

COLLECTION REPORT

**Decisive Action Training Environment
2nd Cavalry Regiment (Stryker)
Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC)
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Summary

This report provides a summary of observations, insights, and lessons (OIL) and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) collected from Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) Rotation 13-01, a Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) exercise focused on the 2nd Cavalry Regiment (Stryker) and multinational forces from 18 countries.

This collection report is based on feedback from Observer/Controller–Trainers (O/C-Ts) and analysts from the Operations Group at JMRC, comments made by Team O7s and the Senior Trainer at Commanders Update Briefings, and by direct observations made during the conduct of the exercise in the maneuver areas spanning from Hohenfels to Amberg and up to the regiment’s base at Vilseck. This report is not intended to be inclusive of all operations during this exercise, but if used in conjunction with the JMRC Final After Action Review (AAR), should provide OIL that can be used to identify trends in DATE training.

Exercise overview:

- Four phases, 13–30 October 2012
 - Movement to contact / squadron attack
 - Area security operations
 - Area defense
 - Regimental attack / transition
- 18 partner nations (BLUFOR, OPFOR, HNSF, OCTs)
- Over 1700 partner nation participants
- After maneuver phase, transition to squadron live fire maneuver
 - Live and/or virtual CAS
 - Live battery for indirect support
 - M4 to MGS weapon systems

Title. Field craft

Issue. Junior leaders and Soldiers are not trained in basic field craft skills.

Discussion. For the past 10, years the Army has fought from combat outposts and forward operating bases, fixed facilities which offer a least some degree of comfort, sanitation and safety. This exercise was conducted under field conditions, with no contracted logistics support such as portable latrines, hot meals, or hardened facilities. The following observations indicate that basic field craft skills have atrophied, and that junior leaders and Soldiers do not know how to operate under total field conditions. Senior officers and non-commissioned officers who were once trained on field craft are not training their subordinates, and are not making on-the-spot corrections when needed. Observations include:

- Priorities of work for occupying a position are not established or adhered to.
- Sleeping areas established prior to preparation of fighting positions.
- Vehicles, fighting positions, CP's, and tents not camouflaged.
- Field sanitation standards not enforced, Soldiers defecating randomly *on top of the ground* in unit positions.
- Range cards not prepared or inaccurate.
- Lack of uniform and personal hygiene standards.
- A lack of small unit leadership and on the spot corrections.

Recommendation. Unit training plans must include an emphasis on field craft and other basic soldier skills. Senior officers and NCOs must take an active role in training subordinates and making on the spot corrections.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Roles and responsibilities

Issue. Officers and NCOs are not familiar with the doctrinal roles and responsibilities of their MTOE positions.

Discussion. Numerous O/T's report that many officers and NCOs simply do not understand what their job is, and do not understand that doctrinal manuals clearly outline roles and responsibilities for all positions. This shortfall results in some personnel trying to do too much or operating at one grade below their pay grade. Subordinates are not empowered and not mentored by their superiors because their superiors are not comfortable in their own positions. Secondary to knowing one's own job is understanding the relationship that your job has with others; an example is an S-4 must know how his role supports that of the XO or the support operations officer (SPO).

Examples:

- First sergeants not understanding their role in sustainment operations.
- Staff sections such as regimental and squadron S-3, S-2, and S-4 not having clearly delineated responsibilities that are understood and synchronized.

- Lack of a “second team,” or assistants; key personnel not developing subordinates so that there can be a coherent rest plan and an opportunity for the “second team” to operate independently and grow.
- Commanders and command sergeant majors tethered to command posts, rarely visiting subordinate units. This results in a lack of mentoring and face-to-face interaction to judge understanding of the operational situation and intent and time to make on-the-spot corrections.

Recommendation. Officer and NCO professional development programs offer an excellent platform for coaching and mentoring subordinates on the roles and responsibilities of MTOE positions and how their position interacts with and supports other positions.

