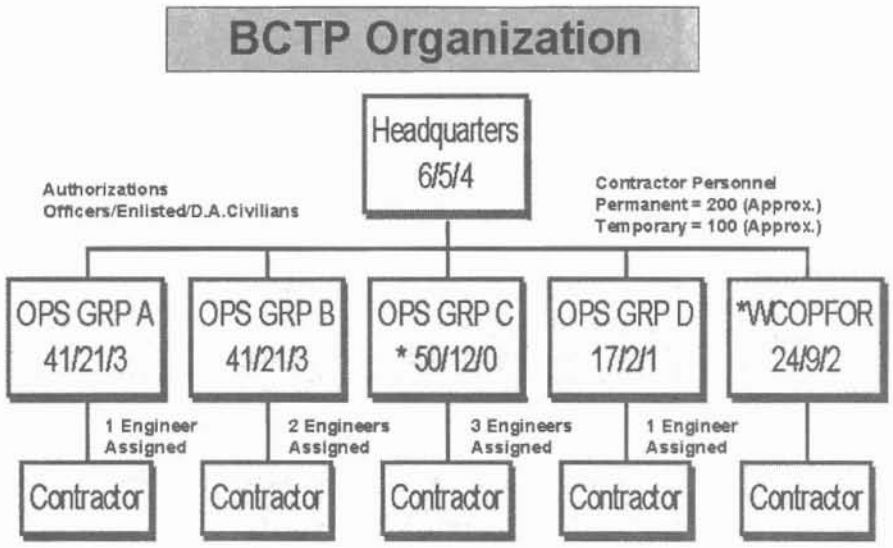
BCTP: Warfighter Exercises Strengthen Battlefield Performance

By Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Stanley and Lieutenant Colonel David Snodgrass

The Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) is the Army's capstone combat training center. Initially formed to conduct realistic, stressful exercises for division- and corps-level commanders and staffs, it has expanded over the last three years to include exercises for National Guard brigades and the Army component of joint exercises. The following information describes recent changes in the BCTP and some perceptions (current trends) of the senior observers and observer/controllers based on recent corps and division exercises.

BCTP Missions

The BCTP consists of four lettered operations groups (teams). Operations groups A and B are responsible for the traditional division and corps BCTP rotations. These groups conduct a seminar for the commander, primary staff, major subordinate commanders, and associated battle staff, ideally within the first 3 to 6 months of a new command. The seminar is normally held at Fort Leavenworth. It offers a unique opportunity for a new commander to divorce himself from the daily peacetime activities of command and to focus specifically on warfighting, team building, and relating his warfighting philosophies to those of his staff and subordinate leaders. Using an order similar to one to be issued during a subsequent warfighter exercise (WFX), the staff conducts portions of a deliberate tactical decision-making exercise. This exercise is a vehicle for initiating professional discussions and information exchanges between unit personnel, observer/controllers, and senior observers. The senior observers are retired three- and four-star general officers who contribute their experience by mentoring the process. (Currently they are GEN(R) Cavazos, GEN(R) Lindsay, GEN(R) Burba, GEN(R) Franks and LTG (R)



Grange.) The actual WFX is conducted at the unit's home station 3 to 6 months after the seminar and pits the unit against a world-class opposing force that fights from the National Simulation Center at Fort Leavenworth. A corps battle simulation (CBS) drives the WFX. (See box for recent improvements to CBS.)

Another operations group, Team C, was added in the summer of 1993. It conducts two phases of realistic and challenging training for Army National Guard brigade and battalion commanders and their battle staffs. In the first phase, the brigade commander, his subordinate commanders, and the brigade staff attend a five-day decision-making seminar at Fort Leavenworth. Observer-trainers lead the staff through the deliberate decision-making process and conduct workshops, a JANUS exercise with the battalions, and an after-action review (AAR). Approximately 3 months later the rest of the brigade command and control cells participate in a 30-hour brigade battle exercise using a brigade/battle simulation that is based on the plan developed during the seminar. Two AARs are conducted during this phase. The same group of senior observers mentor the brigade commander and staff during both the seminar and the brigade/battle simulation.

The fourth operations group, Team D, was formed in 1994. It participates in joint exercises and provides assistance during real-world contingencies. While the other operations groups set up and control exercises, this team focuses on exercises developed and organized by major Army commands and joint commands. Recent examples include Ulchi Focus Lens, in Korea; Frontera Libre, in Panama; and Unified Endeavor, with the Atlantic Command. Team D has also provided assistance with real-world contingency operations in Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti and for the Southern European Task Force in Italy and the Allied Command Europe's Rapid Reaction Corps. In existence for less than two years, Team D has provided assistance for 22 exercises and contingency operations. No other service has an equivalent organization, making this operations group highly sought after for its expertise in joint operations.

1996 Perceptions

Each year BCTP publishes perceptions of observations from WFXs. These generally are common trends collected from recent rotations that identify areas in which the Army should collectively improve. The following engineer-related observations are from 1995-96 division and corps operations.

Integrate engineer effort into the entire battlefield framework.

Perception: Develop situational obstacles for the deep fight.

