



Army Reserve photo by MSG Michel Sauret

Soldiers conduct reconnaissance the night before a morning mission at Fort Hunter Liggett, CA, July 22, 2017, as part of a combat support training exercise.

Resolving Challenges for Brigade Combat Team Collection Management

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Information is a source of learning. But unless it is organized, processed, and available to the right people in a format for decision making, it is a burden, not a benefit.

—William Pollard

Introduction

Brigade combat team (BCT) collection management elements face many challenges during Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotations, the majority of which can be overcome through the study and application of the best practices and lessons learned of other rotational units. Over the past several years of JRTC rotations, the brigade command and control intelligence observer coach/trainer (OC/T) teams identified that collection management elements have encountered three primary obstacles:

- ◆ Uncodified collection management officer-in-charge position.

- ◆ Lack of collection management team-focused training.
- ◆ Unplanned and ill-defined information collection products.

While the BCT collection manager has not been a captain position since the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) change in fiscal year 2014, the majority of BCTs have realized the significant advantage of placing experienced leaders in this critical function area.

Nine of the last ten rotational training units have filled the BCT collection manager position with a captain of varying experience; however, the officer generally serves in this position for only a year or less because it is not a key developmental position. U.S. Army Forces Command has taken this particular lesson learned and is working in conjunction with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command and

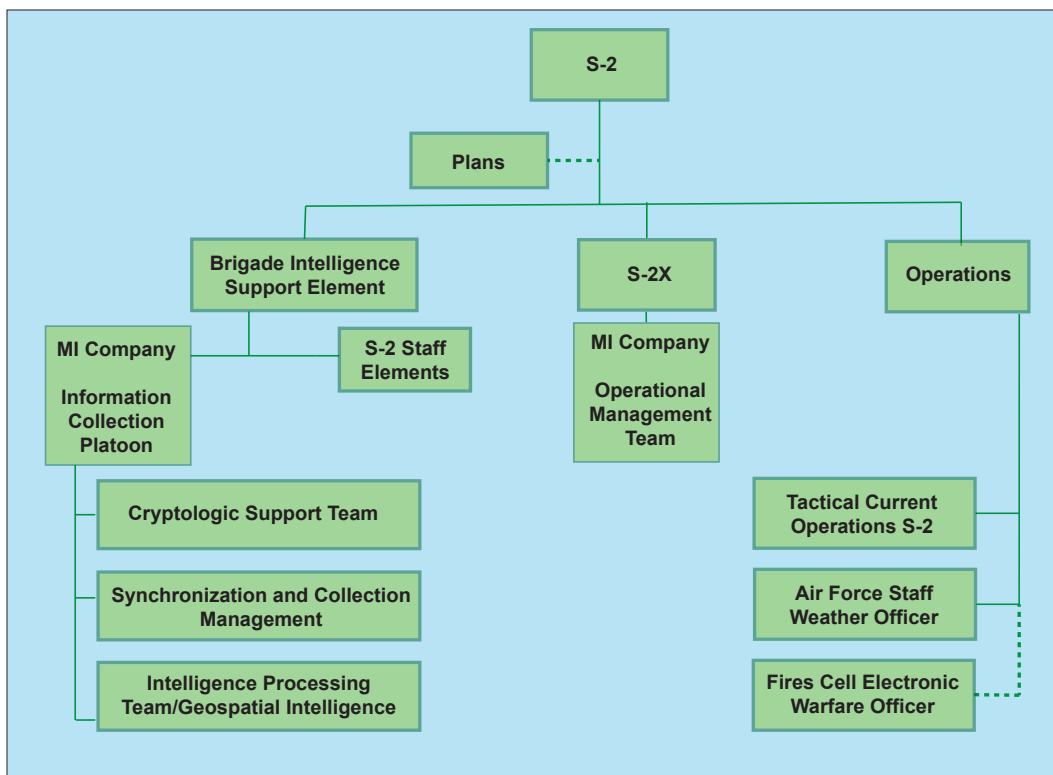


Figure 1. Brigade Combat Team Intelligence Cell Structure¹

Headquarters, Department of the Army to adjust the future BCT MTOE to allocate and align collection management positions within the collection management element. Figure 1 (above) illustrates the current BCT S-2 intelligence cell structure formed from both BCT intelligence staff and military intelligence company Soldiers.

