**3BCT Company / Battery / Troop XO Course Phase II Synopsis:**

I wanted to provide some context to the courses we selected and taught for Phase II of our BCT XO Course, as I think some of the courses may beg some questions as to what we covered or why we selected the course. I also wanted to provide some feedback / AAR comments on things we could have done better for next time.

I will present synopsis of each course in the order we taught them, so you can follow the timeline from the MOI and the courses (If slides available) for details.

To set the stage, I implemented some of the AAR comments from Phase I and elected to conduct 3 x half days, rather than the 3 full days we did for Phase I. It was challenging to keep XOs away for 3 full days last time. Our calendar was packed this time anyway, so it was for the better of everyone. We still chose to do mornings so I could do PT with all of the XOs and run them through our container yard, motorpools, etc and make teaching points in the useable time we had.

**Day 1 (21 FEB)**

**Administrative Actions Class – Instructor was BCT S1 shop**: The purpose of this course was to present to the XOs some of the areas we tend to see many mistakes that are preventable from the Company / Battery / Troop level. i.e. Simple mistakes on awards, wrong thru dates or late NCOERs / OERs, improperly completed 4187s, tracking DD93/SGLV digital signature and other deployment required tasks. While we discussed these topics, I have to admit that this is one of two classes I did not get a chance to final review. It turned into more of a class on NCOERs / OERs / Awards at too high a level for Co/Btry/Trp level XOs. They tuned out quickly after we stopped discussing the things they can easily affect (this was before we even got into the slides). This class got heavily criticized in our end of course critiques. Next time, I would give the S1 shop only 30 minutes and 1 slide with key lessons learned that can be affected at the XO level. They would appreciate that much more than a 1 hour class that bored them to sleep.

 **Medical Readiness Management – Instructor was the BCT Surgeon:** Though this class was at a higher level than they may be able to directly affect, it was well received as they are often asked about their non-deployables. The XOs all seemed to pay attention and asked good questions. The Doc provided them with areas they can help their Commanders to prevent unnecessary non-deployables. I will use this class again in Phase IV of our XO Course.

**BLST Capabilities / Overview – Instructor was the Brigade Logistics Support Team OIC and Senior LAR:** Because we are afforded the luxury of a great BLST TM, I asked them to provide an overview of their capabilities, how they are best used at the Co/Btry/Trp level, and how they support in both garrison and deployed. Because the LARs are often seen in the motorpool in their civilian clothes, I wanted the XOs to know who they were and how they tie into our overall maintenance and supply system. A well received class that I will add back in to Phase IV (in 4th Quarter).

**Day 2 (22 FEB)**

**SSA Reconciliation walkthrough – Instructors were the receiving NCOIC and the SSA OIC:** This was partially a revisit to our SSA class from Phase I because I had several new XOs and I wanted them to know where the SSA was and how to ensure they are picking up parts / supplies in a timely manner. We also had a few issues with Co/Btry/Trps completing SSA recons on time, so I had our SSA guys conduct a walkthrough of the process. I asked them to print out a recon, DCR, and conduct a talkthrough with everyone following along, how to fill it out and find all of the information required. Finally, I had them explain what to do if the recon was over the DA standard. We did this class in the SSA as we did last time. I also had all of the XOs bring their Supply SGT or clerk with them to this class. It was well received and I think most of them understood the requirements at the end of the class.

**DFAC Operations and Training Support – Instructors were the DFAC OIC and NCOIC:** This class was in response to the many late chow requests for training and the lack of understanding of recoupment of funds for chow (S1 was there to assist in answering questions as it is an admin function). This class generated a lot of questions and was a great opportunity for the XOs to understand WHY their chow requests for field training have to be in so far in advance, and the issues caused when they get issued chow inside the request window of 14 days. We also discussed how to order ice and hot and cold drinks (soup and coffee) for events / training. I recommend this class to anyone that has time, even if it is not part of a full XO course.

**Training recovery and Operations Planning – Instructors for this class was the BCT S4 (with help from the BDE SPO):** This class was to provide a couple of simple principles; Ensure your Co/Btry/Trp CDR includes recovery operations in the training calendar / timeline for training events, and to ensure the recovery plan is effective with systems to verify all required tasks are completed to standard. This was a well received class that I will add in to Phase IV, and I will probably hit the talking points during PT next course.

