UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL
TRAINING COMMAND
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TACT 1012
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THE OPERATION ORDER – PART 1 (S.M.E.A.C.)

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Given an order with a mission to conduct combat operations, while wearing a fighting load, prepare for combat to ensure the individual is prepared to accomplish the mission. (OCS-PAT-1004)

2. Given an operations order, a training mission and a fire team or squad leader, issue a five paragraph order to communicate a basic, realistic, tactically sound plan. (OCS-PAT-1008)

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. As the leader of a training unit, while wearing an assault load, receive the 5 paragraph order to begin to formulate the unit's mission and their role. (OCS-PAT-1004c)

2. Without the aid of references and with a training operation order, format received information into a five paragraph order to enable the communication of a clear and concise plan. (OCS-PAT-1008f)

1. **PURPOSE**. Several nations have agreed to use the format contained in standard agreement (STANAG 2014). Most Marines will recognize it as SMEAC, the five-paragraph operations order format. It is used throughout the United States Armed Forces, NATO, and elsewhere overseas. Nearly all types of combat orders are based on all or part of the five-paragraph format. **Memorize this format. You will be tested on it**. Never forget that it is the action that follows your order that counts, not the format itself. A short, simple order that conveys your will is superior to a lengthy, complicated order. Standard order formats expedite understanding, communication, prevent omissions and facilitate ready reference.

2. **OPERATION ORDER OVERVIEW**. The operations order provides a means of directing and influencing your unit to synchronize actions toward accomplishing a mission. The order consists of an orientation and five paragraphs. All five paragraphs work together to coordinate your resources into a plan on how you will reach the goal of mission accomplishment. Below are each of the five paragraphs, what kind of information they contain, and how they work together.

a. **Orientation**. The Orientation paragraph starts off the order with a brief description of the terrain you will be operating in. Understanding the impact terrain has on your movement and mission will help you to come up with a feasible solution.

b. **Situation**. After looking at the terrain as briefed in the Orientation paragraph, you need to understand who is in the immediate area. The Situation paragraph provides details on both friendly and enemy personnel operating in your area of operations. We combine our understanding of the terrain with an understanding of the enemy force we are facing, and what friendly support we may have around us to help our decision making process for finding our solution.

c. **Mission**. A short statement containing all five "W's". **W**hen is **w**ho, doing **w**hat, to **w**hom, and **w**hy. This is the problem that we have to determine the solution for. Using all of the information we have at this point, we determine a course of action to accomplish the mission.

d. **Execution**. This is where we communicate the plan (solution) for our problem (the mission) we are tasked to accomplish. Starting from our present location, we brief how we get to the point where the "what" has been accomplished that leads to the "why" of the operation. We provide enough detail to direct how to accomplish the mission without being too detailed where we lose initiative from subordinates. We imply discretion to subordinates in determining how they accomplish their tasks.

e. **Administration & Logistics**. Providing some of the smaller details of the operation, this paragraph focuses on medical issues, Enemy Prisoner of War handling, food, water, and ammunition needed to accomplish the

mission. We remember the details involved in this portion through the use of four "B's": Beans, Bullets, Band-aids, and Bad Guys.

f. **Command & Signal**. Here we wrap up the order by discussing how we will communicate key events throughout the operation. We also discuss where key personnel are going to be located, and what the order will be for succession of command in the event the unit leader becomes a casualty.

3. **THE OPERATIONS ORDER**

Orientation. Prior to issuing an order, the unit leader orients his/her subordinates to the planned area of operation. Key aspects of the terrain, obstacles along the route, where we are currently located, and where we are going are all things to consider when orienting your subordinates.

Situation

a. **Enemy Forces**. Information on the enemy situation is issued. (the acronym **SALUTE** is used)

Size: How many enemy are there
Activity: What are they doing
Location: Where were they seen last
Unit: Which unit/organization are they from
Time: When were they last seen
Equipment: What kind of weapons do they have

b. **Friendly Forces**. Information about the friendly situation is issued. (the acronym **HAS** is used)

Higher headquarters: Mission statement of next higher commander
Adjacent units: Who is to my left, right, front, rear
Supporting units: Is anyone supporting me

Mission. This is one clear, concise, simple statement on the task the unit must accomplish and the purpose behind it. It answers the 5 Ws (**w**hen, **w**ho, **w**hat, **w**here and **w**hy).

Example: "At 0600, 1st Fire Team will destroy the enemy on the center 1/3 of the objective in order to (IOT) prevent the enemy from withdrawing."

