DIRECTOR’S CORNER

At CALL, our publications run on a fiscal year schedule, so it seems right that for this 4th quarter 2020 update, I would reflect on how we performed last year. Although the production of hard copy publications did slow due to the challenges of COVID-19, our work in support of capturing and distributing lessons from the response has more than made up for our usual travel/exercise coverage and subsequent work products. In the end, we still delivered more than 25 numbered products to the field, and we are proud of that effort. From 30 Sept. to 1 Oct., CALL hosted a virtual “International COVID-19 Lessons Learned Conference” where we invited the lessons learned proponents from 11 partner armies, as well as key U.S. lessons learned communities, to communicate their unique perspective on response operations and to share lessons and recommendations. The conference was well received by the participants, and now the hard work of turning those observations and recommendations into actions begins. Finally, by now many of you have seen the Army’s announcement of the discontinuation of the Asymmetric Warfare Group and the Rapid Equipping Force. CALL has already been working with AWG and REF since 2017 to collaborate within the Army Lessons Learned Program and share operational lessons and best practices. Rest assured that we will continue this effort to capture and archive the work that they have done for our Army.

Christopher J. Keller
COL, IN

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


The information in this bulletin is a snapshot of the Army conducting large-scale combat operations (LSCO). Mission Command Training Program’s (MCTP’s) observations are primarily written by a collaborative group of experienced officers, noncommissioned officers, and chief warrant officers working in conjunction with our highly qualified expert-senior mentors. MCTP uses several avenues to facilitate shared understanding of Warfighter Exercise (WFX) experiences to educate not just those units preparing for WFXs, but the total Army. Beginning in FY21, MCTP WFX key observations will be published semiannually by CALL. The new publications will be more portable, pocket-sized books and will remain packed with current and relevant observations.

20-504: Warfighter’s Guide to Electronic Warfare (CAC login required)

Developed by warrant officers and noncommissioned officers at the National Training Center (NTC), this guide is a result of the lessons learned and best practices experienced by tactical and operational formations during combat training center (CTC) rotations. The near-peer adversary presents a challenge for many units by forcing them to fight for digital terrain to maintain and regain access to mission command systems that were taken for granted during counterinsurgency operations. Most of the recommendations in this guide come from best practices and observations during NTC rotations. The use of sister service publications, joint publications, and Army publications, along with these best practices and lessons learned assisted in the development of this guide to support the Army’s efforts in rebuilding a competitive electronic warfare force to meet the evolving threat. JLLIS link.
This report builds on the initial CALL report “U.S. Army Response to SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus Pandemic 2019: What We Learned in the First 30 Days.” Further collection and analysis indicates that the majority of observations, including those that fell under the original topic of crisis response, fall within eight primary focus areas. Since the initial report, members of CALL’s collection and analysis team have focused on reviewing after action reports (AARs) and conducting key leader interviews (KLIs). Every AAR and KLI will be uploaded into the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) under the JLLIS Community of Practice (registered users only). JLLIS link.

Like many other civilian academic institutions and military training centers, the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), located in West Point, NY, was impacted by the worldwide Coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020. The USMA staff quickly initiated planning to develop a response to COVID-19. This planning resulted in a campaign plan that focused on four major key tasks: Return and reception of the graduating class of 2020, the graduation of the class of 2020, subsequent cadet summer training, and activities surrounding the reception of the new plebe class in late summer. All planning needed to balance the immediate impact of health as a risk to the force against the risk to mission. There were many lessons learned and best practices identified throughout the three months in which Operation Resilient Knight was developed and then transitioned into execution. Contained within this AAR are the key points identified during the on-site CALL collection. Many of these points may serve as waypoints for other educational institutions and training commands to imitate as they also chart a path to return to training amid the Coronavirus threat to operations. JLLIS link.

Written by the 2nd Cavalry Regiment (2CR) commander, “We Kill Tanks” explores the unit’s role in the European Command area of responsibility. From an understanding of the European theater, the leaders of 2CR identified that execution of the defense is its mission essential task. Using a regimental working-group process led by the regimental command team, the 2CR developed and validated its “How We Fight” concept. This paper lays out those principles and the unit’s approach to training to proficiency. JLLIS link.

