FGHT 1004: INTRODUCTION TO THE OPERATIONS ORDER

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S):

(1) Given a unit, without attachments, and completed combat order, issue a Five-Paragraph Order to communicate the order in a clear and concise manner. (MCCS-C2-1504)

(2) Given an order from higher headquarters, write a combat order to support the achievement of higher headquarters' intent. (MCCS-C2-1502)

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S):

(1) Without the aid of references, and with a training operations order, begin planning for an offensive patrol in accordance with MCIP 3-10A.4i. (MCCS-C2-1502a)

(2) Without the aid of references, given a training operations order, format received information into a Five-Paragraph Order without error. (MCCS-C2-1502b)

(3) Without the aid of references, given a training operations order, complete the plan for an offensive patrol in accordance with MCRP MCIP 3-10A.4i. (MCCS-C2-1502c)

(4) Without the aid of references and with a training operations order, issue a foundational order for an operation without error IAW MCIP 3-10A.4i, Appendix C. (MCCS-C2-1504a)

(5) Without the aid of references and with a training operations order, supervise preparation and execution of an offensive operation in accordance with MCIP 3-10A.4i, Appendix C. (MCCS-C2-1504b)

INTRODUCTION. An operations order is defined as "a directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the purpose of effecting the coordinated execution of an operation." They are used by commanders at all echelons and are issued orally, in writing, or both. The broad spectrum of order types and delivery options ranges from a few hasty instructions shouted by a platoon commander or squad leader in the heat of battle to a phone book-sized written operations order for a regiment, division, or Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). In order to provide some standardized structure for operations orders across that spectrum, the common format described below has been adopted by United States forces and our allies.

1. **O-SMEAC FORMAT**.
    a. Purpose. Many nations have agreed to use the format contained in standard agreement (STANAG 2014). Most Marines will recognize it as "SMEAC," the five-paragraph operations order format, or "O-SMEAC" when the *orientation* brief is included. This format is used throughout the United States Armed Forces, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-member armed forces, and elsewhere overseas. Nearly all types of combat orders are based on all or part of the five-paragraph format. Never forget that it is the action that follows your order that counts most, not just the format itself. A short simple order that is easily understood and conveys your will is superior to a lengthy, complicated order. Standard order formats expedite understanding and communication, prevent omissions, and facilitate ready reference.

    b. Elements of O-SMEAC. The operations order provides a means of directing and influencing your unit to synchronize actions toward accomplishing a mission. The order consists of an orientation brief and five paragraphs. All five paragraphs work together to coordinate your resources into a plan on how you will reach the goal of mission accomplishment. Elements of the orientation brief and five paragraphs are described below:

    Orientation. The orientation brief begins the delivery of an order with a brief description of the terrain you will be operating in from "big to small", and should be delivered using a terrain model or map, at least. Understanding the impact terrain has on your movement and mission will help you to come up with a feasible solution. The focus during an orientation brief should be on key terrain related to the specific mission more than just generalities about the environment, unless the environment has changed drastically (for example, "To our northwest beyond Objective 1 is a large reservoir; if we reach it we have gone too far," is more useful than "we are currently located in the Quantico highlands.") A proper orientation is crucial to providing an effective brief.

    (1) Situation. After looking at the terrain as briefed in the Orientation paragraph, you need to understand who is in the immediate area. The Situation paragraph provides details on both friendly and enemy personnel operating in your area of operations. We combine our understanding of the terrain with an understanding of the enemy force we are facing and what friendly support we may have around us to help our decision-making process for finding our solution.

(2) <u>Mission</u>. A short statement containing all five "W's". When is who, doing what, to whom, and why. This is the problem that we have to determine the solution for. Using all of the information we have at this point, we determine a course of action to accomplish the mission.

(3) <u>Execution</u>. This is where we communicate our plan (solution) for the mission we are tasked to accomplish. Starting from our present location, we brief how we get to the point where the "what" has been accomplished that leads to the "why" of the operation. We provide enough detail to direct how to accomplish the mission without being too detailed to the point that we stifle the initiative of subordinates. We imply discretion to subordinates in determining how they accomplish their tasks so long as they do not contradict the intent of the mission.

(4) <u>Administration & Logistics</u>. Providing some of the finer details of the operation, this paragraph focuses on medical issues, enemy prisoner of war (EPW) handling, food, water, and ammunition needed to accomplish the mission. We remember the details involved in this paragraph through the use of the "four Bs: Beans, Bullets, Band-Aids, and Bad Guys." However, we actually brief in terms of: Gear, Chow, and Water Plan ("Beans"), Ammunition ("Bullets"), Casualty Evaluation Plan (CASEVAC, or "Band-Aids"), and EPW Plan ("Bad guys").

