CDR conducted a communications rehearsal that validated all maneuver elements were able to talk over the BN CMD net and that he was able to communicate with BDE. Establishment and use of one common net for the BN gave all subordinate elements situational awareness and shared
Continued from Page 10.

understanding throughout the operation. Furthermore, the Folgore BN CDR elected to use his mounted command and control vehicles during the operation instead of moving dismounted. Although the majority of his force was dismounted, the Folgore BN CDR correctly identified he would need a long range asset to maintain communications with all his elements. The concept of operating off of one common net may seem like a standard procedure, but in a multinational environment with a wide variety of communications equipment, the practice becomes much more problematic.

Fires planning for this operation was a complete success and enabled the dismounted maneuver elements freedom of maneuver as they approached their final march objective. The TF Folgore BN CDR worked with his attached US fires NCO and identified specified indirect fire targets. Recognizing he could not effectively observe his planned targets, the TF Folgore BN CDR asked for permission to fire unobserved targets from the BDE CDR. The BDE CDR was more than willing to allow pre-planned unobserved targets in route and on the objective. Coordination with BDE and a simple but well executed fires rehearsal created shared understanding by all subordinate, which was crucial for unobserved fires. The fires plan was executed for all targets during the execution of the operation with no fratricide and with complete situational awareness across the formation.

**Operational Simplicity**

To tie everything together, the TF Folgore BN CDR kept the plan simple. He immediately brought in his company commanders upon receipt of the WARNO and started collaborative planning IOT facilitate shared understanding and parallel planning. He wanted to focus on controlled and simple bounding techniques. More complex maneuver would have proven highly difficult for an ad-hoc element operating during limited visibility operating over one FM Net.

The TF Folgore BN CDR established an operation which consisted of multiple successive bounds by four mutually supporting maneuver elements under the cover of an indirect fires plan and trailed by casualty evacuation assets controlled by graphic control measures. Using designated avenues approach and controlled by phase lines, the TF Folgore BN CDR successively bounded his element forward. During planning there were concerns by the company commanders that this simplistic bounding technique would be too slow. But through his effective execution, he proved that a synchronized and understood plan can be worth the lack of speed in accomplishing the mission.

**Conclusion**

This vignette is an example of how an established chain of command, an executable span of control, effective mission command, planned fires, and operational simplicity led to the overall mission success. This was the first operation that I have seen where all subordinate elements within the organization and higher were able to communicate, execute fires, and have situational understanding of unit locations throughout the entirety of the operation. Considering this operation was executed by rapidly assembled ad-hoc multinational TF, this is a testament to how deliberate simplicity can lead to of mission accomplishment in a complex multination environment.
Coordinated attacks, whether planned or dynamic, can provide brigade commanders with a lethal, effective, and flexible force component to engage enemy high-payoff targets across the area of operations. Coordinated attacks consist of different combinations of rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft, direct fire, indirect fire, air defense artillery, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems, electronic attack and electronic warfare support systems, and ground maneuver forces. Whether close air support (CAS), strike coordination and reconnaissance (SCAR), or joint air attack team (JAAT), the type of coordinated attack will depend on the situational understanding of the operational environment, the assets available, and the effects the commander is trying to achieve. Regardless of the construct, coordinated attacks are difficult to plan, coordinate, and synchronize. This article attempts to provide best practices to be successful.

At the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, we have observed rotational training brigades plan and execute coordinated attacks with differing levels of success. Recently, an exercise at the Grafenwoehr Training Area demonstrated the difficulty in synchronizing numerous elements to achieve a coordinated attack. The plan was to execute using rotary-wing aircraft, fixed-wing aircraft, and indirect fire simultaneously against the enemy in a designated engagement area. However, the coordinated attack was unsuccessful for a myriad of reasons. The end result was the enemy entering and moving through the engagement area without being engaged.