Despite the growing realization that emphasis is needed for collection management, collection management teams continue to struggle at home station with having sufficient information collection training, synchronizing collection management tasks across all warfighting functions during the military decision-making process (MDMP), and validating information collection products that are both detailed and functional. Although these challenges can be tackled individually, BCT S-2s and collection managers can study the lessons learned from rotational units at JRTC over the past year on how to incorporate the BCT collection manager and the collection management element into both the MDMP and the rapid decision-making and synchronization process.

Gathering the Tools

Success at JRTC for collection management elements starts well before the rotation begins and involves the collection management section's training and integration with the brigade intelligence support element (BISE) and the BCT staff. The most successful BCT S-2s at JRTC prioritize the collection management element and the collective training of the collection management element with the all-source

synchronization and collection (ASSC) element of the BISE during intelligence preparation of the battlefield and step 2 of MDMP. TC 2-19.401, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy for the Brigade Combat Team Tier 1*, describes culminating collection management element certification and provides tables to validate the BCT S-2 and intelligence warfighting function teams; however, only small sections of the TC 2-19.400 series, which addresses tiers 1 through 4 of the Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS), are dedicated to explaining how BCT collection management elements can train individually and as teams. Multiple training re-

sources exist for collection management elements besides what is within MITS, but not all are easily accessible. The majority of BCT collection management elements rely on the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command Foundry Program to obtain training; however, other resources can provide successful training, product validation, and integration with the rest of the BISE.

Successful units identify the collection management team well ahead of their JRTC rotation and develop a multi-echeloned training plan. One of the best resources to achieve this approach is the division collection management element. The division collection management element has not only a key developmental major assigned but also a senior all-source technician, a geospatial technician, senior noncommissioned officers, and multiple Soldiers. The division collection management element takes advantage of other available resources to develop training plans, and the BCT collection management element can coordinate their training plan development to link into the available training. Some of these training opportunities include the Foundry Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) 301–303 classes, the Information Collection Planner Course offered at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence, and other online classes offered through the Defense Intelligence Agency's AGILE portal available on the SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network and Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System. Finally, collection management elements can coordinate with local Air Force ISR liaison

officers to conduct training on echelon above brigade assets, not just for their section but also for the entire BCT staff.

Successful collection management teams develop and gain approval of their “fighting products” from their BCT commander early in the training cycle. These products can be an information collection synchronization matrix (ICSM), an information collection matrix combination, or best practices of a combined ICSM with added fires assets (Figure 2) describing the correlation of sensor-to-shooter linkage in a quick glance product. Gaining approval from the BCT commander will alleviate information collection plan miscommunication and give time back to planners and supported units executing “the plan.” While the ICSM example pro-

vided includes both information collection and fires assets to show the linkage between sensor and shooter, the ICSM uniquely identifies windows of specific enemy activity (improvised explosive device cells and indirect fire cells) based on historical pattern analysis. This addition to the ICSM enabled the rotational training unit’s current operations cell to look for dynamic targeting windows of when enemy elements were the most active instead of remaining focused solely on deliberate targeting. More importantly, the BCT commander requested the ICSM each morning before attending any other meeting.

The final best practice observed during step 2 of MDMP has been the integration of the collection management element and the ASSC element of the BISE. The ASSC element