DOTMLPF

Title. Command posts

Issue. Unit lack training on rapidly displacing command posts.

Discussion. For the past 10 years, the Army has operated out of fixed, hardened command posts that are not displaced. Units are not trained in rapidly displacing command posts and maintaining situational awareness without digital connectivity. Observations include:

- Battle handover between the TOC and TAC was often poorly executed, with neither CP maintaining a COP for long stretches of time.
- Units rely heavily on digital systems and seem at a loss when they must revert to analog or manual systems for long stretches of time, resulting in a total loss of situational awareness of operations.
- Some units did not properly man field and combat trains as command posts, with some type of administrative/logistics operations center with the capability to maintain a logistics COP and keep the commander updated on personnel, supply, and maintenance status.
- Units and leaders unaware of six doctrinal command post functions.

Recommendation. Unit training plans should include training on rapidly displacing command posts. CPX’s are an effective vehicle for training command post personnel on the basics of battle tracking and maintaining situational awareness utilizing all systems, including manual/analog backup.

DOTMLPF

Title. Military decision-making process (MDMP)

Issue. Staff officer and NCOs had difficulty with MDMP in DATE, which varies significantly from MDMP in COIN or stability operations.

Discussion. Most staff officers and NCOs understand the fundamentals of MDMP, but require training and experience in using MDMP in DATE. For the past few years COIN or stability operations have been conducted off of a base order with continuous FRAGOs

generated as the situation dictates. The full MDMP orders process is rarely utilized, resulting in staffs that tend to over utilize FRAGOs and struggle with either the deliberate or hasty MDMP. Observations include:

- The regimental staff generated nine FRAGOs to the base order in the first four days. FRAGOs contained over 50 task organization changes, causing a constant movement of forces laterally and much confusion at the squadron level.
- Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) was often incomplete, lacking products such as a situational templates or modified combined obstacle overlays (MCOO).
- Synchronization and integration of enablers (Fires, Protection, CAS, and Air Defense) were not effective.
- Staff officer analytical skills need improvement; commanders are making decisions without well thought out staff recommendations.
- Commander-centric, hasty MDMP still requires staff analysis and recommendations based on running estimates and understanding of the COP.
- The 1/3–2/3 rule, allowing a preponderance of planning time for subordinate units, rarely occurred.

Recommendation. MDMP in DATE is challenging for any staff, particularly for staffs that have been in a continuous COIN or stability fight. Unit training plans should integrate MDMP training at all levels for commanders, staff officers, and staff NCOs. CPXes or orders drills can be conducted at home station with few resources.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Mission command – commander’s intent

Issue. Many commanders are not comfortable allowing subordinate and supporting commanders to operate broadly under their intent and broad mission orders.

Discussion. Two of the six principals of Mission Command are “provide a clear commander’s intent and “use mission orders.” ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, states that “The commanders intent is a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned.” The publication also states that “mission orders are directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them.” Despite emphasis on Mission Command over the past year, most commanders still do not feel comfortable allowing subordinates to operate broadly under their intent. Observations show:

- Commanders are crafting clear intent statements during the orders process, but often do not allow that intent statement to truly drive the operations of subordinate and supporting units.
- The generation of numerous FRAGOs, continually changing task organization and adding minor tasks, is not in line with the concept of mission orders.

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- Many commanders are tethered to the command post, in essence becoming a chief of staff. Commanders need to execute battlefield circulation, visiting subordinate and supporting commanders in the field to ensure clear understanding of intent and orders.
- The coaching and mentoring of subordinate and supporting commanders are more effective in ensuring mission success under broad mission orders than the generation of more orders and FRAGOs.
- Commanders at all levels seem hesitant to empower subordinates, allowing them to think independently and develop their own concepts and plans under mission orders.