Operations Perspective
Since each of the elements required to conduct the coordinated attack have their own internal mission command structure, mission planning at the brigade level must be deliberate and collaborative. Constant coordination is required between the ground maneuver commander, attack aviation commander, joint terminal attack controller (JTAC)/air liaison officer (ALO), fire support coordinator (FSCoord), fire support officers (FSOs) at the brigade and battalion level, and, potentially, the recon squadron commander. As circumstances change, either enemy or friendly, all members need to be informed so they can adjust their plans according to the latest information available. A successful coordinated attack depends on how well the brigade synchronizes assets and creates a shared understanding of operations between all elements.
Synchronization of assets is a brigade operations officer’s (S3) responsibility and is achieved by conducting operations synchronization meetings (OPS SYNCH) as part of the brigade daily battle rhythm. At the conclusion of a successful OPS SYNC meeting, the brigade S3 and staff understand the timing of the expected enemy attack, when to task information collection assets internal to brigade, and request division assets to help answer priority intelligence requirements (PIR) on enemy movements. This shared understanding is based on linking the enemy event template to named areas of interest (NAI), which feeds the decision support matrix (DSM). Friendly assets (ATK AVN, CAS, firing battery) then need to be synchronized and available when the expected enemy arrives in the brigade pre-planned engagement areas (EAs). Ensuring all these elements are synchronized with continuous coordination sets the conditions for a successful coordinated attack.

Aviation Perspective
One of the most difficult aspects is synchronizing the timing of ATK AVN and CAS. As part of the brigade’s decision points, the timing of launching attack aviation to maximize station time is critical. Planners need to understand REDCON levels and ensure NAIs provide time for ATK AVN to spin up and fly to EAs. They also need to consider how to conduct target handover with ATK AVN once on station or set in attack-by-fire positions with either observation posts (OPs) or with unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) that have observed the enemy at the NAI or entering the EA. Ideally, target handover is done with fixed-wing aircraft as well. Synchronizing the launch of ATK AVN and target handover will maximize station time and allow ATK AVN to conduct a thorough battle damage assessment (BDA) so the brigade intelligence officer (S2) can give an assessment to subordinate units of expected enemy strength as they enter the battalion fight. The brigade must also plan the handover of the enemy not destroyed in the EA as they approach subordinate units EAs. Whether it is rotary-wing aircraft to OPs or to another UAS asset, contact with enemy must be maintained as they approach to ensure subordinate units receive a positive handover.

Intel Perspective
Another difficult aspect is synchronizing the collection plan and cueing of assets to trigger the movement of fire assets forward postured. During planning, the brigade’s intelligence preparation of the battlefield feeds development of the event template. The event template identifies windows on the ground and in time where the enemy can be identified. The NAIs are based on this assessment. The intelligence collection (IC) manager must then identify, request, and task (through the S3 in the operations order process) the assets that can best identify each enemy echelon at each location. Once the collection is in place it should be to confirm or deny what is occurring on the event template. The PIRs should be built on this. A habitual problem area is the inability to plan for all available assets. IC managers tend to focus on fixed wing/full motion video (FMV) assets and often disregard the numerous other collection assets available, like infantry battalions, reconnaissance squadrons, human intelligence, and signal intelligence. FMV and other assets that look at broad areas are perfect for initial identification of each echelon. Once identified, the target should be passed off to other assets that are more specific. Units must not become fixated on observing the front line trace with FMV and never cueing another asset to free up the FMV platform. By fixating on the front line trace, units cannot identify follow on echelons early enough to feed decision points. Timing becomes unsynchronized and opportunities are missed to identify the enemy in time and space to trigger the coordinated attack.

Fires Perspective
A well-designed and planned coordinated attack requires rehearsals for successful execution. Rehearsals should include communications, movement routes, battle positions, time required to move assets forward, graphic control measures, and the fire plan. The rehearsals should also include confirming de-confliction of aviation and CAS initial positions from artillery positions, and airspace coordination areas. Failure to rehearse will likely lead to unsynchronized execution. Once an enemy force is identified moving toward the engagement area, the fire assets must be available to engage the target at the appropriate time. In addition, ensuring a centralized observer plan, to include redundancy, will help ensure the enemy is identified. Assuming brigade and division ISR assets are shot down, re-tasked, or not in operation, an observer plan may identify dedicated, alternate organic observers in position to call for fire on targets in the engagement area.
River crossing operations are one of the least trained operations in the Army and opposed river crossings are trained even less. Without a doubt, they are one of the most complex maneuvers to successfully execute, failure of which can have operational-level consequences. Constraints make it difficult to train for deliberate river crossings: an available, and appropriate, body of water, a Multi Role Bridge Company, MRBC, and buy-in from higher headquarters because deliberate river crossings are doctrinally conducted at the division level. Few Army bases have access to an appropriate river or lake and there are only four MRBCs on active duty, one of which is in the Republic of South Korea. Due to these constraints, and others, training for opposed wet gap crossings is infrequent and resource intensive. Therefore, in the rare occasion when a unit is afforded the opportunity to conduct an opposed wet gap crossing, the importance of capturing and disseminating lessons learned is paramount for leader development across the formation.

