

Initial Impression Report

JRTC 16-04 TRADOC Directed, CALL Collection at DATE CTC rotation 16-25 February 2016

EVENT SUMMARY:

This report provides a summary of observations from the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Rotation 16-04, Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE). The collection was focused on coalition/U.S. interoperability. This was the focus of the collection effort in accordance with Combined Arms Center Operations Order (OPORD) 15-357-003, Taskings, 29 Dec 15. A coalition platoon was attached to a U.S. company for the rotation. This collection report is based on feedback from rotational training unit (RTU) key leaders, observer-coach/trainers (OC/Ts), updates to the Operations Group (OPSGRP) chief of staff, and by direct observations during the conduct of the exercise. The report has been sanitized to remove unit identification and has been vetted and approved by JRTC OPSGRP.

The exercise proved to be a positive training event for the U.S. company and the coalition platoon. Integration and interoperability presented challenges to leadership and Soldiers; however, the company operated very effectively with the integrated platoon. Operations observed included joint forcible entry (JFE), defensive operations, and company attack live-fire exercise (LFX).

(U) Particular areas in which units did well:

1. Establishing and maintaining command relationships.
2. Capabilities briefs.
3. Understanding and employing specific capabilities.
4. Adapting to differing tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP); standard operating procedures (SOPs); and battle rhythm.
5. U.S forward observer (FO) team attached to coalition platoon provided available communication and expertise on U.S fires systems to the platoon.
6. Company fire support officer (FSO) provided capabilities and processes for close air support (CAS) and close combat attack (CCA) requests to coalition platoon.
7. Company maneuvered effectively with integrated platoon.
8. Coalition platoon adapted to U.S. equipment and supplies effectively.
9. Coalition platoon attached a weapons specialist to the forward support company (FSC) to execute maintenance, supply, and repair of coalition weapons systems.

Particular areas in which units were challenged:

1. Availability of coalition doctrine and TTP.
2. Radio communication procedures.
3. Early integration of units.
4. Communications security (COMSEC) interoperability.
5. Cross-training on equipment.
6. Classes of Supply.

(U) LOCATIONS:

Joint Readiness Training Center

(U) PARTICIPANTS:

CALL provided two analysts for the collection effort.

LINKED OBSERVATIONS:

Observation Summary: Multinational Interoperability

Status	ID	Title	Organization
Pending	158906	Establishing and maintaining command relationships	TACTICAL
Pending	158907	Capabilities Briefs	TACTICAL
Pending	158908	Understanding and employing specific capabilities	TACTICAL
Pending	158909	Adapting to differing TTP, SOPs, and battle rhythm	TACTICAL
Pending	158910	Communication and expertise on U.S fires systems	TACTICAL
Pending	158911	Company FSO provided capabilities and processes for CAS and CCA requests to coalition PLT	TACTICAL
Pending	158912	Company maneuvered effectively with integrated platoon	TACTICAL
Pending	158913	Coalition platoon adapted to U.S. equipment and supplies effectively	TACTICAL
Pending	158914	Weapons/systems maintenance	TACTICAL
Pending	158916	Availability of Current Doctrine	TACTICAL

Status	ID	Title	Organization
Pending	158917	Radio Communication Procedures	TACTICAL
Pending	158918	Early Integration of Units	TACTICAL
Pending	158919	COMSEC interoperability	TACTICAL
Pending	158921	Cross-Training on Equipment	TACTICAL
Pending	144931	Classes of Supply	TACTICAL

(U) Observation Details:

SUSTAINS:

SUSTAIN 1

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Establishing and maintaining command relationships

Observation: Coalition and U.S. units adapted easily to command relationships and structure.

Discussion: The coalition platoon (PLT) and U.S. company (CO) adapted easily to command relationships. Structure in the command organization is similar in each nation's military, making the attachment of a coalition PLT to a U.S. CO relatively seamless.

Recommendation: Understand and maintain command relationships.

SUSTAIN 2

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Capabilities Briefs

Observation: Coalition and U.S. units provided capabilities briefs while in the intermediate staging base (ISB) prior to JFE.

Discussion: The coalition PLT and U.S. CO briefed one another on specific equipment, capabilities, and operating procedures at the ISB prior to JFE. The briefing was beneficial to both units in shared understanding. However, the brief was late in the process and allowed little time for training and/or rehearsals with units integrated prior to entering a training environment.