Recommendation. Mission command is a major change in thinking for commanders trained for years under the doctrine of command and control. Until senior commanders understand and exercise mission command we will not begin to grow junior commanders who can succeed under this doctrine. Continued senior leader emphasis and the creation of environments where mission command is embraced is required, as is training at all levels and exercises that focus on mission command.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Common operating picture – “Seeing yourself”

Issue. The regiment and subordinate squadrons did not maintain a current COP, or in the words of the regimental commander, the units could not “see themselves.”

Discussion. In order to succeed in combat, commanders and staffs must maintain a current COP, or must be able to “see itself” from all functional perspectives. Currently the force is used to maintaining a COP through digital systems such as FBCB2, Blue Force Tracker, BCS3, and other ABCS. In the DATE units were required to operate in hilly terrain and inclement weather, displace often, and continuously shift control of the fight between command posts. All of these factors resulted in a significant challenge in maintaining some semblance of a COP. Observations include:

- Loss of availability of digital and FM systems required analog or manual tracking systems, which units did not have any capability of putting into place.
- CP’s did not have comprehensive tracking systems for any of the following:
 - Status of weapons and communications systems
 - Current task organization
 - Threat locations and composition
 - Weapon systems range fans
 - Logistics status for critical classes of supply such as CL III, V, VIII, and IX.
 - Personnel status
 - 026 Maintenance status reports
- SOPs must direct types and frequency of reports that must be submitted to populate the common operating picture.

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Recommendation. In order to maintain a COP, units must have integrated and redundant systems available in numerous command posts that can be used regardless of availability of digital or analog communication systems. CPXes are a useful method to develop systems and train personnel on maintaining a COP. Battle drills, SOPs, and manual charts are required in order to develop fully functional CP's.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. "Fighter Management"

Issue. The regiment did not have systems in place to manage its fighters during the extended period of this exercise.

Discussion. Fighter management is a term used for the maintenance of leaders and Soldiers during periods of extended, stressful, combat operations. Fundamental elements of fighter management are sleep, hot food, basic field sanitation, and maintaining a safe environment. The regiment is made up of well trained and highly motivated leaders and Soldiers, but a can-do attitude and working on pure adrenalin cannot be sustained for two weeks. Observations include:

- Lack of sleep plans resulted in some commanders and key staff officers attempting to work for 48–72 without sleep. Lack of a sleep plan also prevents the "second team" from getting the training and experience they need.
- No hot meals were served for many days, requiring soldiers to subsist off of MREs, limited fruit, and coffee. There did not appear to be any use of the Mobile Kitchen Trailers (MKT) by any units.
- Lack of basic field sanitation, such as digging slit trenches or other field expedient toilets, resulted in indiscriminate defecation throughout unit positions, resulting in huge potential health issues. Hand washing points were a rarity in most positions.
- Lack of sleep can result in safety problems; although there were no significant accidents that could be attributed to lack of sleep, units were clearly pushing the envelope in this area.
- Junior leaders need to check on Soldiers frequently to ensure they are healthy and maintaining themselves. Simple things like changing socks, taking field expedient showers, and having a place to relieve themselves are basic needs for Soldiers; leaders need to ensure they are met.

Recommendation. Fighter management is a fundamental responsibility for leaders at all levels. OPD and NCOPD sessions are good opportunities to establish baseline expectations for what soldiers need in operations. SOPs and battle drills can be used to reinforce these standards. Leaders must inspect and make on-the-spot corrections when standards are not being maintained.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Communications

Issue. Hilly terrain, inclement weather, geographic dispersion, and lack of training in moving and displacing command posts resulted in significant communication problems.