**ORS Planning and Preparations – Instructor was the BDE SPO:** This course was in response to the challenges we have had conducting an ORS every three months, as we have been the GRF BCT for the past 18 months. The SPO provided ways to ensure the planning is done far enough out to get well resourced to make it effective. Because we conduct ORS so often, units have begun to get a little complacent on the planning side and know what needs to be executed. We want them to ensure the planning is done thoroughly enough to ensure they have all equipment receiving first time go’s on the inspections, but more importantly are ready in case of a no-notice deployment. Good and necessary class.

**Vehicle Dispatch Walkthrough – Instructor was the BSTB Maintenance NCOIC:** This is another revisit from Phase I. Because we still find Troopers out in the training area with improper licenses, incomplete dispatches, or incomplete 5988-Es with their dispatch, I had them conduct a start to finish walkthrough of the process. They had a PFC there to walk us through the entire process of how he is to get a vehicle once he is told he was a mission. I made them walk inside and outside and to another part in the motorpool to simulate going to the CDRs officer for signature, shop office for paperwork, getting a maintenance NCO to conduct the maintenance QA/QC, and back for the final turn-in and issue of the dispatch. The great point made by all of the XOs seeing how much running back and forth a Trooper has to do in order to get a dispatch, they were able to see that the only real place a Trooper has to cut time off of getting a vehicle out of the motorpool was by skipping the PMCS. They can’t skip getting signatures, so the only place to make up any time when they are told to get a vehicle and get wherever in 15 minutes, they will do it, but they’ll skip that critical step – PMCS! This was clear to all why they have to really do good, thorough planning to prevent “hey you” tasksings that put Troopers in a bad position to skip PMCS and risk having a break down or accident. Walkthrough was the way to go for this class!

**Day 3 (24 FEB)**

**Chaplain Support – Instructor was the 3BCT Chaplain:** Our Chaplain wanted a few minutes to cover what he (and the BN Chaplains) have to offer the Co/Btry/Trps and how XOs can coordinate with them to get them involved more in training. This was a good class, and it was well received. The more senior LTs and junior CPTs were the most interested.

**PMCS Systems of Systems – I was the primary instructor for this class:** I have been pushing all of our units to conduct PMCS as “Systems of Systems.” Most have heard this term, and it isn’t a ground breaking idea. I want all of our units to PMCS for example, A HMMWV with the Radio, Radio Mount, DAGR, BFT, Trailer, Generator, etc all at the same time. This ensures the “system” that will be used to roll to the field or a deployment works. We were too often seeing a commo guy PMCS all of the vehicle radios by conducting radio checks from one vehicle because he knew THAT radio mount / antenna / etc all worked, only to go to the field and have several not work, because the OTHER vehicle radio mounts / antenna didn’t work. The same is true for weapons, NVGs, sights are all part of the Troopers “System” and should be PMCSd as one to ensure they all work. You can’t see if your laser on the weapon is working without the NVGs, so PMCS them together. Simple idea, but a concept that can be critical to ensuring everything is looked at and functioning.

**XO Operations in the Field – Instructors were myself and the BN XOs:** This class was to answer a request from the Phase I class. As we are beginning to conduct FSO or Decisive Action rotations / missions, the younger generations of officers have not conducted Combat Trains or Field Trains. We provided them some of the doctrinal information and added our own take on TTPs to help them better understand how and where they can best provide support and leadership to the process in the field. A good class, but I will include a terrain model to better portray the distances to give them a sense of what the battlefield looks like with a Combat Trains / Field Trains / SSA versus a multitude of FOBs.

**XO TTPs and Open discussion** was just that. A final opportunity for the XOs to ask questions and then complete their AAR Card / Course Critique. On the AAR cards, I ask them to provide me three things they liked, three things they didn’t like, who the best instructor was, and what they would like to see in the next course. This has been an effective tool to get an understanding of what direction to go in for the next course as well as see how well the guys I have teaching are doing.

Overall, it was another great opportunity for the young LTs / CPTs to get a better appreciation for their job. We once again handed out binders with Tabs with each class for them to follow along with and for them to keep so they have a quick reference guide.

I hope these short summaries are helpful in explaining why we chose the courses we did and if we’d use them again.

Thanks

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XO

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