USAREUR conducted two opposed river crossings on Romania’s Olt River during Saber Guardian 17, (SG17), a multi-national exercise. Each operation consisted of two brigades, one maneuver and one maneuver support, with JMRC OCTs filling the role of HICON and EXCON. Bridging assets were composed of a US MRBC augmented with a Dutch bridge platoon, a German M3 bridging company, and a Romanian PR-71 pontoon bridging company. All three bridges were planned to be emplaced from the near shore to an island in the middle of the river with a ford site leading to the farside.

While planning a river crossing operation, planners must adhere to the six fundamentals of gap crossing operations; surprise, extensive preparation, flexible planning, traffic control, organization, and speed. The fundamentals are not rank ordered; however, SG17 showed that overlooking any one of the fundamentals can result in needless casualties and mission failure.

**Extensive Preparation:** The overall planning and execution must incorporate indirect fires. During Operation Plunder in WWII, General Bernard Montgomery’s 21st Army Group placed a constant smoke screen for a full ten days before his crossing of the Rhine River. This tactic facilitated a detailed river reconnaissance and achieved complete surprise, a river crossing fundamental. During battalion and brigade training exercises, Fire Support Officers (FSO) plan limited smoke missions, usually during breaching operations, which rarely plan for one hour of obscuration. FSOs must plan and resource smoke missions that provide a longer period of obscuration, up to several days, during a deliberate river crossing.

During SG17’s first opposed river crossing, the training unit’s plan did not survive first contact when the assault element was compromised moving their assault boats to the launch site. The OPFOR’s accurate direct fire resulted in casualties and should have triggered an immediate smoke or fire mission by the training unit. Gradual upward sloping terrain on the farside objective allowed the OPFOR to maintain continuous observation on the river crossing site. With unhindered observation, the OPFOR called numerous fire missions on the crossing area, any one of which could have caused mission failure. The training unit planned numerous linear smoke missions but never fired any.

**Bottom line:** During a river crossing, FSOs need to set the conditions, target planning and logistical, to provide battlefield obscuration for hours, possibly days, in advance of friendly maneuver and until the unit is ready to assault the farside objective. Smoke missions should not stop once the first bridge is erected. Units must eliminate OPFOR ‘eyes on’ their crossing site through a combination of obscuration, direct, and indirect fires. “When employed, the obscuration blanket may cover several kilometers of the gap and gap approaches to conceal the actual crossing locations, but it does not obscure the vision of the bridge crewmembers.” (ATP 3-90.4 Combined Arms Mobility).

**Speed:** A prove way to limit friendly casualties and battlefield damage is by quickly eliminating direct and indirect fires on the crossing site, which is where both maneuver and support elements are most vulnerable. Speed is of the essence; the time to move slow and deliberate ceases once a river crossing commences and the element of surprise is no longer a factor. In this environment, units that truly understand their commander’s intent, desired end state, and operate in a mission command environment increase their chances of success.
Both brigades failed to secure the farside objectives during either river crossing. Lack of speed was a contributing factor. During the first wet gap crossing, within 45 minutes of the initial boat assault, the assaulting battalion captured all but one OPFOR on the island. Nothing prevented the assault element from securing the ford site, a natural choke point, but they received orders to await for additional combat power as the German M3 bridges began ferrying operations. It was several hours before the unit initiated maneuver from the island to the farside. The unit successfully prepared the ford site with accurate indirect fires (IDF) which killed a majority of the OPFOR. However, failure to seize the initiative, as well as provide obscuration on OPFOR overwatch positions, allowed OPFOR IDF to inflict multiple casualties on the stationary training unit; casualties which inhibited their ability to maneuver.

