

---

# Studying Orders

---

*A Companion to Orders: A User's Guide*

Brendan McBreen  
Chad Skaggs  
The Warfighting Society

# Table of Contents

---

Introduction	3
<b>Chapter 1 Background and Theory</b>	<b>4</b>
General	4
History	6
Doctrine	9
Theory	10
Mission Orders	11
Detailed Orders	12
<b>Chapter 2 Decision Making and Command and Control</b>	<b>15</b>
Decision Making	15
Command and Control	18
<b>Chapter 3 Plans and Intent</b>	<b>20</b>
Plans	20
Planning Ahead	21
Intent	23
<b>Chapter 4 Practices and Techniques</b>	<b>27</b>
Practices	27
Formats	27
Qualities of Orders	29
Oral Orders	35
Techniques	39
METT-T	39
Warning Order	40
Orientation	40
Situation	41
Mission	45
Execution	47
Scheme of Maneuver	47
Tasks	48
Coordinating Instructions	48
Admin and Logistics	48
Command and Signal	49
Rehearsals	50
<b>Chapter 5 Training and Practice</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Chapter 6 Battle Vignettes</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Chapter 7 References on Orders</b>	<b>67</b>

*“The smallest detail, taken from an actual incident in war, is more instructive for me, a soldier, than all the Thiers and Jominis in the world. They speak, no doubt, for the heads of states and armies but they never show me what I wish to know: a battalion, a company, a squad, in action.”*

— Ardant du Picq  
*Battle Studies*

---

*“...successful leaders study, train, and exercise their minds to improve tactical proficiency. We study examples of successes and failures not to emulate someone else's scheme, but to increase our own tactical understanding and competence.”*

— MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

---

*“The list [where faulty orders result in catastrophe] is a long one. Gallipoli, Borodino, Gettysburg, Stalingrad, Kut el Amara, Arnhem, Plevna. A million lives flung into the cauldron here and there have not appreciably left their mark. Blunders continue to be made. Leaders give impossible orders based on sketchy appreciations. Men obey them and die miserably. Battles which are skilfully won receive great attention. Battles lost by muddling are forgotten. Hence the aura of glory which surrounds war.”*

— H.B. Chamberlain  
"On the Issue of Orders"

# Introduction

---

Orders—the heartbeat of military operations.

Orders—frequently, the difference between defeat and victory.

Orders—infrequently, the subject of study.

Few of us are born gifted communicators—we practice.

Few of us are born gifted tacticians—we analyze historic battles.

This study provides a broad background and context for military orders.

Hard-won experience results in trends and practices necessary to clearly command where *what can be misunderstood will be misunderstood*.

These ideas represent most published work on orders and are a point of departure for further study.

Chad Skaggs  
Gotemba, Japan  
July, 2021

# Chapter 1

## Background and Theory

---

### General

*“With overwhelming material support over any adversary and the best-trained troops on the planet, it’s increasingly obvious that military thinking has been the United States’ most serious deficiency, and American military thought...has become riddled with watered-down principles and misunderstood doctrines and overloaded with bureaucratic baggage.”*

— Colonel Robert Killebrew  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“There has never been a Clausewitz in the American Army because the writing of On War took time and serious thought. An Army officer has not time to think, and imaginative reflection is discouraged.”*

— Colonel Robert Killebrew  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“In peace time...an order issued may be altered or cancelled five minutes later...but in war it must be definitely accepted as a fact, that such... orders are impossible.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command*, 1907

---

*“Every order places the subordinate to whom it is given in a position of constraint, to which he willingly submits without any question if he recognizes the necessity for it; in such a case obedience is not a servile submission, but the free gift of a free man; but he complies with an order unwillingly if it is dictated merely by the pleasure of giving orders, or by the desire to magnify one’s own importance.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command*, 1907

---

*“The essential thing is action. Action has three stages: the decision born of thought, the order or preparation for execution, and the execution itself.”*

— Hans von Seeckt, Chief of Staff, German Army  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“A major source of delay in combat operations is the vital need to decide, disseminate the plan, and issue the commander’s intent to subordinate commanders and soldiers. A study of U.S. Army operations orders determined that the orders issued on seventy operations (eight divisions, thirty-two brigades and thirty battalions) were of such poor quality, fraught with redundant information and needless detail, that the order hindered the units’ ability to accomplish the assigned mission.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti  
*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command?*

---

*“The Schwerpunkt (main effort) concept meant that an officer was trained to identify the decisive element of a confused situation and focus his energies upon it. This involved two fundamental requirements. First, an order was not immutable, demanding absolute submission to its every letter. Orders, in the form of Direktiven (directives), were guides to enable the commander on the ground to identify the decisive element. The second requirement was a common body of thought, a doctrine, which would ensure commanders agreed on the decisive element in a given situation and on the most effective response.”*

— Martin Samuels

*Command or Control: Command, Training, and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918*

---

*“As I have pointed out more than once, orders, instructions, reports and messages will have to abandon their many official frills and step out stark naked into the reality of war ... it is seldom necessary to turn it [order] into a ritual so holy that it is considered almost sacrilegious not to begin an operation order with "information" ... "intention," and so on, etc., etc. All orders will have to be as brief as possible, and not as formal as possible. They should be based on a profound appreciation of possibilities and probabilities, which, as I have explained, will generally lead to a series of alternatives. Therefore an order should not be suited to one operation but to several possible phases of this operation. It should possess a central idea and several radii working out towards the final circumference--victory to you and defeat to the other man.”*

— J.F.C. Fuller

*Armoured Warfare*

---

*“...every man in the squad should listen to his squad leader's orders with the thought in mind that he may have to be the squad leader before the battle is over.”*

— Platoon Sergeant, quoted in Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen  
*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

---

*“[Orders] bring about a course of action, in accordance with the intention of the leader, suited to the situation to ensure full cooperation between all arms and services...”*

— Herbert J. Brees

*“Combat Orders,” 1920*

---

*“...plans and orders exist for those who receive and execute them rather than those who write them.”*

— MCDP 5 *Planning*

---

*“Good Orders. A good order includes: An analysis of the situation. A tie to the higher intent. A unit mission and intent. A series of tasks with intents. A designated main effort, and a designated reserve.”*

— Brendan McBreen

*“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”*

---

*“All of the work of the staff boils down to orders [Befehlen]. "Order" is a simple word and apparently a simple activity, and yet it is interminably difficult when it is a question of giving an order quickly, correctly, and clearly. The art of giving orders is difficult in peacetime, it is frightfully difficult in war, where whatever is falsely explained, whenever a word is falsely understood, the result is damage and disaster.”*

— Max Schwarte

*“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”*

*“...an order is only justified if, under the actual circumstances of the case, it was absolutely necessary.*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command, 1907*

---

*“An estimate of the situation is valueless unless it reaches its logical termination in a decision upon a suitable plan of action. Similarly the decision is of little value unless conveyed, in the form of appropriate orders, to the subordinates charged with its execution.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“...he who seeks to become a leader of troops should develop the following qualifications:*

- 1. The ability to reach a clear and intelligent decision.*
- 2. The ability to communicate this decision clearly and unmistakably to others.*
- 3. The necessary knowledge to enable him to lead the troops so as to carry out his intentions.”*

—Hugo Von Giżycki quoted by Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

## History

*“Russel Stolfi: General, we spoke earlier about the importance of military history in creating a sufficient understanding of military theory. Unfortunately, in the United States today we do not teach military history to any great degree in our military schools--Kriegsakademie or anywhere else. Would you be confident that junior officers and field-grade officers could make good independent decisions if they did not have a background in military history?*

*von Mellenthin: I must admit that it is a pity that you don't lecture war history. It is a pity because it, in my opinion, is one of the best means to develop good leadership and, therefore, a man with common sense...”*

— F.W. von Mellenthin  
*Armored Warfare in World War II Conference*

---

*“Basically the orders format developed in three stages: (1) That period prior to 1905, when there was no established operations order format and orders were given either orally or in written free form. (2) The period from 1905 through 1954 which used the basic orders format established by Major Eben Swift in 1905. (3) The period from 1954 through the present time which witnessed a major modification and expansion of the orders format.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti  
*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“The body of the order is divided into numbered paragraphs without headings.*

*Paragraph 1 contains information of the enemy and so much of the general situation of our own troops as it is desirable for subordinates to know.*

*Paragraph 2 contains the objective of the movement or instructions covering as much of the general plan as is considered necessary to insure proper cooperation in the movements of all parts of the command.*

*Paragraph 3 contains the disposition of the troops adopted by the commander to carry out the second paragraph, including the tasks assigned to each of several fractions of the command.*

*Paragraph 4, with few exceptions, contains all the orders necessary for the regimental train, ammunition columns, and sanitary troops.*

*Paragraph 5, with few exceptions, contains the necessary information as to the place where the commander can be found or where messages can be sent.*

*The ending contains the authentication of the order by an appropriate signature, and a statement showing how the order is communicated to the troops.”*

— Major Eben Swift  
*Field Orders, Messages and Reports 1906*

*“During [WWI], the lower the echelon that produced an order, the more likely it was to use the Swift format. These orders were brief and to the point. In keeping with current doctrine, a statement of intentions is absent. Swift had also modified the format of the order. Paragraph 2 became 'Mission of the Command,' or 'Plan of the Commander,' although in practice the paragraphs did not use the titles.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

*“The orders format emerged due to the operational requirement for standard guidance when directing combat operations. The orders format evolution was based primarily upon operational requirements, repeated use, and continuous adaptation through trial and error. Unfortunately, changes to the format have been usually reactive rather than anticipatory as shortfalls are uncovered and corrective measures taken during the conduct of operations. Also, the resultant changes usually reflect the immediate demands of combat operations rather than a systematic evaluation of the future operational environment.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti  
*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

*“The evolution of the operations order has not been without cost. The mistakes in communicating basic guidance for the execution of operations have been numerous and profound. Some lessons learned have been assimilated and later forgotten or rejected as the impact of the mistakes become absorbed in the 'glory which surrounds war.’”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti  
*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*



*“...in 1905, General Griepenkerl's letters on applied tactics contributed to the doctrine further. Griepenkerl's work was translated by the English, French, Greeks, Japanese and eventually the Americans and had a profound effect on the orders format. General J.F. Bell and Major Eben Swift, Commandant and Assistant Commandant of the Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth obtained a copy of Griepenkerl's work and used it to develop an orders format for the American Army. Major Swift's book was approved by the War Department in 1906 and codified the written orders format that remained relatively unchanged until 1954.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“The expression of intentions in orders is not an American innovation. While the exact genesis of the concept remains unknown, conveying intentions has been a part of the orders process in the German Army since the late 19th Century. It was the success of the Prussians in the late 19th Century that sparked the interest of the U.S. Army leaders. As interest in the Germans grew, the U.S. Army began to rely less and less on the French Army for its doctrine. It is probable that the idea of conveying [commander's intent] in orders was prompted by detailed study of the German military.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson

*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“The early doctrine of the Army had its roots in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, at the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry. American authors took the thoughts of the Germans, and "Americanized" them. That is, following the accepted convention of the day, they took a German concept, wrote it as if it were an original idea, and used an American experience, normally from the Civil War, to illustrate it.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson

*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“There was agreement between the Americans and the Germans as to who expressed their intentions. Either the 'supreme authority' in the American view, or the 'Highest Headquarters' in the German view, provided his intentions to subordinates. It is probable that this focus on the highest commander was based on the ability of that commander to see the entire problem, and that the actions of all subordinates had to contribute to the accomplishment of that commander's plan. Since no other commander could have the same sense of the battle, his plan governed the overall conduct of operations. All actions on the battlefields of the 19th Century were dedicated to accomplishing the intentions of a single commander.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson

*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“Many types of orders were developed during our Civil War, but none of them were fixed, and depended on any logical sequence of the necessary elements. The letter of instructions and orders in that form seemed to be the most common form of written order. No particular advantage was taken of the experience obtained in many campaigns, although many coherent and forceful examples of orders in form of letters were issued by the various commanders. To the elder von Moltke and to the German general staff must be given the credit of clarifying and simplifying directives and field orders.”*

— Major C. H. Corletta

*“The Evolution of Field Orders,” 1925*

---

*“By 1982, however, Lieutenant Colonel Huba Wass de Czege's version of commander's intent was a lift from 1980's German doctrine. Wass de Czege did not go to earlier U.S. Army doctrine in his research of this particular concept, nor apparently, did any of the other American officers who were championing its prominent inclusion in Army doctrine. Therefore, the inclusion of commander's intent in Army doctrine after 1982 is probably not an example of a concept that matured within the Army, but one that was rediscovered.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“By 1993, commander's intent had become a thing, not a concept. It was seen as a part of the order, not the process that Swift originally outlined, and that had been carried forward in doctrine. This may be the one area where the new interpretations of the old concept fall short of the ideal. The current doctrine seems to imply commander's intent is conveyed at the start of an operation in a written order that is referenced throughout the operation. As such, it remains the guiding light for subordinate operations. However there is no apparent provision for the appearance of friction on the battlefield, and the subsequent need to either change or modify the commander's intent.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

## Doctrine

*“Doctrine provides the linkage between theory and practice. Theory establishes a body of principles by which the conduct of war can be explained....From doctrine evolve specific techniques, standard operating procedures, and all the mechanics by which armies conduct war. The operations order is at the bottom of this chain. It is a procedure, a technique for implementing command and control doctrine within the postulated operational environment according to the controlling principles of the applicable theory. Successful execution of operations is dependent upon a connection between sound techniques, reliable doctrine, and an accurate vision of future war derived from applicable theory.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti  
*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“Sound doctrine must be developed based upon applicable theoretical principles as well as a clear vision of the projected operational environment.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti  
*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“Units in the field seek their own systems in order to fill the void left by confusing doctrine. These field expedient answers are not standardized...and are often not standard within the same division or brigade. The result is a serious inability to speak a common language concerning tactical planning In the U.S. Army.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The first thing to understand about military doctrine or ideology is that different armies can have their own distinct ways of operating-different military cultures contain different value systems. What is normal practice in one army may be seen as outlandish in another-including such basic things as their approach to command. Some armies have more functional command values than others; some cling to outmoded ideals. All probably write their history in a way which supports their ideology.”*

— Spencer Fitz-Gibbons

*Not Mentioned in Despatches: The History and Mythology of the Battle of Goose Green*

---

*“[Interwar] doctrine urged orders-writers to prepare [written orders] based on the understanding that at least one person would read them and try to misunderstand them.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson

*Commander’s Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

## Theory

*“Long orders require time to write them down, to read them through, to understand them, but not to think them up; shorter orders requires more time and effort to compose, but require only a few minutes to understand.”*

— Max Schwarte

“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*“An order in wartime suffers from a difficulty that is lacking in peacetime [military service] and in civil callings: the uncertainty of its basic assumptions, particularly where knowledge of the enemy is concerned. In this respect, the things that one bases orders on - suppositions, reports, and intelligence - will only be proved true or false in the course of battle. The assumptions underlying orders can change. Intelligence reports contradict each other, one dispatch confirms another, the third contradicts both.”*

— Max Schwarte

“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*“Frequently recurring changes to orders encourage the feeling that the leader lacks clarity and sureness, and weaken the trust that is indispensable in war. Such feelings will eventually find their way to the troops and will express themselves in wasted energy, in vacillation and hesitation, in the abandonment of a strong grip.”*

— Max Schwarte

“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*“Changes in intelligence lead to a change in point of view and can incline one to alter orders. One should submit to this desire only in extremely pressing circumstances: ‘order plus counter-order equals disorder.’”*

— Max Schwarte

“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*“The standard of what must be included in an order is established by the degree of mental development, intelligence, and the education practiced in the Army.”*

— Max Schwarte

“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*"It is not only the commander's will which is decisive in war, but also his manner of expressing that will. The order which is to transform decision into action is of the utmost importance."*

—Albert Buddecke  
*Tactical Decisions and Orders*

---

*"The art of commanding is exceptionally difficult, but is indispensable for a leader of troops. A plan, promising success, may fail if it does not find correct expression in an order. Often a faulty expression, a word too much or too little, or an omission, may become the source of serious consequences."*

