Troop leading procedures

- Step 1. Receive the Mission
- Step 2. Issue a warning order
- Step 3. Make a tentative plan
- Step 4. Start necessary movement
- Step 5. Reconnoiter
- Step 6. Complete the plan
- Step 7. Issue the complete order
- Step 8. Supervise

1. Receive the Mission

The leader may receive the mission in a warning order, an operation order (OPORD), or a fragmentary order (FRAGO). He immediately begins to analyze it using the factors of METT-T:

What is the MISSION?
What is known about the ENEMY?
How will TERRAIN and weather affect the operation?
What TROOPS are available?
How much TIME is available?

(1) The leader should use no more than one third of the available time for his own planning and for issuing his operation order. The remaining two thirds is for subordinates to plan and prepare for the operation. Leaders should also consider other factors such as available daylight and travel time to and from orders and rehearsals. In the offense, the leader has one third of the time from his receipt of the mission to the unit's LD time. In the defense, he has one third of the time from mission receipt to the time the squad or platoon must be prepared to defend.

(2) In scheduling preparation activities, the leader should work backwards from the LD or defend time. This is reverse planning. He must allow enough time for the completion of each task.
2. Issue a warning order

The leader provides initial instructions in a warning order. The warning order contains enough information to begin preparation as soon as possible. Platoon SOPs should prescribe who will attend all warning orders and the actions they must take upon receipt: for example, drawing ammunition, rations and water, and checking communications equipment.

The warning order has no specific format. One technique is to use the five-paragraph OPORD format. The leader issues the warning order with all the information he has available at the time. He provides updates as often as necessary. The leader never waits for information to fill a format.

If available, the following information may be included in a warning order.

- The mission or nature of the operation.
- Who is participating in the operation.
- Time of the operation.
- Time and place for issuance of the operation order.

3. Make a tentative plan

The leader develops an estimate of the situation to use as the basis for his tentative plan. The estimate is the military decision making process. It consists of five steps:

1. Detailed mission analysis
2. Situation analysis and course of action development
3. Analysis of each course of action
4. Comparison of each course of action
5. Decision.

The decision represents the tentative plan. The leader updates the estimate continuously and refines his plan accordingly. He uses this plan as the start point for coordination, reconnaissance, task organization (if required), and movement instructions. He works through this problem solving sequence in as much detail as time available allows. As the basis of his estimate, the leader considers the factors of METT-T.
4. Start the necessary movement

The platoon may need to begin movement while the leader is still planning or forward reconnoitering. The platoon sergeant or a squad leader may bring the platoon forward, usually under the control of the company executive officer or first sergeant.

This is where your subordinate leaders prepare men, weapons and equipment for the coming mission. It is an excellent time for them to eat, conduct maintenance on weapons/equipment, and gather together anything they are going to need for the upcoming mission.

This step could occur at any time during the troop-leading procedure.

5. Reconnoiter

If time allows, the leader makes a personal reconnaissance to verify his terrain analysis, adjust his plan, confirm the usability of routes, and time any critical movements. When time does not allow, the leader must make a map reconnaissance. The leader must consider the risk inherent in conducting reconnaissance forward of friendly lines. Sometimes the leader must rely on others (for example, scouts) to conduct the reconnaissance if the risk of contact with the enemy is high.

6. Complete the plan

The leader completes his plan based on the reconnaissance and any changes in the situation. He should review his mission, as he received it from his commander, to ensure that his plan meets the requirements of the mission and stays within the framework of the commander's intent.

7. Issue the complete order

Platoon and squad leaders normally issue oral operations orders.

(1) To aid subordinates in understanding the concept for the mission, leaders should issue the order within sight of the objective or on the defensive terrain. When this is not possible, they should use a terrain model or sketch.
(2) Leaders must ensure that subordinates understand the mission, the commander's intent, the concept of the operation, and their assigned tasks. Leaders may require subordinates to repeat all or part of the order or demonstrate on the model or sketch, their understanding of the operation. They should also quiz their soldiers to ensure that all soldiers understand the mission. Chapter 5 Infantry Platoon Tactical Standing Operating Procedure provides a list of questions that leaders can ask to determine if the soldiers understand the mission.

8. Supervise

The leader supervises the unit's preparation for combat by conducting rehearsals and inspections.

(1) Rehearsals. The leader uses rehearsals to--

Practice essential tasks (improve performance).
Reveal weaknesses or problems in the plan.
Coordinate the actions of subordinate elements.
Improve soldier understanding of the concept of the operation (foster confidence in soldiers).

(a) Rehearsals include the practice of having squad leaders brief their planned actions in execution sequence to the platoon leader.

(b) The leader should conduct rehearsals on terrain that resembles the actual ground, and in similar light conditions.

(c) The platoon may begin rehearsals of battle drills and other SOP items before the receipt of the operation order. Once the order has been issued, it can rehearse mission specific tasks.

(d) Some important tasks to rehearse include--

Actions on the objective.
Assaulting a trench, bunker, or building.
Actions at the assault position.
Breaching obstacles (mine and wire).
Using special weapons or demolitions.
Actions on unexpected enemy contact.

(2) Inspections. Squad leaders should conduct initial inspections shortly after receipt of the warning order. The platoon sergeant spot checks throughout the unit's preparation for combat. The platoon leader and platoon sergeant make a final inspection. They should inspect--

Weapons and ammunition.
Uniforms and equipment.
Mission-essential equipment.
Soldier's understanding of the mission and their specific responsibilities.
Communications.
Rations and water.
Camouflage.
Deficiencies noted during earlier inspections.

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