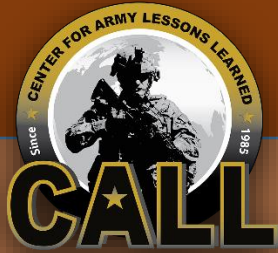
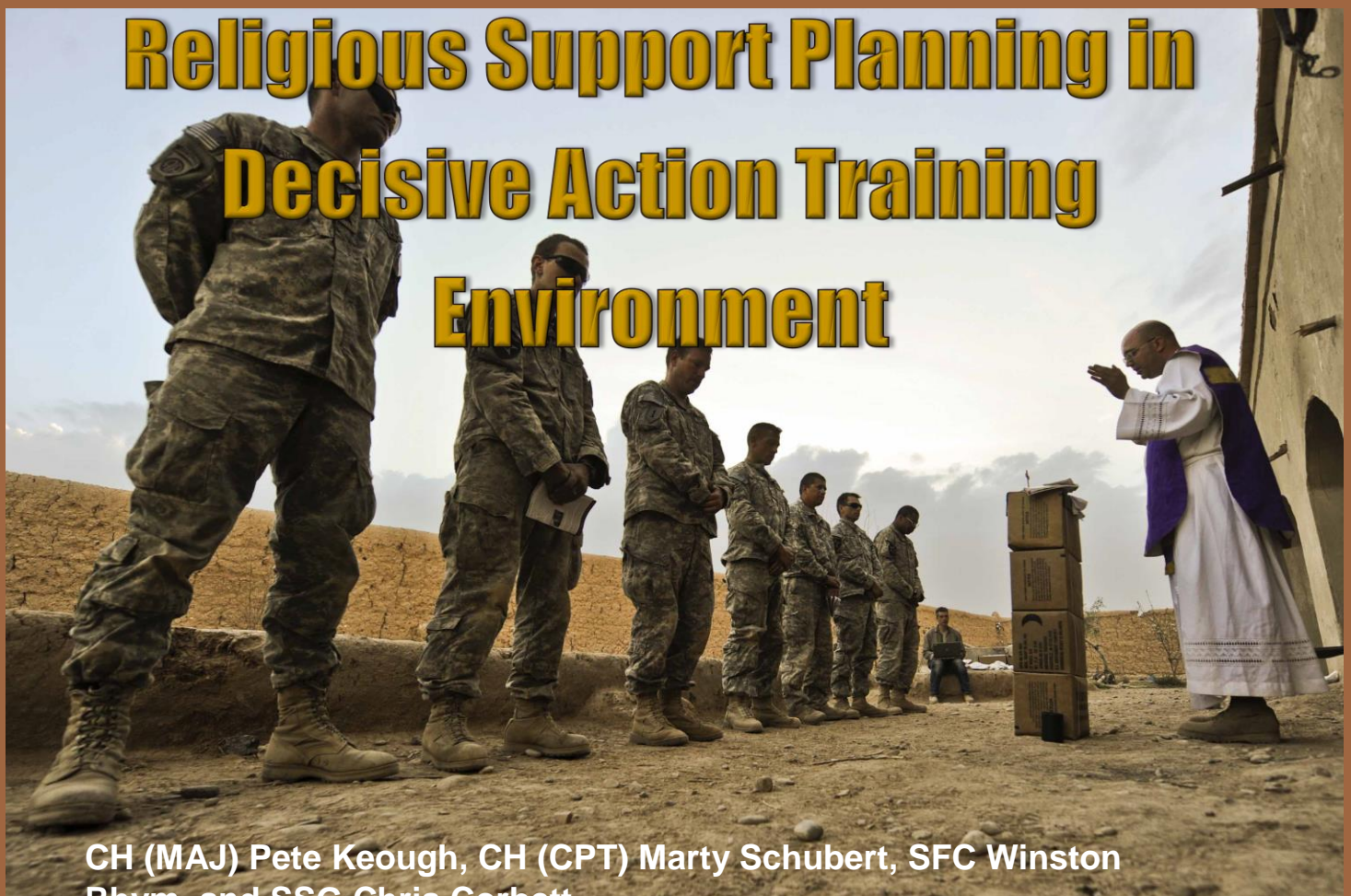


NEWS FROM THE CTC

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Religious Support Planning in Decisive Action Training Environment



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Executive Summary

Unit ministry teams (UMTs) familiar with COIN and/or unfamiliar with DATE scenarios face numerous challenges when attempting to develop religious support plans (RSPs). Current challenges facing UMTs are identified as, but not limited to, inadequate doctrinal understanding and execution of the operations process, heavy dependence upon past and antiquated techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs), a deficiency in effective staff integration, and the struggle to understand roles and responsibilities at the BDE UMT level. In this article the authors discuss the challenges with religious support planning in DATE scenarios and a way forward for unit ministry teams attending JRTC to be more comfortable and familiar with the operations process in order to provide doctrinally designed and integrated RSPs for DATE scenarios.