Bottom Line: Keep moving, eliminate/obscure OPFOR direct fires, eliminate all observers, seize the farside objective, and set conditions for the bridgehead force. Commanders need to communicate clear intent and end state and allow subordinates to execute. Expect casualties and plan accordingly. Until the enemy’s ability to affect vulnerable river crossing forces, either by direct or indirect fires, is mitigated, every minute might be the unit’s last. “Speed is so important to crossing success that extraordinary measures may be justified to maintain it” (ATP 3-90.4 Combined Arms Mobility).

Traffic Management: Sometimes simply arriving at the battle can be the hardest part. Improper traffic management can impede a crossing operation as much as OPFOR. A brigade combat team has over 750 combat and support vehicles, all of which must cross at one or two crossing sites, in varying orders of priority. Traffic management requires several non-contiguous waiting areas, each with primary and alternate routes to the crossing site. Successful commanders and planners will emphasize the planning, synchronization, and rehearsal of this critical portion of the operation. Failure of this fundamental risks the wrong equipment crossing at the wrong time, ultimately ceding the initiative to the enemy.

With the benefit of observing the first iteration, the training unit for the second river crossing operation developed an intricate traffic management plan, strictly controlled by an MP battalion. Constrained to minimal maneuver area, the unit broke their combat power into small serials that were spread out from their tactical assembly area. An MP section accompanied every serial, controlled by the MP BN CDR who, in coordination with the crossing site commander and the brigade TAC, managed all traffic from the tactical assembly area to the crossing site. Though the plan was not rehearsed during the brigade combined arms rehearsal, initial movements were smooth with minimal clustering of serials. An issue occurred when the unit fired an artillery mission on the ford site, causing massive notional craters that needed to be bridged by a Rapidly Emplaced Bridging System, REBS. All forward momentum was ceased until the REBS was located, called forward, and emplaced which took more than two hours. Meanwhile, the clustered assaulting task force, immobilized on the island, suffered numerous OPFOR indirect fire missions, any one of which could have caused mission failure.

Bottom Line: Traffic management must be planned in detail, with contingencies, to ensure the right equipment is at the right place at the right time. Units are extremely vulnerable while staged in their waiting areas and this vulnerability increases if the traffic control plan fails, allowing enemy observed traffic jams. This portion of the operation requires emphasis during the combined arms rehearsals with discussion of numerous ‘what if’ scenarios. Leaders need to know where all key equipment is on the battlefield at all times and plan for quick call-forwarding of equipment essential to unimpeded crossings. Additionally, a detailed EXCHECK will help synchronize and increase situational awareness across the formation. “Traffic management is essential to cross units at the proper locations, in the sequence desired, and as quickly and efficiently as possible to maintain momentum. Traffic management prevents the formation of targets that are susceptible to destruction by artillery or air strikes” (ATP 3-90.4 Combined Arms Mobility).

Leaders at echelon owe it to their units and the Army to understand the planning and execution of opposed river crossing operations. Opportunities to train on this complex, high pay-off mission are rare, necessitating the proper preparation, dissemination, and retention of AAR comments. These lessons are crucial to the development of leaders who will not be afforded the opportunity to train on this mission. A full understanding and implementation of the six gap crossing fundamentals is the natural place to start the plan and prepare process. Additionally, studying the Battle of the Rapido River, WWII; Operation Plunder, WWII; and Operation Badr, Yom Kippur War, are illustrative examples of outcomes achieved when leaders adhered, or failed to, gap crossing fundamentals.
Personal Staff Officer: An Underutilized Capability

By CSM Charles Burrow, MAJ Durward Johnson, SSG Eddie Mejia—Mustang (BDE) Observer, Coach, Trainer Team

The Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), located at Hohenfels, Germany, brings together multiple allied and partner nations’ armies to train with U.S. forces for decisive action, joint operations, and combined operations. The focus is on training for decisive action within a multinational context by integrating Joint, Interagency, and Multinational elements. In this environment, an area of persistent friction is Mission Command. As a philosophy, successful Mission Command leads to the development of teams that share mutual trust and a shared understanding, which enables disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent. To help achieve Mission Command in a multinational task force environment, understanding staff roles, responsibilities, characteristics, and relationships is paramount. An often overlooked capability is the personal staff officer. This article discusses the roles and responsibilities of personal staff officers according to U.S. doctrine.