Discussion. Over the course of the exercise the regiment conducted operations from Vilseck to Hohelfels. This is hilly and rugged terrain and units were widely dispersed, resulting in great difficulties in establishing and maintaining FM communication. The pace of operations and movement of command posts degraded digital systems and resulted in a default to cellular telephones as the primary method of communications. Heavy fog and cloud cover also degraded many systems. These issues resulted in some command posts being out of communication with other units for up to 24 hours. Observations include:

- Movement of CP's caused loss of communications for long periods of time due to an absence of clear priorities of work for occupation of an area and lack of training of personnel in rapidly establishing critical capabilities of the CP.
- Lack of line of sight, made worse by heavy cloud cover and fog degraded FM communications. Lack of planning for these realities was costly to the Regiment.
- Digital systems were often down for long periods of time due to maneuver and displacement of CP's.
- The use of retransmission sites (RETRANS) is a lost art. Teams were not trained and were not deployed to alleviate the FM problems.

Recommendation. Communications exercises (COMMEX) and digital gunnery are examples of unit training that can greatly improve the capabilities of units. These types of exercises, as well as battle drills in rapidly displacing and emplacing command posts should be a foundation of unit training plans.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Synchronization

Issue. The regimental and squadron staffs did not effectively synchronize the operations and effects of all subordinate and supporting assets and enablers.

Discussion. During planning and operations, the staffs at regimental and squadron did not effectively synchronize and integrate all of the assets and enablers available. This resulted in have less effects in critical situations and allowing key assets to be left on the sidelines. Additionally, lack of synchronization affected the COP and resulted in shortages of supplies and other key assets at critical times. Observations include:

- Not all enablers participated in key planning events such as war gaming.
- Lack of combined arms and other rehearsals below regimental level.
- Targeting meetings not held or poorly attended.
- No logistics synchronization meetings until directed, then lacked agenda, task, and purpose.

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- No maintenance meetings held.
- CAS not always integrated into effects planning. Lack of prioritization for CAS missions.
- Obstacle planning not integrated with fires during defense planning.
- Medical evacuation not synchronized with movement control and route clearance operations.

Recommendation. Synchronization is a critical function of the science of control, an element of mission command that is the realm of the staff. CPXes and TOCEXes are excellent opportunities to develop staff cohesion that results in synchronization of all assets and enablers. Adherence to the principals of the MDMP goes a long way to ensuring participation of all functional staff elements and also improves synchronization.

War fighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Medical evacuation

Issue. The regiment did not effectively execute ground medical evacuation of wounded Soldiers.

Discussion. During the past 10 years of war, the Army has relied heavily on air medical evacuation to rapidly move wounded soldiers to medical facilities within the “golden hour.” Operations in DATE require the use of ground medical evacuation due to the larger number of casualties, proximity of casualties to ongoing combat operations, and the threat of air defense weapons. The planning for and execution of ground medical evacuation are complex and require the synchronization of limited ambulance assets. The regiment and subordinate and supporting units did not execute effective ground evacuation, resulting in the loss of many soldiers as died of wounds (DOW) because they did not reach medical treatment facilities in a timely manner. Observations include:

- Wounded soldiers left in place for hours, not moved to casualty collection points or aid stations in a timely manner.
- Aid stations did not have adequate ambulances to move casualties to either ambulance exchange points or next echelon of care.
- Ambulance exchange point operations ineffective and rarely executed, which resulted in ambulances making longer trips to the next echelon and in shortages at aid stations.
- Ambulance routes not synched with operations and movement control plans.

Recommendation. Effective ground medical evacuation operations require extensive planning, rehearsals, and synchronization with other operations. CPXes and sand table drills can assist in training the basics of ground evacuation. Evacuation must also be integrated into all training at all levels as part of unit training plans.

War fighting Function: All

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Title. Sustainment planning

Issue. Sustainment planning was ineffective throughout the regiment, resulting in degradation of operations throughout the exercise.

