

NEWS FROM THE CTC

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1-3-5-M-M:



A Useful Reminder

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1-3-5-M-M: A Useful Mnemonic
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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. During continuous operations, platoon leadership encounters numerous competing considerations; utilization of the 1-3-5-M-M reminder device (Class I, Class III, Class V, maintenance, and medical) facilitates effective and concise organization of logistical concerns.

“The bulldozer’s out of fuel, sir.”

I heard these six words during a National Training Center rotation during box recovery operations on training day 14 from the equipment platoon leader. Furthermore, the platoon’s two Interim High-Mobility Engineer Excavators (IHMEEs) were down to less than a quarter tank of fuel.

This incident could have been easily prevented had platoon level leadership kept 1-3-5-M-M in mind. What is 1-3-5-M-M? I was first taught 1-3-5-M-M by my former squadron executive officer (XO), MAJ Noel Zarza while serving in 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Beyond preventing the incident at the beginning, 1-3-5-M-M is a useful planning mnemonic for platoon leaders and platoon sergeants. It's a mnemonic device that stands for Class I, Class III, Class V, maintenance, and medical; five logistical concerns commonly encountered in the course of operations. This simple mnemonic of 1-3-5-M-M helps remember them all in planning. Knowledge of the command support relationship is vital at all times and 1-3-5-M-M is an excellent way to frame the logistics of said relationship.

For example, an engineer platoon’s busiest time is in the preparation for the defense. Below is a breakdown of each concern, not all inclusive.

- **Class I (sustainment, food/water)** – This question can take many forms. Who is supplying food to the platoon? Is it the maneuver task force? The brigade engineer battalion? Working out the command support relationship prior to working for a given task force can remove friction for practically any logistical concern.
- **Class III (fuel/petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL))** – Any Soldier who’s been through at least one field problem knows that in mechanized warfare without fuel you're not going anywhere. Knowing daily equipment consumption rates can assist platoon leaders and platoon sergeants in forecasting resupply missions as well as provide more accurate estimates to maneuver commanders on work rates.
- **Class V (munitions)** - Does the platoon have a full unit basic load (UBL) of ammunition? Why or why not? Where can the platoon get resupplied on ammunition? For a sapper platoon some questions to consider are: What demolitions or special munitions are required and who’s providing them? What quantity of demolitions or special munitions are needed? An equipment platoon’s greatest risk of ambush is when on the move from one jobsite to another. A good practice is contacting the next unit to be supported with a request for UBL for expedited resupply.
- **Maintenance** - Amidst the preparation for a deliberate defense where and how can we conduct preventive maintenance checks & services (PMCS) of our equipment? If one of the bulldozers breaks down, what is the plan to get it repaired on site or taken to the combat trains command post (CTCP)? Ironing out who is ordering parts (brigade engineer battalion or task force?), the “5988” flow, and what higher level maintenance assets exist before embarking on mission goes a long way towards addressing this concern. Additionally many pieces of construction equipment have unique parts

requirements, such as the Hydraulic Excavator (HYEX) has specialized hydraulic lines. Addressing this concern with the company XO can ensure the proper shop stock list (SSL) is available for replacement parts.

- **Medical** - Which vehicle is the casualty evacuation vehicle for the platoon? Who will handle medical evacuation if the platoon has dig assets spread to three different companies? Where are the ambulance exchange points? Identifying these answers ahead of time can be potentially lifesaving. If a platoon does not have an organic medic, working with the company headquarters to get one assigned during the training cycle will only help refine medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) standard operating procedures (SOPs) before arrival at the NTC.

Competing considerations are on the minds of platoon leaders and platoon sergeants at all times, especially during the defense. Under these circumstances it is easy for logistics to become an afterthought. Remembering 1-3-5-M-M is a simple mnemonic that organizes logistical concerns in a concise fashion. This allows for a platoon leader or platoon sergeant to quickly address these concerns anywhere in the planning process or during operations.

The incident at the beginning did not need to occur had the platoon leader and platoon sergeant been thinking through 1-3-5-M-M while the platoon was co-located with the maneuver task force's assembly area. With some quick coordination, the platoon could easily have sorted out fuel for the upcoming recovery operation. Forecasting logistics prior to mission is always a sound practice, and 1-3-5-M-M is a great planning mnemonic for a platoon leader or platoon sergeant particularly when short on time.