Brigades, as well as, Divisions and Corps, typically group staff members by area of expertise under a coordinating, special, or personal staff officer. Coordinating staff officers are the commander’s principal staff assistants. At the brigade level, they are composed of the S-1—personnel, S-2—intelligence, S-3—operations, S-4—logistics, S-6—signal, S-8—financial management, S-9—civil affairs. Coordinating staff officers also exercise planning and supervisory authority over special staff officers. The number of special staff vary by organization, but normally consist of a fire support officer; engineer; air liaison officer; air and missile defense officer; aviation officer; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear officer; public affairs staff planner; military information support operations officer; and provost marshal. By law and regulation, personal staff officers work directly for, and have direct access to the commander. They advise the commander within their specific area expertise, advise other members of the command, and coordinate with entities external to the unit. At the brigade level, personal staff officers typically include the command sergeant major, brigade judge advocate, the chaplain, and the surgeon.

**Command Sergeant Major**

Commander’s business is command team business, and therefore command sergeant major (CSM) business. As a member of the commander’s personal staff with a mission to give sage counsel on all matters that pertain to enlisted Soldiers, CSMs must be versed in all aspects of the military decision making process (MDMP) and war fighting for the level that they find themselves serving. At the end of the day, it’s an enlisted Soldier tasked with executing the plan derived during MDMP, and using his weapon to defeat the enemy on the battlefield. All matters pertain to enlisted Soldiers.

CSMs do not need to be subject matter experts, but must know enough to ask hard questions and be able to extend the commander’s influence in his absence. Senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are expected to move to points of friction, and identifying that friction is where the challenge is. If a CSM is uninformed about each of the warfighting functions’ (WfFs) responsibilities, how can they identify a shortfall and weigh in with their experience? Too often we find CSMs defaulting to their comfort zone and zeroing in on sustainment and medical care. This is a strength of most NCOs because throughout their career those duties at the company and below have rested in their area of responsibility.

The difference is at the battalion and above level, there exists a staff. Just like other areas, subject matter experts exist to deal with the challenges of sustainment and medical care. In this environment, CSMs are able to concentrate equally at other areas to identify friction and move to it. This is not to suggest ignoring sustainment and medical care, but giving equal measure of time, with additional laser focus on areas that seem to struggle. Is the targeting cycle efficient? Is the intelligence collection plan tied to priority intelligence requirements? In prepping for the defense, are we leaning forward on obstacle planning? Is the logistics synchronization meeting accomplishing the objective of extending operational reach? All of these areas are owned in detail by the operations sergeant major (OPS SGM), but command emphasis comes from the command team. Looking at those challenges will inform the CSM’s placement on the battlefield. While the OPS SGM toils in the current operations integrating cell (COIC) to shape the fight, the CSM is free to move around the area and provide direct feedback to the commander and coordinating staff on real time implementation.

This type of approach also makes the CSM accessible to subordinate commanders. Having a working knowledge of all aspects of the plan, allows for frank and informed discussions with those commanders on challenges as they see it. These are as important as discussions with subordinate First Sergeants and CSMs. Getting ground truth feedback from the units executing the tasks and delivering advice on the spot is a powerful tool in expanding the expert power of the CSM, and extending the commander’s influence and clarifying intent in his absence. Relaying that ground truth back to the commander and staff aids plans and current operations in the fulfillment of their duties, and paints a picture for the commander to issue more informed decisions. Two sets of eyes are better than one.