This product informs Army brigade combat team (BCT) commanders on the nature of competition and potential conflict with the People’s Republic of China from today through the 2030s. China’s strategic roadmap to complete its military modernization by 2035 and “fully transform the people's armed forces into a world-class force by the mid-21st century” make the question of China's vision of future warfare a crucial issue for BCT commanders and the U.S. Army.

The Asymmetric Warfare Group sponsored the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory to analyze the phenomenon of Russian private military companies (PMCs), the scenarios under which they would matter to U.S. Army maneuver commanders, and whether they constitute a unique threat to U.S. and partner forces. The analysis presents key findings from deep-dive research and analysis on Russian PMCs presented in the appendix. It addresses their uses, equipment, training, personnel, state involvement, legal issues, and other related topics.
NEWS FROM THE FRONT AND CTC

Maintaining an Armored Division’s Momentum Through a Wet Gap Crossing

A contested wet gap crossing (WGX) is arguably the most difficult mission for an armored division. Not only is it resource intensive, but the WGX poses significant risk to the operational tempo and logistical lines that extend across lines of communication. In order to conduct a successful and synchronized WGX, an armored division must assign proper command and control, conduct deliberate WGX planning nested with the military decision-making process (MDMP), task organize critical enablers in order to project their capabilities, and practice aggressive traffic control through multiple crossing sites. These actions provide the maneuver commander with flexibility and options as the battle unfolds and they allow an armored division to maintain a steady tempo, quickly maneuver through vulnerable crossing sites, and exploit success on the far side of the WGX. This article outlines some of the 1st Cavalry Division’s lessons from planning and execution during Defender Europe 20 and a WFX.

The Battalion S-1 Section in LSCO

The ability to overcome challenges and accomplish any mission remains a hallmark of the American Soldier. To instill this mindset, Soldiers and leaders have streamlined processes to account for conditions associated with LSCO. For the battalion S-1 section, this happens typically from the comfort of the office in the form of personnel actions, finance actions, customer service, strength management, etc., focusing on the shop and working close to counterparts. However, when operating in a combat environment, S-1 personnel are challenged to adapt their processes. To overcome these challenges, leaders should consider doctrine, integrate S-1 personnel into planning, thoughtfully position personnel and equipment to optimize operations, and properly integrate with other warfighting functions.

BEST PRACTICE SUBMISSIONS

Attack Against Enemy Forces out of Friendly Contact (Video) (CAC login required)

This video provides a by warfighting function planning overview of an aviation attack against enemy forces out of friendly contact for the division and combat aviation brigade (CAB) staff. The purpose is to introduce division leaders, planners, and new CAB staff members to this mission set, and inform them of the resources available to assist in its planning and execution.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Breaking Doctrine Podcasts. The next Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD) “Breaking Doctrine” podcast is entitled “Doctrine Hacks,” and will feature members of the CADD staff discussing products and tools that can make accessing and understanding doctrine easier. All episodes of “Breaking Doctrine” are available on Google and Apple podcasts.

This Is My Squad. In August 2020, the U.S. Army selected 15 noncommissioned officers to serve as the first This Is My Squad app development squad. The squad will assist software developers at Army Futures Command in taking on some of the Army’s most high-impact administrative and leadership challenges such as sponsorship, training management, and counseling.

COMING SOON!

Leader Development in Contact: Leader Observations from the National Training Center

COL Michael Simmering, NTC Operations Group commander, and his staff have developed a “must read” collection of insightful observations on what it takes to be a successful leader when it counts the most: When in contact with an enemy threat. These observations cover a wide range of warfighting functions and provide the reader valuable and insightful attributes that successful leaders participating in NTC rotations have used while fighting in the most strenuous training environment short of actual combat.

