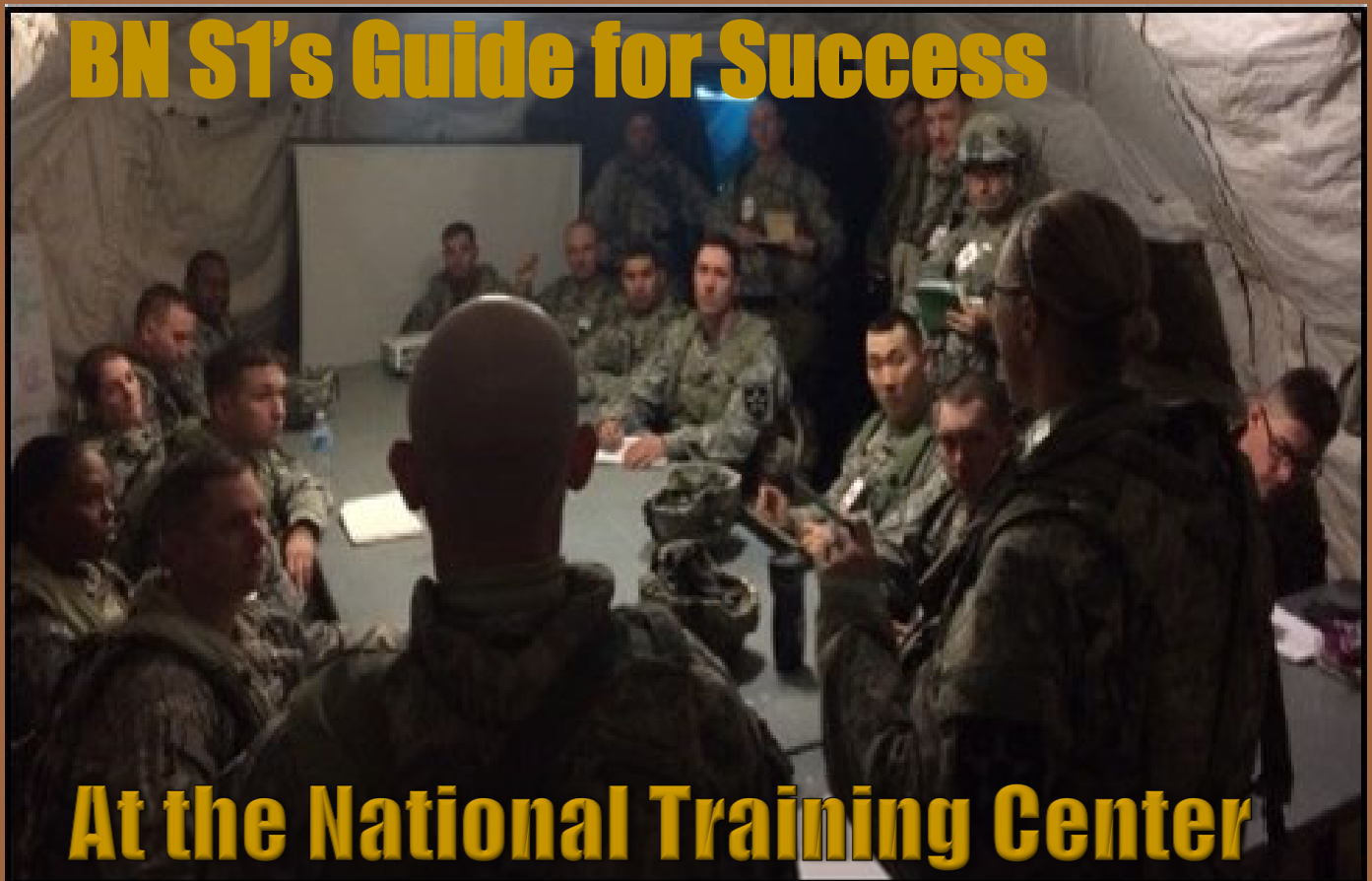


# ***NEWS FROM THE CTC***

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**Battalion S1's Guide for Success at the National Training Center**  
**MAJ David B. Leverett**

**Executive Summary**

This article is for all S1s conducting home station training to prepare themselves for a combat training center (CTC) rotation and combat. Generally, the battalion S1 understands his or her duties and responsibilities in a garrison environment. However, usually is a different story in a field environment where the S1 can be uncomfortable and unsure of the field duties and expectations from his or her command, especially with someone new to the position. This article breaks down the essential S1 functions in a field environment: personnel accountability, strength reporting, casualty reporting, personnel reconstitution, and planning.