(5) <u>Command & Signal</u>. Here we wrap up the order by discussing how we will communicate key events throughout the operation. We also discuss where key personnel are going to be located, and what the order will be for succession of command in the event the unit leader becomes a casualty.

2. **THE OPERATIONS ORDER**.

Orientation. Prior to issuing an order, the unit leader orients his/her subordinates to the planned area of operation. Key aspects of the terrain, obstacles along the route, where we are currently located, and where we are going are all things to consider when orienting your subordinates. Again, whenever feasible, use a terrain model or map, at least.

a. **Situation.**

(1) **Enemy Forces.** Information on the enemy situation is issued. (The acronym SALUTE is used)

(a) <u>Size</u>: How many enemy are there?

(b) <u>Activity</u>: What are they doing?

(c) <u>Location</u>: Where were they seen last?

(d) <u>Unit</u>: Which unit/organization are they from?

(e) <u>Time</u>: When were they last seen?

(f) <u>Equipment</u>: What kind of weapons and equipment do they have?

Briefed in TSUALE sequence. Example:

<u>Example</u>. At 1430, a 2-3 man team of enemy forces were exmplacing mines at grid 1234 5678. They are wearing desert utilities and are armed with American-style small arms and explosives.
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(2) **Friendly Forces.** Information about the friendly situation is issued. (The acronym HAS is used)

(a) <u>Higher unit mission</u>: Task and commander's intent.

(b) <u>Adjacent unit missions</u>: Who is to my left, right, front, rear? Or north, south, east, and west?

(c) <u>Supporting unit missions</u>: Is anyone supporting me?

(d) <u>Attachments / Detachments</u>: "None" at OCS. Have any of my Marines been given to another unit (detachments)? Do I have any additional Marines (attachments)?

<u>Example</u>: "Higher: 1st platoon is *clearing* enemy forces IVO Area of Operations (AO) D1 in order to prevent attacks on adjacent friendly supply routes. Adjacent: 2nd squad is *clearing* to our east, 3rd squad is *clearing* to our west, and there are no friendly forces directly north. The rest of the company is to our south *retaining* Landing Zone (LZ) Blue Jay. Supporting: None. Attachments/Detachments: None.
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b. **Mission.** This is one clear, concise, simple statement on the task the unit must accomplish and the purpose behind it. It answers the "5 Ws" (when, who, what, where, and why).

Example: "1st Sqd/Team, you are the main effort (ME). On order (O/O), destroy the enemy on the center 1/3 of the objective in order to (IOT) prevent the enemy from withdrawing."

c. **Execution**. Communicate the plan (solution) for our problem (the mission) we are tasked to accomplish.

Starting from our present location, we brief how we get to the point where the "what" has been accomplished that leads to the "why" of the operation.

(1) **Commander's Intent (CI)**. The purpose of providing intent is to allow subordinates to exercise judgment and initiative to depart from the original plan when the unforeseen occurs. Squad and team leaders do not develop commanders' intent sections of orders. However, they must communicate their higher commander's intent provided in the order they receive. There are three elements of the CI:

(a) P- Purpose "WHY"

(b) M- Method "HOW"

(c) E- Endstate. Describes what the commander wants the situation to look like when the mission is accomplished in terms of friendly forces, enemy forces, and terrain.

Example: "**Purpose**: To prevent enemy interference with the company assault.

Method: The enemy key strength is their small size giving them unrestricted mobility within the AO. Their key weakness is that their small size lacks substantial combat power. We will exploit this weakness using squad size patrols to prevent enemy interference with the company assault.

End state: *Enemy forces* unable to interfere with company operations, *friendly forces* able to move freely throughout the AO, and *terrain* within the AO is clear of enemy forces.

(2) **Concept of Operation**. This section describes generally the type of operation. At OCS, this will always be "This operation will be a dismounted patrol (or attack)," compared with, for example, "this will be a motorized patrol."

(a) **Scheme of Maneuver.** This section provides the general "how to" of your plan – it is the "game plan" for how the entire unit will work together to accomplish the mission. It is important to issue your scheme of maneuver in anonymous terms first (anonymous, sequential, and thorough) in order to keep everyone's attention throughout the whole plan. Everyone needs to understand what those around them are doing in order to create flexibility and support during the execution of the plan. General elements to brief include: Direction of attack (DoA), distribution of forces (DoF), form of maneuver (FoM), applicable tactical control measures (TCMs), and plan for consolidation.

