

# SUTS2

## SMARTBOOK

Second Edition



# Small Unit TACTICS

Leading, Planning & Conducting Tactical Operations

**The Lightning Press**  
Larsen and Wade

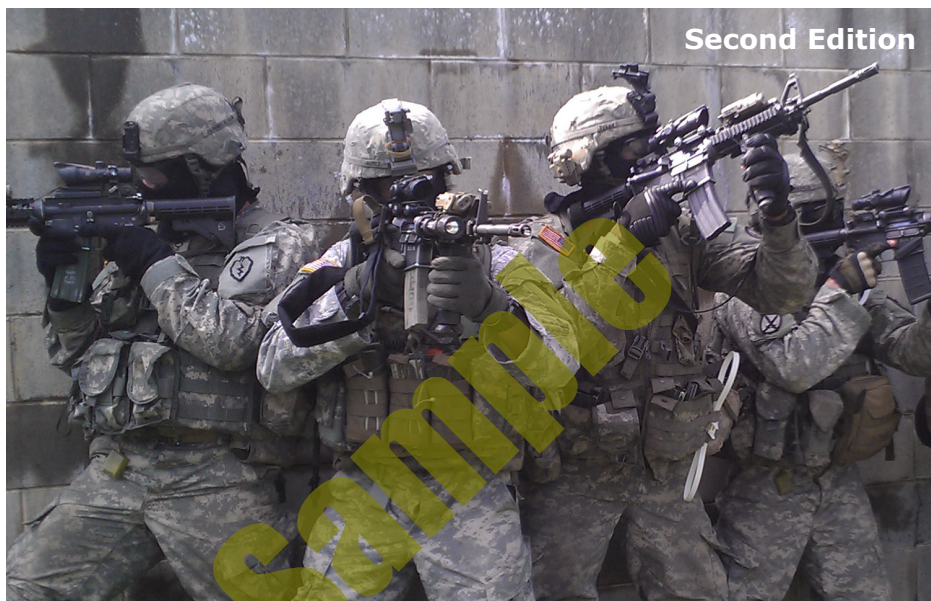


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**Leading, Planning & Conducting Tactical Operations**  
(Second Printing)

**The Lightning Press** 

**Christopher Larsen**  
**Norman M. Wade**

## The Lightning Press



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# (SUTS2) The Small Unit Tactics SMARTbook, 2nd Rev. Ed.

*SECOND PRINTING. This is the 2nd printing of SUTS2 (1st printing ISBN 978-1-935886-28-0), featuring updated "lay-flat" binding with spine in place of the original plastic-comb binding.*

## Leading, Planning & Conducting Tactical Operations

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ISBN: 978-1-935886-64-8

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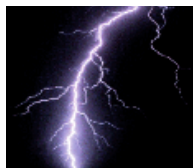
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**About our cover photo:** Prepare to breach. Soldiers from Borzoi Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, stack outside the objective compound while Sappers from the 34th Engineer Company prepare to breach the target building during training in South Korea. (Dept of Army photo).

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# (SUTS2) Notes to Reader

## Leading, Planning & Conducting Tactical Operations

**Tactics** is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. The tactical-level commander uses combat power in battles, engagements, and small-unit actions. Establishing a common frame of reference, **doctrine** provides a menu of practical options based on experience. It provides an authoritative guide for leaders and Soldiers but requires original applications that adapt it to circumstances.

The Small Unit Tactics SMARTbook **translates and bridges** operational-level doctrine into tactical application -- in the form of tactics, techniques and procedures -- and provides the “**how to**” at the small-unit level, providing a ready reference at the battalion, company, platoon, squad and fire team level.

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## Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs)

Principles alone do not guide operations. Tactics, techniques, and procedures provide additional levels of detail and more specific guidance, based on evolving knowledge and experience.