## Introduction

As an observer/coach, trainer (OC/T) of the brigade (BDE) S-1 teams at the National Training Center (NTC) provided me with a unique opportunity that most S1s do not get. That is the chance to witness numerous human resource (HR) teams at the BDE and battalion (BN) level going through a rigorous 14-day exercise at the NTC in preparation for combat. Two common themes I noticed as an OC/T. First, the BN S1s were usually brand new to the position or lacked experience, especially in a field environment. Also, on many occasions, a combat arms officer was the BN S1 and did not receive any formal personnel training. Second, the S1 did not have the "I'm a Soldier first" mindset. Generally, in a garrison environment, the BN S1 understands his or her duties and responsibilities. It is usually a different story in a field environment where the S1 is typically uncomfortable and unsure of the field duties and expectations from his or her command. As you read through this paper, there are multiple questions asked to get the reader to think through certain situations before arriving at the NTC.

So how does an inexperienced adjutant general (AG) officer or junior combat arms officer assume the role as a BN S1 and be successful in a field environment, specifically at the NTC? How does the S1 have a Soldier's first mindset? This paper is intended to answer these precise questions while outlining the essential HR functions for a BN S1 to execute for an NTC rotation.

As with any new job, quickly building relationships and gaining trust is a top priority. There are a handful of pertinent leaders a BN S1 must build strong relationships and credibility with to be successful. These are the BN commander (CDR), BN command sergeant major (CSM), executive officer (XO), S3, company commanders, first sergeants, platoon leaders, and the BDE S1. Knowing what the leadership expects from you in a garrison and field environment is imperative. Sit with these individuals as often as possible early in your tenure to develop those relations and identify their expectations of you.

Months in advance of your unit's NTC rotation, start building casualty packets for all personnel in the battalion. Find out from the BDE S1 what the mandatory documents in each packet are and have your S1 section create them. The BDE S1 standard operating procedure (SOP) should dictate what materials are in each casualty packet. The casualty packet contents may include something like Soldier record brief (SRB), DD93, Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLV), letter of condolence, DA 4187 for an award, and casualty feeder card. This practice will save your S1 team time at the NTC to complete other vital taskings. Train your shop on the standard warrior tasks and drills (i.e., map orientation, land navigation, weapons training, maintenance, first aid, react to chemical attack, etc.). Conduct regular pre-combat checks (PCCs) and pre-combat inspections (PCIs) on vehicles and equipment. Practice setting up the tiny aperture terminal (VSAT) and know how to use it. Train on using communication systems [frequency modulation (FM), Joint Capabilities Release (JCR)] that you will use at the NTC. Execute casualty reporting and casualty packet processing with the BDE S1 utilizing each communications platform before showing up at the NTC. Ensure your drivers are trained and feel comfortable with using night-vision goggles while driving. The terrain at the NTC is unforgiving and can create havoc on the unprepared.

Identify the true non-deployable with your BN leadership. A good practice of ensuring the right Soldiers stay on the rear detachment roster is by; executing weekly to biweekly non-deployable roster scrubs with the BN CSM, first sergeants, rear detachment CDR, BN medical officer (MEDO), and legal representative. These sessions are tedious but necessary to capture the actual non-deployable. Since all commanders want to deploy with a full team; having the BN CSM be the approval authority for adding Soldiers to the rear detachment roster, by following the BN CDR's guidance, eliminates unnecessary involvement from other BN leadership. Once the BN starts to deploy, the rear detachment CDR and BN S1 must maintain regular communication to track the late deployed and to track the Soldiers who will redeploy back early.