Examples: (SULE 1 scenario) "We will depart from our current position in a fire team wedge on an azimuth of 167 degrees magnetic and move approximately 200m to reach the objective. At 100m, we will transition to a fire team skirmishers right formation. Once in contact with the enemy, we will assault through the objective to a point beyond it about 20m, where we will transition into a hasty-180. Once we see no signs of enemy counter-attack, we will consolidate into a 360 and you will give me your ACE reports. From there, we will receive further tasking.

(SULE 2 scenario) "1st Squad will conduct a hasty flanking attack from NW to SE, with ME in the center, SE1 on the left, and SE2 on the right. We move from the AA to the Aslt Pos in the squad column, from the Aslt Pos to the OBJ we will be in the Squad on-line formation. ME will clear the center of the objective with SE1 clearing the left and SE2 clearing the right. ME will occupy the 11-1 of the H180, SE1 occupying the 9-11, and SE 2 occupying the 1-3. ME will occupy the 10-2 of the C360, SE1 occupying the 6-10, and SE2 occupying the 4-6."

(b) **Fire Support Plan.** "None" at OCS. The fire support plan supports the scheme of maneuver, but is covered in-depth at The Basic School.

(3) **Tasks**. These are the specific tasks given to members of the fire team (or to subordinate leaders within higher levels of units) on the scheme of maneuver. This is when you are speaking specifically to the subordinate (unit or person) on the part of the scheme of maneuver they will execute. The unit or individual's tasks turn into their mission. Tasks will look different at the fire team and squad levels. When appropriate, teams can be tasked using "in order to" statements with a specified task and purpose. They can also be tasked more simply when the situation allows.

Examples:

(Fire Team SULE Scenario): "Candidate Jones, you will be the point man. Candidate Johnson, you will be the assistant automatic rifleman and navigator. Candidate Smith, you will be the automatic rifleman and pace-count man." (Each candidate knows his/her role in the fire team formation and his/her additional duty)

(Squad SULE Scenario):

3d FT – SE 2 – On order, suppress the objective in order to allow 1st and 2d FT to clear the objective. You will be provide a navigator and pace man.

1st FT – SE 1 – Upon effective suppression, clear the right half of the objective in order to prevent enemy interference with the platoon assault. You will be the aid and litter team.

2d FT – ME – Upon effective suppression, clear the left half of the objective in order to prevent enemy interference with the platoon assault. You will be the EPW team.

*If all three teams are assigned the same task, it is not necessary to use the same "in order to" statement to tell each of them the same thing. (For example, an attack in which each team is tasked to "destroy" 1/3 of the objective).

    (4) **Coordinating Instructions.** This paragraph contains instructions common to two or more people in the unit. There is no standard list of coordinating instructions that must be included in every order, but examples include:

- Time of Attack
- Base Unit
- Order Of Mvmt
- Route
- Security Plan
- Rehearsal Plan
- Applicable TCM grids or locations: AA, ATK POS, ASLT POS, OBJ, LoD

Example: (SULE Scenario) "Coordinating instructions: Time of Attack: 0650, Base Unit: 1st Fire Team, Tactical Control Measures: MA3 – TA 9580 6320, Co Obj A – TA 9450 6337, Priorities of rehearsal: Contact R/L/Ft, Signal Plan, Casualty response procedures, and crossing linear danger areas.

    d. **Administration & Logistics**. This paragraph contains essential information used to assist in accomplishing the mission. We remember the key components using the memory device "the four Bs" (beans, bullets, band-aids, and bad guys). However, we brief in terms of their actual meaning.

    (1) "Band-Aids" = CASEVAC Plan: How do we care for the injured?

Example: "CASEVAC Plan: Self-Aid, Buddy-Aid, Corpsman Aid. Casualty Collection Point (CCP) at the center of consolidated 360. Company CCP is at the AA. I will coordinate with the Company Gunnery Sergeant for a link up point to evacuate the casualty and the aid and litter team will move the casualty."

    (2) "Bad guys" = Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Plan: What do we do with EPWs?

Example: "EPW's will be handled by Candidate Johnson and Smith. They will be treated with STRESS, and initially consolidated in the center of the 360. From there, I will coordinate with the company Gunnery Sergeant for a link-up point to evacuate them."

    (3) "Beans" = Chow and Water Plan: How much food and water do we need?

    (4) "Bullets" = Ammunition: How much ammo do we have and how much do we need?

    *This section also covers any special equipment items/gear required for the mission.

