



OPTIMIZE AND DOMINATE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Command in Operations Exercise for Tactical Leaders

RFT 3.2 Tome 2 (FT-05)

Published on 11/11/2018

Histoire & stratégie

The digitisation of the battle space (NEB), and today's widespread access to the new information and communication technologies (NICT), are giving the exercise of command a new form. High technology instils all types of conflict, whether symmetrical, asymmetrical or asymmetrical. For military action, the NEB constitutes a revolution comparable to that of the Internet in the functioning and life of societies. Digitisation goes hand in hand with the need to adapt methods, which presupposes a sustained training effort, maintained throughout the course. The main challenge is the resistance to change inherent in any technological progress.

Digitization significantly shortens the decision-making cycle. The major progress to be expected from it will be felt mainly in terms of standards of engagement and the use of supports and backstopping.

Digitization implies both specific and **continuous training of the staff, and a particular positioning of the chief in relation to this tool**. The NEB allows for a better visualization of the situation and a better sharing of information. It should promote dialogue between commands in the development of orders. As a staff tool, it is a decision-making aid for the chief. He must nevertheless be aware of the limits of digitization. Thus, the pawn that is virtually "absent" from the tactical reference situation risks being truly forgotten, with the risk of being subjected to fratricidal fire. Likewise, the visualization of the subordinate device presents risks such as interventionism down to the lowest levels. This risk of interventionism is to be formally prohibited, while precise and accurate knowledge of the friendly situation should on the contrary promote subsidiarity. The leader's situational intelligence, intuition and ability to make choices remain at the heart of the decision-making process.

Digitisation must therefore make it possible to take the right decision at the right time, without allowing oneself to be paralysed by the expectation of information that one

would always want to be more complete. However, precise and accurate knowledge of friendly arrangements (subordinates and neighbours), as well as of the logistics assessments that automatically come up, does not replace the chief's perception of the subordinate's ability to fulfil his mission (morale, understanding of the mission). Thus, the NEB becomes a multiplier of effectiveness in operations, among others. It does not eliminate, but a contrario reinforces the importance and necessity of command dialogue.

Access to high technology is not exclusive to "conventional" military forces. The irregular adversary is constantly adapting its tactics, techniques and procedures, taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by today's technologies. In this race for technical sophistication, Western armies are victims of their cumbersome equipment development and procurement procedures. That is why, against an irregular adversary, the key to success will not rest solely on technology. Faced with an elusive enemy, with random modes of action and techniques, it will be necessary to adapt one's own operating methods and procedures, without expecting everything from technology, which is only a partial response to the problem posed. Thus, in the fight against IEDs, it can be said, as in the case of the Allied experience in Afghanistan, that success is based on 60% procedures, 30% technology and ... 10% chance. This emblematic example clearly shows the importance of orders given, that is to say of command.

The military leader must know how to take advantage of the digital tool, without being dictated to by it. Drawing on his experience and situational awareness, and while making the most of his command support system, he must be able to estimate when and where his physical presence, and even his voice, are indispensable. As a result, the information mastery induced by digitization will help him to make better and faster decisions.

In conclusion to this presentation of the impact of the engagement context on command:

The nature of operations, in particular their nature, their duration, the consideration of multiple environmental factors and the growing importance of the law are leading to an increasingly complex operational context. These new constraints broaden the military leader's field of action to include the need to understand and control the environment. One of the chief's objectives will be to take into account, at his level, this complexity in order to transform it into simple orders for his subordinates.

This environment has a direct impact on the style of command of the chief in operations: it requires a proper understanding of the spirit and letter of orders.

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Author (s) : RFT 3.2 Tome 2 (FT-05)

Release date 12/02/2021