The personnel on the torch and advance team (ADVON) flights set the stage for success during the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI). I recommend having S1 representatives on both torch and ADVON flights. Ensure this S1 personnel has specific guidance on what tasks must be completed, and they understand their role. These individuals aid the BN by capturing the by-name roster of organic and non-organic personnel as they arrive at the NTC. They also can gather points of contact for the leadership of the non-organic units, which is vital to the BN's accurate accountability of personnel. They should make contact with the Fort Irwin post office and the casualty assistance center to identify any specific procedures that are different from their home station facilities. Have them report back to you with daily updates on what tasks they've completed and/or what issues they've run into until you arrive.

Once on the ground, there will be a great deal of internal and external BN requirements. Be patient, as timelines and battle rhythm events will regularly shift, so prepare your team ahead of time. Be engaged with your BN leadership. Meet with the BDE S1 to verify what due outs he or she has, when is the daily BDE S1 synch, and then have a daily BN S1 synch with your S1 section. Make contact with the BN attachments' officer or non-commissioned officer in charge (OIC/NCOIC) and ensure they are tracking the reporting requirements. Contact your OC/T to let him or her know that you are on the ground. This individual is there to support you and can help make your life easier, but you must communicate with them.

BNs will execute many repetitions of the military decision-making process (MDMP) throughout RSOI and in the box. As a BN S1, don't sit on the sidelines during MDMP. The S1 plays a role during the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). During the IPB, the S1s assist with analyzing the operational environment to identify its relevant aspects and its impact on casualty assistance operations, postal operations, personnel replacement operations, and personnel reporting.

**Casualty Assistance Operations.** Casualty assistance is collecting, recording, reporting, verifying, and processing of casualty information from unit level to Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA).<sup>1</sup> Ensure casualty reporting is integrated into current operations tracking. Place an S1 representative on the existing operations floor to monitor casualty information. How is the BN S1 section reporting casualty information to the BDE S1? What communications systems can we use? What is the format for reporting casualties? Do we already have pre-made casualty packets on all organic and non-organic personnel? If not, who is building the casualty packets? Is it happening at the BN level or in the personnel holding area (PHA)? Is the MEDO

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<sup>1</sup> FM 1-0, Ch 1, Par 1-20, Pg 1-5

tracking what I'm tracking? The BN S1 and the MEDO ought to be on the same page regarding casualties.

**Postal Operations.** Sometimes postal operations are an afterthought during field exercises. In a deployment, receiving mail can immediately boost the morale of a Soldier. The same goes for an extended field exercise. Understand your CDR's intent with postal operations and engage the BDE S1 on the subject before the NTC. During planning for postal services, there are many parts to consider. Are postal services affected by terrain? Are postal operations critical to the BN's leadership? Do we have enough certified mail handlers with DD Form 285 cards in the BN before arriving at the NTC? Recommend having at least two mail handlers in the BN S1, and each Company has a mail handler. How often should the BN's leadership expect mail to be delivered in the box? Is the BDE S1 coordinating for delivery of correspondence with the combat sustainment support battalion (CSSB) or aviation element?

**Personnel Replacement Operations.** At the NTC, a personnel holding area (PHA) hold casualties until reconstitution. After the medical personnel screen the injured, they move to the PHA and wait until their casualty packet is fully processed and approved. The PHA is not doctrinal by nature but usually consists of tentage, camouflage netting, tables/workstation areas, generator, VSAT, and communication equipment [FM, JCR, non-secure internet protocol router (NIPR)]. Once the casualty packet is approved, the casualty becomes a replacement and can then return to the fight. On average, a casualty remains at the PHA from 8-12 hours, but occasionally the casualty or replacement will stay at the PHA for an extended amount of time (24-72 hours). This delay happens for any number of reasons but can be mitigated through planning, coordination, and rehearsals. The brigade S1 runs the PHA, but the BNs usually supplement the PHA with a representative to help with processing their casualties. So what can the BN S1 do to ensure their personnel are processed and returned to their unit promptly to not slow down the BN operations tempo (OPTEMPO)? Here are a few recommendations to assist with getting replacements from the PHA back into the fight sooner than later.