—Albert Buddecke  
*Tactical Decisions and Orders*

### **Mission Orders**

*"The higher commanders should give only such orders as are unavoidable. They must abstain from any interference in matters of detail, and must leave the choice of means to their subordinates."*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command, 1907*

---

*"The use of mission orders and oral operation order techniques were standard practice in the Wehrmacht and was a critical element in their tactical flexibility."*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*"Mission tactics demand a high degree of military skill and discipline. "Mission tactics" are just as the name implies: the tactic of assigning a subordinate a mission without specifying how the mission must be accomplished. The manner of accomplishing the mission is left to the subordinate, thereby allowing him freedom -- and establishing the duty -- to take whatever steps he deems necessary based on the situation."*

— John Antal  
*"Combat Orders: A Tactical Analysis"*

---

*"Mission tactics is a concept that seeks fast, decentralized decision-making."*

— Captain John F. Antal  
*"Mission Tactics"*

---

*"In World War II, those who served in armored divisions --and probably in other units as well -- learned that mission-type orders were a requirement if the most was to be obtained from a command....As the battle becomes more complex and unpredictable, responsibilities must be more and more decentralized. Thus mission-type orders often will be used at all echelons of command and probably will be the rule at the division and higher levels. This will require all commanders to exercise initiative, resourcefulness, and imagination -- operating with relative freedom of action. In our tactical forces we have built-in organizational flexibility. We must recognize this and capitalize on it in our orders..."*

— General Bruce C. Clarke  
*Guidelines for the Leader and the Commander*

---

*“...basically a mission type order needs to cover only three important things: 1) It should clearly state what the commander issuing the order wants to have accomplished. 2) It should point out the limiting or control factors that must be observed for coordinating purposes. 3) It should delineate the resources made available to the subordinate commander and the support which he can expect or count on from sources outside his command.”*

— General Bruce C. Clarke  
*Guidelines for the Leader and the Commander*

*“In the past we have often used what may be called mission tactics and mission orders. Under this system, instructions and orders are not prescribed in minute detail; the reason being that the commander on the ground is the only person who can correctly judge existing conditions and take the proper action when a change occurs in the situation. In addition to the tactical reason there is a strong psychological reason for such tactics and orders. The commander who is given a mission and made responsible for results will normally accomplish more because he can act in accordance with his own individuality.”*

— Major Fred During and Captain G.B. Guenther  
*“Review of Military Literature” 1935*

*“Mission tactics are the preferred method of waging maneuver warfare. This is accomplished largely by verbal orders, issued by the senior commander, overlooking the terrain where the battle will be fought.”*

— John Antal  
*“Combat Orders: A Tactical Analysis”*

*“In mission tactics, the higher commander describes the mission and explains its purpose. The subordinate commander determines the tactics needed to accomplish the task based on the mission and the higher commander’s intent. In this way, each leader can act quickly as the situation changes without passing information up the chain of command and waiting for orders to come back down.”*

— MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

*“In contrast to the current 5-paragraph order, in which the mission is usually to seize a piece of terrain, the mission-type order provides subordinate commanders with an understanding of what their superior wants to accomplish vis-a-vis the enemy. For example, paragraph two of the five paragraph order states, usually in geographic terms, the mission of the unit. It may read something like, ‘At 0900 on 1 Jan 8\_, this battalion will attack and seize Hill 48 (Grid 123456) and be prepared to continue the attack on order.’ The mission-type order would, instead, state, ‘At 0900 on 1 Jan 8\_, this battalion will attack through Hill 48 in order to prevent enemy observation and interference with amphibious offloading in the beachhead area.’ This order clearly shows the intent of the commander and orients on the enemy rather than a terrain feature. Subordinate commanders, aware of the overall purpose of the attack, may deviate from the geographic objective in order to accomplish the commander’s intent. The requirement to attack through Hill 48 also allows them to exploit any gaps created by the attack.”*

— William Lind and Michael Wylie  
*The Maneuver Warfare Handbook*

## Detailed Orders

*“Detailed plans seek order in an environment that rejects order.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal  
*“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”*

*“...the anguish of developing this voluminous beast of a brigade OORDER that is only good when you roll it up, go find somebody, and poke them in the eye with it, because that is all it's good for once you LD.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel Hansen  
*“Accelerated Decision Making Process” 66 Stories of Battle Command*

---

*“In the Soviet Army's case, the “detailed orders” approach to maneuver warfare is the cornerstone of their system of ‘Troop Control.’ Centralized planning and decentralized execution, within the narrow parameters established by the plan, fit the traditional Russian style of war. Reluctant to accept responsibility outside the letter of the order, ‘Troop Control’ provides the positive control necessary to maintain the tempo required of Soviet operations.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The United States Army has historically conducted attrition warfare employing detailed orders tactics. The U.S. Army Tactical Orders Process has been typified by detailed orders that attempt to foresee every eventuality and plan for every contingency. This traditional process has facilitated the employment of firepower but does not support the demands of maneuver warfare.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The United States Army adopted AirLand Battle, however, without changing the traditional attrition-based detailed orders tactics techniques for preparing and issuing orders. The application of detailed orders tactics does not meet the requirements of AirLand Battle.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“Attrition emphasizes firepower and an orientation on terrain. Maneuver emphasizes mobility and an orientation on the enemy. Each style of war has a corresponding tactical orders process style. The orders process technique that best supports the attrition style of war is the system of ‘detailed-orders tactics.’ The orders process technique that best supports maneuver warfare is ‘mission tactics.’”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“There [in those armies], what we value as beneficial brevity appear to be considerable gaps; there the subordinate leader receives specific detailed guidance that here would be considered an affront to his independence [Selbständigkeit].”*

— Max Schwarte  
*“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”*

---

*“...care must be taken to adapt the order to the intellectual horizon and military ability of the one who is to carry it out.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*"During tactical exercises in time of peace the superior issues short orders and instructions and leaves the execution of the same as far as possible to his subordinates. For the superior then wishes to become acquainted with the ability and judgment of his subordinates. If errors are made by the latter they do not result in injury to the troops, but serve as a means of instruction and further advancement. War is not the place for this. In war it is necessary to dispose of the available strength and ability in such a way as to derive the greatest benefit."*

—Hugo Von Giżycki quoted by Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*"In deciding into how great detail you should go in your orders, it is well to remember that all your subordinates are considered to be well trained officers. By remembering this you will avoid giving detailed instructions on points which such subordinates should be allowed to determine for themselves. Do not usurp their rights as sub-commanders."*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

# Chapter 2

## Decision Making and Command and Control

---

### Decision Making

*“Combat decision making is decision-making with incomplete information.”*

— Colonel Michael Wyly,  
“Teaching Maneuver Warfare”

---

*“The Germans emphasize that a Commander must not only know how to arrive at a decision but also when. They contend that it is better to render a partly faulty decision at the right time, than to ponder for hours over various changes in the situation and finally evolve a perfect decision, but too late for execution. They visualize rapidly changing situations on the modern battlefield and emphasize “seizing and maintaining the initiative.” The students at the Staff School are not only trained how to make estimates and render decisions, but to recognize when the situation requires a new decision and orders. In some problems and terrain exercises, it was readily apparent that only a few minutes were available for a decision; in others, hours. Students were taught to budget their time accordingly, taking into consideration not only the time required for the issuance of orders, but for the execution of the plan.”*

— Albert C. Wedemeyer  
German General Staff School

---

*“A leader must meet battle situations with timely and unequivocal decisions.”*

— Captain C.T. Lanham  
Infantry in Battle

---

*“The first demand in war is decisive action...The commander’s primary role is to make decisions. The commander’s decisions are translated by his staff into plans for execution. The purpose of the command staff process, therefore, must be to support the commander’s ability to make decisive decisions in time. Muddled, confused, or late decisions produce combat orders that often set the stage for defeat.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

---

*“If time is the common denominator of all military operations, then the side that can seize a time advantage gains a dominant benefit. Time is gained by thinking and acting faster than your opponent. Time is gained by making clear, reasonably correct decisions quickly. Time gained in making the decision, therefore, is time gained for combat.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

---



*“Frequently, commanders must make decisions in combat without the benefit of a time-intensive, deliberate analysis. In combat, the commander may have to proceed through the decision-making process and issue oral orders based on his own knowledge of the situation, without taking the time to formally include the staff in the process.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

---

*“Every tactical decision in war must be based on the enemy. Commanders who attempt to execute their plans, regardless of the enemy situation, open themselves up to fall into a trap. Commanders who determine their courses of action based solely on the terrain, likewise set themselves up for failure.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

---

*“The analytical decision-making approach is an attempt to bring order out of chaos by applying overwhelming mass. Current U.S. Army and Marine Corps doctrine on the command-staff process emphasizes this analytical approach to combat problem-solving.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

---

*“During my second rotation [to National Training Center], the brigade commander, using what we call the accelerated decision making process, was able to assist the brigade combat team in developing feasible, suitable, acceptable brigade level OPORDERS in 6 to 8 hours. Unheard of.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel Hansen

“Accelerated Decision Making Process” 66 *Stories of Battle Command*

---

*“Should the mission no longer suffice...or it is changed by events, the decision must take these considerations into account... [I]n the vicissitudes of war, an inflexible maintenance of the original decision may lead to great mistakes. Timely recognition of the conditions and the time which calls for a new decision is an attribute of the art of leadership. The commander must permit freedom of action to his subordinates.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“To create an uninterrupted advance and exploit fleeting opportunity, the commander required strong nerves to fight off the inherent paralysis of decision making in war. The factors that comprise the climate of war, especially danger, uncertainty, and chance, conspire to immobilize commanders.”*

— Russel H. S. Stolfi

“A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted”

---

*“The Wehrmacht gained an appreciable time advantage over their opponents In most of their tactical engagements by quick decision making and the use of oral operations orders. Decisions were usually made by the commander and his deputy or chief of staff. Committee briefings, long situation analysis and inordinate detail did not generally occur.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*"Fluid situations, fleeting opportunities, and chaotic conditions will require rapid decision-making under conditions of great uncertainty. Furthermore, speed will often demand a conscious sacrifice of precision."*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*"The decision arises from the mission and the situation. Should the mission no longer suffice as the fundamental of conduct or is changed by events, the decision must take these considerations into account. He who changes his mission or does not execute the one given must report his actions at once and assumes all responsibility for the consequences. He must always keep in mind the whole situation...However, in the vicissitudes of war an inflexible maintenance of the original decision may lead to great mistakes. Timely recognition of the conditions and the time which call for a new decision is an attribute of the art of leadership. The commander must permit freedom of action to his subordinates insofar that this does not endanger the whole scheme...."*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, German Field Service Regulations of 1933

---

*Basing the scheme of maneuver solely on the terrain places the commander and his staff in a dangerous dilemma. With the decision made without adequate information to select a best approach, the commander either ignores the enemy and forces his synchronized plan to work, or ignores the plan and issues oral orders to change the scheme of maneuver. Commanders are, therefore, often forced to ignore the detailed decision-making doctrine in order to make the vast majority of time-pressured tactical decisions during training exercises."*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

*"It's Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making"*

---

*"Subordinates are expected to make decisions within the guidelines established by the commander's intent. When decisions are made at the point of execution, advantage can be taken of battle opportunities as they occur, without loss of time"*

— John Antal

*"Combat Orders: A Tactical Analysis"*

---

*"The initial order must specify the general plan of attack; this will ensure that, in the absence of orders or in situations requiring immediate decisions, subordinate commanders will be able to take action that will conform to the overall decision and plan of the battalion commander."*

— FM 17-33 Tank Battalion, 1949

---

*"The great revolution in the security, the capacity, and the rapidity of means of communications brings with it the danger that one [the higher commander] can get involved at a time and place where his intervention can only serve unfavorable ends. The leader located far to the rear pushes for a quick decision without being able to see the obstacles that stand in the way of the execution [of his plans]."*

— Max Schwarte

*"A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913"*

## Command and Control

*Because war is characterized by chaos, uncertainty, and rapid change, control quickly breaks down. It is probably a mistake to speak of control in combat. MCDP 6 states that 'given the nature of war, it is a delusion to think that we can be in control with any sort of certitude or precision.' As anyone who has experienced combat will undoubtedly agree, it is impossible to control everything. Attempts to impose control also can easily undermine the initiative upon which Marine Corps tactics depend. Marines can become hesitant; they may feel they must wait for orders before acting.*

— MCDP 1-3 Tactics

---

*"The greater the predictability of the operational environment, the more important is control in achieving tactical and operational success. Conversely, the greater the uncertainty of the operational environment. The greater the importance is command in achieving success. Both command and control must be present, to a certain degree, to enable a force to achieve success."*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*"He who has clear definitions can command."*

— Goethe quoted by Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*"To espouse a command-oriented philosophy and have our procedures reflect a control-dominant approach is to risk contusion and defeat."*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*"LTC Timmerman in his article 'Of Command and Control and Other Things'... proposes that command and control are two competing activities. Generally he typifies command as a function of leadership which results in effective operations. Whereas control is a function of management which results in operations that are efficient. Both command and control contribute to success."*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*"The deterministic view of combat often leads to centralized control. It can be a recipe for micromanagement stifling the initiative subordinates need to deal with combat's inevitable uncertainties. Overly prescriptive orders and plans inhibit a unit's ability to cope with uncertainty and change. Eventually, the unit, inflexible and unable to adapt, may be overwhelmed by events.*

*The probabilistic view of combat recognizes that the complexity and uncertainty of war leads to a more decentralized approach to control. We place greater trust in subordinates to achieve a desired result. Through use of mission orders and commander's intent, subordinates are able to handle unforeseen situations and exploit opportunities that arise.*

*Marine Corps tactics are based on the probabilistic view of combat."*

— MCDP 1-3 Tactics

*“The art of properly framing orders so as to insure effective action by subordinates is an important feature in the exercise of command.*

— *Staff Officers Field Manual U.S. Army, 1932*

---

*“In the past, the traditional response to the chronic American weakness in command and control was to plan more thoroughly and leave as little to chance as possible. In their excellent book, *America’s First Battles*, Charles E. Heller and William A. Stoff remarked that ‘thorough planning, with its natural de-emphasis of unexpected situations (beyond the scope of contingency plans), led to rigidity and, often, heavy losses. In other words, the command-and-control weakness and its chosen professional remedy were but two aspects of a single larger problem: inadequate preparation of commanders and staffs for the real world of combat.’”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

*“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”*

---

*“The British Army employed two, mutually contradictory, command systems, which have been termed ‘umpiring’ and ‘restrictive control’. Restrictive control is a system in which subordinates are given orders which lay down their actions in detail and must be obeyed regardless of circumstances. Local initiative tends to be frowned on by commanders, on the grounds that it disorganises the centralised plan. This system of command was standard at the tactical level within the British Army and influenced the operational level, especially during the First World War. More common at the operational level, however, was the system of umpiring.*

*Umpiring is a term coined to illustrate that practice in which an officer abdicates his command responsibilities. In both directive command and restrictive control, the commander imposes his will upon his subordinates through the assignment of clear objectives, which he then ensures that his subordinates work to achieve. The umpire, by contrast, having indicated a general mission withdraws rather than spur on his subordinates. Whereas both directive command and restrictive control are ‘energy positive’, in that they force subordinates into action, umpiring is ‘energy neutral’.”*

— Martin Samuels

*Command or Control: Command, Training, and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918*

---

*“Doesn’t the superior lose control if his subordinates have a great deal of freedom to make their own decisions? The historical record quickly shows this is not the case. Generals George Patton and Bruce Clark both used mission-type orders in World War II. The German Army has used mission-type orders for over a century, yet it has not been an army that was ‘out of control.’ What changes is the way control is achieved. Instead of controlling by telling the subordinate what to do and then demanding constant reports to show he is doing it, control comes through the intent and the mission. Indeed, control is really replaced with guidance, while the intent and the mission ‘glue’ the force together.”*

— William Lind and Michael Wyly,  
*The Maneuver Warfare Handbook*

# Chapter 3

## Plans and Intent

---

*“The finest decision and tactical plan are of little value unless followed by clear and definite orders...”*

— Herbert J. Brees,  
“Combat Orders,” 1920

### Plans

*“Planning time saved is combat time gained.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal  
“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“A good plan is independent of any theory of war.”*

— Major John Garrett  
“Plans That Survive First Contact”