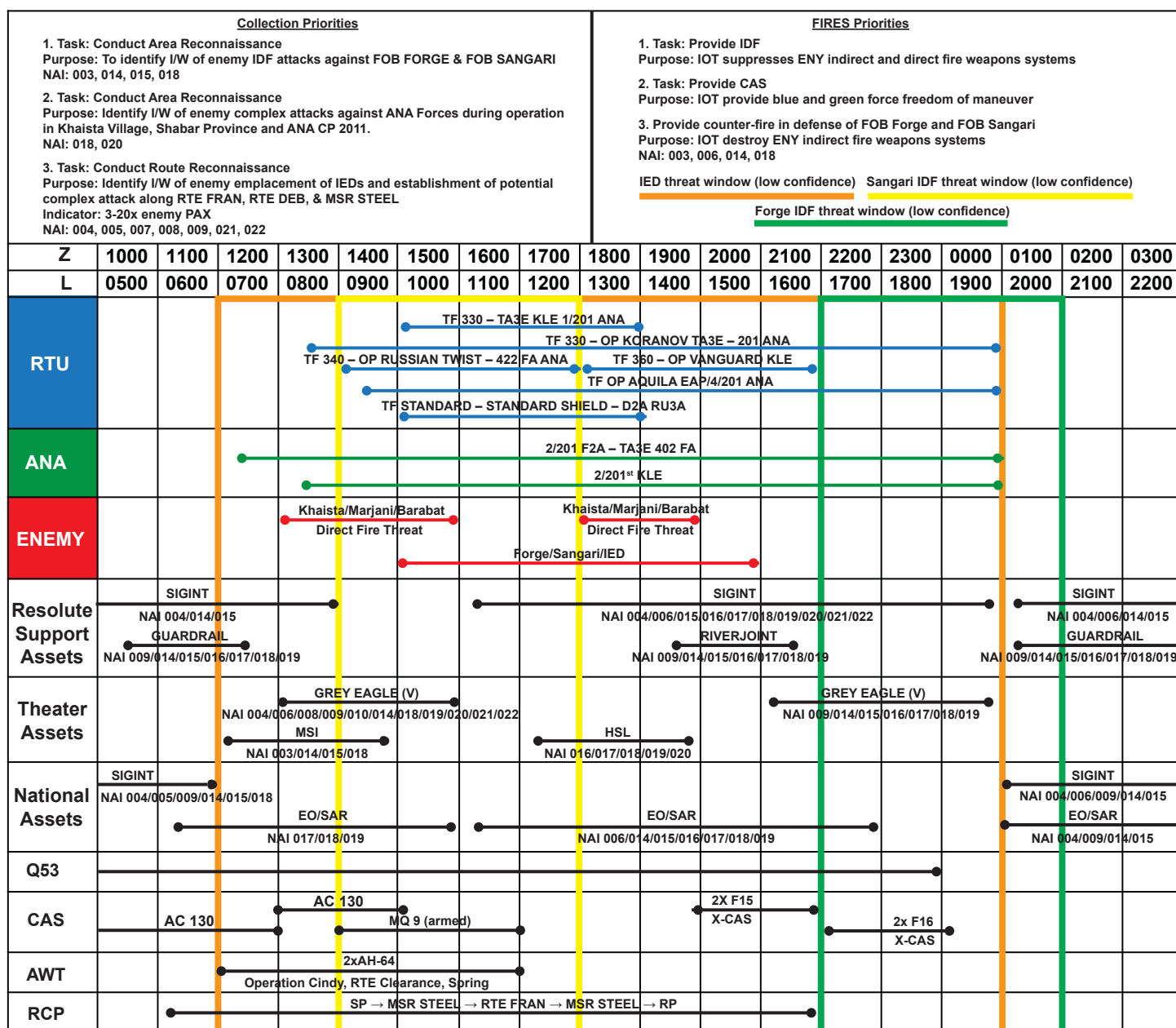


Figure 2. ICSM Synchronizing Intelligence and Fires

is responsible for developing the enemy event template and event matrix. The most successful units have the ASSC element identify and provide the gap analysis and information requirements to the collection management element. The collection management element then develops the scheme of information collection. The units that struggle have relied solely on the collection management element to develop the priority intelligence requirements and generate all information requirements. Additionally, they expect the collection management element to define the essential elements of information to build the information collection matrix and ICSM as the intelligence warfighting function generates the necessary outputs to support step 3 of MDMP. The BCT collection management element has neither the manpower nor the situational understanding of the enemy required to identify and produce all intelligence gaps, requirements, and information needs for the BCT. In doing so, the collection management element is overwhelmed, which is almost always seen as the collection management element being behind instead of in front of the BCT's mission execution. After action reviews with collection management teams and OC/Ts revealed that collection management elements struggled with the roles and responsibilities of intelligence and operations requirements both within the BISE and with the rest of the staff. This resulted in fewer preplanned information collection missions requiring more ad hoc/8-line requests for collection to the division collection management element.

We've Gathered the Tools. It's Time to Gather the Experts

Step 2 of MDMP for the intelligence warfighting function focuses primarily on the enemy and the development of running estimates. Step 3 focuses on developing the course of action (COA) for the rotational units' options, refining the scheme of information collection into a working ICSM, and building the information collection matrix to support COA development and wargaming. COA development focuses on generating options for the BCT commander. OC/Ts historically observe units struggle through this process because they bring only the BCT S-2, assistant S-2, and collection manager to COA development rather than the single-source technical experts who would best be suited to attend.

It is a continuing best practice at JRTC for the military intelligence (MI) company commander, warrant officers, and senior noncommissioned officers of the various intelligence and aviation disciplines for the organic BCT assets to attend and provide necessary inputs during COA development. From the human intelligence operational management team to the unmanned aircraft system aviation warrant of-

ficers, these experts bring a multitude of collection options and expertise to the process. They are also present to understand the guidance from the BCT commander and operations officer and can provide input to collection asset placement and task organization considerations. These experts can relay the requirements and intent to their collectors. Separately the MI company commander can add the tasks within the MI company base order if the verbiage is not present in the BCT base order.