**Brigade Judge Advocate**

As the senior legal advisor to the command and the primary legal advisor to the commander, the brigade judge
advocate (BJA) ensures the delivery of legal services encompassing six core legal disciplines—international and operational law, military justice, administrative and civil law, contract and fiscal law, claims, and legal assistance. During decisive action, the focus is synchronizing operational law support across WfFs while postured to provide real-time advice and expertise to the commander. Given the breadth of issues across WfFs, BJAs must be legally proficient in all aspects of operational law. Operational legal issues typically include mission authorities; law of war; rules of engagement; intelligence activities; interrogation operations; fires authorities, constraints, and measures; lethal and nonlethal targeting; contracting and fiscal authorities; treatment of detainees and noncombatants; foreign claims; the conduct of investigations; and military justice. In a multinational task force environment, the challenge is even more pronounced given national caveats of our allies and partners, and how they impact mission requirements and capabilities. BJAs must be legal subject matter experts and provide guidance across WfFs during planning and current operations. Proper legal support resolves issues before they happen and support the mission within the commander’s intent. In order to provide legal expertise during operational planning and current operations, BJAs must also be subject matter experts in staff processes, to include the operations process, targeting, and MDMP. Staff integration and synchronization across WfFs cannot occur unless the BJA understands roles and responsibilities of each WfF, actively participates, and provides fully developed inputs. BJAs facilitate mission accomplishment through proactive legal advice throughout the operations and planning processes with a clear understanding of the commander’s intent, situational awareness, and expertise in legal considerations.

Chaplain
“The Chaplain Corps is the most uniquely situated among all diverse military branches, professions, and staff positions to provide reliable internal advisement to commanders not only on religious matters, but also on matters of morals, ethics, and morale.” Unit ministry teams (UMT) focus on providing religious support to the lowest ranks and forget about their duty to advise the commander. One example in a previous DATE-E rotation, a chaplain and chaplain assistant executed great battlefield circulation but realized midway through the rotation they had failed to advise their commander. The UMT circulated a company
that sustained significant losses over the prior 24 hours. With the chaplain’s situational understanding of the impact of the losses, it was critical the UMT advise the commander on these significant events and the effect it has on the mission. This could greatly influence the commander in shifting the priority of effort to another company. During another rotation, the UMT successfully advised the command. In that situation, the Brigade UMT identified their BSB chaplain was killed in action during an attack. They activated their succession plan seamlessly to ensure consistent religious support. The prior coordination with command teams and intentional advisement enabled the Brigade UMT to be successful. UMTs must maintain strong staff integration and continuous assessment throughout each phase of the operation while advising the commander accordingly. Chaplains and assistants must provide intentional ministry at all times. If they fail to complete this key task, they will continually miss crucial opportunities to brief their commanders and help shape the operation. “Chaplains and chaplain assistants assist commanders by providing religious support and advisement on religion throughout the planning processes and the execution of operations.”

**Surgeon**
The brigade surgeon’s primary responsibilities include advising the commander on the health of the command and coordinating health assets and operations within the command. Army Health System (AHS) operations are much more complex in a multinational decisive action environment where tactical combat casualty care (TC3) plays a vital role. Future conflict against a near-peer dynamic threat emphasizes the need for more deliberate planning and synchronization of AHS operations into planning and current operations at the brigade level. The surgeon maintains overall responsibility for medical care and should leverage the brigade medical planner and noncommissioned officer in charge to manage coverage and medical capabilities across the area of operations. It also requires working closely with the brigade support battalion commander, support operations officer, and Role 2 commander to ensure the AHS plan is nested with the commander’s intent and brigade operations. For execution, the surgeon section should also coordinate with the CSMs to ensure the plan is executed down to the lowest level.

As a medical doctor, the surgeon’s most critical role is establishing the standard of care for sick, injured, and wounded Soldiers within the area of operations. The surgeon is the only one at the brigade-level with the specific training to make medical care assessments for the commander. This role must be a priority during decisive action due to likely increases in casualty numbers. Additionally, future conflicts will likely increase the demand for medical care for detainees, local civilian population, and enemy personnel during all phases and transitions of decisive action operations. This will require a comprehensive AHS plan and synchronized execution. By maintaining situational understanding of the operational environment, the surgeon can influence changes to the AHS plan by making sound recommendations to the commander regarding medical care requirements during all phases and transitions of the operations.