---

*“The entire order is expected to be read by everyone, no staff specific information is included. “[The order does] not expect the enemy to behave in specific way, but they do expect that all friendly forces behave in a specific manner in relationship to each other. These orders are a blend of mission type orders and prescriptive instructions. As units in combat produce orders they continue to plan beyond first contact with the enemy.”*

— Major John Garrett  
“Plans That Survive First Contact”

---

*“Plans! I have no plans, Sir. I shall be guided by circumstances!”*

— Wellington, at Waterloo, 18 June 1815  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“Plans must be simple and flexible. Actually they only form a datum plane from which you build as necessity directs or opportunity offers. They should be made by the people who are going to execute them.”*

— General George S. Patton  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“Sound tactics win battles and engagements...Sound tactics begin with effective and timely tactical planning.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“To get maximum combat power, we must have plans flexible enough to meet rapidly changing situations. But careful planning is not enough; this must be coupled with the readiness to change and adapt to situations as they are, not as they were expected to be...”*

— General Bruce C. Clarke  
*Guidelines for the Leader and the Commander*

---

*“In the preparation of the plan the commander usually issues a directive to his staff, and with that as a basis each staff section prepares the details pertaining to its particular part of the plan. Coordination in this respect as in all other staff functions is required in order to ensure a timely and comprehensive formulation of the tactical, administrative, and intelligence elements of the plan.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

---

*“[The field order] is the expression of the decision and will of the commander... [It] sets forth the tactical plan of action and missions decided upon and such details as to the method of execution as will insure coordinated action by the whole command...”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
“*Combat Orders*,” 1920

### **Planning Ahead**

*“Orders should instruct only so far as conditions can reasonably be foreseen. Orders which attempt to arrange details too far in advance usually have to be countermanded. Such changes tax the communications system, cause confusion and misunderstanding, impose needless hardships on personnel, and harm morale.”*

— MCDP 5 *Planning*

---

*“Because we cannot anticipate the unforeseeable, we tend to assume the future will be a linear projection of the present and recent past, and we frequently underestimate the magnitude of changes in the pattern of events over time. Consequently, our assumptions about the future, especially the distant future, are often greatly in error.”*

— MCDP 5 *Planning*

---

*“...plans that survive first contact are those that do not try to predict the future. Plans that survive first contact focus on the objectives and the interrelationships of subordinates to the aim. This type of plan, used by combat experienced commanders and staffs, survives as long as the objective retains its value in relationship to the overall goal.”*

— Major John Garrett  
“*Plans That Survive First Contact*”

---

*“When commanders were exposed to combat over a length of time their plans tend to conform to the same simple methodologies. The plans they developed no longer tried to be predictive about the future, detailed concepts and schemes of maneuver disappeared. What was left was long periods of detailed situational analysis and plans that only stated the aim, resourced subordinates, and did not attempt to dictate the method.”*

— Major John Garrett  
“*Plans That Survive First Contact*”

---

*“An examination of orders and plans over the last one hundred years shows that they all exhibit certain trends. Orders all start out long, complicated, prescriptive of minor details of leadership and discipline, and normally include a generous amount of the commander's personal idiosyncrasies. Once in combat, orders tend to conform to a similar pattern. They become shorter and they appear simpler on the surface, but they also portray a deep level of analysis.”*

— Major John Garrett  
“Plans That Survive First Contact”

---

*“Anticipatory orders dealing with a time a long way ahead—and those which go into minute detail—can seldom be carried out in their entirety.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command*, 1907

---

*“Above all, orders are to avoid going into detail when changes in the situation cannot be excluded by the time they are carried out...”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“Anticipation and advance planning are most important, but the commander must be careful not to provide in his orders for things too far in advance. Orders that attempt to give instructions covering all contingencies that may arise will probably have to be changed before execution, and they will probably lead to misunderstanding and confusion with regard to the main objective.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

---

*“Field orders should not attempt to arrange matters too far in advance...changes injure morale and are apt to impose unnecessary hardship on the command...The rule is to give sufficient detail to make the plan clear and ensure teamwork; to give to each subordinate a general understanding of the whole and a picture of the part he is to play...”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
“Combat Orders,” 1920

---

*“...remaining in doctrine was the apparent paranoia about giving too much information about the future to subordinates. Commanders were urged to limit dissemination of intentions unless knowledge of those intentions was essential to ensure cooperation of units.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“In 1941, the Army updated FM 100-5... exhort[ing] the commander to keep from ‘regulating matters too far in the future’ because that causes frequent changes.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“Confine your orders to the measures necessary to cover the particular situation presented in the problem. You will thus avoid the common fault of issuing orders that reach too far into the future.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

## Intent

*“[Commander’s Intent] is a statement, not a format.”*

— Captain Michael L. Ettore  
“Commander’s Intent Defined”

---

*“...just before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Infantry Journal published an article that explained how to translate intentions into orders using paragraph 3 of the operations order as the focal point. That appears to be the first instance in which it was suggested that a discussion of intent be placed into its present location, paragraph 3 of the operations order.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander’s Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“Combat orders must clearly and concisely express the intent of the commander... “*

— FM 100-5 Operations 1954

---

*“In the German Army, decentralisation was to be maintained only as long as it assisted the achievement of the intent. If it ceased to do so, commanders were permitted not only to order their immediate subordinates back on course, but even to bypass them and issue orders ‘two-down’.”*

— Martin Samuels  
*Command or Control: Command, Training, and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918*

---

*“Bad guidance — guidance that does not specifically assist the staff to focus the planning effort —can slow orders development and wastes staff planning time. Loss of planning time often produces tragic results on the battlefield.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal  
“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“Most commanders believe that they know how to issue guidance. Few commanders, however, have ever received any formal instruction on how to issue clear, concise, and effective guidance in a logical, sequenced manner. Platitudes concerning “kicking the enemy’s rear” or “moving swiftly with speed and agility to destroy the enemy in zone” do not provide the detailed information required by staffs to prepare effective tactical plans. Commanders who cannot communicate clear planning guidance hobble their staffs and degrade staff planning performance.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal  
“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”



*“An essential feature of the German system of directive command was that a subordinate should ‘enter into the mind of the commander’. Only in this way could commander and subordinate come to a ‘union of views’, whereby the subordinate could fully understand the overall intent and his part in it. Commanders therefore had the responsibility to make themselves clear to their subordinates.”*

— Martin Samuels

*Command or Control: Command, Training, and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918*

---

*“Communications will be interrupted by enemy action at critical times and units will frequently have to fight while out of contact with higher headquarters and adjacent units. Subordinate leaders will be expected to act on their own initiative within the framework of the commander’s intent.”*

— FM 100-5 Operations, 5 May 1986

---

*“The acid test of commander’s intent is the ability of a subordinate to act “correctly” when the situation has changed, the initial order is no longer valid, and the subordinate cannot receive instructions in time to get a decision on a new course of action. The subordinate must either act or wait for instructions and run the risk of being defeated. If the subordinate’s initiative is guided by a well-thought-out and clearly communicated commander’s intent, then the chances of acting “correctly” will increase.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal

“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“In the past, especially in staff school instruction, commander’s guidance has been given too little attention. This situation has conditioned many staff officers to expect vague and incomplete guidance from commanders.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal

“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“I do not propose to lay down for you a plan of campaign, but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done and leave you free to execute it in your own way.”*

— General Ulysses S. Grant, to General William Tecumseh Sherman. April 1862  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

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

— General Heinz Guderian

Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“In any sort of society... somebody has to give the orders. Orders have to be carried out. But whenever it is possible, it is a very good thing to explain why an order is given, why things are done a certain way... Let the man see a bit further along the chain in which he is a link.”*

— Field Marshal Sir William Slim quoted by Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“In so far as the conditions permit, it is often best for the commander to clarify his Intentions to his subordinates by word of mouth and discussion.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“Commander’s intent is the commander’s personal expression of the purpose of the operation. It must be clear, concise, and easily understood two levels down.”*

— MCDP 1-0 *Marine Corps Operations*, 2011

---

[Commander’s Intent] *“should be clear enough to ensure subordinates understood the object upon which they were to focus, but should not impinge on their personal initiative.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander’s Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

---

*“Commanders of subordinate units cannot plead absence of orders or non-receipt of orders as an excuse for inactivity in a situation where action on their part is desirable, or where a change in the situation upon which the orders issued were based renders such orders impracticable or impossible of execution. If the subordinate commander knows what the general plan-the end in view-is, lack of initiative on his part is inexcusable.”*

— U.S. Army *Field Service Regulations* 1918

---

*“A field order is faulty if it does not convey to the recipient the meaning and intention of the author...”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
*“Combat Orders,”* 1920

---

*“Nesting Intents. The intent of each task should be nested. Supporting efforts support the main effort. The main effort supports the higher headquarters. From the highest headquarters to the leading squad, the intents of all units should cascade so that the actions of each unit contributes to the whole. This is the only way to make a large organization operate effectively in a chaotic environment. Disciplined initiative at each level will contribute to the greater good only if the intent of each order supports the order above it.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
*“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”*

---

*“The commander’s intent statement is not a duplication of the scheme of maneuver paragraph; not where missions or tasks are assigned to subordinate units; and not the place for useless statements such as ‘we will attack vigorously,’ ‘we will utilize supporting arms to stun the enemy,’ or ‘try not to get bogged down.’”*

— Captain Michael L. Ettore  
*“Commander’s Intent Defined”*

---

*“A short, concise commander’s intent statement is easier to send via radio or messenger and is more easily remembered by subordinates once they come under extreme stress.”*

— Captain Michael L. Ettore  
*“Commander’s Intent Defined”*

---

*“Consequently, too many operations officers like myself lose sleep over the ‘parts’ that are supposed to be included in intent. We should simply make sure intent inspires Marines to do positive things they might otherwise not do if no intent were given.”*

— Major Thomas C. Greenwood  
“Commander’s Intent: The Seed of Hatian Success”

---

*“...key points [to intent] are that the commander must: write it himself, use the active voice and be concise, give commanders at all levels something worth discussing, arouse Marines and Sailors to feeling and acting nobly, convey his central concerns, and worries without diminishing command confidence, avoid summarizing other parts of the order or simply restating the concept of operations, not be afraid to have his intent reflect his personality.”*

— Major Thomas C. Greenwood  
“Commander’s Intent: The Seed of Hatian Success”

# Chapter 4

## Practices and Techniques

---

### Practices

#### Formats

*“Standard order formats expedite understanding, prevent omissions, and facilitate ready reference. However, content, clarity, and conciseness are more important than format. Slavishly following a prescribed format can result in rigid form and unimaginative content not consistent with the unique requirements of each situation.”*

— MCDP 5 Planning

---

*“In requiring students to give their orders, de-emphasize format. Once again, combat is an action thing. Too often in the classroom and in the bureaucracy, I have seen Marines - especially senior Marines - wanting to make it a game of words.”*

— Colonel Michael Wylly  
“Teaching Maneuver Warfare”

---

*“Too often I have seen Marines rejecting good tactical ideas because they could not fit them into the format. Too often I have heard squad leaders stutter through the format of the five paragraph order and then, after ward, say, ‘Alright, guys, now, here’s what we’re going to do...’ and proceed in their own words and with no set format to give a clear, concise imperative statement of what needs to happen.”*

— Colonel Michael Wylly  
“Teaching Maneuver Warfare”

---

*“There is no single ‘best’ way to prepare operations orders.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal  
“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“Standardization and simplicity were the key ingredients of the Wehrmacht’s tactical orders process. Although the Wehrmacht did not develop a rigid series of standard procedures or formats, a common, almost unspoken, understanding as to what was required was developed in the officer corps. This development was the result of the standardization of the education of the German officer corps provided by the institution of General Staff. The Wehrmacht’s tactical orders process derived its advantages from the quality of the officer corps. This understanding allowed the translation of the commander’s intent implicitly, without the need for elaborate explanation.*

*The Soviet Army, in a different fashion, created standardization and relative simplicity by training their officer corps. The Soviet troop control provides a strict standardization of the requirements of the tactical orders process. Orders are issued on formatted sheets, procedures are expected to be followed exactly, and norms for time requirements are established in regulations. These norms and regulations take on the authority of “law.” The penalties for disregarding or disobeying the established norms can be very severe.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The increasing demands for written orders coupled with the increases in the complexity of war brought about the emergence of standardized operations order formats to facilitate communications. Von Moltke's issuance of mission-type orders in the Franco-Prussian war is credited with allowing subordinates the freedom to exercise initiative within an overall plan designed to direct the effects of the combat.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“Too much time is wasted using procedures that emphasize the combat order as a final product of the orders process.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“...the operations order format must avoid the extremes of specificity or generality. It must not be so specific as to limit its application to the infinitely variable situations typical of combat. Conversely, it must not be so general as to obviate the advantages inherent in structured communications. However, no matter how eloquent, detailed, or brilliant the intended plan, unless the concept is understood and remembered by the subordinate leaders, the plan will not be executed. Thus, the orders format should account for cognitive processes common to its receivers so as to facilitate understanding.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“...information presented first has primacy over subsequent elements of information. In the Dyer [et al] study of 54 squads, statements at the beginning of the platoon operations order were more likely to be remembered than statements in the middle, or at the end by the squad leaders. An examination of the statements recalled by the squad leader by subject matter experts indicated that those that were remembered were not those that were the most important to the operation but those that were sequenced first.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“...the primacy of information presented first should require that the most important elements be listed first in the format. Since the enemy situation is so transitory and has such a high degree of uncertainty, it should not be the first item in the format. Current literature argues that the commander's intent is the most important aspect of operational plans.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“The [format] for preparation of orders should be used as a guide in order to maintain the proper sequence; but it should not be followed blindly, as all tactical situations vary in greater or less detail. Certain portions of the [format] may quite properly be omitted, while in other situations the form may be added to.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

---

*“Set rules and methods must be avoided..The commander’s decision is translated into action by means of combat orders which convey the commander’s intent and which give specific instructions to guide all elements of the command in the conduct of the operation...”*

— FM 100-5 Operations 1954

---

*“Matrix format is a result of peace-time training: trying to control tactical events with precise scripts. Combat is not a complex ballet of scripted phases. The enemy never lets this happen. Can you write a matrix order for the third inning?”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“Notes on Company Matrix Orders”

---

*“...a trained commander or staff officer prepares an order to fit the situation—not a form.”*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

---

*“The purpose of a uniform technique throughout the’ service in the preparation of orders is to promote clarity and prevent misunderstanding.”*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

---

*“There is no greater mistake, either in tactics or in the manner of drawing up orders, than a blind adherence to set forms. Every case is different. Every case must be judged and handled by itself.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

## Qualities of Orders

*“Squad leaders tended to omit information in the platoon order rather than distort it. Most additional information provided by the squad leaders focused on mission execution...Low levels of orientation and organization information were given. Squad members rarely asked questions. Approximately half the squad leaders briefed only the team leaders; another quarter briefed all squad members. Few leaders took notes during the platoon order, used terrain maps when briefing or questioned squad members on their understanding of their mission responsibilities.”*

— Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen  
*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

---

## Brevity

*“...an order should contain all that the subordinate must know in order to be able to act on his own responsibility for the attainment of the object in view, and no more.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command, 1907*

---

*“An order shall contain everything that a commander cannot do by himself, but nothing else.”*

— Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen, “McBreen’s Military Maxims”

---

*“The higher the authority, the shorter and more general will the orders be.”*

— Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke  
*Instructions, 1869*

---

*“The more pressing the situation, the shorter the order.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“The higher the command, the shorter and simpler the order.”*

— Lieutenant General George S. Patton, 1945

---

*“An order shall contain all that is necessary for the lower commander to know in order for him to execute independently his task. It should contain no more. Correspondingly, the order must be brief and clear... The commander must never fail to place himself in the place of the receiver.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“Lengthy orders are in most cases harmful.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“[Field orders] must be concise so that the essentials will not be obscured by superfluous information or instructions. They must be clear and sufficiently comprehensive so that each subordinate unit may have an accurate and exact idea of its assigned task.”*

— *Army Air Forces Field Manual Combat Orders, 1942*

---

*“The amount of detail in any order depends upon the composition and size of the force...the larger the force the more general, the smaller the force the more detailed the orders...”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
*“Combat Orders,” 1920*