Execution

a. **Commander's Intent**. (This will be covered in the Operation Order – Part 2 class)

b. **Concept of the Operation**. (Scheme of Maneuver) This is the general overview on the "how to" of your plan – it is the "big picture" on how the entire unit works together in accomplishing the mission. It is important to issue your Scheme of Maneuver in anonymous terms in order to keep everyone's attention throughout the whole plan. Everyone needs to understand what those around them are doing in order to create flexibility and support during the execution of your plan.

Example: (LRC scenario) "One candidate will provide local security oriented towards the enemy. Another candidate will move to the far side of the 2-rope bridge and provide local security there. Another candidate will move the 55-gallon drum to the other side.

c. **Tasks**. These are the specific tasks given to members of the fire team (or to subordinate leaders within higher levels of units) on the scheme of maneuver. This is when you are speaking specifically to the subordinate (unit or person) on the part of the scheme of maneuver they will execute.

Example: (LRC scenario) "Candidate Jones, you will provide local security oriented towards the enemy. Candidate Johnson, you will move to the far side of the 2-rope bridge and provide local security there. Candidate Smith, you will move the 55-gallon drum to the halfway point."

d. **Coordinating Instructions**. This paragraph contains instructions common to two or more people in the unit.

Example: (LRC scenario) "All the areas painted red represent unexploded ordnance and will produce casualties if touched. All the areas painted white are safe areas to touch."

ADMINISTRATION & LOGISTICS. This paragraph contains the items used to assist in accomplishing the mission. It uses the 4 Bs (**b**eans, **b**ullets, **b**and-aids, and **b**ad guys).

Band-Aids: How do we care for the injured
Bad guys: What do we do with EPW's
Beans: How much food and water do we need
Bullets: How much ammo do we need

Example: "Everyone will have two full canteens, map pens and protractors, and ten rounds filled in one magazine prior to departing the assembly area."

COMMAND & SIGNAL. This paragraph contains any signals that will be used to coordinate movement or events with the scheme of maneuver. This paragraph also identifies the location of key leaders and who will succeed in command if key leaders become casualties

Example (Signal): "We will use hand and arm signals during movement. Upon enemy contact we will switch to voice commands."
Example (Command): "I (as fireteam leader) will be the second to cross the obstacle. If I get wounded or killed Candidate Johnson will assume command."

Any Questions? Finally, after all five paragraphs have been verbally communicated, the leader will ask if there are any questions in order to clarify any misunderstandings and ensure everyone is clear on the plan before execution commences.

4. **WARNING ORDER**. The warning order is simply the "heads up" given to the unit before issuing the operation order.

5. **TECHNIQUES OF ISSUING AND RECEIVING THE ORDER**

a. **Time**. An operation order is often given in circumstances where time is critical. Commanders may issue an order to their squad leaders at conversational speed, or slightly faster. A squad leader must be prepared to copy a great deal of information in a short amount of time.

b. **Abbreviations**. One of the easiest methods used to save time and copy large amounts of information is to abbreviate certain words. There are no official USMC abbreviations for terms listed below. Develop your own abbreviations and become accustomed to using them. The following is a list of abbreviations that are commonly used during operation orders:

Defend	**DEF**	Attack	**ATK**
Position	**POS**	Seize	**SZE**
Platoon	**PLT**	Objective	**OBJ**
Line of Departure	**LOD**	Squad	**SQD**
Tentative assault position	**TAP**	Fire team	**FTM**
Order	**ORD**	Prepare	**PREP**
Re-supply	**RSP**	Enemy	**EN**
Location	**LOC**	Route	**RTE**

c. **Skeleton**. Another technique that saves time is developing an outline format that serves as a skeleton of the operations order. As the platoon commander moves through his order, plug the pertinent information into the proper place in the outline.

(1) Use the sample five paragraph order skeleton in the back of TACT 1015-9 to aid your orders process.

(2) Use small letters or key words to identify sub-paragraphs.

(3) Write the appropriate acronyms in their appropriate place, in order to use them as a reference once you receive the platoon commander's order.

d. **Issuing The Order**. There are four techniques that should be used when issuing an order.

(1) Speak in a clear, forceful, and conversational tone.

(2) Speak at a conversational speed, or a little faster. Do not go too fast; subordinate leaders must be able to take notes.

(3) Display confidence and enthusiasm in the plan. Any hesitation, apprehension, or confusion will be noticed by subordinates.

(4) To avoid confusion, prevent any interruptions which may arise. Insist that all questions be held until the completion of the order.

SAMPLE #1 – SQUAD ORDER

*Issued from the Squad Leader and received by the Fire Team Leaders. You are 1st Fire Team Leader

Orientation. You are currently located at grid coordinate 9583 6383.