An observed trend at JMRC is the surgeon typically remaining in the brigade administrative logistics operations center (ALOC). In the ALOC, the surgeon assists the S-4 with understanding the medical common operating picture for the brigade, manages casualty tracking, and maintains awareness of medical assets in the area of operations. However, the brigade staff should leverage the surgeon section by integrating them into planning and current operations. Additionally, the brigade surgeon is rarely observed moving to the Role 2 Medical Treatment Facility to assess the quality of the medical care or the medical workload requirements based on casualty estimates. Without first-hand situational understanding, the surgeon’s ability to make sound recommendations to the commander is compromised. In a decisive action environment, AHS operations can have enormous impact on the unit’s ability to fight.

**Conclusion**
Personal staff officers have unique roles, responsibilities, and characteristics to supplement units at all levels. They are situated to provide specialized advice to commanders, other members of the command, and entities external to the unit. Units with a better understanding of personal staff can leverage these capabilities during planning and current operations. A better understanding also enhances mutual trust and a shared understanding across the staff – the basis of the Mission Command philosophy. More cohesive teams lead to disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent while fostering agile and adaptive leaders. At JMRC, we train how we will fight the next war. Effective plans and accurate assessments of operations are necessary to be successful in this uncertain and complex environment. By not overlooking the personal staff officer, units achieve better unity of effort and are better able to inform their commander’s decisions. Timely and effective decisions lead to success on the battlefield.
Four JMRC Observer Coach Trainers (OCTs) from diverse teams volunteered to be on the first JMRC away game to South Africa at the largest Combat Training Center (CTC) in the southern hemisphere located in Lohathla, South Africa.

Between the dates of 15 and 29 July, the four OCTs supported U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) staff acting as exercise control (EXCON) and higher headquarters (HICON). They assisted the exercise planner and Opposing Force (OPFOR) commander in finalizing the design of the Master Scenario Event List (MSEL) and controlling the OPFOR situational training exercises (STX) and the Force-on-Force (FoF). The OCTs partnered with the South African Defense Force (SADF) evaluators and training facilitators during STX lanes, sharing EXPRO and OC/T Academy tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and observed, coached and mentored the historic and distinguished 2-327th “No Slack” Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division, its organic “Cougar” Rifle Company, “Havoc” Forward Support Company, and the 2nd South African Infantry Company (2 SAI) Mechanized of Johannesburg.

The OCT team provided recommendations for risk mitigation in the safety plan, such as pre-planned hasty landing zones (HLZs) – this since the Lohathla CTC is in a remote part of the Kalahari Desert in the Western Cape Province and the medical evacuation (medevac) time to Role 2 exceeds the golden hour. This was facilitated with air and ground medevac full-rehearsals prior to the Live Fire Exercise (LFX) succeeding FoF.

The commander of the 2-327th LTC Edward Sedlock leveraged the JMRC OCTs to maximize training value during both STX and FoF, with CBIs designed to challenge their junior leaders with multiple concurrent decisions under pressure, establish priorities of work and improve transitions- reconsolidation and reorganization.

The exercise director of the SADF, and his two OPFOR commanders, shared experiences of controlling crowds and dispersing riots from the Apartheid era and recent deployments to hot zones on the continent: South Sudan, Central African Republic, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. South Africa is a key supporter of the United Nations peacekeeping mandate and the African Union. With 11 official languages, a factionalized, complex history and adversaries shaping atmospherics and the African National Congress’ (ANC) disposition toward the U.S., “No Slack’s” Battalion commander was the perfect representative for the US Army. His junior leaders learned many valuable lessons facing situations that required agility and adaptability, it was the composed professionalism, and disciplined initiative of the U.S. Soldiers and marines, to include the JMRC OCTs that were received best by the hosts. Correctly, the engaging Green Book After-Action Review (AAR) had as a central theme: emotional intelligence.