- **Tactics.** Tactics is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. Effective tactics translate combat power into decisive results. Primarily descriptive, tactics vary with terrain and other circumstances; they change frequently as the enemy reacts and friendly forces explore new approaches.
- **Techniques.** Employing a tactic usually requires using and integrating several techniques and procedures. Techniques are non prescriptive ways or methods used to perform missions, functions, or tasks. They are the primary means of conveying the lessons learned that units gain in operations.
- **Procedures.** Procedures are standard, detailed steps that prescribe how to perform specific tasks. They normally consist of a series of steps in a set order. Procedures are prescriptive; regardless of circumstances, they are executed in the same manner. Techniques and procedures are the lowest level of doctrine.



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# Offense and Defense (Decisive Operations)

*Ref: ADP 3-90, Offense and Defense (Aug '12).*

Tactics is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other (CJCSM 5120.01). Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. The tactical-level commander employs combat power in the conduct of engagements and battles. This section addresses the tactical level of war, the art and science of tactics, and hasty versus deliberate operations.

## The Tactical Level of War

ADP 3-90 is the primary manual for offensive and defensive tasks at the tactical level. It does not provide doctrine for stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks. It is authoritative and provides guidance in the form of combat tested concepts and ideas for the employment of available means to win in combat. These tactics are not prescriptive in nature, and they require judgment in application.

The tactical level of war is the level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces (JP 3-0). Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives. It is important to understand tactics within the context of the levels of war. The strategic and operational levels provide the context for tactical operations. Without this context, tactical operations are just a series of disconnected and unfocused actions. Strategic and operational success is a measure of how one or more battles link to winning a major operation or campaign. In turn, tactical success is a measure of how one or more engagements link to winning a battle.

## The Offense

The offense is the decisive form of war. While strategic, operational, or tactical considerations may require defending for a period of time, defeat of the enemy eventually requires shifting to the offense. Army forces strike the enemy using offensive action in times, places, or manners for which the enemy is not prepared to seize, retain, and exploit the operational initiative. Operational initiative is setting or dictating the terms of action throughout an operation (ADRP 3-0).

The main purpose of the offense is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy force. Additionally, commanders conduct offensive tasks to secure decisive terrain, to deprive the enemy of resources, to gain information, to deceive and divert the enemy, to hold the enemy in position, to disrupt his attack, and to set the conditions for future successful operations.

## The Defense

While the offense is the most decisive type of combat operation, the defense is the stronger type. Army forces conduct defensive tasks as part of major operations and joint campaigns, while simultaneously conducting offensive and stability tasks as part of decisive action outside the United States.

Commanders choose to defend to create conditions for a counteroffensive that allows Army forces to regain the initiative. Other reasons for conducting a defense include to retain decisive terrain or deny a vital area to the enemy, to attrit or fix the enemy as a prelude to the offense, in response to surprise action by the enemy, or to increase the enemy's vulnerability by forcing the enemy to concentrate forces.

## Tactical Enabling Tasks

Commanders direct tactical enabling tasks to support the conduct of decisive action. Tactical enabling tasks are usually shaping or sustaining. They may be decisive in the conduct of stability tasks. Tactical enabling tasks discussed in ADRP 3-90 include reconnaissance, security, troop movement, relief in place, passage of lines, encirclement operations, and urban operations. Stability ultimately aims to create a condition so the local populace regards the situation as legitimate, acceptable, and predictable.



# Offense and Defense (Unifying Logic Chart)

## Unified Land Operations

Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage in sustained land operations in order to create the conditions for favorable conflict resolution.

*Executed through...*

### Decisive Action

offensive

defensive

stability

DSCA

## Offensive tasks

### • Movement to contact

- Search and attack
- Cordon and search

### • Attack

- Ambush
- Counterattack
- Demonstration
- Spoiling attack
- Feint
- Raid

### • Exploitation

### • Pursuit

#### Forms of maneuver

- Envelopment
- Flank attack
- Frontal attack
- Infiltration
- Penetration
- Turning movement

## Defensive tasks

### • Area defense

### • Mobile defense

### • Retrograde operations

- Delay
- Withdrawal
- Retirement

#### Forms of the defense

- Defense of a linear obstacle
- Perimeter defense
- Reverse slope defense

## Tactical enabling tasks

## Tactical mission tasks

Ref: ADP 3-90, *Offense and Defense*, fig. 1, p. iv.