1. Try to get a dedicated light medium tactical vehicle (LMTV) to transport BN replacements from the PHA back to the unit.
2. It is producing accurate casualty packets promptly. Rehearse building casualty packets and processing them through the same channels you will have at the NTC. This processing can happen before arriving or during RSOI.
3. Message the importance of picking up replacements from the PHA to the BN's leadership. Get these folks on your side. Get them to make it a BN priority with the company leadership. This messaging should start before arrival at the NTC, continued during RSOI, and at each sustainment rehearsal.
4. Have constant communication with the PHA to identify which BN personnel are held at the PHA. The BN S1 representative at the PHA must actively keep the BN up-to-date on what the status of BN personnel are at the PHA and when replacements are ready for pickup. There is always a way to make contact with the BN either through FM, JCR/JBCP, NIPR, Secure Internet Protocol Router (SIPR), or runner. Too many times,

the BN S1 representatives sit at the PHA and play a passive role for 14 days. Ensure this individual knows his or her duties and responsibility to the BN also, why he or she plays a massive role in maintaining the BN's OPTEMPO.

5. Ensure the S1 representative knows the personnel priority of fill for the BN by military occupational specialty (MOS). It's great to get the 11C back into the fight, but the 11B or 19D might be more important, depending on the next mission.
6. If the BN can't pick up their replacements promptly, find another way to get them back into the fight. Coordinate for air movement requests or through logistics package (LOGPAC). Identify the request procedures with the brigade sustainment battalion (BSB) and aviation BN before going to the box.

**Personnel Accountability and Strength Reporting;** this is what we do as an S1, and we must own and take pride in it. Early on during RSOI, the BN must have a consolidated by-name roster of all organic and non-organic personnel with battle roster numbers. Ensure the BDE S1 and the PHA have your BN's consolidated list from RSOI throughout the rotation. Rehearse the primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) communications plan with BDE S1 by sending up personnel status reports (PERSTATs), strength reports, and casualty reports through each communications system (FM, JCR/JBCP, NIPR). Be aware the BN may jump the tactical operations center (TOC) every 24 hours, so be prepared that communications will be in a degraded status often while at the NTC. One consistent failure observed during most rotations is the fact that the BN S1s did not submit battle rhythm reports (i.e., PERSTATs) to BDE S1 in a consistent and timely manner. These reports are not optional, and subordinate units should comply with higher HQs directives. Understand what the BDE S1 expects from the BN S1's reporting in regards to times and formats and meet or give the BDE S1 a heads up if you can't make suspense. What are the BN systems available to send reports? What systems does the BDE S1 and PHA have access to? Are both the BDE S1 and PHA on the BN S1 distro for battle rhythm reports? The BDE will jump locations every 48 hours, so sending both the S1 and PHA, the emails will ensure everyone is on the same page. Ensure BDE S1 confirms receipt of the submitted reports. Don't just send a JCR text message and assume BDE S1 received it.

Strength reporting provides commanders with a snapshot of the personnel component of their combat power and capabilities.<sup>2</sup> Strength reporting is more than the total number of personnel in the unit as a basic PERSTAT report provides. It can also include the current strength of the critical MOS of subordinate units and forecasted personnel issues/concerns (i.e., emergency leaves, task organization changes, etc.) that may impact combat power. Strength reporting requires regular and timely personnel reporting by leaders at the company level. Ensure all attachments know when to report and what to report. The following strength reports are examples that give the BDE S1 and the BDE leadership an up-to-date picture of where the BN stands on personnel.

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<sup>2</sup> ATP 1-0x1, Ch 4, Par 4-18, Pg 4-6

<b>Critical MOS Availability Report (for FM / JCR / JBCP reporting)</b>
Line 1: Total # of 19Ds in the Company
Line 2: Total # of 19Ks in the Company
Line 3: Total # of 11Bs in the Company
Line 4: Total # of 11Cs in the Company
Line 5: Any current/forecasted personnel issues?