Though there are differences in the way JMRC and Lohathla CTC currently operate regarding instrumentation, and adjudication of weapons’ effects on vehicles and personnel, there are doctrinal similarities and a predisposition toward shared understanding. Due to the cooperation that developed between OCTs from the two countries, the groundwork was laid for future possibilities between the two CTCs. The exercise director declared this the best Shared Accord yet and invited the senior general staff in the SADF to the remote CTC to observe for themselves, the strides made in the South African and American partnership.
Reserve Training Opportunities
By LTC Troy Sedam / Minuteman 07

The Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) cannot complete its assigned mission without support and augmentation from the US Army National Guard and Reserve Forces. In FY17, 3,200 Reserve and Guard Soldiers supported JMRC Exercise Rotations through multiple projects and seven brigade and division-level rotational exercises. The Reserve Component provides exercise support by augmenting JMRC permanent party forces with: Infantry OPFOR, Engineer OPFOR, Medical OPFOR, Civil Affairs, PYSOP, HICON, Public Affairs, and OC/T Augmentation. Additionally, team Minuteman reinforced JMRC Mission Support with maintenance personnel providing 56K man hours of work through the Troop Construction Program.

JMRC is unique in that it requires an augmented HICON to run rotations at the training center. Staffs assigned to serve as the HICON for a rotation replicate the Multinational Division - Hohenfels (MND-H) and command a multinational team fighting a near-peer threat inside of Germany. They coordinate, resource, and execute a full division fight utilizing live, virtual, and constructive Brigades simultaneously. The blended training environment provides the HICON with the unique opportunity to execute the joint targeting cycle and intel collection with the use of live, virtual, and constructive assets. The HICON is able to influence and attrit OPFOR in the scenario through the use of joint and multinational assets such as SOF, UAS, fires, and cyber/EW; all lethal and non-lethal effects executed by the HICON in the virtual and constructive scenario have a direct impact on the live forces "in the box".

Finally, JMRC is leaning forward to provide ODT opportunities with readiness building exercises for National Guard and Reserve Component forces. These training opportunities will reinforce Objective-T priorities by maintaining unit integrity at the crew, squad or platoon or company level. These exercises will provide the appropriate operational environment (Static or Dynamic) and threat for Squad, Platoon, and Company sized elements. JMRC will support the development of an external evaluation (EXEVAL) plan to assist with the production of Commander assessments of the units Training proficiency. These ODT missions provide real world exercises that allow the units to work along our NATO Allies and country partners.

Please, feel free to contact Minuteman 07, LTC Troy Sedam, with any questions or comments about opportunities for AC/RC units at JMRC. All team contact information can be found on the back page of this publication.
In the Army’s ongoing effort to focus on training to fight and win tonight, it is our responsibility as noncommissioned officers to train our Soldiers, build readiness, and develop lethal and decisive units. While many units have made significant strides toward improving NCO lethality, units must continue to work on synchronizing training at echelon to maximize opportunities on the calendar. To do this, NCOs must paint an adequate picture for the Commander by reporting utilization numbers to indicate personnel trained, and why or how that training met the Commander’s intent for unit readiness. This gap between training briefed and training executed must be bridged to produce the desired readiness end state. The first step toward this readiness end state is to maximize the power of our training environment. Our focus can no longer be simply on just training Soldiers, we must build decisive units. This monumental task requires the NCO Corps to focus training efforts, support readiness generation, and produce a highly trained force.

Sustainable readiness is not about being ready at one specific time. It is about building and sustaining readiness over long periods of time. At the end of the day, our mission as noncommissioned officers boils down to the often-used phrase, “I train Soldiers.” A phrase that confesses dedication to the overall mission, regardless of how it gets accomplished. While incredibly noble, it is becoming apparent that just training Soldiers does not meet the requirement to provide a combatant commander with trained and ready units, leaders, and individuals. Merely saying we train Soldiers falls deceptively short of acceptable standards because Soldiers will always be the recipients of training. A bigger challenge is to say we build and sustain ready units. The Corps of the Noncommissioned Officer must meet this new challenge. Such a challenge demands the proper training and certification of leaders and Soldiers from home-station to the Combat Training Center.

When Soldiers are trained, they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct some type or level of activity to some specified standard. The NCO Corps should place a high value on legacy of training Soldiers while recognizing the importance to adapting to the realities of today’s Army. The phrase, “grounded in heritage, values, and tradition” conveys the sense that the Noncommissioned Officer Corps has an important legacy to preserve. The phrases, “values perpetual learning” and “adapts to a changing world” temper this historical perspective by stating that it is important for the Noncommissioned Officer Corps to change with the times, as factors both inside and outside the Army change.
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