While the BCT S-2, collection management element, and technical experts are conducting COA development, ASSC elements conduct continuous intelligence preparation of the battlefield refinement. One of the best practices of the past year is the development of an enemy synchronization matrix that provides more detail to enemy actions throughout the planning timeline. Instead of relying solely on an event template and event matrix developed during step 2 of MDMP, the ASSC element developed the enemy synchronization matrix. The ASSC element did this by using this common format as the rotational units' synchronization matrix over separate 24-hour periods for both easy comparison and support to collection efforts and options during COA analysis/wargaming (Figure 3, on the next page). The enemy synchronization matrix turned into a necessary fighting product that not only supported detailed wargaming but also served as a fighting product that the BCT commander requested daily.

Collection Management Element Actions during Wargaming and Beyond

Tools from the previous steps of MDMP include the event template, event matrix, enemy synchronization matrix, priority intelligence requirements with essential elements of information and information requirements, information collection matrix, and ICSM. With these tools, the intelligence warfighting function and collection management section are prepared to tackle one of the most important, but often not well executed, steps of MDMP—the wargame. Too often at JRTC, OC/Ts observe units that fail to analyze the relative combat power analysis and turn-based effects on enemy and friendly units. For both the collection management element and the fires warfighting function to accurately account for battle damage assessment collection, the BCT staff needs to determine the adjudication criteria for turn-based wargaming. Successful units used the correlation of forces matrix (COFM) or calculator to determine the effects on both friendly and enemy forces, to adjust and refine friendly COAs, and to emphasize collection during the counteraction turn. The COFM tool provides an unbiased look at the effects of various engagement types from a