Recommendation: Multinational units should provide capabilities and operating procedures briefs to one another at the earliest opportunity once command/operating relationship is determined.

SUSTAIN 3

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Understanding and employing specific capabilities

Observation: U.S. CO identified specific capabilities, such as a sapper engineer squad and Gustav 84 weapons, within the coalition PLT and employed the platoon in a manner to take advantage of these capabilities.

Discussion: The U.S. CO employed the coalition PLT in roles such as checkpoint

operations and breach force in an attack to take advantage of the capabilities resident in the coalition PLT. The commander identified roles and missions that fit the capabilities of the platoon and enhanced the combat effectiveness of the company.

Recommendation: During troop leading procedures or mission analysis, leaders must identify unique capabilities resident within the multinational forces in their organizations and take advantage of those capabilities to enhance combat effectiveness.

SUSTAIN 4

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Adapting to differing TTP, SOPs, and battle rhythm.

(U) Observation: Coalition PLT adapted seamlessly to U.S. CO's TTP, SOPs, and battle rhythm.

Discussion: Although TTP, SOPs, and battle rhythms were shared late in the training scenario, the coalition PLT adapted seamlessly to the U.S. procedures. Reporting and battle rhythm events went smoothly and situational awareness was shared between the company and platoon.

Recommendation: Multinational units must share TTP, SOPs, and battle rhythm expectations early upon determining partner relationships.

SUSTAIN 5

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - U.S FO team attached to coalition PLT provided available communication and expertise on U.S. fires systems to the platoon.

Observation: U.S. CO attached a FO team to the coalition PLT.

Discussion: This attachment provided the coalition PLT with fires enablers and a means of communication on U.S. radios with COMSEC that accommodated the inability to load COMSEC on the PLT's organic radios. It also provided expertise in U.S. tactics and procedures within the coalition PLT.

Recommendation: Multinational partners should consider attachment of enablers to bridge gaps in combat enablers and understanding of procedures.

SUSTAIN 6

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Company FSO provided capabilities and processes for CAS and CCA requests to coalition PLT.

Observation: U.S. CO FSO provided a detailed brief of processes and capabilities for CAS and CCA to the Coalition PLT.

Discussion: Coupled with the attachment of the FO team to the coalition PLT, this provided the Coalition PLT good understanding of processes and capabilities, allowing them to employ CAS and CCA in support of operations.

Recommendation: Specific enablers must provide capabilities and process information to multinational partners upon determination of the partner relationship.

SUSTAIN 7

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Company maneuvered effectively with integrated platoon.

Observation: The U.S. CO maneuvered effectively and seamlessly with the coalition PLT in its formation.

Discussion: With minimal training opportunities and briefings to bridge gaps, the doctrine, TTP, and SOPs between the U.S. CO and the coalition PLT were similar enough to allow seamless incorporation of the coalition PLT into the company. Operations were largely successful.

Recommendation: Multinational partners must share doctrine, TTP, and SOPs, and identify and resolve differences upon determining the partner relationship.

SUSTAIN 8

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Coalition PLT adapted to U.S. equipment and supplies effectively.

Observation: Members of the Coalition PLT used U.S. equipment during the exercise for various reasons. They used U.S. ruck sacks during airborne operations because of rigging requirements. They used U.S. radios for communication in order to maintain communication with the U.S. CO to which they were attached. They used U.S. litters for medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) due to limited similar equipment within their organization. These are examples and there were other instances. The coalition PLT also adapted to available supplies, particularly classes I, III, V, and VI.

Discussion: Familiarization and usage of U.S. equipment was seamless and rapid for several systems used during the exercise. The coalition PLT showed flexibility in adapting to U.S. equipment and the U.S. CO was able to provide equipment, as needed, to the coalition PLT from within its formations. This benefited both the PLT and the CO and enhanced capabilities across the formation.

Although CL III and V supplies are very similar for coalition and U.S. forces, there were some minor differences. These were easily accommodated. Classes I and VI are different among the forces. An example was the availability of insect repellent. It is

available in the U.S. system, but not in the coalition system. The coalition PLT did very well adapting to available supplies to meet the requirements of the environment.

Recommendation: Multinational partners must maintain flexibility in adapting to equipment of partners. Partners must be willing to analyze capabilities and equipment availability and cross-level equipment to maximize combat capabilities.