1. **Situation**

a. **Enemy**. About 4 hours ago, an enemy soldier was spotted establishing a hasty ambush position near the crash site of a downed Marine pilot on Platoon Objective 1. He was wearing desert camouflage uniform and armed with a light machine gun.

b. **Friendly.** The platoon is currently located in the rear fifty meters of the company assembly area. 2d squad is to our left and 3d squad is to our right.

2. **Mission**. At 0800, 1st squad will recover a downed Marine pilot on platoon objective 1 in order to prevent him from being captured by the enemy.

3. **Execution**

a. **Concept of the Operation**. The squad will separate into three fire teams. Two teams will move to Platoon Objective 2 and await further instructions. The remaining fireteam will move via the most direct route to Platoon Objective 1, recover the downed Marine pilot, and then move to Platoon Objective 2.

b. **Tasks**

(1) 1st Fire Team. At 0800, 1st Fire Team will recover a downed Marine pilot on Platoon Objective 1 in order to prevent him from being captured by the enemy.

(2) 2d Fire Team. At 1500, you will move to Platoon Objective 2 and await further instructions.

(3) 3d Fire Team. At 1500, you will move to Platoon Objective 2 and await further instructions.

c. **Coordinating Instructions**

d. **Tactical Control Measures**

Assembly Area: 9583 6383
Attack Position: 9585 6386
Line Departure: Trail
Assault Position: 9587 6387
Platoon Objective 1: 9587 6388
Platoon Objective 2: 9585 6384

e. **Timeline**

0700-0715 Prep for Combat
0715-0730: Squad Rehearsals
0730-0745: Rehearsals
0745-0800: Final Inspections
0800: Cross LD

4. **ADMINISTRATION & LOGISTICS**. Everyone will have two full canteens, map pens and protractors, and ten rounds filled in one magazine prior to departing the assembly area.

5. **COMMAND & SIGNAL**

a. **Signal.** We will use hand and arm signals during movement. Upon enemy contact we will switch to voice commands.

b. **Command**. I will be with 1st Fire Team. Succession of Command will be to 1st, 2nd, then 3rd Fire Team Leader.

*Issued from the Squad Leader and received by the Fire team Leaders about a squad "cook-out."

SAMPLE #2 – SQUAD ORDER

1. **SITUATION**. Eight weeks from now, 1st squad is going to conduct a cookout.

2. **MISSION**. At 1500, on 29 Mar xxxx, 1st squad will cookout at Sergeant Jones's house in order to promote camaraderie and build our unit cohesion.

3. **EXECUTION**

a. **Concept of the Operation**. The squad will fall out after mustering at 1200. Two fireteams will link up at the grocery store. Upon link up at the store, one fireteam will get enough meat for the squad. One fireteam will get enough beverages and chips. The remaining fireteam will go directly to Sergeant Jones's house after the 1200 muster and set up the grill. This remaining fireteam will cook all the meat after the other two fireteams have arrived. At 1500, the squad cookout will commence.

b. **Tasks**

(1) 1st Fire Team. At 1500, you will cookout at Sergeant Jones's house in order to promote camaraderie and build our unit cohesion. Provide enough meat to feed all members of the squad.

(2) 2nd Fire Team. At 1500, you will cookout at Sergeant Jones's house in order to promote camaraderie and build our unit cohesion. Provide enough beverages and chips for the squad.

(3) 3rd Fire Team. At 1500, you will cookout at Sergeant Jones's house in order to promote camaraderie and build our unit cohesion. You will be the working party to cook all the chow for the squad.

c. **Coordinating Instructions**

(1) 1st and 2nd Fire Teams will travel in column via privately owned vehicles. 3rd Fire Team Leader will drive the most direct route to Sergeant Jones's house. Team Leaders will drive.

(2) Each member of the squad will wear appropriate civilian attire.

4. **ADMINISTRATION & LOGISTICS**

a. Each member of the squad will contribute $10.00 to the squad party fund.

b. The first aid kit will be inside Sergeant Jones's house on the kitchen counter next to the telephone in case of an emergency.

5. **COMMAND & SIGNAL**

a. **Signal**. Cell phones will be the primary means of communication while in transit to Sergeant Jones's house. Secondary will be public payphones.

b. **Command**. Succession of Command will be to 1st Fire Team Leader, followed by 2nd Fire Team Leader then 3rd Fire Team Leader.

NOTES

REFERENCES:

1. Commander's Tactical Handbook	MCRP 3-11.1A
2. Counterinsurgency Operations	FMI 3-07.22
3. Marine Rifle Company/Platoon	FMFM 6-4
4. Marine Rifle Squad	MCWP 3-11.2
5. Operational Terms and Graphics	MCRP 5-12A