**Figure 1: Report used to assist with capturing the personnel component of combat power**

TF SPARTAN	AUTH	REAL ASGN	BOG	ASGN IN BOX	AVAIL vs BOG %	ELV(-)	REDEPL(-)	KIA	WIA	REAR D	HOS/ DNBI (RW)
A Co	101	91	81	77	95.1%						
B Co	101	91	82	76	92.7%						
C Co	90	81	73	69	94.5%						
D Co	90	81	74	68	91.9%						
E Co	115	102	95	89	93.7%	1					
<b>TF SPARTAN(-)</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>93.6%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
CA Team	22	22	22	22	100.0%						
Profit Team	5	5	5	5	100.0%						
ENABLERS	22	27	27	27	100.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TF SPARTAN TOTAL</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>94.0%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Figure 2: Example of a BN PERSTAT**

At the NTC, units will struggle with consistent communications. So how does an S1 get personnel accountability with degraded communications? Wherever the S1 OIC location is [BN TOC, administration and logistics operation center (ALOC), or combat trains command post (CTCP)], the S1s must have access to multiple communication platforms (FM, JCR, SIPR, NIPR) to report information to your TOC and the higher HQs regularly in the event communications are degraded. If using FM or JCR to report PERSTATs or other reports, look at using an abbreviated format that is easily transmittable and not time-consuming. The format could be something as simple as:

<b>5 Line Personnel Status Report (for FM / JCR / JBCP reporting)</b>
Line 1: Total # of BN Personnel in the field
Line 2: Total # of available personnel in the field
Line 3: Total # of casualties received over the last 12 hours
Line 4: Total # of casualties at the PHA
Line 5: Total # of BN pax on Rear Detachment

**Figure 3: Report to send up a quick snapshot of personnel via FM or JCR when NIPR is not available**

The BDE S1 will most likely dictate the format, but it is the BN S1's responsibility to ensure the BDE S1 knows what communication platforms the BN S1s have access to. The BN S1s must ensure he or she knows how to use each communication platform to send reports. Conduct a PACE plan rehearsals to practice the reporting of PERSTATs to BDE S1 via all communication platforms before the field exercise. These rehearsals will help to ensure communication systems are operational and to identify issues early.

<b>S1 ALOC PACE Plan</b>
Primary – JBC-P (roll name – S1-XBCTXID)
Alternate – FM Radio (BDE A/L Net, FH 203, Call Sign – Warrior 1)
Contingent – CPOF (Transverse, Roll Name Warrior 1)
Emergency – SVOIP (phone number – xxx-xxxx)
NIPR (add email addresses to send to)
<b>S1 PHA PACE Plan</b>
Primary – JBC-P (roll name – TOC-XXXBSB)
Alternate – SVOIP (phone number – xxx-xxxx)
Contingent – SIPR CPOF (Transverse, Roll Name Warrior 1)
Emergency – NIPR (add email addresses to send to)
<b><u>Casualty Assistance Center (CAC)</u></b>
Primary - NIPR Email (add email addresses to send to)
Alternate – NVOIP (xxx-xxx-xxxx)

**Figure 4: Example PACE Plan from Rotational Unit** (Ensure subordinate elements have the S1's PACE plan.)

During the course of action (COA) analysis or war game, the S1 should produce casualty estimates for the operation broken down by phase. As per FM 1-0, division G1 is in charge of casualty estimates, however, in a field environment with no G1 available, the BDE and/or BN S1 must assume this responsibility. The casualty estimates help the commander, S3/XO, and planners understand what to expect with friendly losses during the operation. This analysis allows commanders to decide the task and purpose of each subordinate element. The BN S1 and the BN MEDO should synchronize efforts to determine the expected number of casualties, and this will help the MEDO determine what medical capabilities and platforms are required during the operation. Understand how the leadership wants to receive the casualty estimates. He or she may want the information broken down by total #, or by loss of whole platoons (PLTs), or by total loss of each MOS. For example, at PLT level- A company (CO) can expect to lose 1 x PLT, and B CO will lose 2x PLT of combat strength. A CO can expect to lose 35x 11Bs, and B CO can expect to lose 25x 19Ds. S1 also understand when the leadership wants to receive this during the MDMP process, probably during COA analysis.