Refer to *The Army Operations & Doctrine SMARTbook (Guide to Unified Land Operations and the Six Warfighting Functions)* for discussion of the fundamentals, principles and tenets of Army operations, plus chapters on each of the six warfighting functions: mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, and protection.

# ADRP 3-90: Overview (What's New!)

Ref: ADRP 3-90, *Offense and Defense* (Aug '12), *preface and introduction*.

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-90 provides guidance in the form of combat-tested concepts and ideas modified to exploit emerging Army and joint offensive and defensive capabilities. ADRP 3-90 expounds on the doctrine established in Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-90. It provides additional information on the basic concepts and control measures associated with the art and science of tactics. ADRP 3-90 provides the doctrine for the conduct of offensive and defensive tasks, just as ADRP 3-07 provides doctrine for the conduct of stability tasks and Field Manual (FM) 3-28 provides the doctrine for defense support of civil authorities. Offensive and defensive tasks conducted as part of joint operations within the geographic limits of the U.S. and its territories are referred to in joint doctrine as homeland defense. (See Joint Publication [JP] 3-27.)

ADRP 3-90 focuses on the organization of forces, minimum essential control measures, and general planning, preparation, and execution considerations for each primary offensive and defensive task. It is the common reference for all students of the art and science of tactics, both in the field and the Army school system. The offensive and defensive considerations in this manual apply to small tactical units, such as companies and battalions, even though most of the figures in this manual use the division and the brigade combat team (BCT) echelons to illustrate points in the text. Echelon specific field manuals and Army techniques publications address the specifics of how each tactical echelon employs these tactical concepts.

## Introduction

To understand ADRP 3-90, the reader must understand the operational art, the principles of war, and the links between the operational and tactical levels of war described in JP 1, JP 3-0, ADP 3-0, and ADRP 3-0. The reader should understand how the stability and defense support of civil authorities tasks described in ADPs and ADRPs 3-07 and 3-28 carry over and affect the conduct of offensive and defensive tasks and vice versa. The reader should understand the operations process (plan, prepare, execute, and assess) and how that process relates to the Army's military decisionmaking process and troop-leading procedures described in ADP 5-0 and ADRP 5-0. Reviewing these publications assists the reader in understanding ADRP 3-90.

The use of an operational framework assists commanders in articulating their visualization of operations in time, space, purpose, and resources. In ADP 3-0 and ADRP 3-0 the Army established three different frameworks—deep, close, security; decisive, shaping, and sustaining; and main and supporting efforts. To avoid redundancy, this manual uses only the decisive, shaping, and sustaining framework where necessary to provide needed tactical information. This is not meant to imply that the other two frameworks are not equally valid.

*Refer to The Operations & Training SMARTbook and ADRP 3-0 for additional information on the use of the other two frameworks.*

## Organization

The five chapters of ADRP 3-90 focus on the tactics used to employ available means to win in combat (the offense and the defense) and constitute the Army's collective view of how it conducts prompt and sustained tactical offensive and defensive actions on land. Those tactics require judgment in application. As such, this manual is not prescriptive, but it is authoritative. ADRP 3-90 provides a common discussion of how commanders from the battalion task force level through the division echelon conduct tactical offensive and defensive tasks and their supporting tactical enabling tasks. The doctrine in this publication focuses on the employment of combined arms in lethal combat operations. These offensive and defensive principles and considerations apply to the conduct of operations, but they cannot be used in isolation. Their application must be tempered by the obligation to protect the civilian population within the area of operations.

