

MAKE THE BOS

WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR PLATOON

By 1SG C. R. Johnson

Like most Army NCOs, I invested some time studying for my Self Development Test (SDT). As I read one of the testable field manuals, FM 25-101, **Battle Focused Training**, I noticed in several places it discusses making assessments of a unit using the battlefield operating systems (BOS). This process is done at both the company and battalion levels using ratings of "Trained," "Needs Practice" or "Untrained." As an observer/controller (OC) at the National Training Center (NTC), I've developed several techniques to explain how the seven BOS categories apply at platoon level.

I was introduced to the BOS several years ago while attending an informal unit After Action Review (AAR) led by my squadron commander. He made no attempt to explain what he was talking about and I started to get confused as he ran down the list of positive and negative actions of our unit in each of the seven systems. What I retained from the AAR was limited, at best.

As an OC, I use the BOS almost daily when observing the operations of tank platoons. The BOS experience level of most platoons is minimal and usually only includes the platoon leader and platoon sergeant. So, before using the BOS categories in an AAR, I always take a few minutes to explain what they are and give some examples of how they apply to the platoon.

I list them so they're easier to remember. Both FM 25-100 and FM 71-2 begin with the maneuver system and carry on from there. Listing the categories also helps ensure nothing gets left out of a discussion.

The next step is to find specific examples of tasks performed at the platoon/soldier level that fall into one of the

seven systems. Intelligence can be intimidating since most soldiers think it's something done by that officer who issues maps and conducts arms room inspections back in garrison. So, I talk about spot reports generated by the platoon which, when passed back up the chain of command, become intelligence. I also mention how the platoon leader usually gets an intelligence update prior to the start of a mission and passes this information out to the tank commanders. By this time, most people begin to realize intelligence *does* apply at platoon level. Before I move on to the next system, I talk about how noise, light and litter discipline keep the platoon from becoming an enemy spot report.

Of the seven BOS categories, maneuver is probably the easiest for the platoon to apply. Examples in this system include vehicle formations and movement techniques. I use anything that in-

volves platoons moving across the battlefield.

Fire support is a system in which most platoons have little or no control. The examples I use here include planning for employment and calling for indirect fire before getting into physical contact with the enemy. I also discuss the use of smoke during obstacle breaching. The other side to this is, given the opportunity to employ artillery, do all personnel in the platoon know how to call for fire?

The next system, mobility and survivability, is usually found in that portion of the OPORD dealing with work priorities for engineers. I tie this in with platoon-level operations by discussing it in two parts. Examples of mobility include breaching obstacles—especially when the platoon has tanks equipped with mine plows—and employing hasty protective minefields. Once we discuss these areas, I explain that survivability

Battlefield Operating Systems

(chart used to introduce BOS to platoon)

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|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Intelligence _____ | OPORD, PARA 1 situations |
| (spot reports, noise & light discipline, intel updates) | |
| 2. Maneuver _____ | PARA II & III |
| (movement techniques, formations) | |
| 3. Fire Support _____ | Mission Execution |
| (Employing as CBT multiplier, all personnel able to call for fire) | |
| 4. Air Defense _____ | Mission Execution |
| (Passive vs. active, react to air drill) | |
| 5. Mobility and Survivability _____ | Mission Execution |
| (Employ ENG assets, breach obstacles, crew drills, NBC tasks) | |
| 6. Logistics _____ | PARA IV, Service support |
| (Casualty evacuation, LOGPAC operations, vehicle maintenance) | |
| 7. Battle Command _____ | PARA V, CMD & Signal |
| (Communications, TACSOP, EW plan, rehearsals) | |

includes all the tasks that help them survive on the battlefield. These include NBC skills as well as the battle drills which are supposed to be second nature to any tank crew. Construction of fighting positions is another essential subject.

When I talk to units about survivability, I usually qualify things ahead of time and don't discuss those skill which fall under the air defense system. Examples of this category generally fall under one of two subjects -- passive or active air defense. Early warning dissemination within the platoon is another area that applies at their level.

Combat service support (CSS) is an area that is usually quite familiar to the platoon, although it normally takes a serious shortfall in maintenance, logistics packages (LOGPAC) or emergency resupply before its importance hits home. This is also a system where it's easy to point fingers at the support assets, so

I make every attempt to use examples where the platoon has direct control. These include logistics reporting, crew-level maintenance and dissemination of paragraph IV information to the platoon.

The last system, battle command, overlaps all the other systems since a breakdown here can have a severe affect on mission accomplishment. At the platoon level, I use communications with and without radios as an example. Another major point in this system is that a well-written SOP can assist when command and control is either difficult or lost completely. This helps to emphasize why all tank commanders need to have all the operational graphics posted on their maps.

Once the platoon has some solid examples of how the BOS applies to them, the next logical step is to determine what they're doing well and where they need

to concentrate extra effort. During the last half of the final AAR I conduct with platoon members, they use the BOS to determine at least one skill or task in each system they need to sustain and one they need to improve. This self-evaluation is strictly at platoon level and has a majority consensus among those soldiers present. The end result is kind of a report card of their NTC experience. They put it to use when they return.

I realize that in some instances I've oversimplified the BOS in order to fit platoon operations. As stated earlier, all NCOs are now familiar with it because of SDT study requirements. Applying the BOS to the lowest levels should help to reinforce its use and understanding and help trace training deficiencies back to their roots.

Johnson serves as first sergeant of C Co, 2-33rd Armor, Ft. Knox, KY.

Where Are Your Battle Staff NCOs?

By SGM Dana Eisenga

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy graduated over 3,800 NCOs from the Battle Staff Course (BSC) through class 6-94. However, there are many installations throughout the Army that don't know how many BSC graduates are assigned to them.

After each class graduates, the Army Training Requisitioning and Resources System (ATARRS) is updated to reflect the graduates' status. This information is then sent to the Specialized Training Branch of the Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate (EPMD) at the U.S. Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM). This data is down-loaded into the Enlisted Distribution and Assignment System (EDAS). Each installation's strength manager should query EDAS to obtain a list of all BSC graduates assigned.

The procedure to query this information is as follows:

- 1 Enter the EDAS
- 2 Check personnel system
- 3 Check personnel query combo
- 4 Using the screen, tab to "CTASIE" and enter 2S
- 5 Enter your data for one of the following—"DML," "CURUPC," "PSC" or "PPA"
- 6 Query your installation data base

7 Cross-check the two queries to determine who EDAS has as a BSC graduate.

USASMA used this procedure and Ft. Bliss, TX, data as a test. The 93 BSC graduates showing on EDAS were at Ft. Bliss.

However, Ft. Bliss only knew of 81, because 12 weren't on the installation data base as 2S (the ASI for BSC).

The Battle Staff Course has become very important to the Army and the soldier and both are valued assets to any organization.

When a soldier returns from BSC, the Personnel Activity Center (PAC) supervisor and/or command sergeant major should immediately obtain a copy of DA Form 1059, Academic Evaluation Report.

A DA Form 4187, Request for Personnel Action, should be submitted requesting award of ASI "2S" and posting to DA Form 2-1, Item #17.

If you have further questions on this procedure, contact SGM Eisenga at DSN 978-8222 or COM (915) 568-8222. ■

Eisenga is the executive officer, Student and Faculty Bn, USASMA, Ft. Bliss, TX.