An example of a casualty estimator can be found on S1 Net at the following link: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/message/687138#687138>. S1 Net is part of an Army-wide knowledge management system supporting the flow of knowledge throughout the HR community. S1 Net is pair with a network of over 40 professional forums. Where HR professionals can share knowledge and ultimately become more efficient and effective in supporting our Army in an era of persistent conflict. The mission of the S1 NET is to support the warfighter, provide relevant and timely information to professionals in the field, capture



knowledge to improve decision making, and finding new methods for tapping the latest HR experiences and expertise in the field.<sup>3</sup> If you are not a member of S1 Net, you can join here: To join, click on the S1NET Home Page link <https://www.milsuite.mil/s1net> and sign in to milSuite with your common access card (CAC). Signing in establishes your milSuite account if you didn't have one). When you reach the S1NET home page, look on the left side of the page for the "Join S1NET" widget and click it. Approval is automatic. You must log on at least once per year to keep your account active.<sup>4</sup>

The below table was created during an NTC rotation by the S1 and the MEDO. It's broken down by MOS by phase but also by urgent and priority patients to assist with the planning analysis for medical evacuations and determining the number of medical platforms required. The table allows the command to visualize and plan for the projected casualties during the mission.

Casualty Estimates by MOS by Phase		
URGENT	PRIORITY	TARGETED MOS
9	17	12B, 12H, 13B
PHASE 6B DEFENSE		
URGENT	PRIORITY	TARGETED MOS
33	64	19K, 11B, 13F, 12B
PHASE 6C COUNTER ATTACK		
URGENT	PRIORITY	TARGETED MOS
46	90	19K, 11B, 13F, 12B
TOTALS		
URGENT	PRIORITY	TARGETED MOS
88	171	PER PHASE

**Figure 5: Example of Casualty Estimate (provided by rotational unit)**

The S1 can deliver a big hit by not only articulating casualty estimates but by assisting the S2 and S3 in their enemy attrition analysis during COA analysis. Our force versus the enemy's strength and also determining the DO/SO1/SO2/SO3 based on the number of personnel each CO/BN has available for the operation. Combat power is often looked at by vehicle status alone, but it includes vehicles, equipment, and personnel. The S1 should assist the S3 with capturing the personnel portion (total certified crews by platform, total available personnel, and identify MOS shortages) of the BN's combat power picture.

An excellent article that captures the importance of analyzing the friendly and enemy forces is Demystifying the Correlation of Forces Calculator.<sup>5</sup> It demonstrates the correlation of forces calculator to help planners compare the relative combat power of friendly and enemy forces and estimate the engagement outcome between the two. The calculator is a great tool to aid the S1 in his/her analysis of friendly and enemy personnel. The article can be found on S1 Net.

<sup>3</sup> HR Planner's Information Handbook, Version 6, April 2014, Pg 49

<sup>4</sup> Dillard, Jerry, S1 Net Message Summary, 16 August 2019

<sup>5</sup> LTC Dale Spulin and LTC Matthew Green, Demystifying the Correlation of Forces Calculator