ADRP 3-90 contains five chapters:

- Chapter 1 establishes the context of the art and science of tactics
- Chapter 2 defines common tactical concepts and tactical echelons
- Chapter 3 addresses offensive tasks
- Chapter 4 addresses defensive tasks
- Chapter 5 addresses those tactical enabling tasks that are not the subject of their own publication

The tactics discussed in this manual are only examples of ways to conduct a specific offensive or defensive task. Collectively they provide a set of tools that commanders employ in accordance with the exact tactical situation that they face at any one given time. The tactical situation is defined as the mission variables of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC).

## New, Rescinded, and Modified Terms

### New Army Terms

Term	Remarks
crew	New definition
deep, close, and security operational framework	Introduced in ADP 3-0
fire team	New definition
main and supporting effort operational framework	Introduced in ADP 3-0
platoon	New definition
section	New definition
squad	New definition

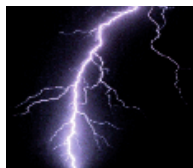
### Rescinded Army Terms

Term	Remarks
calculated risk	Replaced by prudent risk
civil affairs activities	Replaced by civil affairs operations
heavy brigade combat team	Replaced by armored brigade combat team
intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)	Replaced by information collection when talking about these three things collectively. Individually the terms are still doctrinal terms.
light	Replaced by infantry when referring to Army forces
military gamble	Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
motorized	Replaced by Stryker when referring to Army forces

### Modified Army Terms

Term	Remarks
corps	No longer considered a tactical echelon of command
division	New definition for the division echelon
stability-centric/offensive-centric/ defensive-centric	The suffix "centric" is no longer used when talking about the elements of decisive action
subordinate tasks within the mission command, intelligence, fires, and protection warfighting functions	Subordinate task changes based on ADP 3-0





# (SUTS2) References

The following references were used in part to compile The Small Unit Tactics SMARTbook. Additionally listed are related resources useful to the reader. All references are available to the general public and designated as "approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." The Small Unit Tactics SMARTbook does not contain classified or sensitive information restricted from public release.

## Army Doctrinal Publications (ADPs) and Army Doctrinal Reference Publications (ADRP)

ADP/ADRP 1-02	Feb 2015	Operational Terms and Military Symbols
ADP/ADRP 3-0	Oct 2011/May 2012	Unified Land Operations
ADP/ADRP 3-07	Aug 2012	Stability
ADP/ADRP 3-90	Aug 2012	Offense and Defense
ADP/ADRP 5-0	May 2012	The Operations Process
ADP/ADRP 6-0	May 2012	Mission Command (with Chg 1, Sept 2012)

## Army Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (ATTPs)

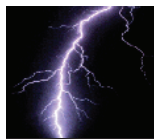
ATP 5-19	Apr 2014	Risk Management
ATTP 3-06.11	Jun 2011	Combined Arms Operations in Urban Terrain
ATTP 3-97.11	Jan 2011	Cold Region Operations
ATTP 5-0.1 *	Sept 2011	Commander and Staff Officer's Guide (* superseded by FM 6-0, May 2014)
FM 3-19.4	Mar 2002	Military Police Leader's Handbook (change 1)
FM 3-21.8	Mar 2007	The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad
FM 3-21.10	Jul 2006	The Infantry Rifle Company
FM 3-24	Dec 2006	Counterinsurgency
FM 3-90	Jul 2001	Tactics
FM 3-97.6	Nov 2000	Mountain Operations
FM 6-0	May 2014	Commander and Staff Organization and Operations
FM 6-01.1	Jul 2012	Knowledge Management Operations
FM 7-85	Jun 1987	Ranger Operations
FM 7-92	Dec 2001	The Infantry Reconnaissance Platoon and Squad (Airborne, Air Assault, Light Infantry) w/change 1
FM 7-93	Oct 1995	Long-Range Surveillance Unit Operations
FM 90-3	Aug 1993	Desert Operations
FM 90-5	Aug 1993	Jungle Operations

## Joint Publications

JP 3-0	Aug 2011	Joint Operations
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## Additional Resources and Publications

SH 21-76	Jul 2006	The Ranger Handbook
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## Tactical Mission Fundamentals

## I. The Art of Tactics

Ref: ADRP 3-90, *Offense & Defense* (Aug '12), chap. 1.