Religious Support Planning in Decisive Action Training Environment

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After over a decade of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, our Army has refocused training efforts at the combat training centers (CTCs) with the Decisive Action Training Exercise (DATE) that challenges brigade combat teams (BCTs) to plan, prepare, execute, and assess their capabilities and competencies regarding combat operations. The Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) provides BCTs with strong command leadership along with professional coaching, training, and mentorship through expert observer coach/trainers (OCTs) who provide BCTs the opportunity to see themselves clearly while conducting combat training requirements. DATE rotations allow units to plan by phase, in great detail, how they are going to execute combined arms maneuver (CAM) and wide area security (WAS) in a complex and challenging environment while facing a near-peer enemy with conventional, unconventional, and hybrid threat capabilities.

DATE rotations at the JRTC provide opportunities for brigade (BDE) and battalion (BN) commands and their staffs to develop and execute doctrinally based plans that assist commanders in visualizing, describing, and understanding the area of operations (AO) to achieve mission success. BDE and BN unit ministry teams (UMTs) are not exempt from this requirement of planning. UMTs are expected to provide doctrinally shaped religious support plans (RSPs) that fully support the commander's intent and are integrated into the overall mission.

Challenges with Religious Support Planning in DATE Scenarios

UMTs familiar with COIN and/or unfamiliar with DATE scenarios face numerous challenges when attempting to develop RSPs. Current challenges facing UMTs are identified as, but not limited to, inadequate doctrinal understanding and execution of the operations process, heavy dependence upon past and antiquated techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs), a deficiency in effective staff integration, and the struggle to understanding roles and responsibilities at the BDE UMT level. These challenges will prevent the development and execution of doctrinal RSPs that address religious services (RS) requirements across the AO and meet the commander's intent.

Most UMTs' operational experience is in the COIN environment. Because of this, most BDE and BN level UMTs struggle to provide detailed RSPs in the DA scenario due to the difference in planning requirements and the operational environment. They are used to conducting stability operations that have been sustained and guided by standard operating procedures (SOPs) and TTPs. The operations process (prepare, plan, execute, assess) has been neglected and doctrinal understanding of decisive action (DA) and planning RS by phase is, at best, unfamiliar to them. A majority of UMTs come to the JRTC uncomfortable with the operations process and unfamiliar with doctrinal terminology. This has degraded the development and execution of RS resulting in a trend where chaplains and chaplain assistants perform RS in a vacuum and are

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disconnected from the BCT's mission. The transition from a COIN environment to DA should provide a forcing function for UMTs to display both personal and disciplined initiative to study, understand, and operate doctrinally.

A second challenge facing UMTs in RS planning for DATE is their dependence on past and antiquated TTPs developed from their former COIN experience. While TTPs are "a way," they should not replace doctrine, especially in the operations process. Sole dependence and/or reliance on TTPs negatively affects RS planning and fails to provide critical analysis of a UMT's RS operational plan. The benefit of the operations process can be found when "chaplains and chaplain assistants apply critical and creative thinking to solve problems as it executes its religious support mission. Critical thinking enables chaplain sections and UMTs to understand situations, identify problems, find causes, arrive at conclusions, make quality plans, and assess the progress of operations" (FM 1-05, para 4-4, *Religious Support*).

The third major challenge UMTs face while training at the JRTC is their deficiency in integrating with the unit command and staff. This proves to be a consistent downward trend for UMTs training at the JRTC. UMTs are strong in building relationships, but that, in and of itself, is not staff integration. In short, they have historically integrated their personalities but not their capabilities. The UMT must overcome their limited experience and knowledge concerning doctrine and the operations process if they want to get beyond the commonly given command guidance of "just take care of the Soldiers" and apply a doctrinal task to that purpose.