---

*“[A] properly written field order is brief and to the point... It is so plain that the recipients obtain a clear mental picture of the plans and intentions of the commander who issues it...”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
*“Combat Orders,” 1920*

---

*“Every sentence in your order should be mission specific.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
*“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”*

---

*“...orders must be brief as clarity will permit, but clarity is not sacrificed for brevity.”*

— *FM 17-33 Tank Battalion, 1949*

---

*"[Orders] should only contain what is absolutely necessary, for each superfluous word makes understanding more difficult. Its expression must be so clear and simple that each receiver understands its properly and doubts or misunderstandings are out of the question."*

— Max Schwarte  
"A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913"

---

*"It is a mistake to include in an order matters that are self-evident. These make them longer, require time, and make understanding more difficult."*

— Max Schwarte  
"A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913"

---

*"[Fragmentary orders] are concise but not at the expense of clarity and omissions of essential information."*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

---

*"Orders should be concise. Those giving missions for subordinate units should prescribe only such details or methods of execution as are necessary to ensure that the actions of the subordinate unit concerned will conform to the plan of operations for the force as a whole."*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

### **Simplicity**

*"Simplicity is avoiding unnecessary complexity in organizing, preparing, planning, and conducting military operations. This ensures that guidance, plans, and orders are as simple and direct as the objective will allow. Simple guidance allows subordinate commanders the freedom to creatively operate within their battlespace."*

— USAF Doctrine

Quoted from B.B. McBreen, "McBreen's Military Maxims"

---

*"Order no more than is absolutely necessary and... avoid planning beyond the situations one can foresee. These change very rapidly in war. Seldom will orders that anticipate far in advance and in detail succeed completely to execution. This shakes the confidence of the subordinate commander and it gives the units a feeling of uncertainty when things develop differently than what the high command's order had presumed."*

— Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke  
*Instructions, 1869*

---

*"If one orders much, then the important thing... will be carried out only incidentally or not at all because it is obscured by the mass of secondary things and those which are valid only under the circumstances."*

— Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke  
*Instructions, 1869*

---

*"Orders may bind only insofar as they correspond to the situation and its conditions... Above all, orders are to avoid going into detail when change in the situation cannot be excluded by the time they are carried out."*

— Truppenführung, Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*"In issuing orders, detailed instructions should be especially avoided in cases where circumstances may have changed before the order can be carried out...The general views of the commander for the conduct of the*



*intended operation should be given, but the method of execution must be left open. An order thus issued assumes the nature of a directive.”*

— Felddienst Ordnung 1908

---

*Once we have it, there are a number of things we can do to increase speed. First, we can keep everything simple. Simplicity promotes speed; complexity slows things down. Simplicity should be central to our plans, our staffs (large staffs may be one of war's greatest consumers of time), our command and control, and our own actions.”*

— MCDP 1-3 Tactics

---

*“Two important characteristics of any plan should be simplicity and flexibility—simplicity to insure ease of execution and prevent misinterpretation, and flexibility to make it readily susceptible to changes in a changing situation.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual Combat Orders, 1942

---

*“In a difficult position, simplicity is important. As simple as possible on the communication method--not complicated, then you are lost.”*

— F.W. von Mellenthin  
Armored Warfare in World War II Conference

### **Clarity**

*Effective orders are the result of clear thinking, definite decisions, and clear, straightforward language designed to translate the decision into action.”*

— U.S. Army Staff Officers Field Manual, 1932

---

*“The shorter the order, the clearer it will be. It must not leave a loophole for the receiver of the order to evade its intentions or to transgress them. However, within the scope of the order, he must be left an opportunity to use his own initiative.”*

— Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units

---

*“... the order must be brief, clear, and definite, and it must also be suited to the recipient's range of view. Orders, during the transmission of which the situation may become changed, or those which may have to be carried out under circumstances which cannot be foreseen, must abstain especially from details.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
The Art of Command, 1907

---

*“After providing for the issuance of orders, [the commander] visits his subordinate commanders and his troops in order to inspire confidence, to assure himself that his orders are understood, and that adequate preparations for actions are underway.”*

— FM 100-5 Operations 1954

*“For the rapidly changing environment of combat, however, the Marine Corps needs to be good at verbal orders. This key skill accelerates our tempo and maintains our momentum. A tactical decision is meaningless without the ability to communicate it clearly and rapidly.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

*“Less is more. Be painstakingly brief and clear. Construct an unambiguous order with the fewest number of carefully chosen words. Kill all adjectives and adverbs. Avoid excessive “Be Prepared To” sentences for future potentialities. Strive to meet the current situation. When another task is required, issue another order. Avoid phases for the same reason. In the disorder of combat, simplicity is strength.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

*“Language. Use inclusive language, ‘You are moving with me,’ and avoid exclusive language, ‘You are not staying here.’ Avoid qualified statements, ‘Try to hold,’ or ‘As far as possible.’ These lessen responsibility. Avoid conditional statements, ‘If you can get over the bridge.’ Know and use precise tactical terms, the language of your profession. Mission and task statements, especially, need to be clear and correct. Tasks that focus on the enemy, fix, suppress, tasks that focus on terrain, secure, occupy, and tasks that focus on friendly forces, overwatch, have very precise meanings and need to be understood by your Marines. Likewise, when organizing for combat, use the terms attach, direct support, and take command. Imprecise statements, ‘The XO will supervise,’ or ‘Machineguns move with 3rd Platoon,’ can lead to dangerous confusion in combat.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

*“The military profession, like all other professions, has developed a technical vocabulary. This vocabulary is convenient and aids in the clear and rapid transference of ideas between military persons. The use of this vocabulary in texts and instructions is natural. In combat orders, it is essential that there be no opportunity for misunderstanding by any subordinate of the exact intended meaning of all terms used. With partially trained troops and staffs the use of technical military language may afford opportunities for such misunderstandings. Therefore, the use in combat orders of technical expressions should be avoided, if there is any danger of misunderstanding. In such cases, words of common understanding should be substituted, even at the sacrifice of brevity.”*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

*“Imagine, for instance, a football team in which, at the crisis of the game, the signals given by the team captain were not clearly given, or were misunderstood by the other players. You can readily picture the effect upon the result of the game, even though the individual players were stronger and heavier than their opponents. Although Napoleon said that the Lord was on the side of the heaviest battalions, he did not mean that mere numbers were the deciding factor, but rather that getting the heaviest battalions to the right place at the right time was what counted. Cooperation and teamwork count just as much in war as in football.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

**Timeliness**

*“Decisive action requires clear, succinct, and timely orders.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

*“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”*

---

*Clear, succinct and timely orders, by themselves, do not guarantee decisive action; but few, if any, victories can be won with muddled or confusing combat Instructions. A commander executes combat operations by means of his tactical orders process.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The side that can decide and issue orders faster than its opponent, and translate the order into decisive action, can gain a valuable time advantage. To gain this time advantage, the tactical planner must create and transmit the minimum essential elements of the order within the limitations of the available planning time. This must be accomplished in enough time for subordinate commanders and sub unit leaders to conduct their own planning, preparation, reconnaissance and rehearsal.”*

— Major John Antal

*“Combat Orders: A Tactical Analysis”*

---

*“Those organizations that can process accelerated information and produce effective orders from their decision-making apparatus gain a decisive advantage. Those that cannot will be defeated while the staff officers in the tactical command post watch the battle lost on their computer screens.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

*“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”*

---

*“The general trend...is to produce ever more detailed and complete written orders. The minimum products of an operations order, that prescribe product and priority of accomplishment, have not been established in doctrine. General norms for orders production are left to the discretion of commanders. The result is a ponderous and slow orders process...”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*von Mellenthlin: “You know, In a tank division there are no written orders. There are only verbal orders and the commander of the division can have assistant officers with radio connection to him at the place of the various regiments which inform him about movement. This keeps him informed, by radio.”*

*Pierre Sprey: “I would like to add a question to that. What would be your impression of the effect on operations and the effect on the speed of your divisions and the mobility of your divisions if you had to transmit all your orders by teletype --- perhaps via a computer.”*

*von Mellenthlin: “Forget about it.”*

— F.W. von Mellenthlin

*Armored Warfare in World War II Conference*

---

*“Even the best orders are worthless if they arrive too late. If this becomes a rule, it will affect the confidence of the troops. They deprive the officer who receives the order of the possibility of examining the situation and making his preparations, and thus lessen the chances of success.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan next week.”*

— General George S. Patton  
*War as I Knew It*

---

*“There are several methods of issuing an order: in fragmentary or complete form, given orally, dictated, or written. The particular method used in each case is a matter for the determination of the commander. He is influenced by the amount of time available, by the type of operation, by the degree of training of his staff and subordinate commanders, and by his personal preferences. The invariable rule is that an order must reach the lowest subordinate concerned in its execution in sufficient time to afford him suitable opportunity to make his own plans, issue his orders, and effect his dispositions in sufficient time to accomplish his assigned task.”*

— *Army Air Forces Field Manual Combat Orders, 1942*

---

*“When [fragmentary orders are] transmitted in a form other than written, the instruction should be followed as soon as possible by a written confirmation. When conditions permit, officers are used for the delivery of oral fragmentary field orders. The unit which has the least time to initiate its action should be the first to receive the order.”*

— *Army Air Forces Field Manual Combat Orders, 1942*

---

### **Oral Orders**

*“The operations order, at division level and below, was almost always issued verbally, by the commander, preferably overlooking the ground on which the battle would be fought.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders: An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“Remember, gentlemen, an order that can be misunderstood will be misunderstood.”*

— Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen. *“McBreen’s Military Maxims”*

---

*“We never loaded units with unnecessary bits of paper. Whatever could be disposed of verbally—and that meant most things, including operations orders—was done verbally.”*

— General Hermann Balck  
Quoted from B.B. McBreen. *McBreen’s Military Maxims*

---

*“The mission order should be issued orally, from brigade level down, to preclude unnecessary time delays. A verbal order issued by the commander on the battlefield is better than written order, prepared in quantity, but issued late.”*

— Captain John F. Antal *“Mission Tactics”*

---

*“The most important thing was that I gave all orders verbally. Even my largest and most important operations orders were verbal. After all, there wasn’t any need for written orders. As division commander, I forbade the use of written orders within my division.”*

— General Hermann Balck

---

*“Orders were exclusively verbal within the Panzerdivision. Balck made his decision for the next day during the evening and he gave the necessary orders verbally to his regimental commanders on the battlefield; then he returned to his main headquarters and discussed his intention with the Chief of Staff of the 48th Panzerkorps over the phone. If approval was obtained, the regiments were sent a wireless message: ‘No change’, and all the moves were carried out according to the plan. If there were fundamental changes, the Division Commander visited all of his regiments during the night and gave the necessary orders, again verbally. Divisional operations were conducted from the forward position on the battlefield. The Divisional Commander had his place with the group which was to make the main effort (Schwerpunkt).”*

— F.W. von Mellenthin  
Armored Warfare in World War II Conference

---

*“Where circumstances permit, oral orders are given in accordance with the terrain, not the map. On the front lines and with the lower commanders this is particularly so.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, German Field Service Regulations of 1933

---

*“Accordingly, an order must be brief and clear, definite and complete, tailored to the understanding of the recipient and, under certain circumstances, to his nature. The person issuing it should never neglect to put himself in the shoes of the recipient.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, German Field Service Regulations of 1933

---

*“Oral and dictated orders are similar orders in that method of both are spoken orders. Dictated orders are spoken slowly so that the receivers may write them down verbatim. Oral orders are not written verbatim, but notes are taken. The commander may say, ‘Copy this order,’ signifying that it will be a dictated order; or he may say, ‘Take notes,’ signifying an oral order.*

*The greatest advantage of oral orders is the short time required for their issuance. They have the disadvantage of depending upon the ear and, to a great extent, on the memory of the receiver. This may result in errors and misunderstandings. Oral orders have particular advantage and application in a rapidly changing situation, and in many instances the orders will be oral and in fragmentary form.*

*Dictated orders.-The dictated field order has many advantages over the oral order. The receiver is required to take down verbatim all provisions of the order as given. It then becomes a permanent ready reference for the subordinate’s use, and the chances of subsequent error due to forgetfulness or misunderstanding on his part are much less than in the case of oral orders. When time does not permit the issue of a complete written field order and the commanders can be readily assembled, the dictated order should be given in preference to the oral order.*

*A strict adherence to the prescribed sequence of the standard form for field orders is particularly applicable to oral and dictated orders. Training the mind to follow a logical systematic method of dealing with the situation is highly important. The written order, before issue, can be corrected, modified, added to, or otherwise changed. This can be done also with dictated or oral orders; but the moment a commander starts changing his dictated*

*or oral orders he opens the door to confusion and misunderstanding, to say nothing of the lack of confidence in him as a commander that is engendered by his apparent indecision and vagueness.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

---

*“As a general rule, the field orders of armies, corps and divisions are written; those of brigades or regiments written or dictated, and those of lower units, dictated or verbal.”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
“*Combat Orders*,” 1920

---

*“The standard for verbal orders should be: Three sentences, in thirty seconds, while under fire.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“Command. As far as possible, move to your subordinates and issue verbal orders face to face at a critical observation point on the battlefield. Beyond the words, a leader communicates far more by looking into the eyes of his Marines. When issued over the radio, a verbal order is far less likely to be misunderstood if it is well constructed, succinct and unambiguous. Remember also that issuing the order is only ten percent of the commander’s responsibility. Supervision, pushing the plan vigorously to success, is the true role of the commander.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“The battalion commander personally should issue the attack order to his subordinate commanders.”*

— FM 17-33 *Tank Battalion*, 1949

---

*“Oral orders, fragmentary orders, and warning orders should be considered as standard. These orders must be issued soon enough to permit dissemination by company commanders to the platoon. When time permits, it is desirable to supplement oral orders with attack orders of the overlay type, which should be as detailed as the situation requires.”*

— FM 17-33 *Tank Battalion*, 1949

---

*“Once the attack is underway, however, orders will of necessity be oral and fragmentary, and will be transmitted by voice radio.”*

— FM 17-33 *Tank Battalion*, 1949

### Clarity of Oral Orders

*“What [Haig] was thinking about the war as it stood on any particular day, no one, not even his Chief of Staff, could fully make out. He gave his orders quick enough, but never explained them. Moreover, men say he was tongue-tied. If it came to public speaking that was abundantly true. He was anyway a ‘silent’ man. But such silence was babbling compared with what he said when he gave an oral...order. You had to learn a sort of verbal shorthand, made up of a series of grunts and gestures...I recall one briefing which consisted of [Haig] with a pointer in front of a large-scale map, pointing at various spots and making grunting noises with a few words interspersed.”*

— Gerard J. De Groot  
Douglas Haig, 1861-1928

---

*“The superior knows well enough what he wishes to order, but what he actually has ordered in the excitement of an engagement is beyond his power to judge. In his mind there remains only what he wished done at that given moment, not the actual wording of the order, though the whole question depends upon the latter only.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
The Art of Command, 1907

---

*“...if we went to the bottom of the misunderstandings and mistakes, and their origin, we should find often enough that it was our own fault. When, for instance, a subaltern [2d lieutenant] tells his newly-appointed soldier servant to “get these gloves cleaned” (I have done it myself), why should we be astonished if the man sends the gloves to the washerwoman! Or again, whose fault is it if the man, being ordered to “bring me a glass of beer,” brings the wrong brand of beer, or gets it from A instead of from B.*

*Examples of this kind constantly occur every day, and the unlucky servant gets all the blame, because he went off on a false scent.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
The Art of Command, 1907

---

*“...how difficult it is, even in everyday life, to give orders in such a way as to make it impossible to misunderstand them, so as to place the difficulties of orders in the field in the right light. In the one case orders are given quietly at one’s ease, when there is nothing to distract one’s attention, while in the field we have to deal with the excitement of the moment, which may, all too easily, lead to crude, ill-considered, and hasty orders.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
The Art of Command, 1907

---

*“The formulation of a field order which is to be dictated or given orally is a more delicate task than that of a written order and requires more practice. Regardless of the size of the unit for which issued, dictated and oral orders should follow the prescribed form, which is the form for the formal written field order. The smaller the unit the more this is necessary in order to prevent the omission of essential details. Care and exactitude in the choice of language are also requisites. Before dictating an order or giving one orally, the commander must have his plan thoroughly crystallized and must know exactly what he is going to say and the exact language he is going to use. When he has the time, he should block out on paper the various headings and paragraphs of the order, noting the force to be included in each and the instructions to be given to each unit. When time does not permit this blocking out on paper, the order should be completely arranged in his mind before he starts giving it; that is, the decision must be made and the means for carrying that decision into effect must be determined upon before any start is made to issue the order.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