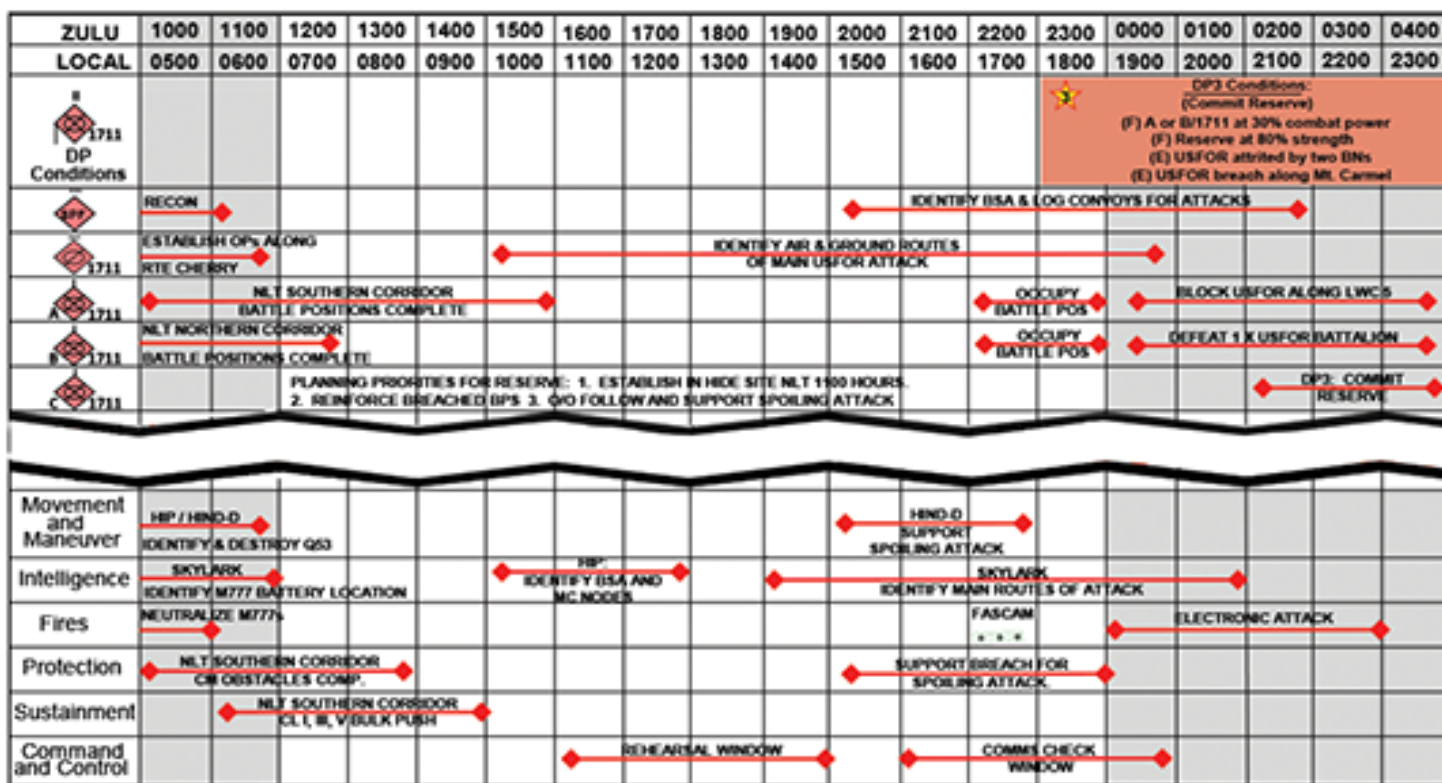


Figure 3. Enemy Synchronization Matrix

friendly and enemy perspective. The use of COFMs by divisions during warfighter exercises is a best practice adopted by multiple units. Dale Spurlin and Matthew Green describe COFM in detail in their 2017 *Infantry Magazine* article.²

During wargaming, the collection manager, MI company commander, and collection asset leads also refine the verbiage for the BCT's operations order and MI company operations order to provide exact tasks to subordinate units and collectors by phase, to enable sensor-to-shooter linkage from both a physical and logical topology. This discussion of topology and architecture during the wargame enables the staff as a whole to understand what physical assets and communication systems are required to provide both structured and unstructured messages to flow using the SPOT method (sensor, processor, output, and transport mechanism). Understanding the SPOT method and applying it during wargaming enables the collection management element and the rest of the staff to understand the flow of intelligence information and indicators. This feeds not only the common operational picture but also the other mission command systems.

Once the BCT commander approves the COA, successful collection management elements, intelligence warfighting function leads, and other staff sections build the necessary scripts, address books, and protocols in their digital systems to support deliberate targeting of the enemy rather than rely solely on analog means. All 10 of the past year's rotational

units conducted a version of an information collection/fires rehearsal and fires technical rehearsal (such as the best practice GTA 30-04-001, *Information Collection Rehearsal (IC RX)*).³ However, only 1 of 10 units conducted a deliberate information collection and fires technical rehearsal validating the point-to-point transfer of U.S. message text format messaging or a combination of peer-to-peer transfer and dissemination through the defense dissemination service to other mission command systems. If more rotational units deliberately plan, prepare, and validate the sharing of data within the objectives of the Army Data Strategy in AR 25-1, *Army Information Technology* (visible, accessible, understandable, trustable, and interoperable), OC/Ts anticipate greater success not only for collection management sections and the intelligence warfighting function during JRTC rotations but also for future large-scale ground combat operations.⁴

Final Tips for Future Rotational Collection Management Elements

Every rotational training unit struggles in some areas of the intelligence core competencies (synchronization; intelligence operations; processing, exploitation, and dissemination; and analysis). Fortunately, each rotational unit has at least one or more best practices or lessons learned to assist the MI Corps and BCTs at both JRTC and in future operations. Collection managers and collection management elements are making progress based on numerous best practices that

OC/Ts have observed. Those units that conduct collective training as a collection management element in accordance with MITS and other “outside the box” training strategies refine and validate their standard operating procedures over multiple exercises. They integrate the collection management element and technical single-source collectors into their MDMP process and conduct multiple iterations as a BCT staff. These units will continue to have the greater levels of success at the combat training centers. ✨

Epigraph

“William Pollard Quotes,” BrainyQuote.com, accessed 29 May 2020, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/william_pollard_125776.

Endnotes

1. Figure 1 is adapted from figures in Department of the Army, Training Circular 2-19.401, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy for the Brigade Combat*

Team Tier 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 14 May 2019) (common access card [CAC] login required) and Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication 2-19.4, *Brigade Combat Team Intelligence Techniques* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 10 February 2015) (CAC login required).

2. Dale Spurlin and Matthew Green, “Demystifying the Correlation of Forces Calculator,” *Infantry Magazine* 106, no. 1 (January–March 2017): 14–17, <https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/magazine/issues/2017/JAN-MAR/index.html>.

3. Department of the Army, Graphic Training Aid 30-04-001, *Information Collection Rehearsal (IC RX)* (Washington, DC, 10 April 2019).

4. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 25-1, *Army Information Technology* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 15 July 2019), 2, 39.

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Department of the Army. Field Manual 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 5 May 2014. Change 1 was issued on 11 May 2015. Change 2 was issued on 22 April 2016.

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