UMTs must integrate with fellow staff to create shared understanding across the command. The UMT brings required capabilities (provide and advise) and core competencies (nurture, care, honor), and must integrate said capabilities and competencies with staff sections and Warfighting Functions (WfFs). Well-integrated UMTs will follow Army guidance as found in FM 6-0 stating "effective staffs establish and maintain a high degree of coordination and cooperation with staffs of higher, lower, supporting, supported, and adjacent units." (FM 6-0, para 2-5, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*). When the UMT becomes properly integrated, they will actively participate in their unit's operations process and achieve the critical aspect of situational understanding allowing for quality detailed planning.

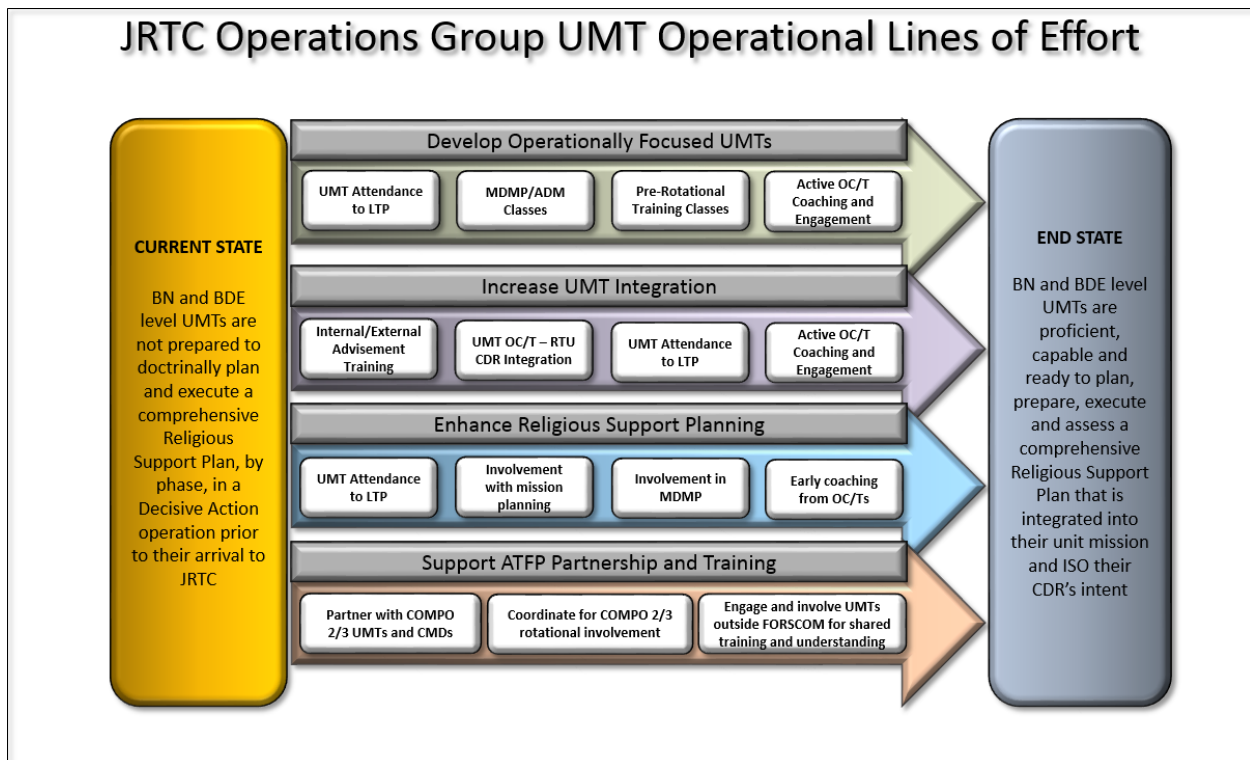
A fourth challenge identified at JRTC is the transition of chaplains and chaplain assistants who move from the BN to the BDE position. At the BN level, chaplains and chaplain assistants are executors of the mission and serve as direct leaders. At the BDE, however, the roles and responsibilities of the chaplain and chaplain assistant change dramatically. They become managers of RS operations, supervisors of subordinate UMTs, and are expected to be engaged with operational planning with the rest of the BDE staff. BDE UMTs need to recognize the focus cannot be just on HHC BDE, but also on each subordinate BN UMT. BDE UMTs must be provide leadership and guidance to ensure subordinate UMTs plan, prepare, and execute a successful and operative RS plan. The scope of responsibility at the BDE UMT changes from direct leadership to organizational leadership where they required to supervise, resource and manage BN UMTs in support of the overall mission.