Example: "Everyone will have one MRE, a full camelback and two full canteens, mapping gear, and ten rounds filled in one magazine prior to departing the assembly area. Upon consolidation, we will request re-supply as needed."

e. **Command & Signal.** This paragraph contains any signals that will be used to coordinate movement or events with the scheme of maneuver. This paragraph also identifies the location of key leaders and who will succeed in command if key leaders become casualties.

Example (Signal): "We will use hand and arm signals during movement. Upon enemy contact we will switch to voice commands." Or "HAVOC"

Example (Command): The squad leader is located at the platoon command post. Succession of command will be 1st Fire Team Leader, 2nd Fire Team Leader, 3rd Fire Team Leader.

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3. **TECHNIQUES OF ISSUING AND RECEIVING THE ORDER**.

a. Time. An operation order is often given in circumstances where time is critical. Commanders may issue an order to their squad leaders at conversational speed, or slightly faster. A squad leader must be prepared to copy a great deal of information in a short amount of time.

b. Abbreviations. One of the easiest methods used to save time and copy large amounts of information is to abbreviate certain words. There are no official USMC abbreviations for terms listed below. Develop your own abbreviations and become accustomed to using them. The following is a list of abbreviations that are commonly used during operation orders:

Assault Position	**Aslt Pos**	Objective	**OBJ**
Assembly Area	**AA**	On Order	**O/O**
Attack	**ATK**	Order	**ORD**
Attack Postion	**Atk Pos**	Platoon	**PLT**
Defend	**DEF**	Position	**POS**
Enemy	**EN**	Prepare	**PREP**
Fire team	**FTM**	Re-supply	**RSP**
In order to	**IOT**	Route	**RTE**
Line of Departure	**LOD**	Seize	**SZE**
Location	**LOC**	Squad	**SQD**

c. Short hand. Create your own abbreviations, but most likely you will be the only one to understand your short hand. You must remember what it all stands for as you will be the one to brief it!

d. Skeleton. Another technique that saves time is developing an outline format that serves as a skeleton of the operations order. As the platoon commander moves through his order, plug the pertinent information into the proper places in the outline.

(1) Use small letters or key words to identify sub-paragraphs.

(2) Write the appropriate acronyms in their appropriate place, in order to use them as a reference once you receive the platoon commander's order.

(3) Used to assist receiving/delivering information

(4) Can be simple or detailed

(5) State paragraph's and sub paragraphs

e. Issuing The Order. There are four techniques that should be used when issuing an order.

(1) Speak in a clear, forceful, and conversational tone.

(2) Speak at a conversational speed, or a little faster. Do not go too fast; subordinate leaders must be able to take notes.

(3) Display confidence and enthusiasm in the plan. Any hesitation, apprehension, or confusion will be noticed by subordinates.

(4) To avoid confusion, prevent any interruptions which may arise. Insist that all questions be held until the completion of the order.

The Operation Order (without detailed explanations) - **** know this format**

O. Orientation

I. Situation

  a. Enemy Forces

    (1) SALUTE: S **=** Size, A = Activity, L = Location, U = Unit, T = Time, E = Equipment

    (2) DRAW-D: D = Defend, R = Reinforce, A = Attack, W = Withdraw, D = Delay

  b. Friendly Forces

    (1) HAS: H = Higher Unit Mission, A = Adjacent Unit Missions, S = Supporting Unit Missions

    (2) Attachments and Detachments

II. Mission – with the 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where and Why ("why" is predominant and is represented by the words "In Order To")

III. Execution

  a. Commander's Intent (Remember "PME")

    P: Purpose

    M: Method

    E: Endstate

  b. Concept of Operation

    (1) Scheme of Maneuver

    (2) Fire Support Plan

  c. Tasks

  d. Coordinating Instructions

    (1) Examples: Time of Attack, Base Unit, Order of Movement, Security, Tactical Control Measures, Route to the Objective

IV. Administration and Logistics: the 4 "Bs" represent:

  a. Beans

  b. Bullets

  c. Band Aids

  d. Bad guys

V. Command and Signal

  a. Signal: Pre-arranged signals, passwords and counter-signs, radio calls, frequencies and radio procedures, emergency signals, pyrotechnics, restrictions on the use of communications, etc.

  b. Command: Location of Key Leaders and Succession of Command

"Any Questions?

"Time is now, _____."

NOTES:

REFERENCE(S):

Commander's Tactical Handbook	MCRP 3-30.7
Marine Rifle Squad	MCRP 3-10A.3
Scouting and Patrolling	MCTP 3-01A
Warfighting	MCDP 1