SUSTAIN 9

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Weapons/systems maintenance

Observation: Coalition platoon attached a weapons specialist to the forward support company (FSC) to execute maintenance, supply, and repair of coalition weapons systems.

Discussion: There are subtle but important differences in weapons systems between coalition and U.S. forces. The coalition C7 rifle is similar to the U.S. M4 rifle, but has a different upper receiver, including the barrel. A coalition 7.62 machine gun also has subtle differences from an M240. The coalition Gustav 84 was not always in the U.S. inventory for rotational units. The coalition PLT identified requirements to maintain weapons systems and recognized that repair parts and expertise would not be available in the U.S. system prior to deployment. The coalition unit deployed a weapons specialist, attached to the FSC, that enabled them to have adequate repair parts and expertise for weapons maintenance of platoon-specific weapons systems. This was absolutely essential in maintaining combat power.

Recommendation: Multinational partners identify systems and expertise that are not available in units to which they are attached and accommodate for those by attaching appropriate enablers and Soldiers with appropriate expertise to ensure they maintain operational systems.

IMPROVES:

IMPROVE 1

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Availability of Current Doctrine

Observation: Both U.S. and coalition units did not have access to doctrinal publications from one another. This led to discovery learning of doctrine and TTP during the training rotation. The units did share SOPs prior to deployment to JRTC; however, basic doctrinal publications were not available.

Discussion: Both units and OC/Ts expressed that they had difficulty in obtaining doctrine from multinational partners prior to rotation.

Recommendation: Maintain a library of appropriate and relevant current doctrine from potential multinational partners. Provide our current doctrine to potential multinational partners. Share doctrine and SOPs as soon as possible after determining partner relationships.

IMPROVE 2

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Radio Communication Procedures

Observation: Terminology differences between U.S. and coalition forces led to confusion and misunderstanding over radio communications.

Discussion: U.S. and coalition forces used different terms for acknowledgement and/or receipt, as well as different doctrinal terms to describe actions during operations. As the exercise progressed, each gained an understanding of terms used by the other. This was partially due to a lack of familiarity with doctrinal terms used by each.

Recommendation: Share doctrine, TTP, and SOPs. Provide training in radio communications procedures with multinational partners to reduce miscommunication.

IMPROVE 3

Topic: Multinational Interoperability- Early Integration of Units

Observation: The coalition PLT and U.S. CO had limited opportunity to integrate prior to deployment for the exercise.

Discussion: The coalition PLT and U.S. CO had first contact approximately three weeks prior to the JRTC rotation. Neither had seen the CALL Commander's Guide to Multinational Interoperability (CGMI). The U.S. battalion had already conducted load-out prior to the first meeting. The majority of time and effort was spent on training the coalition PLT on the T-11 parachute prior to JRTC. Little time was spent resolving differences in doctrine, TTP, and SOPs. Although both units overcame any issues rapidly, more time before deployment to JRTC clearly would have helped integration and interoperability. Capabilities briefs and rehearsals in the ISB helped both coalition and U.S. units tremendously.

Recommendation: Identify combined units early and allow time to coordinate and train together prior to deployment. Provide CALL CGMI to units as part as a reference for considerations. Integrating units should conduct detailed capabilities and equipment briefs upon integration, enabling a common understanding.

IMPROVE 4

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - COMSEC interoperability

Observation: U.S. unit was not able to share COMSEC fill with the coalition PLT.

Discussion: The coalition PLT had radios capable of accepting a COMSEC fill. Because the fill was not releasable, these radios could not be used. The U.S. company provided a radio for communication on the company command net. This became the single point of failure for command net communications and caused the company to give up one of its radios. A North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) COMSEC fill that could be shared with NATO partners would have solved this issue. Not sharing COMSEC with a Five Eyes (FVEY) partner runs counter to interoperability and partnership philosophy.

Recommendation: Have NATO COMSEC available for multinational operations. Consider releasability of COMSEC to FVEY partners.

Implications: A COMSEC set that can be shared enables both/all units to use organic equipment and enables redundancy of communications.

IMPROVE 5

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Cross-Training on Equipment

Observation: The coalition PLT had a Gustav 84mm recoilless rifle and Harris radios, among other differing equipment. Platoon members were not familiar with some U.S. equipment, such as SKEDCO™ litters and Advanced System Improvement Program (ASIP) radios. The coalition PLT Soldiers had to draw U.S. ruck sacks in order to rig and jump during airborne operations.