Discussion. Sustainment planning and forecasting are an integral part of MDMP and must be synchronized with all other operations. Planning is required at all levels from company to regiment. The regiment did not have an effective sustainment plan going into the exercise; there was no forecasting of requirements for the initial mission of movement to contact, no preconfigured loads prepared, and no priorities of support or effort identified and understood. Observations include:

- Staff estimates not prepared or incomplete
- Lack of forecasting for initial movement to contact, resulting in shortages of critical CL V by day 3
- No preconfigured loads of CLIII, V, VIII, and IX
- Planning and forecasting for the defense, particularly for CL IV material were ineffective
- No maintenance planning or meetings conducted
- Lack of log synchronization meetings and LOGSTAT reporting made anticipating requirements impossible
- Lack of logistics common operating picture (LCOP) made anticipating requirements impossible

Recommendation. Sustainment planning is critical to the success of all combat missions and is particularly important in DATE. All training must include sustainment planning and operations, at all levels. CPXes and LOGEXes are key training activities that allow for integration of sustainment planning. Sustainment planning must be conducted down to company level and include S-4s, XO's, and First Sergeants to truly be effective.

Warfighting Function: All

DOTMLPF

Title. Sustainment operations at company level

Issue. Company XO's and First Sergeants do not understand their roles in sustainment operations at company level.

Discussion. Company-level personnel across warfighting functions do not understand their role in sustainment operations, resulting in lack of supplies, poor maintenance postures, and lack of proper field sanitation. The execution of LOGSTAT reporting, LOGPAC operations, and maintenance of Soldiers and equipment rely heavily on the XO and First Sergeant, and the skills required to do these basic operations were not evident in this exercise. Observations:

- Company LOGSTAT reports not completed or forwarded to battalion
- First Sergeants not familiar with LOGPAC operations and their role in sustaining the unit
- Basic field sanitation lacking, junior leaders not maintaining standards or making on-the-spot corrections

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- Unit personnel not trained on use of field sanitation kits, or kits not taken to the field.
- Routine maintenance of weapons and vehicles not conducted. Lack of maintenance reporting.
- Lack of training on casualty handling and evacuation procedures
- No senior non-commissioned officer involvement in sustainment operations

Recommendation. Unit training plans must incorporate sustainment planning and operations, utilizing CPXes, LOGEXes, and establishing battle drills to train leaders at all levels the skills needed to execute their doctrinal responsibilities to sustain their unit. Senior NCO involvement is critical to sustainment operations at company level, NCO professional development programs should focus on this critical area.

Warfighting Function: All

DO TMLPF

Title: Organizational structure of regimental support squadron

Issue. The regimental support squadron (RSS) of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment is not structured to support sustained combat operations.

Discussion. The RSS, along with the brigade support battalion (BSB) of the Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT), is not organized, manned, and equipped the same as a BSB in a light or heavy BCT. This structure has been in place since the fielding of the Stryker system, and it appears that sustainment was the bill payer for other enablers in the Stryker organization. Since Stryker units have only been deployed in COIN and stability operations, the RSS has not really been tested in DATE until this exercise. Significant shortcomings in the structure of the RSS are apparent; examples include:

- The Stryker organizations do not include forward support companies (FSC) at the squadron/battalion level.
- Without the FSC, the RSS is required to task organize ad hoc support elements to push down to the squadron level to perform the basic supply, maintenance, and medical functions required at that level.
- The RSS does not have the redundancy in capability in most supply, maintenance, and medical MOSes to properly task organize elements for the squadrons and still perform the necessary tasks required in the regimental support area.
- There are not enough material handling equipment and transport vehicles in the Stryker MTOE to support operations at squadron and regimental levels.
- FSCs in a normal BSB are commanded by captains as branch-qualifying assignments. There are no such branch-qualifying assignments in the RSS.
- The detachment of 271 RSS personnel to support squadron operations leaves the RSS with insufficient personnel to perform their doctrinal sustainment missions, manning of the RSS TOC, and defense of the RSA during continuous operations.

Recommendation. This DATE rotation and future Combat Training Center rotations give the Army an opportunity to review the Sustainment organizational structure of all

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Stryker units in the coming years. A thorough systematic study of this structure should make it clear that Stryker organizations need similar capabilities as other BCTs.

Warfighting Function: Sustainment

DOTMLPF