*Tactics is the employment of units in combat. It includes the ordered arrangement and maneuver of units in relation to each other, the terrain and the enemy to translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements. (Dept. of Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett).*

## I. The Tactical Level of War

Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. The tactical-level commander employs combat power to accomplish assigned missions. The tactical level of war is the level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces (JP 3-0). Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives. It is important to understand tactics within the context of the levels of war. The strategic and operational levels provide the context for tactical operations. Without this context, tactical operations are reduced to a series of disconnected and unfocused actions.

Tactical operations always require judgment and adaptation to the unique circumstances of a specific situation. Techniques and procedures are established patterns that can be applied repeatedly with little or no judgment in a variety of circumstances. Tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) provide commanders and staffs with a set of tools to use in developing the solution to a tactical problem.

### Individuals, crews, and small units

Individuals, crews, and small units act at the tactical level. At times, their actions may produce strategic or operational effects. However, this does not mean these elements are acting at the strategic or operational level. Actions are not strategic unless they contribute directly to achieving the strategic end state. Similarly, actions are considered operational only if they are directly related to operational movement or the sequencing of battles and engagements. The level at which an action occurs is determined by the perspective of the echelon in terms of planning, preparation, and execution.

## Battles, Engagements and Small-Unit Actions

Tactics is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. The tactical-level commander uses combat power in battles, engagements, and small-unit actions. A battle consists of a set of related engagements that lasts longer and involves larger forces than an engagement. Battles can affect the course of a campaign or major operation. An engagement is a tactical conflict, usually between opposing, lower echelons maneuver forces (JP 1-02). Engagements are typically conducted at brigade level and below. They are usually short, executed in terms of minutes, hours, or days.

## II. The Science and Art of Tactics

The tactician must understand and master the science and the art of tactics, two distinctly different yet inseparable concepts. Commanders and leaders at all echelons and supporting commissioned, warrant, and noncommissioned staff officers must be tacticians to lead their soldiers in the conduct of full spectrum operations.

### A. The Science

The science of tactics encompasses the understanding of those military aspects of tactics—capabilities, techniques, and procedures—that can be measured and codified. The science of tactics includes the physical capabilities of friendly and enemy organizations and systems, such as determining how long it takes a division to move a certain distance. It also includes techniques and procedures used to accomplish specific tasks, such as the tactical terms and control graphics that comprise the language of tactics. While not easy, the science of tactics is fairly straightforward. Much of what is contained in this manual is the science of tactics—techniques and procedures for employing the various elements of the combined arms team to achieve greater effects.

Mastery of the science of tactics is necessary for the tactician to understand the physical and procedural constraints under which he must work. These constraints include the effects of terrain, time, space, and weather on friendly and enemy forces. However—because combat is an intensely human activity—the solution to tactical problems cannot be reduced to a formula. This realization necessitates the study of the art of tactics.

### B. The Art

The art of tactics consists of three interrelated aspects: the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decision making under conditions of uncertainty when faced with an intelligent enemy, and understanding the human dimension—the effects of combat on soldiers. An art, as opposed to a science, requires exercising intuitive faculties that cannot be learned solely by study. The tactician must temper his study and evolve his skill through a variety of relevant, practical experiences. The more experience the tactician gains from practice under a variety of circumstances, the greater his mastery of the art of tactics.

Military professionals invoke the art of tactics to solve tactical problems within his commander's intent by choosing from interrelated options, including—

- Types and forms of operations, forms of maneuver, and tactical mission tasks
- Task organization of available forces, to include allocating scarce resources
- Arrangement and choice of control measures
- Tempo of the operation
- Risks the commander is willing to take

# Aspects of the Art of Tactics

Ref: ADRP 3-90, *Offense & Defense* (Aug '12), pp. 1-2 to 1-3 (not labeled in ADRP 3-90).