---

*“In general, however, it must be said that the ability to give orders goes hand in hand with tactical knowledge. Whoever has arrived at a definite and sure decision will be able to give clear and decisive orders.”*

—Albert Buddecke  
*Tactical Decisions and Orders*

---

*“When verbal orders are being issued by the commander, each subordinate present should jot down such notes as will obviate the possibility of his forgetting any of the details that apply to his own particular command. Ordinarily also, a staff officer of the commander will at the same time take down sufficient notes to enable him to make a memorandum of the principal details of the order.*

*After having issued verbal field orders, it is usually advisable for the commander to state that in case any one does not understand his orders he should say so in order that the matter may be cleared up at once.*

*Any officer who does not thoroughly understand his orders should of course have no hesitancy in asking that they be repeated or explained. If a false sense of pride keeps him from asking for such information or elucidation, he is not playing fair either to himself or to his commander.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

## Techniques

### **METT-T: Estimate of the Situation**

*“Your METT-TC analysis has to consider the enemy’s intent and scheme of maneuver. Don’t just look at what he might or can do. Consider what he needs to win, and look at how he loses. Assess his tactical triggers, and update your model with every engagement. Then you are ready to develop a scheme of maneuver to defeat him.”*

—Captain Larry Sharp  
*“Setting the Conditions for Decisive Engagements in Buhriz”*

---

*“A detailed, written Commander’s Estimate of the Situation will rarely, if ever, be found below division.”*

—United States Marine Corps *Staff Manual*, 1944

---



*“It is even doubtful if large units will ever prepare a complete written estimate covering any phase of an operation after the operation in question has begun. Estimates made during an operation will normally either be mental or by the use of brief notes.*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

*“The terrain and its influence upon the situation must be given the consideration due its importance, for the nature of the ground -whether favorable or unfavorable-may mean the difference between success and failure.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch

*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

### **Warning Order**

*“Maximum use was made of warning orders to give the troops plenty of time to prepare for combat and to initiate movement. Parallel planning techniques, where each subordinate echelon of command began planning as soon as the warning order was received, was normal procedure. Often, a written order was only prepared after the operation was conducted in order to have a record for the unit's official history.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

*“Critical time is wasted if a warning order is not issued as soon as possible. Warning orders should be issued over the quickest available means. Doctrine does not prescribe a specific format for the warning order.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

*“Warning orders and fragmentary orders mentally prepare the troops for the complete order and give them time for preparations.”*

— Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units

*“But we didn't allow the battalions or squadron enough time to plan it and practice it all the way down to troop level. Then they had to execute it without a lot of rehearsal. Totally the fault of the brigade. And, you have to have a timekeeper and this time we didn't have a timekeeper telling us we were way behind. We needed someone telling us, “Get the mission out,” and “It's time to rehearse,” et cetera. As soon as you get the mission, you set up a time sequence that allows you to monitor all these things so you give these units two-thirds. The point is, even if it's an average plan, get the average plan out to the units on time. An average plan well rehearsed will be much better than this ideal plan with no time to rehearse. You think you know that going in, but you let yourself get overwhelmed with TOC movement and other missions. It becomes a vicious cycle and suddenly time has gotten away from you and it's time to execute.”*

— Colonel Craig Madden,

*“Air-Ground Planning” 66 Stories of Battle Command*

### **Orientation**

*“I told everybody that there were two pieces of key terrain I wanted to control, Hill 466 and the John Wayne*

*Foothills. We got to those pieces of key terrain and when I got there I said now we win because that is the key terrain. Problem is he didn't ever want that key terrain. He stayed on the east side of the Siberian Ridge Complex and waited for us to attack.*

— Colonel Rick Lynch  
 “Pick Up the Red Pen First” 66 *Stories of Battle Command*

*“Infantry squads can be classified as teams that often perform emergent or unexpected, as opposed to established or routine, tasks. Member actions can vary greatly from mission to mission depending upon the dynamic interaction between the enemy and the squad itself, the terrain, the weather, etc. Thus in order to perform well the squad must be informed about each situation/mission that it faces and must be organized appropriately for it. On the other hand, in some military units team member actions remain relatively constant from mission to mission (e.g., actions of a mortar crew vary little across missions). In such cases, the orientation and organization functions become less important.”*

— Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen  
*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

*“Infantry rifle squads are not ad hoc groups; they have a history. This history, which includes all the experience that they have had as a squad as well as the training for individual team member positions experienced by each member, impacts upon the squad leader's operation order. For example, standing operating procedures (SOP) that have been established within the squad also serve orientation and organizational functions. If such SOP are well-established and applicable to the specific mission, it may not be necessary for the squad leader to give a detailed execution paragraph. However if the mission and situation are unfamiliar to the squad, the leader may devote much time to execution, thereby focusing heavily on the orientation and organizational functions of the team.”*

— Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen  
*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

*“Task Organization. Organize your force before issuing the order. State the time of attachment.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
 “All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

*“Orientation. One sentence on orientation, if needed, should precede the order to identify any new control measures.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
 “All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

## **Situation**

*“In general, orders should not merely repeat information and instructions from higher authority; rather, orders at each echelon should adapt the scope of information and the level of detail to the particular situation.”*

— MCDP 5 *Planning*

*Orders may bind only insofar as they correspond to the situation and its conditions.*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

*“The order should be organized in the order of succession of development of the situation and should lead from the situation, by way of the mission and the objective, to the execution in general and in particular.”*

**Situation - Enemy**

*"I simply took at face value what the division order said. You get a division order out there, the 52nd Division. And there's always an intel annex, and in the intel annex is always the most likely enemy course of action. And, all I did, very naively, was assume the 52nd Division does have eyes so they're telling me what the enemy is going to do. As a result, I based my plans on what I thought the enemy was going to do as a function of what the division told me they were going to do, which was all wrong. All wrong."*

— Colonel Rick Lynch

"Pick Up the Red Pen First" 66 Stories of Battle Command

---

*"You have to focus on the enemy. You have to think like the enemy, and that's really the most critical piece of battle planning. But we pooh-pooh that all the time. Instead, we say the enemy is going to this, the enemy is going to attack in this CRP, FSE, advance guard formation. Then in the CRP you can expect to see three vehicles, and the regimental recon comes forward and it's going to have some BMPs and BRDMs. But that's all wrong because he never does that. The OPFOR at the National Training Center is not constrained by the smart books we write here at home station. He does whatever he wants to do."*

— Colonel Rick Lynch

"Pick Up the Red Pen First" 66 Stories of Battle Command

---

*"So, the moral of this story is don't believe anything you hear from anybody because nobody knows. Unless you have the opportunity to call the enemy personally and ask them what they are going to do, nobody knows. Everybody is just thinking what they know. We use the term 'most likely enemy course of action' but we have no idea what that means. All we're doing is thinking. So, what the commander has to do is say, 'Okay, I got all that input. Very interesting. But first tell me what is the enemy's capabilities.'"*

— Colonel Rick Lynch,

"Pick Up the Red Pen First" 66 Stories of Battle Command

---

*"...our focus group research showed that the EMLCOA is part of a self-referential decision-making loop because the order-writer has already chosen a preferred SOM to which the enemy will react to write the EMLCOA. The order-writer develops a SOM based on the EMLCOA, and the EMLCOA is based on a SOM that the writer already has in mind while conducting the METT-TC. Our focus groups showed that the current approach to teaching and developing EMLCOAs... leads to a middle-of-the-road approach that ascribes insufficient agency to the enemy, resulting in poorly developed analysis that falls into multiple cognitive traps."*

— Major Roberto Scribner and 2nd Lt Patrick Terhune

"EMLCOA 2.0"

---

[Marine Officers] *"stated that they had developed a preferred SOM prior ro EMLCOA...development. The respondents then consciously or unconsciously structured the enemy's actions to serendipitously allow for the platoon's use of a combined arms attack that maximized the use of indirect fire and automatic weapons."*

— Major Roberto Scribner and 2nd Lt Patrick Terhune

"EMLCOA 2.0"

---

*“To achieve better EMLCOA analysis, mirror-imaging must be eliminated; the enemy must be ascribed the appropriate level of agency to do what is most effective for its own ends; and moral, psychological, and emotional states of the actors on the battlefield must be taken into account.”*

— Major Roberto Scribner and 2nd Lt Patrick Terhune  
“EMLCOA 2.0”

*“It is important to remember that conducting EMLCOA analysis does not excuse the analyst from understanding how the enemy’s doctrine may shape or constrain action and decisions. Doctrine can supersede creativity, and the analyst must understand when this is the case for a particular opponent.”*

— Major Roberto Scribner and 2nd Lt Patrick Terhune  
“EMLCOA 2.0”

---

*“Obscurity of the situation is the rule. Seldom will one have exact information on the enemy. Clarification of the hostile situation is a self-evident demand. However, to wait in tense situations for information, is seldom a token of strong leadership, often of weakness.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“Everything that is known concerning the enemy situation, his intentions, and his capabilities must be contained in the order. If, by extended contact, the friendly unit is familiar with the enemy, the paragraph relating to this can be short. For new troops, unfamiliar with the combat area, a brief summary of the enemy situation must be made, even frequently a summary of the development up to the given time. An order must not contain any guesswork about the enemy. His intentions may be stated only if indications leave no doubt that he will carry them out.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“...brigade and battalion staffs rarely have enough information on the enemy during planning to select a single best course of action. In most cases, the selection of the best course of action is based solely on the terrain and not the enemy.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal

“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

---

*“Situation. Give a one-sentence assessment of what you think the enemy is trying to do. Start with “I think...” “I think those vehicles are the counterattack!” Your orders make sense if your Marines know what you are thinking. Do not restate the obvious: “We’re under fire!” Do not restate facts, interpret them. What does it mean? Draw conclusions! Then put your analysis in context. How do these enemy actions affect your higher headquarter’s mission and intent?”*

— Brendan McBreen

“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“Ordinarily the information of the enemy will be more or less incomplete. Only on extremely rare occasions will a commander have full and accurate knowledge of the enemy’s strength, position, morale, intentions, etc. Occasionally a commander may have sufficient information to enable him to deduce quite accurately the enemy’s military situation, but in most cases information will be entirely lacking upon some important points.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch

*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

*“In war the enemy will undoubtedly make every effort to keep us from learning his strength, position, intentions or the manner in which he proposes to carry out his intentions. The result is that a commander will rarely be able to say to himself that his adversary will do exactly this or that in exactly this way or that way; all that he can ordinarily do is to analyze the information received concerning his forces and then try to make reasonable deductions as to his real intentions and probable movements.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“Throughout consideration of the factors [of the enemy situation] you must make a particular effort to avoid preconceived ideas and must adhere strictly to the facts as known. Where information on the enemy is lacking, as it will be frequently, it must not be improvised.”*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

---

*“No assumption should be made about the enemy unless it is based on reliable information or prior experience.”*

—United States Marine Corps Staff Manual, 1944

---

*“If the recipients of the order are already acquainted with the latest information concerning the enemy, the commander should begin his order by saying: ‘No further news of the enemy has been received’ or something to that effect. Each officer who receives the order will then understand that the order is based on the assumption that the enemy’s situation remains the same as before, and will be able to act more intelligently in case the enemy’s actions prove to be considerably different from what was believed to be the case at the time the order was issued.*

*On the other hand, if trustworthy information of the enemy has been received since the subordinate officers were last made acquainted with the situation, this new information would ordinarily be stated. Similarly, with reference to our supporting troops, any changes of importance to our command would ordinarily be mentioned.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“For, in the absence of recent and definite information of the enemy, you must always credit him with doing what would best further his own interests and be most disadvantageous for you.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“In war the enemy will undoubtedly make every effort to keep us from learning his strength, position, intentions or the manner in which he proposes to carry out his intentions. The result is that a commander will rarely be able to say to himself that his adversary will do exactly this or that in exactly this way or that way; all that he can ordinarily do is to analyze the information received concerning his forces and then try to make reasonable deductions as to his real intentions and probable movements.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

**Situation - Friendly**

*“The friendly situation is to be briefly indicated in the order so that every unit knows what troops are adjacent to it and the units which will be employed in the combat area. Friendly intentions generally commence with the combat mission of the unit directly superior, in which the part of the mission which the unit itself is to take part in is included. The intentions of a friendly unit depend on those of the unit to which it is immediately subordinate. The combat tactics, march, rest, attack with or without assembly, pursuit, defense, delaying action, disengagement, retreat will be stipulated.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“It has already been shown that if a commander is acting beyond supporting distance from any friendly troops. his action may have to be very different from what it would be if support were near at hand. A commander should ordinarily consider the amount of real support that can be expected from any supporting troops. This naturally involves a consideration of the distance by which he is separated from them or of the time that must elapse before they can be of any material assistance to him. In case the commander knows that the enemy also has supporting troops it is advisable to compare the two supporting forces as regards their relative strength and positions and their respective distances from the probable point of contact or scene of combat.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch

*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

**Mission**

*“The mission and the situation form the basis of the action... A mission which indicates several tasks easily diverts from the main objective.”*

— Truppenführung, 1933 – Troop Leading, *German Field Service Regulations of 1933*

---

*“All missions must have as their objective the destruction of the enemy. Orders like ‘the regiment will attack’ are wrong. They will be correct only if ‘and will destroy the enemy’ or ‘will throw back the enemy’ is added. The seizure of terrain is not a combat objective. The objective is the destruction of the enemy on the terrain. The way to carry out the order must admit of but one interpretation. One cannot ‘advance’ or ‘move toward’ an enemy. One can only ‘attack’ him. One cannot ‘wait for’ or ‘delay’ the enemy, but one can ‘repulse’ or “throw back” the enemy. The execution of every order must be reported to the agency which has issued it.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“...the inferential nature of the cognitive process would also indicate that the broad goals and objectives as described in the commander's intent and/or mission paragraphs should precede all other elements of information. All information following these paragraph become relevant because of their influence on the attainment of the goals or objectives.”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

---

*“...every leader--it doesn't matter if he is a platoon leader or the army leader--must act according to the mission he has got. The mission must be clear for the army leader to attack Kharkov, or the platoon to attack Height Number so and so. How he does it is his own decision. He can attack--the platoon leader--can attack the hill frontally, from the left, or from the right. That is his matter, but he has to capture the Height. That, I understand is the mission.”*

— F.W. von Mellenthin  
*Armored Warfare in World War II Conference*

---

*“Mission. State the single collective unit mission before assigning any tasks. Start with “We...” Use the in-order-to (IOT) format to link mission and intent: “At 1215, we will seize the pass IOT prevent enemy withdrawal.” This is the single most important sentence of your order. Choose each word carefully.”*

— Brendan McBreen “All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“Missions and Tasks. Assign a single mission to your unit. Assign a single task to each subordinate. Select only the essential tasks and focus on those. A mission which includes several parts diverts attention from the primary goal.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“Finally, one's own mission [Auftrag] must be expressed sharply and clearly. To what degree the execution [Ausführung] should be prescribed can be decided on a case by case basis. The more sure the knowledge [Unterlagen], the smaller the unit, the more exact the details of execution should be. The larger the unit, the greater the degree to which freedom of action must be allowed.”*

— Max Schwarte  
“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*“In some cases; circumstances arise which will make impossible the accomplishment of the original mission but will still afford the commander an opportunity to further his superior's general plans.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“It sometimes happens that, by reason of unexpected developments, the original mission must be totally disregarded and a very different one adopted.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“So long as possible, however, a commander should keep the reins in his own hands. His mission, and not the enemy's movements, should as long as possible be considered the governing factor.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

## Execution

*“The key...is...decentralized execution...Lord Nelson did not win at Trafalgar because he had a great plan, although his plan was great. He won because his subordinate commanders thoroughly understood that plan and their place in it well in advance of planned execution.”*

