

NEWS FROM THE CTC

11 March 2019



Effective Time Management



At the Company Level

CPT (P) Mike Conforti

Approved for public release: distribution unlimited

Effective Time Management at the Company-Level CPT (P) Mike Conforti

Executive Summary

This article is intended for all units conducting home station training to prepare themselves for a combat training center (CTC) rotation and combat. By conducting an analysis of observations at a CTC, the author discusses how to successfully manage time in a constrained and stressful environment. CPT (P) Conforti explains how development/adherence to an established timeline, utilization of a company command post (CP), and effectively implementing a fluid approach to troop leading procedures (TLPs) are key components to efficiently managing time.

<p style="text-align: center;">Observation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No Timeline Published Timeline Not Enforced Incomplete Timeline</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Observation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Company CPs not utilized CP readiness/training insufficient</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Observation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commanders approaching TLPs as a rigid/sequential process Unwillingness to modify TLPs to meet mission, situation, and time available leads to operational inefficiency</p>																																				
<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Timeline is an effective management tool. Application of reverse or backwards planning is the most effective method of development. Strict adherence and enforcement are key to effective time management.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CP is a combat enabler. Successful employment of a CP provides a location/tools to conduct operational planning/preparation/execution concurrently.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TLP is a fluid/concurrent process. Commanders can anticipate requirements and/or modify steps to maximize time.</p>																																				
<p style="text-align: center;">Technique/Procedure</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="215 646 555 846"> <thead> <tr> <th>Time</th> <th>Event</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Personnel Required</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Line of Departure (LD)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Start Point (SP)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Readiness Condition (REDCON)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Rehearsal</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Confirmation Brief</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Backbrief</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Operations Order (OPORD)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Warning Order (WARNORD)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Commander must also allocate time for subordinate planning, enemy analysis, and MVM/T/MNVR</p>	Time	Event	Location	Personnel Required		Line of Departure (LD)				Start Point (SP)				Readiness Condition (REDCON)				Rehearsal				Confirmation Brief				Backbrief				Operations Order (OPORD)				Warning Order (WARNORD)			<p style="text-align: center;">Technique/Procedure</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CP personnel handle routine communication, send reports, and request sustainment. Enables commander to conduct modified IPB, COA development, and other planning requirements in time-constrained and continuously evolving combat scenario. Establishing a functional and effective CP requires training and rehearsal at home station to validate prior to arrival at a CTC.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Technique/Procedure</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Anticipate mission requirements prior to mission receipt to start necessary movement (RXLs, PCCs, terrain/enemy analysis, etc.) Brief a robust WARNO (include complete situation, mission, general concept of the operation, and timeline). Understand and utilize all available forms of reconnaissance (map, UAV, JCR, etc.) and rehearsals (map, radio) if time does not permit a more deliberate method.</p>
Time	Event	Location	Personnel Required																																			
	Line of Departure (LD)																																					
	Start Point (SP)																																					
	Readiness Condition (REDCON)																																					
	Rehearsal																																					
	Confirmation Brief																																					
	Backbrief																																					
	Operations Order (OPORD)																																					
	Warning Order (WARNORD)																																					

Conducting effective troop leading procedures (TLPs) and efficiently managing time in a constrained and stressful environment are key components of success at combined training centers (CTCs). Rotational training units (RTU) at the company-level and below are currently struggling to effectively manage the allotted time in a complex operational environment; specifically, a) not publishing/adhering to a planning timeline; b) inadequate command post (CP) operational readiness; and c) a lack of TLP fluidity. These shortcomings are resulting in planning/preparation inefficiency, delayed/unsupported movement, desynchronized operational execution, and ultimately, significant loss. Achieving optimal time management and executing effective TLPs require a collective cultivation of applicable doctrinal knowledge, development of a standard operating procedure, and conducting realistic planning rehearsals ad nauseum.

Timelines

Upon receipt of the mission, commanders begin planning and preparing for its successful completion. Integral to successful mission completion is assessing the allotted time and allocating time to complete essential steps in the planning process, effectually generating a series of sequential deadlines; known formally as a timeline. The timeline is a time management tool to manage briefing preparations and budget time; as new information becomes available during the planning process refinement may be necessary. The most effective method of developing a realistic timeline is by applying the principle of reverse or backwards planning. An initial timeline should include at minimum a series of deadlines for the briefing of the warning order (WARNO), operations order (OPORD), back brief, confirmation brief, readiness condition (REDCON), start point (SP), and line of departure (LD) (see figure 1). Each event should include the tentative time, location, and audience required to attend to provide subordinate leaders the situational awareness to nest their timeline with higher headquarters. Additionally, commanders must allocate time for subordinate planning, understanding the enemy event template (EVENTEMP), and movement/maneuver. Timeline development alone is insufficient, enforcement and

adherence to the established hard times is equally important in achieving efficient time management. Essentially, commanders must adhere to a strict timeline in order to provide subordinates enough time to execute internal troop leading procedures. Establishing a timeline enables subordinate leaders to develop and produce their own actions for mission success.