Discussion: Scatterable minefields emplaced to support the deep fight often lack a detailed plan for execution and synchronization with other operating systems to achieve a specific effect. As a result, helicopters and Air Force aircraft

CBS Improvements

CBS is constantly changing, and the Engineer School recently made several enhancements to improve the fidelity of engineer play. For those who have not participated in a WFX recently, a summary of those improvements follows:

- Engineers now show up as separate icons and can be task organized. They used to be invisible and conducted work as engineer task teams (ETTs). Because engineer units and equipment now can be seen by opposing forces, intelligence simulation with engineers is greatly improved. This change also allows engineers to continue functions such as breaching while in contact. Formerly, the ETTs would abort work upon any contact with the enemy.
- The number of engineer tasks that can be performed is expanded. Previous versions allowed only one type of minefield. Now the simulation discriminates between surface-laid, buried, antitank, antipersonnel, and scatterable mines. Breaching can be done by various means, such as MICLICs or tanks with rollers and plows, which the operator selects. The time required to complete tasks is based on the resources on hand; the more forces available, the less time required. Multiple breach lanes can be established through all minefields.
- Operations previously done by "work around" now are performed as integral parts of the simulation. (A "work around" is an action taken outside of the simulation through a specific set of rules.) For example, tactical bridges now can be constructed, removed, or destroyed. Fixed bridges can be destroyed or repaired, and runways can be cut and repaired. Point obstacles can be detonated on command.
- Survivability improvements allow specific units to be dug in, according to the survivability levels described in FM 5-103. In previous versions, engineers fortified a piece of terrain, and all units received additional protection by occupying terrain close to the dug-in unit. The simulation now calculates how much earth must be moved to dig in a piece of equipment and applies earth-moving rates to the pieces of engineer equipment allocated to the task. The time required depends on the assets available and what is dug in. The protection is directional and applies only to the equipment, personnel or unit supported.
- Work-arounds have been added to allow for future engineer equipment tested during EXFOR warfighter rotations and Prairie Warrior. These include wide-area munitions, intelligent minefields, the Grizzly, and stand-off-minefield detection systems.
- Efforts are ongoing to drastically improve the corps battle simulation of terrain. Conceptually, rates of movement will vary depending on the slope, condition of the route, and vegetation. The flat terrain board of the current system will be replaced with a three-dimensional model that will affect both aviation and artillery.

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are placed at risk emplacing obstacles that have little impact on the enemy, and direct and indirect fires are not planned to take advantage of obstacle effects. Division and corps staffs should identify the named areas of interest (NAI), decision points (DP), and targeted areas of interest (TAI) to support scatterable minefields in the deep fight. The planning requirement for situational obstacles is the same as that for all obstacles; scatterable minefield delivery systems are just a faster method for emplacement.

Perception: Anticipate the transition to the defense.

Discussion: Division and corps staffs seldom plan for battle culmination. Additionally, they do not use the reverse planning sequence, starting with actions on the objective and working back toward actions in the assembly area. As a result, engineers have a difficult time successfully planning and conducting the transition to the defense. Changes to task organizations often are made without considering their potential impacts on current activities or the status of engineer units. During the planning process, units should identify the best terrain to defend throughout the offensive zone and the Class IV and Class V requirements for each potential line of defense. Engineers need that information to determine the task organization changes needed to support the transition.

Perception: Allocate resources to conduct general engineering tasks.

Discussion: Many units sacrifice general engineering requirements in order to support close operations. This may not cause problems during a relatively short WFX conducted in a computer-simulated environment, but it does not replicate the engineer support that maneuver units will expect over a long duration in a deployment. To train as we will fight, units must balance the requirements of the close fight with the general engineering tasks required to sustain units over an extended time period.

Exploit engineer expertise in the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process.

Perception: Engineers seldom "think red."

Discussion: Friendly engineers must be "experts" on enemy engineers. We must know the enemy engineer structure, how they are organized, their equipment, and how enemy engineers are employed in various situations. Engineer planners and S2s use that knowledge to predict enemy engineer actions and the effort required for each identified course of action. We provide that information to commanders, intelligence staff officers, and subordinate engineers. To provide useful tips on probable enemy actions, we must evaluate how, when, and where the enemy uses engineer reconnaissance teams, mobile obstacle detachments, movement support detachments, and bridge units. Ultimately we want to predict the enemy's main effort and deception efforts. Prediction is the bottom line, not regurgitation of information.

Perception: Continuously estimate enemy engineer capabilities based on the battle damage assessment.

Discussion: Engineer planners should allocate resources based on actual and anticipated requirements derived from enemy capabilities. Many units initially assess enemy capabilities based on known strengths and time available. They often fail to track enemy losses or update their probable capabilities based on the passage of time and changes in strength. As a result, friendly units often find themselves facing more (or occasionally less) engineer effort than anticipated and templated. Many units allow the enemy to construct or improve his defense. They tend to ignore enemy engineer targets in favor of enemy air defense, artillery, and command and control targets. Enemy engineers should be considered in the division and corps high-payoff target lists.

Perception: Template and disseminate enemy engineer effort based on their known capabilities.