— Vice Admiral Henry C. Mustin III, JTF 120

---

*“Additional information presented by the squad leader may also be crucial to mission success. The OPOD is the last chance for the squad leader to prepare his squad prior to the mission. Thus it is important that his tactical plan be clear to all members, and that contingency actions be specified. Such additional information is most likely to fall in the Execution and the Command and Signal paragraphs. The amount of such additional information may depend on the time given to prepare the OPOD, whether or not the leader has an opportunity to conduct a recon, and the squad SOP. To the extent that operation orders influence, directly or indirectly, squad mission success, it was expected that operation orders that correctly and completely relayed the information in the platoon order and that specified additional execution plan, including contingency actions, would contribute to success.”*

— Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen  
*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

---

*“Execution. A concept of operations lets everyone know the context of your plan and any support planned. If you jump straight to tasks, “You buy meat! You buy cheese! You buy vegetables!” your people may not know if they are building a salad, a pizza, or a sandwich.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

## Scheme of Maneuver

*“It is more effective for the commander to issue his instructions...early, and decisively, rather than to waste time muddling through confusion and changing courses of action later in the planning process.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal  
“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“Phases should not just be used as a convenient means for commanders to tidy up their plans...Phases can impose unwanted breaks in the tempo and continuity of an operation, contrary to the intention underlying modern doctrine: the fewer, therefore, the better.*

*If the phases of a plan make it difficult to give a mission a clear, single, unifying purpose, it is a warning to a commander...that he is trying to anticipate events too specifically. Too many phases may also lead to a lack of fluidity in operations and a loss of momentum.”*

— Army Tactical Doctrine Note 8, quoted by Spencer Fitz-Gibbons:  
*, Not Mentioned in Despatches: The History and Mythology of the Battle of Goose Green*

---

*“There is not time or place for detailed orders, limiting lines or zones, phase lines, limited objectives or other restraints.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff  
“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”



## Tasks

*“A clearly defined task, coupled with an explanation of why the action is being conducted, can make the difference between a successful mission and a lot of wasted effort.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel John Antal  
“Commander’s Guidance for Battle Command”

---

*“Subordinate Unit Paragraphs list the specific missions of each subunit. At Battalion level, all units that appear in the task organization will be included in subordinate unit instructions with the exception of the combat service support elements which are addressed in paragraph.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“This last mentioned form of giving orders, the assignment of a mission, with latitude being given as to execution, will induce all commanders and combatants to think. It will increase their self-confidence and their sense of responsibility and, in case of a sudden change in the situation, it will ensure that the spearheads act according to the intentions of the commander. On the other hand, forces accustomed to waiting for an order, or who need an order for each action, will simply freeze to the point of inaction unless they receive such an order.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“Tasks. Phrase each task exactly like a mission statement. Use the IOT format to link mission and intent. Always designate one unit as the main effort. The main effort task needs to parallel the unit mission. Always designate, and avoid tasking, a reserve. A single “Be Prepared To” statement for the reserve can guide that unit commander in his preparations.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

## Coordinating Instructions

*“Coordinating Instructions are the last subparagraph of the execution paragraph of the operations order. These instructions contain coordination and control data for two or more units. Most items in coordinating instructions can be covered in unit standing operating procedures.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“Coordinating Instructions. The final sentence ties up the order with any instructions for all hands, usually timing, signals, or locations such as the casualty collection point.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

## Admin and Logistics

*“This paragraph contains all the information necessary for subordinate units to coordinate their resupply, recovery of equipment and evacuation of wounded and prisoners.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*For the care of the sick and wounded of the troops, the location of the clearing stations, aid stations, and collecting points as well as the location and kind of transportation available is important. For ammunition supply and the replacement of arms and equipment, the troops must be given place and time as well as the means of transportation available.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

*“The administrative and supply details...must be highly organized and must function quickly and smoothly. This can best be done by having a well conceived supply plan and making many of the activities, as far as supply for combat is concerned, automatic and according to standard operating procedure (SOP). All subordinate units should be thoroughly familiar with the plan and the SOP for supply. For the foregoing reason, it is undesirable to include in paragraph 4 any instructions that would be normal and according to SOP. Paragraph 4 of the field order would then include those changes in the plan that may be necessary for the particular operation. If there are no changes in the plan, the statement ‘No change’ would suffice.”*

— *Army Air Forces Field Manual Combat Orders, 1942*

*“It should be a rule that the division goes not back to the supply, but that the supply has to go to the troops. As far as I remember, Panzergrenadier Division "Gross Deutschland" did not go back, but the supplies came in the front line and assisted them.”*

— F.W. von Mellenthin  
*Armored Warfare in World War II Conference*

*“Most Admin & Logistics and Command & Signal information should be SOP, and rarely needed in a verbal order.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
*“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”*

### **Command and Signal**

*“Subparagraph 5.a lists the Command CP location, the location of the commander before and during the battle and his proposed location after the battle. The order for assumption of command must be clearly understood and should be specified if it is not a working part of the unit's SOP. Subparagraph 5.b. specifies the signal instructions for the unit. Designated alternate or "jump" frequencies should be established in this paragraph if they are not already established by SOP. As a minimum the CEOI (Communications Electronic Operating Instructions) index number must be specified so that everyone will be on the proper frequencies.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

*“The command post or headquarters of the commander must be mentioned in the order, so that the troops will know where to send messages and where to get information. The command post (headquarters) is for higher and lower commands the collecting and distributing point for orders, messages and requests. The location of the command post will, therefore, be dealt with in a special section.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

*"In paragraph 5 is found the commander's plan for exercising his command functions during the operation. This is important information that should be in the hands of the subordinate commanders. This plan may include any or all of the following points...1. Plan for signal communication. 2. Axes of signal communication. 3. Command posts.*

*The plans for signal communication are usually issued prior to general operations and are covered in detail as "Signal Operation Instructions No. -," usually written SOL. In referring to the SOI in the order, it would be necessary to state the number and the time they became effective—for example, "SOI No. 10 in effect 2000 2 Mar 42." Examples of other pertinent remarks that may be included in this subparagraph "'Radio silent \_\_\_\_\_ (period of silence).'"*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

## Rehearsals

*"I spent my Captain B-Billet time at Advanced Infantry Training Battalion-East. While there I witnessed hundreds of squad and platoon-level orders. A consistent theme that emerged for me was that a shitty order, well-rehearsed, resulted in good to above average execution far more frequently than a killer order that wasn't rehearsed as thoroughly."*

— Michael Breslin

"Acta Non Verba: The Company Operations Order"

*"After you get the mission, go through the rock drill rehearsals. As much as possible, the brigade commander really should go to every battalion-level rehearsal. So you might literally sit through six hours of rock drill in 130 temps. That can cook your brain in kevlar, but you have to do it. Make sure they understand the mission. You can then fix it right there if there are misunderstandings. If two rock drills were going simultaneously, then I would attend one and send the S3 to the other. We'd split our forces, and then come back together and exchange info. Most of the time these guys were so sharp that they were on track. They knew the mission and came up with some good plans. And, you don't "I didn't trust the read I got from my brigade TOC compared to what I was hearing from my CAV commander." And you don't want to have to say, in the middle of a rock drill, "Guys, you have this all screwed up." If they don't understand it, then either the commander's intent was not clear, or the order was screwed up. Fortunately, I think the orders we put out were pretty decent as long as we got them out in time. It helps you grasp the overall concept by going to some of these rehearsals and seeing what these guys are doing at the company or troop level."*

— Colonel Craig Madden

"Air-Ground Planning" 66 *Stories of Battle Command*

*"I will tell you that if you are not conducting rehearsals, you're not going to win the fight."*

— Lieutenant Colonel Hansen

"Accelerated Decision Making Process" 66 *Stories of Battle Command*

*"Henriksen et al. (1980) specified four other actions taken by the squad leader during the OPORD that could influence the conduct of the mission. The leader should ask squad members to recite their specific responsibilities, graphically display the overall operation by using visual aids (ground, sticks, rocks), ask subordinates to demonstrate their specific tasks, and conduct rehearsals of the planned execution by deploying forces in a mock exercise."*

— Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen

*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

# Chapter 5

## Training and Practice

---

*“As I reflected on my training and experiences in combat I realized that I had never really been taught to give a ‘combat order.’ This skill was one I was forced to develop out of necessity in actual combat.”*

— 1st Lieutenant Elliot L. Acherman  
“Rethinking Combat Orders”

---

*In a combat situation, something will inevitably be left out due to time. What is essential is that leaders have been trained to differentiate between the essential and nonessential elements of the order.”*

— 1st Lieutenant Elliot L. Acherman  
“Rethinking Combat Orders”

---

*Another and better method of learning the art of command is found in war-games, tactical exercises, and staff rides, if the directing staff strictly insists that commanders of all grades shall give all their tactical orders, without exception, in the proper form and wording, and therefore not in the form of: I should now move up X Battalion on the left flank,” but, Major O., deploy your battalion on the left of N Battalion, the regiment will attack.”*

— Colonel Von Spohn  
*The Art of Command*, 1907

---

*“During training, the issuance of orders, conduct of rehearsal, and receipt of brief-backs should be conducted over the radio. Tactical decision game training for scenarios at the company level or above should require the solutions to be briefed in the form of a FRAGO over the radio.”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

---

*“Training staffs to formulate plans that had to be briefed over the radio would have eliminated significant levels of friction.”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

---

*“Peacetime command and control training in programs like the Combined Arms Exercise should move away from a detailed plan that relies on perfect situational awareness and focus on applying the very relevant combined arms TTPs to the chaotic information-starved environment that the battalion faced during OIF.”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

---

[young Officers] *“must be given the chance to make on-the-spot decisions, through wargames, that is, terrain models and map exercises. When a young soldier makes a decision, you must praise him. He might not have found the perfect or right solution, but he made a decision. Praise at that point must be forthcoming. You must do this again and again. That is how we give our young officers and NCOs confidence.”*

— Colonel Peske  
“German Training and Tactics: An Interview with Colonel Peske”

---

*“After viewing his division’s first written order in combat, MG John S. Wood, commander of the 4th Armored Division, told his G3 (operations officer) not to issue any more. Wood believed the formatted, five-paragraph order taught to U.S. Army officers at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth would only slow down his division’s decision cycle in combat.*

*The fact that MG Wood could dispense with written orders while leading his division across France highlights the level of training, cohesion, and education that a unit would need to achieve in order to execute verbal mission orders.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff

“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”

---

*“At the beginning of World War II, the Regular Army had 14,000 officers and 120,000 enlisted men. Almost overnight, the officer corps expanded about 60-fold. The war exposed Regular officers to responsibilities far beyond anything they had experienced, and forced them to rely on subordinates who were essentially commissioned amateurs. Most division commanders and their regimental commanders, who were largely pre-war regulars, turned toward authoritarian, top-down methods of command. They issued detailed orders, insisted on unquestioned obedience, and used their staff officers to check on compliance. Reposing trust and confidence in a subordinate entailed the possibility that he might fail, and embarrass his ambitious superiors with their eyes on one of the many commands being formed.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff

“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”

---

*“The division trained on how to task organize for a particular mission, and then, on Wood’s orders, reform the task forces while on the move to meet a new threat. Wood did this with no fancy briefings or lengthy rehearsals. He used the radio, and face-to-face oral instructions to train his division to operate without written directives.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff

“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”

---

*“How can we best develop our commanders’ judgement in order for them to make decisions intuitively? Battle Studies, Decision Games, Simulations, Exercises, and Combat.”*

— LtGen Paul Van Riper

“Combat Decision-Making Presentation”

---

*“A unit that attempts to adopt mission tactics, but has not reached the training level necessary to employ mission-type orders, will usually fall. The less trained the units are in receiving and executing mission tactics and using mission type orders, the more orders-intensive the units will become.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The procedures of the tactical orders process should be a common skill for a modern army. These procedures should aim at producing effective, timely combat orders. The drill of receiving and issuing combat orders should assist, not inhibit, a unit's combat effectiveness. One standard thinking process, common to all military education programs, could clarify combat procedures and save time.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The result of too many different procedures printed in several publications has been confusion. With several different procedures it is not surprising that units...use a variety of techniques to produce combat orders. Each battalion, brigade and division uses a different set of procedures. More significantly, these procedures change with the personalities of the operations officers and commanders, resulting in a rate of change that insures continued inefficiency.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“Well trained units with experienced commanders needed few instructions...For these types of units, an identification of their mission and the higher commander's intent was all that was needed. For poorly trained units with mediocre leadership, more detail was required.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“The order tells its recipient to what extent he and the troops under him are to participate in the execution of the intentions of the higher headquarters. If the one who is to carry out the order is a factor in a plan strictly organized as to time, place and procedure, the order must itself be strictly organized and must contain all necessary details. This form of order is also necessary if the subordinates are insufficiently trained. If, however, the commander believes his subordinates are capable of completing a mission themselves, because they have the necessary training, experience and fighting qualities, he will content himself with stating the purpose and objective of his order.”*

— *Manual For Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*

---

*“Of course, implicit communications must be developed over time. This requires actions that strengthen unit cohesion and mutual trust. This requires keeping people together in their units and stable in their assignments. It implies keeping good teams together. It means developing a band of brothers in our units, as Admiral Horatio Nelson did. He spent many evenings with his captains gathered in the cabin of his flagship talking over tactics, ways they might fight different engagements, how they would defeat this or that opponent. From those evenings came a shared way of thinking so strong that, at Trafalgar, Nelson needed only to signal "England expects every man will do his duty," and "Close action." Sometimes words have meaning beyond the normally obvious meaning because of shared experiences and understanding.”*

— MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

---

*“Because of the relative infrequency of actual combat experiences in most military leaders' careers, Marines must seek to expand their understanding through other, less direct means. The study of military history is critical to developing judgment and insight. It enables us to see how successful commanders have thought through—and fought through—the situations they faced. Not many people can do it instinctively—few possess the rare native ability to think militarily. Even those few can enhance their abilities through study and practice.”*

— MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

*“Professional readings and study are not solely the responsibility of military schools. Individuals cannot afford to wait for attendance at a military school to begin a course of self-directed study. Military professionalism demands that individuals and units find time to increase their professional knowledge through professional reading, professional military education classes, and individual study.”*

— MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

*“Both map and sand table exercises enable students to conceptualize the battle, deliver their decisions, and issue orders to subordinates. Afterwards, students discuss their decisions and are critiqued. The discussion should focus on making a decision in the absence of perfect information or complete intelligence.”*

— MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

*“The screams of men sent to unnecessary death echo through the valley of our combined conscience. A wave of a hand and a garbled order become symbols of the military men. Catastrophes like the Somme dull our senses with their enormity. Ant hills of disjointed ideas become substitutes for clear thought.*

*A man who desires to give orders must study. If the military life is aspired to, there is work ahead. Without undue emphasis on platitudes of altruism there is a need for dedicated men.”*

— H.B. Chamberlain  
“On the Issue of Orders”

*“At Leavenworth, student officers wrote practice order after practice order. In the early days of the century, the orders were critiqued more on overall content than style.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

*“The amount of detail included in a field order varies greatly and is dependent upon the...status of training and degree of experience of the unit.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

*“The extent to which a commander will participate in the detailed formulation of the plan is most elastic and is dependent on many factors, such as experience and training of the staff, availability of staff officers, and available time.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

*“The formulation of a good order is an art acquired by continued practice and application.”*

— Army Air Forces Field Manual *Combat Orders*, 1942

---

*“Quality of the operation orders varied, with squad leaders omitting information in the platoon order and/or failing to elaborate on orientation and organizational information that could help the squad in its mission. Operation order quality was related to leader experience, but not to mission outcome. The results indicate that squad leaders need training in both the delivery of operation orders and in using them as a planning tool.”*

— Jean L. Dyer, Robert H. Bennett and Robert H. Sulzen  
*Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success*

---

*“The preparation of field orders...is an art that cannot be acquired overnight.”*

— Herbert J. Brees  
“Combat Orders,” 1920

---

*“...the sub-leader must be educated as an independent leader and must act on his own. He must not wait for any order from higher up, but has to do it on his own, if there is no order.”*