There are three aspects to the art of tactics that define a competent tactician:

## 1. Domain Knowledge

*Note: For more complete discussion of domain knowledge, see The Leader's SMARTbook or FM 6-22 Army Leadership, pp. 6-5 to 6-9.*

The first is the creative and flexible application of the tools available to the commander, such as doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, training, organizations, materiel, and soldiers in an attempt to render the enemy's situational tactics ineffective. The tactician must understand how to train and employ his forces in full spectrum operations. The factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC) are variables whose infinite mutations always combine to form a new tactical pattern.

They never produce exactly the same situation; thus there can be no checklists that adequately address each unique situation. Because the enemy changes and adapts to friendly moves during the planning, preparation, and execution of an operation, there is no guarantee that a technique which worked in one situation will work again. Each tactical problem is unique and must be solved on its own merits.

## 2. Decision Making Under Conditions of Uncertainty

The second aspect of the art of tactics is decision making under conditions of uncertainty in a time-constrained environment and demonstrated by the clash of opposing wills—a violent struggle between two hostile, thinking, and independent opposing commanders with irreconcilable goals. Each commander wants to impose his will on his opponent, defeat his opponent's plans, and destroy his opponent's forces. Combat consists of the interplay between these two opposing commanders, with each commander seeking to accomplish his mission while preventing the other from doing the same. Every commander needs a high degree of creativity and clarity of thought to outwit a willing and able opponent. He must quickly apply his judgment to a less than omniscient common operational picture provided by his command and control (C2) system to understand the implications and opportunities afforded him by the situation. The commander always uses the most current intelligence in order to facilitate his visualization of the enemy and environment. That same C2 system transmits the decisions resulting from his situational understanding to those individuals and units required to engage and destroy the enemy force.

## 3. The Human Dimension

The third and final aspect of the art of tactics is understanding the human dimension—what differentiates actual combat from the problems encountered during training and in a classroom. Combat is one of the most complex human activities, characterized by violent death, friction, uncertainty, and chance. Success depends at least as much on this human aspect as it does on any numerical and technological superiority.

The tactician cannot ignore the human aspect. He seeks to recognize and exploit indicators of fear and weakness in his enemy, and to defeat the enemy's will, since soldiers remain key to generating combat power. More than any other human activity, continuous combat operations against an intelligent enemy takes a toll on soldiers, severely straining their physical and mental stamina. This creates in soldiers the tangible and intangible effects of courage, fear, combat experience, exhaustion, isolation, confidence, thirst, and anger.

Leaders must be alert to indicators of fatigue, fear, lapses in discipline standards, and reduced morale in friendly and enemy soldiers. These conditions can have a cumulative effect on units that can lead to collapse. The tactician must understand how they affect human endurance and factor them into his plans. He must understand the limits of human endurance in combat.



## Chap 1

# V. Troop Leading Procedures (TLP)

*Ref: ATTP 5-0.1, Commander and Staff Officer Guide (Sept. '11), chap. 5.*

Troop leading procedures extend the MDMP to the small-unit level. The MDMP and TLP are similar but not identical. They are both linked by the basic Army problem solving methodology explained. Commanders with a coordinating staff use the MDMP as their primary planning process. Company-level and smaller units lack formal staffs and use TLP to plan and prepare for operations. This places the responsibility for planning primarily on the commander or small-unit leader.



*Leaders project their presence and guidance through troop leading procedures. TLP is the process a leader goes through to prepare the unit to accomplish a tactical mission. It begins when the mission is received. (Photo by Jeong, Hae-jung).*

Troop leading procedures are a dynamic process used by small-unit leaders to analyze a mission, develop a plan, and prepare for an operation (ADP 5-0). These procedures enable leaders to maximize available planning time while developing effective plans and preparing their units for an operation. TLP consist of eight steps. The sequence of the steps of TLP is not rigid. Leaders modify the sequence to meet the mission, situation, and available time. Leaders perform some steps concurrently, while other steps may be performed continuously throughout the operation.