At the NTC, rehearsals are a crucial function for all units' leadership to come together to understand the whole plan, synchronization triggers, and to identify issues with the plan. An area of anxiety with some S1s is what do I brief during a sustainment rehearsal? The S1 should inform the location of S1 assets across the battlefield to include PHA location. These locations should be either marked on the terrain model or at least direct the audience's attention to the precise sites. Cover which communication systems the BN S1 has available to send up reports to higher and to communicate with the platoon personnel on the ground. How long will it take to reconstitute personnel once casualties leave the Role 2 medical treatment facility (MTF)? Remind everyone of the 72-hour bag. What goes into a 72-hour bag? Meals, Ready to Eat (MREs), water, clothing, sleeping bag. Remind the leadership of the importance of picking up their personnel from the PHA promptly. The BN S1 and BN MEDO must work closely in the planning process and synchronization of casual estimation. Casualty estimates should be discussed at COA analysis. And during the sustainment rehearsal the BN MEDO address the medical evacuation requirements, medical assets available by location, ambulance exchange points (AXPs), and triggers. The synchronization of this medical information with the BDE and BN medical personnel before the rehearsal is vital to keep the rehearsal from turning into a war-gaming exercise.

For example, "The S1 OIC and NCOIC will be located at the BN CTCP (say grid & point to the location on terrain model/map). I'll have 1x E5 located at the BDE PHA (say grid & point to the location on terrain model/map). The PACE plan for the BN S1 at the BN CTCP will be FM (A&L net on 380), JCR (what is the S1 roll name?), NIPR, and runner. Once casualties depart Role 2, they move to the PHA where they will be processed. Once casualty packets are completed and approved by the proper authority, the casualties are reconstituted. Once reconstituted, the BN S1 rep at the PHA will inform the BN S1 and/or BN Ops SGM through FM (as the primary) or JCR (as the alternate). At this point, the BN S1 and/or BN Ops SGM will work with the proper Company to get their personnel recovered from the PHA. Companies can expect for reconstitution/replacement process to take 10-12 hours. This process is from the point in time the Soldier arrives at the PHA, till the casualty packet is completed/approved until the BN picks up their Soldier from the PHA. If BN is unable to pick up their Soldier(s) on time, the BN S1 rep at the PHA will work with BSB on utilizing a LOGPAC to drop off our Soldier(s). If both COAs fail, the PHA OIC will coordinate with the BDE S3 brigade aviation element for an air movement request to get the reconstituted personnel back into the fight. For any personnel that is rendered as a casualty, ensure each casualty has a 72-hour bag on hand consisting of at least 3x MREs, water, extra clothing, hygiene kit, and sleeping bag." End of BN S1's briefing portion.

Should a BN S1 or an S1 representative be located on the current operations (CUOPS) floor? If so, what should the S1 bring to the fight on the CUOPS floor? Of course, it all depends on if the leadership allows the S1 a seat on the CUOPS floor. If the BN S1 or an S1 representative is permitted on the CUOPS floor by your command, that is great. This seat gives the S1 timely operational situational awareness of the battlefield. If not allowed, then fine. The S1 still has that responsibility and must figure out how to gain operational situational awareness promptly timely manner. Just like any staff primary at any level, the S1 must consistently move between current operations, plans, and its S1 section wherever it is located. Most likely located in the combat trains command post (CTCP) or at the administration and logistics operations center (ALOC).

The S1 must be engaged and not be a passive onlooker. The essential areas the S1 must track and not mess up are personnel accountability, strength reporting, casualty reporting, personnel reconstitution, and planning. To do this, the S1 must understand what current operations are going on and what operations will be going on over the next 72 hours.

## **Summary**

As with any primary staff officer, the command has high expectations. It should not be any different from the S1 in the field. There is no secret formula for an S1 at NTC. The topics covered above address primary concerns repeatedly observed at the NTC. Many issues the S1 will face at the NTC can be mitigated through prior planning, coordination, and analysis. The best advice I can give is to put forth the effort, stay engaged throughout the rotation, be a team player, be responsive, have a positive attitude, don't be afraid to make mistakes, and ask questions. Over-communicate with your command, BDE S1, and subordinate unit's leadership to ensure everyone is on the same page. Rehearse every critical function and any event that is critical to execution or has a chance to slow the BN's OPTEMPO down (i.e., casualty packet processing and movement of replacements back to the unit). Keep in mind that the NTC is a learning environment and a final step before deployment. Have an open mind, be ready to learn, be a Soldier first, and stay aggressive.