— F.W. von Mellenthin  
*Armored Warfare in World War II Conference*

---

*“We are not teaching our leaders that combat is a dynamic clash of wills. When our training ‘enemy’ does not react or attempt to counter our efforts, we learn the dangerous tendency to precisely script our every move. Evidence of this trend can easily be found in orders that include seven or eight sequential tasks for each subordinate, and in matrices that precisely envision six phases for an attack. In the dynamic chaos of actual combat, we can never predict the sequence or the results on the battlefield with such accuracy.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“Why are we not good at verbal orders? The first reason our verbal orders technique suffers is because in school and in the fleet, ‘the orders process’ is synonymous with ‘the planning process’ which concludes with lengthy published orders. The training rationale is that this process develops an understanding of the components of an order.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“Your ability to issue a brief, clear, unambiguous order is a difficult but essential combat skill. This requires guidance, training, and practice.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---



*“The essential skill of issuing clear, concise, unambiguous orders is difficult. It is not a skill you are born with nor is it acquired automatically with rank. Only those who practice will be successful leaders in the chaos of combat.”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“All Stations This is Kodiak Actual”

---

*“A commander must train his subordinate commanders, and his own staff, to work and act on verbal orders. Those who cannot be trusted to act on clear and concise verbal orders, but want everything in writing, are useless.”*

— Montgomery of Alamein, *Memoirs*, 1958  
Quoted in Brendan McBreen “Orders Techniques in the Infantry Company”

---

*“In order to give orders, one needs not only an inborn gift, but, as with any other art, a great deal of practice.”*

— Max Schwarte  
“A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913”

---

*“All writers on tactics agree...most desirable qualifications can best be developed by constant practice in the solving of concrete problems, necessitating the formulation by the student of a large number of definite decisions and orders. By a thorough course in such [map] problems the student will acquire an ever increasing ability to form correct tactical decisions in the field and will eventually be able to arrive at such decisions very rapidly-in fact, almost instantaneously.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

---

*“Map problems are primarily intended to assist officers in gaining a practical knowledge of tactics and to develop their power of decision.”*

—Captain Roger S. Fitch  
*Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*

# Chapter 6

## Battle Vignettes

---

### Revolutionary War

*“William Washington had only mission orders built around commander’s intent. Morgan never instructed Washington to handle the threat presented by the 17th Light Dragoons’ attack on the American left following the withdrawal of the militia line. Washington saw the threat and dealt with it.”*

— Joseph Fischer, “Cowpens, 1781”

quoted from Richard Barbuto and Jonathan House, *Forgotten Decisive Victories*

### Mexican-American War

Casualty Plan excerpt during the Mexican-American War:

*“As soon as it shall be known that the enemy’s works have been carried, or that the general pursuit has been commenced, one wagon for each regiment and one for the cavalry will follow the movement, to receive, under the I directions of medical officers, the wounded and disabled, who will be brought back to this place for treatment in the General Hospital. The Surgeon-General will organize this important service and designate that hospital, as well as the medical officers to be left at it.”*

— General H.L. Scott

*General Orders No III* for the Battle of Cerro Gordo during the Mexican War, 1847

---

Admin and Logistics excerpt during the Mexican-American War. Ammunition and chow loads were SOP:

*“Every man who marches out to attack or pursue the enemy, will take the usual allowance of ammunition, and subsistence for at least two days.”*

— General H.L. Scott

*General Orders No III* for the Battle of Cerro Gordo during the Mexican War, 1847

## Franco-Prussian War

*“A marked difference is observed in the orders issued by German commanders in the Franco-Prussian War and those issued by French commanders. Many French orders were verbose, rambling and faulty, while the German orders are models of precision and conciseness.*

*As an example of the French method or lack of method, the instructions of General Chanzy, one of their best generals, is of interest. He states:*

*‘The enemy today attempted to force us from our position. He attacked in succession at Saint Baureut-des-Bois and in the direction of Poisly, Cravant and Yillorcean. From information received from prisoners we learn that Prince Charles with his entire arm was engaged, together with numerous artillery. Everywhere we have resisted with energy and good order and have remained in possession of the field after having inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. All should be inspired by this new success and be filled with confidence thereby. Ye must keep our positions and continue to resist if the Germans make an attack tomorrow,’*

*And so on for four printed pages. Many sentences are practically meaningless as, ‘The cavalry shall be placed in such a way as to profit by occasions to fall upon the enemy.’ ‘Each division commander will point out precisely where his baggage will go in case of an attack tomorrow.’ ‘All troops who were engaged today shall have an extra ration of brandy.’ [The orders] were scrambled with directions for rations, ammunition, appointment of doctors and reports required.”*

— Major C. H. Corlett, “The Evolution of Field Orders,” 1925

## World War I

*“This first operation order format was used in World War I with varying degrees of success. Initially, the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) planners lost sight of the purpose or the operation order format. The format was to facilitate communicating the commander’s plan of action. Instead the orders format became an ends in itself. Staff’s and commanders went into laborious detail specifying minute instructions for their subordinates. This nearly proved fatal. For in the attempt to provide subordinates complete and detailed guidance, the AEF frequently provided no guidance. ‘In the American Expeditionary Force elaborate and complete written orders to attack were often received after the hour when the attack should of started, thus destroying the coordination they were intended to provide.’”*

— Major Edward J. Filiberti

*The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?*

*“In France in 1918 a Division attack order was sometimes fifteen or twenty pages long. After the war continuous efforts were made to cut down this verbosity but even as late as 1927 when I took over the Infantry School I found a battalion order three and four pages in length. It is very hard to break down a highly developed technique which had indoctrinated a great many officers as a result of trench warfare procedure.”*

— General George C. Marshall  
“Memorandum for the President” 1943

## World War II

*“ [In] French planning...Great importance is attached to the formulation of very long orders... The analysts cited instructions for a high-level French war game...[that] was 280 pages long, not counting its twenty-two appendixes.”*

— German Foreign Armies West Study, 1938  
Quoted in Brendan McBreen “Orders Techniques in the Infantry Company”

*“It was not until the preliminary to the maneuvers in Louisiana in 1940 that we succeeded in cutting divisions down to a simple operational statement based on the high state of training of combat teams (CT’s) within the Division, consisting of a regiment of Infantry and a battalion of Artillery with or without attached supporting units.”*

— General George C. Marshall  
“Memorandum for the President” 1943

---

*“In the late spring of 1940, the German army was poised along the western front to break the calm of Germany’s seven-month ‘phoney war’ with France and England, during which no major land operations were conducted. The chief of staff of the German invasion forces, Oberst (Colonel) Kurt Zeitzler, issued orders to the subordinate commanders of Panzergruppe Kleist. He reportedly commanded ‘that your divisions completely cross the German borders, completely cross the Belgian borders, and completely cross the River Meuse. I don’t care how you do it, that’s completely up to you.’ Such were the mission orders that guided the actions of the 250,000 soldiers of the German army’s main effort in the battle to defeat the combined forces of the Western allies massed along the French border.”*

— Major Brett Matzenbacher  
“The U.S. Army and Mission Command: Philosophy versus Practice”

---

*“...the orders for the American forces to land in North Africa were the size of a Sears Roebuck catalog.”*

— Jörg Muth  
Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901–1940

---

*“Oddly, there was a reversal of accepted historical roles during this period. While Wood and his subordinates sped up their actions, moving quickly on verbal mission orders, the German commanders operated under an extremely centralized system. The German military culture in 1944 turned into one where, ‘Generally, commanders lacked flexibility to make changes and were subject to court martial if they did so without first checking with Berlin. Orders were spelled out in great detail and subordinates had to follow them to the letter.’ Hitler and his headquarters in Berlin and the Oberkommando Wehrmacht (OKW), attempted to control the actions of units down to and even below division level, employing the most modern communications devices to keep in constant contact with the front, army groups, and army commanders. While Hitler attempted to manage two major warfighting fronts, his commanders wasted precious time waiting for permission to act. Hitler became so fanatical about making decisions that commanders risked court martial if they used initiative.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff  
“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”

---

*“Orders, once easily transmitted verbally, became detailed written transmission of actions. Subordinates were then expected to follow these orders to the letter. Gone were the days of Auftragstaktik, or mission orders; commanders now copied the orders of higher headquarters, making no adjustments to them. Only a few commanders, like Erwin Rommel, Hermann Balck, and Eric Manstein, still possessed the moral courage and character to argue with Hitler over ‘bad’ decisions.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff  
“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”

---

*“Major General Bautz made an appearance on the television show, Modern War, hosted by William Lind in January 17, 1997, discussing the actions of 4th Armored Division and maneuver warfare. Afterward, a group of U.S. Marine Corps lieutenants asked General Bautz how long did it take his battalion [Task Force 1-37 Armor, or Task Force Abrams] to move from an assembly area to conduct an attack. General Bautz remarked that it took 30 minutes to conduct a hasty attack from the time they received the order to ‘getting on the road.’ The lieutenants replied they were being taught to plan a platoon deliberate attack in six hours.”*

— Major Donald E. Vandergriff

*“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”*

---

*“In keeping with the fluidity of the situation, Wood reconfigured the combat commands about every three days. Frequently, task forces were formed, and mission-type orders were issued over the radio. Wood dispensed with phase lines, zones of advance, and secure flanks as the 4th drove deep into France.”*

— Dr. Christopher R. Gabel

*The 4th Armored Division in the Encirclement of Nancy*

---

*“Wood and his subordinates were continually urging the higher commanders to exploit opportunities—they saw the possibilities, not the obstacles. An example of this was the enthusiasm with which small units passed over the Moselle and then drove deep behind German lines with a minimum of detailed supervision. Wood’s ability to control the division with fragmentary orders and general guidance indicated the faith he placed in the initiative of his subordinates.”*

— Dr. Christopher R. Gabel

*The 4th Armored Division in the Encirclement of Nancy*

---

*“The 4th Armored Division was mentally agile as well. To Major General Wood, plans and orders were simply the foundation on which operations could be shaped while they were in progress. Witness the flexibility with which Wood shifted CGA to the Dieulouard crossing site and then converted its breakthrough into a deep attack to interdict German lines of communication at Arracourt. Such mental agility robbed the enemy of his options and forced the Germans into premature countermeasures.”*

— Dr. Christopher R. Gabel

*The 4th Armored Division in the Encirclement of Nancy*

---

*“In Russia, during World War II, German division commanders were able to receive orders at 2200 and issue their own orders to the regiments by 2400. In effect, the Germans operated on a 2 hour, division-echelon, decision cycle. ‘Division, corps, and army staff were small and contained few decision-makers. The decision process was usually very fast and not characterized by exhaustive details and analyses by the staff and specialists. This was accompanied, however, by very competent and detailed ongoing staff work and superb staff planning and execution once decisions had been made.”*

— Major John F. Antal

*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“Gen. DePuy: ‘... I would like to have General Balck tell me what orders he [would have issued] to that Panzer Division commander - in order to find out how much detail is required - how simple or extensive would that order be?’*

*Gen. Balck: ‘The order would be, and was, the following: ‘The Russians are breaking through at point X - at a certain command you attack at point Y’ - and that is what they did.’*

*Further on the same subject:*

*Gen. DePuy: ‘[Coming back to the same point], how explicit, how complete, how detailed was the concept of the defense on the Chir River: was it standard operating procedure (SOP), or was it a detailed explanation of how [General Balck] intended to operate?’*

*Gen. Balck: ‘It depended entirely on the subordinate. If he was a stupid fellow, you had to go into much detail explaining the situation to him; if he was an intelligent officer, a word was sufficient for him.’*

*Mr. Karber: ‘...Did the subordinate who was given a very short order, to attack such and such a unit at such and such coordinate -did he, before that, have a detailed concept of General Balck’s overall battle plan?’*

*Gen. Balck: ‘I can only answer that by saying yes, because word had gotten around that the Chir line was to be held. We lived off a century-long tradition, which is that in a critical situation the subordinate with an understanding of the overall situation can act or react responsibly. We always placed great emphasis on the independent action of the subordinates, even in peacetime training.’”*

— Generals Balck and Von Mellenthin  
*On Tactics: Implications for NATO Military Doctrine*

*“Burn Em! That’s the last written field order this division prepares! Every order I give will be verbal, either eye-to-eye or by radio.”*

— Major General John S. Wood, after viewing his division’s first written order in combat  
*“How MG J.S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders”*

*“The swifter German rate of advance was based on a contrasting German Style of offensive battle highlighted by a leader positioned as far forward as possible; a dominant operations officer heading a small, modestly ranked general staff, each issuing oral or short written orders; movement twenty-four hours a day; constantly reorganizing battle groups; and vigorous combat reconnaissance.”*

— Russel H. S. Stolfi  
*“A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted”*

*“The smaller the unit, the more frequently were orders issued orally...As the war continued, the practice of issuing oral commands was adopted even by medium and large units.”*

— General Erhard Raus, CG 6th Panzer Division, 1942  
Quoted in Brendan McBreen *“Orders Techniques in the Infantry Company”*

*“Orders were more often than not verbal. We issued...only four written directives.”*

— Lieutenant General William Slim, CG XIV Army, Burma, 1944  
Quoted in Brendan McBreen *“Orders Techniques in the Infantry Company”*

**Korean War**

*“The day before, their headquarters had been fully occupied getting their forces ashore, but on the following 16, 17, and 18 September, the division and corps commanders and MacArthur himself had the tactical opportunity and a strategic imperative to get to Seoul fast. Those leaders, however, committed themselves to battle fighting quiescence as shown in the official account of activity that again seems to be natural, pertinent, and necessary to reach Seoul: “On the evening of D plus 1, General Smith had issued Opn 05- 50, directing the 1st and 5th Marines to attack toward corps phase line CC the next morning.” There is little action in this scene and much writing of orders for two regiments frozen in position for an entire night. In essence, General Smith has issued a written order not to exploit the opportunity offered by a weak and confused enemy to drive through the night to Seoul, but rather to wait to advance the next morning to an intermediate phase line.”*

— Russel H. S. Stolfi

“A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted”

---

*“The American ground force moved slowly to the drumbeat of cautious, restrictive written orders that limited daily advances to distances so small that it took eleven days to begin the attack into Seoul, which lay only 20 road miles distant from Inchon. The German ground force moved swiftly using oral orders that demanded continuous, unrestricted advance toward a target city reckoned to be four days away although 190 miles distant.”*

— Russel H. S. Stolfi

“A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted”

---

*“The regiment’s attack plan called for the 1st Battalion to move both west and south in an effort to reestablish a firm shoulder on the river, while reducing the enemy’s maneuver space. The 2d Battalion would simultaneously advance toward the west and north, also toward the river, where it would seek a link with Company I, 34th Infantry. These plans represented nothing more than the continuation of the previous day’s scheme of maneuver. Company commanders received their attack orders at 0700 with H-hour placed at 0900.”*

— Dr. William Glenn Robertson  
*Counterattack on the Naktong, 1950*

Note: companies, exhausted from days of fighting, had two hours to plan and brief attack orders.