This common trend can be addressed through effective UMT integration with the BDE staff, active UMT participation in MDMP, attendance to the Religious Support Operations Course taught at the United States Army Chaplain Center and School (USACHCS), and deliberate mentorship from higher headquarter (DIV and above) UMTs.

All UMTs should approach any training event, especially participation at a CTC, with the intent of participating in their unit’s collective training exercises and objectives. Inherent in that implied task should be an aggressively planned and executed RSP focused on each phase of the operation. In order to accomplish this, the UMT must integrate themselves with the staff in order to contribute to the operations process and produce necessary products (i.e. running estimate, religious area analysis, etc.) with an end state of a published Tab D in their unit’s operations order. When UMTs are able to integrate, plan, and execute a doctrinally based RSP, they will be able to successfully execute their required capabilities and core competencies in decisive action operations that support overall unified land operations.

A Way Forward for Unit Ministry Teams and Operational Planning

Most UMTs attending JRTC are uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the operations process and are challenged when required to provide doctrinally designed and integrated RSPs for DATE scenarios. Most UMTs do not know how to develop a comprehensive RSP that outlines distinct phased RS operations which is synchronized with the overall BDE operation. At the JRTC, we are working to change this through the four operational lines of effort (LOEs) listed below:



UMTs can overcome the operational gaps, increase staff integration, and gain situational understanding through two simple steps: participation in the leaders training program (LTP)

offered at each CTC and attend and participate in the military decision making process (MDMP) with their commands and staffs. This is true for chaplains and chaplain assistants across the Army Total Force who are serving at every level. Based on Army doctrine, this is a requirement as UMTs “and chaplain sections must maintain situational understanding throughout planning, preparation and execution activities in order to safely and comprehensively execute the concept of religious support” (ATP 1-05.1, para 2-27, *Religious Support and the Operations Process*).

The Army’s Mission Command philosophy: is to build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander’s intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use of mission orders, and accept prudent risk are the guiding principles of unified land operations. (Army Doctrine Publication [ADP] 6-0, para 7, *Mission Command*).

These principles enable commanders and staff to blend the art of command and science of control to synchronize and integrate all WfFs into the Mission Command WfF. It is through the Mission Command WfF that staff are tasked with conducting the operations process (plan, prepare, execute, and assess). UMT integration into the Mission Command WfF is essential to the success of RS planning, in which it synchronizes RS capabilities (provide and advise) with the rest of the unit’s activities. RS also provides input to inform the planning of other staff sections (i.e. religious area analysis, ethics, etc.) and informs RS Planning simultaneously. For example, a religious area impact assessment (RAIA) may inform other WfFs to develop courses of action (COAs) that consider religious sites and High Holy Day observations; revise a timeline for missions, and define when a subordinate UMT will provide RS at critical points.

As stated earlier, UMTs are required to “support the commander in understanding, visualizing, and describing the operational environment...prepare plans and orders...[develop] staff products that consist of timely and relevant information and analysis...arrange this information in the form of running estimates to help commanders build and maintain their situational understanding” (FM 6-0, para 2-2, 2-3). This is achieved when UMTs participate in common staff duties and responsibilities which include, but are not limited to: building and maintaining running estimates, preparing plans and orders, identifying and analyzing problems, and conducting staff research” (FM 6-0, para 2-8). These tasks are common and expected of all UMTs.

Conclusion

UMTs are required to provide RS to the Soldiers and authorized personnel in the unit and advise their command on all areas of religion, ethics, morals and morale (FM 1-05). In order to do this effectively in the DA environment, UMTs must actively participate in the operations process with their fellow staff. At the BDE level especially, it is important for UMTs to know their roles and responsibilities and how they differ from the BN. When a UMT knows their roles and responsibilities and they synchronizes their capabilities and competencies with other staff sections and WfFs, they can then engage in detailed planning that will produce a doctrinally based RSP that identifies needs and requirements at every phase of the operation.

The measure of a good RSP is not whether execution transpires as planned, but whether the plan facilitates effective action during unforeseen events. A good RSP addresses contingencies in

current and future operations” (FM 1-05, para 4-6). If the UMT can combine effective TTPs with current doctrine and impart that into the planning process, integrate effectively with fellow staff sections, and know their roles and responsibilities, they will be able to plan, resource, and action an effective and operationally focused RSP that meets the commander’s intent by supporting the overall mission.