Radio Operator’s Quick Reference Guide

Written by the Cyber Center of Excellence and the U.S. Army Signal School, this publication will update the consistently requested “Radio and System Operator’s Handbook, Version 2.” This handbook will provide operator procedures, guidelines, and information to enhance the effectiveness in the operation of currently fielded combat net radios and mission command systems.
MCTP’s operational tempo remained high this past quarter. In addition to supporting the Army North COVID-19 response, continuing operations in a COVID-19 environment, and resuming WFXs in October, MCTP has planned and executed a significant unit reorganization.

Prior to FY21, MCTP utilized several smaller operations groups, which were focused on enabling training for corps, division, and brigade headquarters and staffs at echelon. Beginning in FY21, MCTP reorganizes to fewer (but larger) operations groups focused on corps and division formations preparing for LSCO. Although the throughput will remain the same, MCTP is now better postured to assist with the integration and synchronization of warfighting functions (WfFs) throughout the depth of corps and division formations, providing deeper insights and feedback required by commanders to train their staffs.

MCTP’s former structure was compartmentalized, with observer controller/trainers (OC/Ts) organized against a specific headquarters and its staff. From WFX academics through final after action reviews, MCTP was horizontally aligned, limiting the integration of WfFs to the brigade level. Training audiences were approached as separate entities rather than a vertically integrated team.

In response to the Army’s focus on LSCO, divisions have become the unit of action for the tactical-level fight. In an effort to weigh the corps/division as the main effort during a WFX, MCTP has reorganized into five total operations groups. OC/Ts in Operation Groups Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie are now organized by WFX instead of unit echelon. This optimizes the training audience’s efforts throughout all headquarters within the division formation.

Operations Group Juliet is re-designated as the Strategic Effects Group (SEG). The SEG continues to conduct special operations force and joint operations, but has now assumed responsibility for multi-domain operations (MDO) and information operations (IO). Operations Group X-Ray is re-designated as Plans and Exercises (PLEX), retaining its core scenario planning, exercise control, world-class opposing forces (OPFOR) functions, and effectively serving as the 3/5/7 for MCTP.

FY21 will serve as the proof of principle for MCTP’s new organizational structure. MCTP looks forward to providing world-class collective training opportunities for U.S. Army corps, Army divisions, Army Service component commands, and functional/multi-functional brigades across the operating force.
As the military continues to train despite COVID-19, the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) recently hosted its first major training exercise since the COVID-19 threat began earlier this year. In order to effectively train U.S. and multinational forces while mitigating the threat of COVID-19, JMRC enacted several control measures designed to both stop and, if needed, contain the spread of COVID-19.

Training units not stationed within Germany were required to conduct a 14-day restriction of movement (ROM) at the Hohenfels Training Area. Additionally, units were tested twice during their ROM, with the first test conducted on their third day of ROM, and the second test conducted on the tenth day. Once cleared, units were allowed to begin reception, staging, and onward movement as part of the rotation.

For those who tested positive while in ROM, established procedures included tracing people who had been in close contact, isolation of personnel who tested positive in designated facilities, and additional testing. Soldiers who tested positive were required to complete a second 14-day ROM and have a negative test before being allowed to participate in the rotation.

While in rotation, any Soldier who showed symptoms was immediately isolated and given a COVID test. Contacts of symptomatic Soldiers were also identified and isolated, pending the results of their COVID tests. These procedures allowed for the quick halting of the spread of the virus throughout the formation.

In addition to the training unit, our OCTs also followed established protocols. These protocols included daily screening and temperature checks, adding masks to the OCT uniform, daily cleaning of masks and gloves, and exercising social distancing measures when around the training unit.

During the rotation, additional tests were conducted for both the training unit and OCTs. These additional tests provided another layer of mitigation designed to control the introduction of COVID-19 through the interaction between the training unit and OCTs.

Key to the COVID-19 mitigation plan was the planning effort of all involved. From JMRC, the training unit, and the Army medical community at Hohenfels, all made sure proper procedures were developed and executed to ensure a successful rotation.

CALL INSIDER

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JOINT MULTINATIONAL READINESS CENTER

CALL HAS A NEW HOME!