**Vietnam War**

*“Can a battalion operate on verbal orders? Absolutely, yes. In Hue City, Colonel Cheatham never issued anything but a verbal order throughout the battle.”*

— Major General O.K. Steele, CG 2d Marine Division, 1990

---

*“In most cases these were verbal instructions of the kind Swift had envisioned as the kind of face to face updates used in World War II. However, what company commanders [in Vietnam] received the most of was the one thing that Swift, and previous Army doctrine, had specifically forbidden—specific instructions on how to carry out the intentions of the commander. The helicopter, and the lack of major engagements, allowed battalion, brigade, and division commanders to over-fly the one or two company commanders actually engaged in fire-fights, and provide their subordinates with immediate and close tactical guidance. This practice, known euphemistically as, the 'Big Squad Leader in the Sky,' probably more than any other example, demonstrated that senior commanders had no clear idea about the process of communicating their intentions and allowing subordinates the latitude to execute those intentions as had been described in the doctrine as recently as 1954.”*

— Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Patterson  
*Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*

### **Golan Heights - 1973**

*“The superior may not specify anything more than the result to be achieved. For example, at one point during the fighting on the Golan Heights during the 1973 Mideast war, an Israeli commander received orders to block a Syrian armored brigade. That was the whole order—don't let them through.”*

— William Lind and Michael Wyly  
*The Maneuver Warfare Handbook*

### **Falklands War**

*“H Jones [Commanding Officer of 2 Para during the Battle of Goose Green] wanted to control, which is why he had such a complicated plan; so complicated that I don't think any of us really understood it.”*

— Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Keeble, then second in command of 2 Para, quoted by Spencer Fitz-Gibbons  
*Not Mentioned in Despatches: The History and Mythology of the Battle of Goose Green*

---

*“The company second-in-command remembers that the orders were ‘very very short’, except the enemy forces paragraph: ‘And it was very interesting, because I've always thought people give far too much detail in orders anyway. And that was a set of orders in exactly the way I would hope to get them; and the initial reaction of most people was ‘is that it?’...[Major John Crosland, B Company Commander] made no attempt to give the kind of exhaustive and largely irrelevant detail preached at various army establishments.”*

— Spencer Fitz-Gibbons  
*Not Mentioned in Despatches: The History and Mythology of the Battle of Goose Green*

---

*“Amidst the noise and the enemy fire, Webster and Staddon obviously failed to make any sense to each other; which illustrates again that a commander cannot expect to be able to control his immediate subordinates— in this case, notwithstanding that they were within shouting distance. This was not merely because they couldn't hear each other properly and their radios were not working: in Staddon's account, Webster was attempting to give Staddon an order which he (Webster) could not see was impossible to carry out. Naturally, attempting to give orders when pinned to the ground 50 meters or so in front of an enemy position and deafened by fire is a problem to which there is no simple answer. But the other aspect of the problem must not be overlooked— that in this case, as in many more, the superior will be unable to give specific orders to his immediate subordinate in contact, unless he is fully aware of the latter's situation.”*

— Spencer Fitz-Gibbons  
*Not Mentioned in Despatches: The History and Mythology of the Battle of Goose Green*



*“...the battalion order for the Goose Green battle was a complex ballet of six phases with fragile linkages and schedules requiring excessive oversight and coordination. A critical flaw of the order was its assumption of perfect intelligence on the enemy. It was never understood by the officers or the men. Yet this order, and the style of planning and control that it represented, was the norm in the British army. The battalion commander who wrote it had been the lead instructor at the army’s school of infantry. When the battle quickly exceeded the scope of the order, the battalion commander froze all initiative, berating his company commanders to remain in position, in some cases for hours: ‘Let me fight my own battle!’”*

— Brendan McBreen  
“Combat Orders and the Battle of Goose Green”

### **Operation Desert Storm**

*“One hundred and sixteen M1A1 tanks and fifty-four Bradley Fighting Vehicles waited in position for the attack to begin. At 0730, on 26 February 1991, the ‘Tiger Brigade’ of the U.S. 2d Armored Division, passed its final orders to its battalions. The brigade, which was attached to the Marine Central Command, had been given the mission to attack to secure the Al Mutla Pass, northwest of Kuwait City. Securing the pass would block the Basra-Kuwait City Highway and trap the Iraqi forces trying to escape to the north.*

*At 0730, the brigade commander issued an oral order over the FM radio to begin the attack at 0930. Between 0730 and 0930, the brigade’s mission, boundaries and final objective changed five separate times!”*

— Col Robert M. Williams, quoted by Lieutenant Colonel John F. Antal  
“It’s Not the Speed Of the Computer That Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making”

### **1994 SPMAGTF Carribean**

*“Commander’s Intent: Attack and overwhelm the enemy with absolute force and resolution, while treating the populace with dignity, fairness, and compassion. Win and maintain the ‘Hearts and Minds’ of the Hatian people! Immediately capture—to hold—the port and airfield, using surprise, shock, and simultaneity of execution. Maintain security of the force always; all maneuver and movement of forces must be accomplished within the framework of absolute security! Rapidly paralyze the...(deleted); consequently the...(deleted) is the center of gravity and must be controlled quickly. Secure all objectives using nonlethal force to the maximum extent possible. However, once deadly force becomes necessary, it must be used decisively and unhesitantly. Prepare a reservoir of ‘audibles’ for every planned/expected action. We will comport ourselves always as liberators not dominators. Mental and physical toughness must be our watchwords; be prepared to do what others couldn’t, wouldn’t or shouldn’t. UPHOLD ALWAYS the standards of our Corps and legacy of those who have gone before us.”*

— Commander’s Intent extract from SPMAGTF Caribbean’s Operation Order for the 1994 landing at Cap-Hatien quoted by Major Thomas C. Greenwood “Commander’s Intent: The Seed of Hatian Success”

### **Operation Iraqi Freedom**

*“The battalion spent the better part of six months developing, wargaming, rehearsing, writing and rewriting the plan for the first twenty-four hours of the campaign.”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

*“...enemy action, internal friction, and challenging weather patterns precluded detailed OPORDs, rehearsals, and brief-backs from occurring. Most frequently, commanders at all levels in the Battalion found themselves receiving higher headquarters instructions over the radio, jotting down these FRAGOs in notebooks, and briefing their plan, again, over the radio. When time was available to gather key leaders for a face-to-face brief, the sheer exhaustion of commanders and staff members operating 24-hours per day, constantly on the move made the lengthy, formal briefs practiced in peace-time ineffective.”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

---

*“Most of the staff were unused to writing clear, succinct FRAGOs, issuing those orders over the radio, and dealing effectively with the inevitable questions that arose.”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

---

*“Because so many plans were written in a time-constrained, information starved environment, the integration of certain staff functions initially suffered...Towards the end of offensive operations, the Battalion Staff had gained significant skills in rapid development, issuance, and executions of simple, decentralized, violent plans. These FRAGOs were issued entirely over the radio...Of interest is that precision, speed, integration of fires, and overall effectiveness against the enemy was significantly better than that experienced during the meticulously planned and rehearsed ‘opening gambit.’”*

— “3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Review”

### **Operation Enduring Freedom**

*“We were challenged to paint a coherent picture of the enemy in Buhriz. Solid intelligence on enemy activity there proved difficult to obtain. External reporting was at best vague and often wildly inaccurate and unverifiable.”*

— Captain Larry Sharp

“Setting the Conditions for Decisive Engagements in Buhriz”

---

*“As an attached 2nd Lt leading my first clear in Afghanistan, I was hand delivered a 65 page company order four hours before my platoon was scheduled to LD. That’s a company commander that failed; by the time I got that brick, there was little I could do to translate the important parts for the squad leaders. The end result was that I took 40 Marines and 20 ANA soldiers into a multi-day clear without me or any of my subordinate leaders truly understanding the commander’s intent.”*

— Michael Breslin

“Acta Non Verba: The Company Operations Order”

**National Training Center Vignettes**

*“The total time allotted from receipt of the mission to the crossing of the start point was 21 hours and 30 minutes. Using the standard U.S. Army rule of reserving 2/3s of the available time for subordinate units to plan their operations (the 1/3s - 2/3s Rule), the battalion should have Issued the operations order not later than 151630 October 1982 (430 P.M., 15 October 1982). The Task Force issued their operations order to subordinate leaders at 151845 October 1982 (6:45 PM, 15 October 1982). The order was completed In one hour and twenty minutes. At the end of the task force operations order the company commander's and subordinate leaders had only ten hours and thirty minutes remaining with which to create their own operations orders, brief, and rehearse their units. In addition, the available time remaining was all during the hours of darkness. The first time that the subordinate leaders would see the terrain In the daylight would be at the hour of attack. The lack of speed in conducting the tactical orders process had a damaging Impact on the early morning attack.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

---

*“Pressed to the limit to prepare for the offensive action, very few leaders got any precious sleep. The cumulative effect of a slow orders process tired the leadership and robbed them of valuable rest time. Oversleeping the "stand to" time, the lead company team missed the line of departure. The task force commander immediately had to issue a fragmentary order to change the order of movement across the line of departure. At the same time the task force scout platoon reported seeing dust clouds in the direction of the enemy. The Soviet Motorized Rifle Regiment was on Its way.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

*“The task force had won, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. Total losses were 9 out of 11 tanks, 7 out of 14 APC mounted TOW Antitank vehicles, and 11 out of 36 APCs (Armored Personnel Carriers) to enemy action. The task force was reduced to approximately 65 X strength. Many of the casualties could be directly related to the lack of time that was available to subordinate leaders for reconnaissance, planning, rehearsal, preparation, maintenance, and rest. A better tactical orders process could have gained the valuable time advantage needed to make these tasks possible.”*

— Major John F. Antal  
*Combat Orders, An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*

# Chapter 5

## References on Orders

---

### Articles and Papers

- Ackerman, E.L. (2006, Feb). Rethinking Combat Orders. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 51.
- Antal, J.F. (1990). *Combat Orders: An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process*. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Antal, J.F. (1995, May-Jun). Commander's Guidance for Battle Command. *Armor* 104, 30–34.
- Antal, J.F. (1998, May-Jun). It's Not the Speed Of the Computer that Counts! The Case for Rapid Battlefield Decision-making. *Armor* 107, 12–16.
- Antal, J.F. (2014, Oct-Dec). Decisive Leadership: BG Bruce C. Clarke and the Battle of St. Vith. *Armor* 123, 93–98.
- Battelle Columbus Laboratories (1979). *Armored Warfare in World War II Conference Featuring F.W. von Mellenthin* Defense Technical Information Center
- BDM Corporation (1990). *Generals Balck and Von Mellentin on Tactics: Implications for NATO Military Doctrine*.
- Belcher, M. (2003). *3/7 Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Report*.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/37OIFAAR.pdf>
- Brees, Herbert J. (1920) *Combat Orders*. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: The General Service School Press.
- Breslin, M. (2020). Acta Non Verba: The Company Operations Order. *Connecting File* 9.
- Chamberlain, H.B. (1959, Dec). On the Issue of Orders. *Australian Army Journal*, No. 127, 30.
- Corlett, C.H. (1925, Jun). The Evolution of Field Orders. *The Coast Artillery Journal Vol. 62 No.6*, 502-513
- Department of the Army (1952). *Manual for the Command and Combat Employment of Smaller Units*. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief Historian.
- Dyer, J.L., Bennett, R.H. and Sulzen, R.H. (1985, Jan). *Infantry Rifle Squad Operations Orders: Their Characteristics and Role in Mission Success* U.S.Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Fort Benning.
- Ettore, M.L. (1993, Apr). Commander's Intent Defined. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 52.
- Filiberti, E.J. (1987). *The Standard Operations Order Format: Is Its Current Form and Content Sufficient for Command and Control?* SAMS, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Filiberti, E.J. (1987, Aug). Command, Control, and Commander's Intent. *Military Review*.
- Fitch, R.S. (1909). *Estimating Tactical Situations and Composing Field Orders*. Department of Military Art, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

- Frame, A. and Lussier, J.W., ed. (2000) *66 Stories of Battle Command*. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press.
- Gabel, C.R. (1986, Apr). *4th Armored Division in the Encirclement of Nancy*. Combat Studies Institute.
- Garrett, J. (2000). *Plans that Survive First Contact*. SAMS, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Greenwood, T.C. (1995, Feb). Commander's Intent: The Seed of Hatian Success. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 43
- Marshall, G.C. (1943, Mar) Memorandum for the President: Development of Army Operational Technique. *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 3: The Right man for the Job*. The George C. Marshall Foundation.  
<https://www.marshallfoundation.org/library/collection/marshall-papers/volume3-the-right-man-for-the-job/#!/collection=331>
- Matzenbacher, B. (2018, Mar-Apr). The U.S. Army and Mission Command: Philosophy versus Practice. *Military Review*, 61.
- McBreen, B.B. (1989, Oct). Commander's Intent. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 63.
- McBreen, B.B. (2003, Feb). Ten Years of TDGs. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 40–42
- McBreen, B.B. (2001). All Stations, This is Kodiak Actual: Thoughts on Orders in the Infantry Battalion.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/Kodiak%20Verbal%20Orders%20McBreen.pdf>
- Letter to the Infantry Officer's Course.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/McBreen%20Letter%202004.pdf>
- Notes on Company Op Orders at MCAGCC.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/CAX%20Order.pdf>
- Orders Techniques in the Infantry Company.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/Orders%20Techniques%20McBreen%202004.pdf>
- Combat Orders and the Battle of Goose Green.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/Combat%20Orders%20Goose%20Green.pdf>
- Combat Orders at Kasserine Pass 1943.  
<http://www.2ndbn5thmar.com/orders/Kasserine%20Pass%20McBreen%202003.pdf>
- Mountcastle, J.L. (1985). Command and Control of Armor Units in Combat. *Military Review*.
- Patterson, J.S. (1994). *Commander's Intent: Its Evolution in the United States Army*. SAMS, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Rendulic, L. (1917). Notes on Orders. Reprinted in *Tactical Notebook*, October 1992.
- Robertson, W.G (1985, Dec). *Leavenworth Papers No. 13: Counterattack on the Naktong, 1950*. Combat Studies Institute, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Schwarte, M. (1913). A German Approach to Combat Orders, 1913. Reprinted in *Tactical Notebook*, October 1992.

- Scribner, R. and P. Terhune. (2019, July). EMLCOA 2.0. *Marine Corps Gazette*.  
<https://mca-marines.org/blog/gazette/emlcoa-2-0/>
- Sharp, L. (2007, Jul-Aug). Setting the Conditions for Decisive Engagements in Buhriz. *Infantry*.
- Smith, M.L. (1988). *The Five Paragraph Field Order: Can a Better Format Be Found to Transmit Combat Information to Small Tactical Units?* SAMS, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Stolfi, R.H.S. (2004, Apr). A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revised, Revisited, and Contrasted. *The Journal of Military History* 68, 505–526.
- Sutherland, J.R. (1997, Mar-Jun). The Intent of Intent. *Infantry*, 9–12.
- Vandergriff, D.E. (2000, Sep-Oct). Before There Was Digitalization: How MG J.S. Wood's 4th Armored Division Stormed Across France Without Written Orders. *Armor* 109, 20–27.
- Von Spohn (1907, Oct). The Art of Command. General Staff, British War Office
- Anonymous. (1983, Oct). German Training and Tactics: An Interview with Colonel Peske. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 58–65. <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/German-Training-and-Tactics.pdf>
- Anonymous. (1943). Estimate of the Situation: 21st Panzer Division. U.S. National Archives, T-315, Roll T69. (Reprinted in *Tactical Notebook*, October 1992).

### Books

- Balck, H. (2017). *Order from Chaos: The Memoirs of General of Panzer Troops Hermann Balck*. The University Press of Kentucky.
- Barbuto, R.V. and House, J.M., ed. *Forgotten Decisive Victories*. US Army Command and General Staff Press.
- Buddecke, A. (1908). *Tactical Decisions and Orders*. Kessinger Publishing, LLC
- Clarke, B.C. (1963). *Guidelines for the Leader and the Commander*. Harrisburg-Stakpole Books
- Fitz-Gibbon, S. (2006). *Not Mentioned in Despatches*. Lutterworth Press.
- Guderian, H. (1957). *Panzer Leader*. Da Capo Press.
- Hooker, R.D. (1993). *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology*. Presidio Press. See “The Wehrmacht Approach to Maneuver Warfare Command and Control,” by J.F. Antal and “Teaching Maneuver Warfare,” by M.D. Wily.
- McDonough, J.R. (1993). *The Defense of Hill 781*. Presidio Press.
- McDonough, J.R. (2003). *Platoon Leader: A Memoir of Command in Combat*. Presidio Press.
- Rommel, E. (1937). *Attacks*. Athena Press.
- Samuels, M. (1995). *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918*. Frank Cass Publishers.
- Slim, W. (2000). *Defeat Into Victory*. Cooper Square Press. (Originally published in 1956).

Swain, R.M., ed. (1994). *Selected Papers of General William E. Dupuy*. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Swift, E. (1906 Jul). *Field Orders, Messages and Reports*. Washington: Government Printing Office.

Vandergriff, D.E. (2019). *Adopting Mission Command: Developing Leaders for a Superior Command Culture*. Naval Institute Press.

Wedemeyer, A.C. (1938). *German General Staff School*. U.S. Department of War.

### **Military Doctrine**

FM 3-90-1 *Offense and Defense, Volume I*, 13 Apr 2015.

MCDP 1-0 *Marine Corps Operations*, 29 Mar 2019.

MCDP 1-3 *Tactics*

MCDP 5 *Planning*, 4 Apr 2018.

FM 1-75 *Combat Orders*, Army Air Forces, Government Printing Office, 1942

FM 17-33 *Tank Battalion*, September 1949

*Staff Manual*, United States Marine Corps, 1944