Time	Event	Location	Personnel Required
	Line of Departure (LD)		
	Start Point (SP)		
	Readiness Condition (REDCON)		
	Rehearsal		
	Confirmation Brief		
	Back brief		
	Operations Order (OPORD)		
	Warning Order (WARNORD)		

Figure 1: Recommended Timeline

Command Post Operations

A company-level CP is essential for continuous planning in a combat or training environment and can also be helpful in coordinating current operations. The commander will encounter planning and operational constraints if he/she is the individual relaying all reporting requirements and sustainment needs to higher headquarters. Utilization of a company CP enables subordinates to handle routine communication, send reports, and request sustainment, freeing up leaders to plan, prepare, and execute mission requirements. The CP also provides a location and the tools needed to analyze terrain, enemy, and friendly considerations. A trained and well-equipped CP allows the commander and subordinate leaders to maintain situational awareness while navigating the complexities of a fast paced and complicated combat environment. Additionally, integrating continuous intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) and screening criteria consisting of: suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete (SFADC) in course of action (COA) development as part of the CP's responsibilities will improve a commanders ability to plan effectively in a time-constrained and continuously evolving combat scenario. A good planning battle rhythm will win the day and facilitate efficient time management in a fast-paced combat environment. Establishing a functional and effective CP requires thorough home-station training and validation prior to deploying to a CTC or combat zone.

Troop Leading Procedures

Although TLPs are listed sequentially, they should be executed as a fluid process and can be modified to meet the mission, situation, and time available. A concurrent approach in the completion of each step enables the unit to continuously plan and prepare without the constraints of awaiting a single step to be completed before moving forward. In a time-constrained environment, manipulation of these steps becomes critical for mission success. Commanders must anticipate future missions and identify steps that can be taken before or shortly after receipt of mission. For example, before an operation is received, movement can be initiated and pre-combat checks (PCCs) of organic equipment can be completed ahead of time. If general area of operations is known prior to delivery of the warning order (WARNORD), initial terrain analysis and reconnaissance can be conducted. Leaning forward and anticipating these future planning/preparation considerations provides the commander with more time to develop a better, more coherent plan and facilitates adherence to the 1/3-2/3 rule for subordinate leaders.

Commanders must also fully understand the multiple techniques available for accomplishing each task. For example, reconnaissance may be conducted in a variety of different ways during initial terrain and/or enemy analysis (i.e. map reconnaissance, organic unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), Joint Capabilities Release (JCR), etc.). Operational graphics can also be sent via the JCR while the order is briefed via frequency modulated (FM) means. Map and FM rehearsals may also replace the standard terrain model rehearsal if time to conduct formal rehearsals is unavailable. Issuance of a robust WARNORD is also recommended. Ideally, a WARNORD with a complete paragraph one and two, a general scheme of maneuver, and a solid timeline will provide enough information for subordinate units to begin their own planning. Issuing the operations order (OPORD) should act to solidify and synchronize previously briefed information and finalize plans for sustainment and command/signal. Essentially, TLPs should not be viewed as a rigid structure, enabling leaders at all echelons to conduct the TLPs in a manner that best fits their mission. Commanders must further focus planning by meeting requirements of time, simplicity, detail, and desired outcome. Rehearsing a more fluid approach to TLPs in planned training events at home station with the objective of conducting TLPs at the company-level and below will better prepare units for the unique training environment provided by CTCs.

In conclusion, development/adherence to an established timeline, utilization of a company CP, and effectively implementing a fluid approach to TLPs are key components to efficiently managing time in constrained and stressful operational scenario. Based on observations from multiple CTC rotations, units consistently struggle to effectively manage the allotted time leading to planning/preparation inefficiency, delayed/unsupported movement, desynchronized operational execution, and significant loss. After careful analysis of these observations and implementation of the recommended techniques and procedures, company-level leadership should be better prepared to conduct operations in any training or combat environment.