Discussion: Identifying differing equipment and conducting cross-training enhances the combined unit's capabilities and effectiveness. The ability of Soldiers to employ weapons, vehicles, and equipment of both forces enhances unit capability. The coalition PLT and U.S. CO did not have an opportunity to conduct cross-training on equipment.

The U.S. jumpmasters were not able to certify coalition soldiers during jumpmaster personnel inspection (JMPI) for airborne operations with the coalition rucksacks. As a workaround, the coalition soldiers drew U.S. ruck sacks to conduct airborne operations. However, this caused the coalition soldiers to use the U.S. equipment throughout the rotation and not their own equipment. This then required them to revise their load plans for airborne operations as the U.S. equipment did not accommodate their SOP for loading/rigging.

The coalition PLT did receive some SKEDCO™ litters from the U.S. company. The PLT's first experience with this equipment was during a casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) in the exercise. While coalition soldiers adapted and succeeded in the CASEVAC, prior training on the equipment would have benefitted the platoon.

The 1SG also indicated he wished he had an opportunity to train U.S. Soldiers on the Gustav and the coalition soldiers on the AT-4, as well as other weapons systems. This would have provided the capability to cross-man weapons systems if necessary. He indicated the same for vehicles and radios. He recommended that units go line-by-line through all classes of supply, identify differing equipment and supplies and cross-train both forces to enhance interoperability.

Recommendation: Units should identify differing equipment and cross-train/certify Soldiers on both forces equipment if possible.

IMPROVE 6

Topic: Multinational Interoperability - Classes of Supply

Observation: There were differences in supplies and equipment across all classes of supply that needed to be accounted for and resolved.

Discussion: Although much of the equipment between coalition and U.S. forces was similar, there were some differences that required the units to obtain supplies or adapt procedures to existing equipment and supplies. Some examples are below:

The coalition mine detector equipment required C-cell batteries, which are available in the U.S. system, but were not carried in inventory by the U.S. unit. The U.S. unit purchased the required batteries locally to be available to supply to the attached coalition unit. This was identified and accounted for by the units.

The coalition C-7 rifle is similar to the U.S. M-4, but has a different upper receiver with a heavier barrel and different rails and handguards. Ammunition was not an issue, as the C-7 used the same ammunition as the U.S. weapon, M4. However, repair parts and maintenance for the weapon were different. The coalition PLT identified this issue prior to deployment to the exercise and had an attached weapons specialist in its task organization and deployed with appropriate repair parts. The weapons specialist was then attached to the FSC supporting the U.S. company and provided maintenance and repair parts for the coalition weapons. Repair parts for the upper receiver are not available in the U.S. inventory. Additionally, the U.S. multiple integrated laser engagement system (MILES) equipment would not mount as designed on the upper receiver of the weapons. The coalition PLT overcame this by using field expedient clamps to mount the MILES lasers to the weapons. The rails and handguards would also not accommodate common U.S. accessories to individual weapons such as optics, bipods, grips, or other equipment that mounts to the upper receiver. This was not a significant issue, but was identified and resolved through field expedient adaptation.

The U.S. jumpmasters could not JMPI the coalition PLT before airborne operations with their rucksacks. The U.S. procedures did not account for the different equipment. The coalition PLT had to draw U.S. rucksacks which altered their load plans and forced them to operate with unfamiliar equipment. This was not a significant issue and the

coalition PLT easily adapted to the U.S. rucksack, but again the unit was not able to use organic equipment and the U.S. unit had to supply the coalition PLT with additional equipment.

The coalition PLT deployed with only two stretchers for medical evacuation in the platoon, and had no equivalent of the SKEDCO™. This left the PLT far short of the standard load of the U.S. PLTs. The company issued the coalition PLT SKEDCOs™ to supplement its medical evacuation capabilities. The coalition PLT Soldiers were not familiar with this equipment, but quickly trained on its use and used it effectively during training.

Coalition forces use a different 7.62 linked blank cartridge that does not require a blank adapter for use. They did not have blank adapters for their 7.62 machine guns because they did not anticipate the requirement. The U.S. company provided blank adapters and the issue was resolved.

Recommendation: Multinational units should do a line-by-line comparison across all classes of supply once a command/operational relationship has been determined. Identify differences in supply/logistics requirements. Identify logistics supply sources and chains of supply. Determine means to acquire supplies not available in established supply chains.