Discussion: Engineers should apply their knowledge of terrain and enemy engineers to template enemy engineer efforts. This template, derived from known enemy engineer capabilities, should be revised and updated frequently to reflect new data gathered in a focused and integrated information-collection effort. Units should devise a system to disseminate the template when it is revised. The All Source Analysis System (ASAS) is a great option for disseminating information. The engineer S2 can also use ASAS to search for reports of enemy engineer activities the G2 might not otherwise disseminate. Unfortunately, not all divisions resource their engineers with ASAS.

Perception: Coordinate efforts of the engineer S2 and the G2 to take advantage of their individual strengths.

Discussion: Units must delineate intelligence responsibilities for products based on the skills each intelligence officer brings to the collective table. Many units duplicate efforts on enemy obstacle tracking, with both the G2 and the engineer S2 following reports and tracking obstacles. Often, neither of them uses confirmed obstacle reports or their knowledge of terrain, enemy capabilities, and enemy doctrine to template additional obstacles. Coordinating their efforts will focus data-collection activities and enhance the picture of the enemy defense. The engineer S2 offers the unit a tremendous capability when he maintains and updates the obstacle database for the entire unit because he can ensure that all subordinates have

access to a common picture of the battlefield. With that database and his unique knowledge of terrain, defense construction techniques, and enemy engineer capabilities, the engineer S2 is the ideal person to assign obstacle templating responsibilities. Updated obstacle status and templates based on dynamic enemy engineer capabilities give commanders (including subordinate unit commanders) and their staffs valuable clues to identify the enemy defensive array. Division engineers should get an ASAS terminal for their S2 and exploit ASAS to assist in this function.

Integrate obstacles to enhance other battlefield operating systems.

Perception: Develop an obstacle plan that supports the scheme of maneuver.

Discussion: Divisions often decentralize obstacle plans down to the brigade level but fail to synchronize brigade efforts to ensure a coherent division defense. As a result, one brigade may plan and construct a belt that turns the enemy into the flank of another brigade. Some plans lack a concept for obstacles. Units should ensure that obstacle intents match the maneuver intent and concept of operation. One option to ensure compatibility is to use intent graphics at the division level. Another option is to review the obstacle plan and intents during each division backbrief and rehearsal.

Perception: Refine obstacle-control measures to focus engineer effort and materials.

Discussion: Divisions often do not want to restrict maneuver brigade commanders, so they design zones that cover entire brigade sectors. As a result, each brigade fights a separate fight not a division fight. Failing to focus obstacle-control measures to specific enemy avenues makes it difficult to determine obstacle resource requirements.

Perception: Provide meaningful information on friendly and enemy obstacles.

Discussion: Dissemination of obstacle information is extremely weak. Units lacking a staff engineer (field artillery, air defense artillery, signal, and corps units) either do not get obstacle information or fail to use it. Units, especially those with several types of communications systems, must develop a method that is easy to use and facilitates dissemination. Generally, the DIVEN S2 cell is the ideal group to develop a single, common database and disseminate it over a tactical local area network or via TACFAX. The cell also must maintain an overlay that identifies cleared lanes and obstacle-control measures. Engineers must be involved with movement control, and maneuver units must enforce procedures to ensure that all movement within their sector is coordinated with their engineer representatives.

Perception: Address obstacles during rehearsals.

Discussion: Discuss the intent for obstacles during rehearsals. This practice will reduce the chance of diverting engineers for lower priority missions and ensure that obstacle plans support the commander's intent and the unit scheme of maneuver.

Perception: Plan obstacles that support offensive operations.

Discussion: Obstacle-control measures are rarely discussed in plans for offensive operations. FM 90-7 describes techniques for obstacle planning in the offense. Obstacles are an engineer weapons system that, when properly employed and integrated with other operating systems, can wrest the initiative from the enemy. Many commanders hesitate to delegate emplacement authority for FASCAM during offensive operations but rarely restrict the use of other obstacles. As a result, a unit is guaranteed not to face a "temporary" obstacle that will self-destruct in another hour or two but potentially runs the risk of dealing with such "semipermanent" obstacles as road craters or conventional minefields. When defining delegation authority, commanders must consider differences in sighting accuracy and marking methods between aerial- and ground-delivered FASCAM as well as potential areas of employment.

Perception: Synchronize FASCAM to maximize effects.

Discussion: FASCAM capabilities are not understood by all, so they are rarely exploited during combat operations. Many commanders tend to consider field artillery (FA) delivered ADAM and RAAM only. When FA-delivered FASCAM is used, it tends to be a "Call 911" approach. In that situation, nobody can maintain a clear picture of all of the FASCAM self-destruct times or safety zones. Once again, the planning requirement for FASCAM obstacles is the same as that for all obstacles; scatterable minefield delivery systems are just a more rapid method for emplacement. The bottom line is that obstacles must be emplaced for a specific effect and be targeted with direct and indirect weapons systems to take advantage of enemy delays at the obstacles. If the timing of an obstacle is critical to mission success, units must identify the NAIs, DPs, TAIs, and observation required to support the scatterable minefields.

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