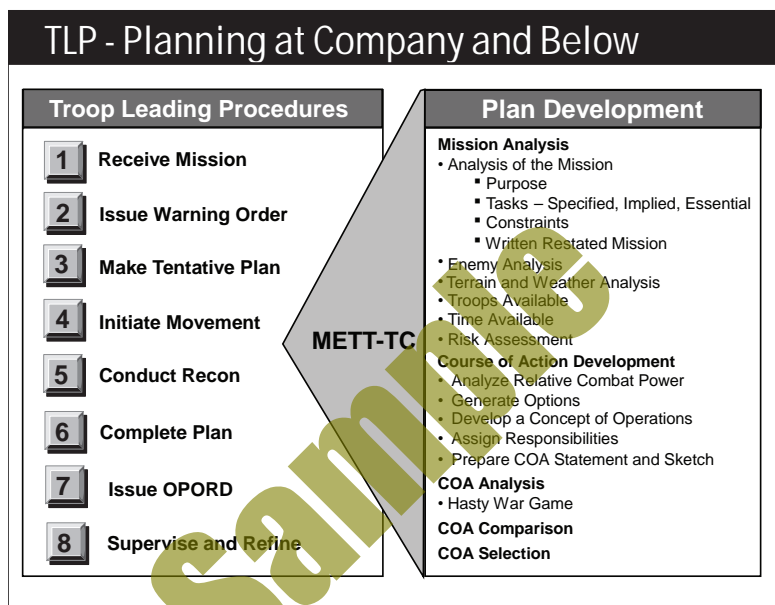


*Refer to The Battle Staff SMARTbook (Guide to Designing, Planning & Conducting Military Operations) for complete discussion of the three Army planning methodologies. Additional related topics include the operations process, integrating processes and continuing activities, plans and orders, mission command, rehearsals, after action reviews (AARs), and operational terms and military symbols.*

# I. Performing Troop Leading Procedures

TLP provide small unit leaders a framework for planning and preparing for operations. This section discusses each step of TLP.

Army leaders begin TLP when they receive the initial WARNO or perceive a new mission. As each subsequent order arrives, leaders modify their assessments, update tentative plans, and continue to supervise and assess preparations. In some situations, the higher headquarters may not issue the full sequence of WARNOs; security considerations or tempo may make it impractical. In other cases, Army leaders may initiate TLP before receiving a WARNO based on existing plans and orders (contingency plans or be-prepared missions), and an understanding of the situation.



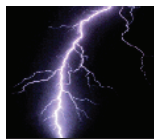
Ref: ATP 5-0.1, *Commander and Staff Officer's Guide*, fig. 5-2, p. 5-3.

## 1. Receive The Mission

Receipt of a mission may occur in several ways. It may begin with the initial WARNO from higher or when a leader receives an OPORD. Frequently, leaders receive a mission in a FRAGO over the radio. Ideally, they receive a series of WARNOs, the OPORD, and a briefing from their commander. Normally after receiving an OPORD, leaders are required to give a confirmation brief to their higher commander to ensure they understand the higher commander's concept of operations and intent for his unit.

Upon receipt of mission, Army leaders perform an initial assessment of the situation (METT-TC analysis) and allocate the time available for planning and preparation. (Preparation includes rehearsals and movement.) This initial assessment and time allocation form the basis of their initial WARNO. Army leaders issue the initial WARNO quickly to give subordinates as much time as possible to plan and prepare.

Ideally, a battalion headquarters issues at least three WARNOs to subordinates when conducting the MDMP. WARNOs are issued upon receipt of mission, completion of mission analysis, and when the commander approves a COA. WARNOs serve a function in planning similar to that of fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) during execution.



# The Small Unit Tactics SMARTbook

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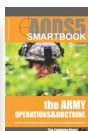


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