The Center for Army Lessons Learned has relocated! In mid-September CALL began moving operations from building 50 to the Trolley Station (Building 275) and the new address is 511 Grant Avenue, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027. All phone numbers remain the same. Although the front office is fully operational, there may be some delay in responsiveness as the rest of the staff makes this transition. Your continued patience is appreciated!
The Joint Readiness Training Center continues to provide relevant, rigorous, multi-echelon training to brigade combat teams in preparation for LSCO on the decisive action battlefield against a near-peer threat with multi-domain capabilities while maintaining interoperability with our unified action partners.

The force is currently fighting to maintain the proper balance of safety for troops and families with readiness training to accomplish the mission in a COVID-19 environment. JRTC remains flexible, innovative, and here to help!

In an effort to reverse some of the historical trends seen at the BCT level, the staff at the JRTC worked tirelessly to put together several projects designed to assist units in their preparation for a successful rotation at any CTC and increase overall unit readiness.

Distributed Intelligence Operations in BCT’s Tactical Operations (CAC login required) This publication is a good companion for those considering how to array command posts on the battlefield, which typically causes some dispersion of the brigade intelligence support element.

The Correct Rehearsals Executed Correctly...It's Time to Fix IC/Fires (CAC login required) This publication takes a hard look at the problems with conducting the information collection/fires rehearsal in a high-tempo operational environment, such as seen during LSCO or decisive action training environment rotations at the CTCs.

Sustaining the Fight is focused on sustainment at the BCT level, and covers the latest sustainment rotational trends and best practices, as well as several short white papers that expound on some of the points of friction highlighted in the trends. The project is divided into self-explanatory sections covering: general sustainment trends and recommendations; command and control; brigade support area defense support operations; distribution operations; health service support; and maintenance operations. The publication has links that allow the reader to instantly traverse the document by simply double-clicking the title on the table of contents.

The Command Post Functions in Decisive Action (CAC login required) project consists of building on a doctrinal foundation coupled with the latest trends reversal efforts and best practices. It also has several examples of how command posts (CPs) should function. It is designed to provide the basis for a leader professional development session at the unit level that should spark dialogue between the commander and staff. The project covers a wide variety of topics including general CP functions and ergonomics, plans-to-current operations transitions, and security force assistance brigade CP considerations, as well as several “A Way” examples. Additionally, the project is paired with another relevant project from the past, “A COP When You Need One,” and JRTC’s “Resources for Command Post Operations,” which is a one-stop shop for all of the related material and projects on this topic.
During the month of September, NTC conducted a division-level exercise with the 1st Infantry Division. This exercise was critical for not only enhancing the capabilities of the 1st Infantry Division, but also for identifying potential training programs for echelons above brigade (EAB) elements as the Army gravitates towards a division-centric force and incorporates new multi-domain capabilities and mission-essential skills necessary to win the next fight. As such, these lessons and observations will be shared to inform resourcing decisions regarding the future of the Army, as we move toward the force of 2028.

Besides the division-level exercise, NTC has also focused on its outreach program, sending monthly updates to the force. These updates are also being published through CALL. Right now, there are several products in the process of publishing:

**Fire Support Operations:** This publication is a compilation of products used over the last couple of years to sustain and increase fire superiority over potential enemies.

**Training to Win: Preparing for LSCO:** This publication was specifically designed to help units at echelon understand the LSCO environment; develop tactics, techniques, and procedures for success; and better understand how to train for this environment at home station.

**Leader Development – In Contact:** This publication examines the art of leadership, its application on the replicated NTC battlefield, and what some of the more successful rotational unit leaders do to build winning teams.

**Hard Lessons:** This publication shares experiences from operations sergeants major and command sergeants major at the battalion and brigade level in areas such as mentoring subordinates and managing organizational systems.

**NCO Crosswalk:** This publication describes the duties and mission essential tasks, to include where to be and what to do, for over 60 different key noncommissioned officer positions across the brigade.

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**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Want to be informed about new products and items of interest at CALL? Like us on Facebook @CenterforArmyLessonsLearned or follow us on Twitter @USArmy_CALL.

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