

Crushing Uncertainty in the Army Division: Adaptability as a Combat Multiplier

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Crushing Uncertainty in the Army Division: Adaptability as a Combat Multiplier, by MAJ Duke W. Reim, US Army, 52 pages.

This monograph analyzes the role of the division staff in an emerging operational environment. The division staff must become more adaptable to the uncertainties presented on the battlefield. Adaptability is the ability to adjust to new conditions. As the global environment continues to evolve, so too must our divisions. The division is at the pinnacle of the operational level of war. With one foot in the tactical directing the Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) and the other fully resting in the operational level with a watchful eye on the strategic endstate, the division is vital to future mission success for the Army. Two historical examples display the unique tasks that a division must carry out to be successful. The 162d Division of the Israeli Defense Force struggled to adapt to the Egyptian army in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Conversely, the 1st Infantry Division during Desert Storm overcame the shadows of Vietnam to transform on the move and attack and defeat Saddam Hussein's most revered division. The sources supporting this monograph ranged from history books, military journals, current theoretical papers and biographies of those who served in the wars discussed. The United States divisions of the future must train to become more adaptable. The division chief of staff must enable the transformation and development of staff capable of succeeding in uncertainty.

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Acronyms

1ID	First Infantry Division
ACR	Armored Cavalry Regiment
BDE	Brigade
BG	Brigadier General
CAV	Cavalry
CENTCOM	Central Command
CG	Commanding General
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
COL	Colonel
COS	Chief of Staff
CPT	Captain
DA	Direct Action
FM	Field Manual
GEN	General
GPS	Global Positioning System
IDF	Israeli Defense Force
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
LTG	Lieutenant General
MAJ	Major
MG	Major General
MCTP	Mission Command Training Program
MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket System
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
(R)	Retired
US	United States

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Introduction

Crisis will unfold rapidly, compressing decision cycles and response times, Ambiguous actors, intense information wars, and cutting-edge technology will confuse situational understanding.

—GEN Mark A. Milley, Washington DC

Since the creation of the United States, no two American conflicts have looked the same. Terrain, enemy forces, friendly forces, equipment have all differed on some level, broadening the range of conflicts that the US has been involved in. Military leaders and planners have attempted to forecast and predict the next conflict, however the prediction statistics are low. In May 2012, Major General H. R. McMaster confessed, “We have a perfect record in predicting future wars—right? ... And that record is 0 percent.”¹ On the rare occasion that the prediction was remotely close, the ability of the enemy to adapt still presents a major challenge. With the army’s inability to forecast the future, success hinges on being able to respond quick enough to cope successfully with the unanticipated.² Adaptability, being able to adjust to new conditions, is a combat multiplier that must be trained and sustained within the US Army, especially the division staff.³ In Iraq during the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), President George W. Bush announced on May 1, 2003 “Mission Accomplished” yet the actual war had just truly begun.⁴ While conventional Iraqi forces had been defeated, the war transitioned from a Direct Action (DA) narrative to a Counter-Insurgency (COIN) environment. The adversary had adapted to the

¹ David Feith, “H.R. McMaster: The Warrior’s Eye View of Afghanistan,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 2012, accessed September 17 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304451104577392281146871796>.

² John Dowdy and Kirk Rieckhoff, “Agility in US National Security,” *McKinsey & Company*, March 2016, accessed February 5, 2018, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/agility-in-us-national-security>.

³ Oxford English Dictionary, “adaptability,” accessed March 9, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/adaptability>.

⁴ George W. Bush, “Bush Makes Historic Speech Aboard Warship,” *CNN*, May 2, 2003, accessed September 7, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/05/01/bush.transcript/>.

situation and found new and innovative ways to fight US forces. Today's operational environment presents threats to the army that are ominously more perilous in terms of capability and capacity than those we faced in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵ As seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Army adapted to the enemy and tactics, but at a much slower pace and at the cost of human lives and public dismay. The ability to adapt in conflict whether against a near-peer enemy, failed state actor or counter-insurgent will be one of the most significant combat multipliers necessary on the battlefield. As Williamson Murray wrote, "One of the foremost attributes of military effectiveness must lie in the ability to recognize and adapt to the actual conditions of combat."⁶

The division is at the pinnacle of the operational level of war. With one foot in the tactical directing the Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) and the other fully resting in the operational level with a watchful eye on the strategic endstate, the division is vital to future mission success for the Army. The current rigid bureaucracy found in division headquarters however is not conducive in gaining and maintaining an adaptive mindset. Divisions can overcome the adaptability conundrum with training and effort. Complexity Leadership Theory proposes that adaptability enhances performance and innovation and emerges in the everyday interactions when individuals act and react in response to pressures and opportunities.⁷ Critical to adaptability success are the leaders in this environment fostering creativity and learning in a quest for adaptable teams. The division chief of staff is the enabler of fostering and building an adaptive division. Everyday activities must be seen as an opportunity to increase adaptability. However, it is in the everyday that the division struggles to increase adaptability, set meetings, mundane routine, and stagnate briefing slides choke out adaptability at its roots. Mission Command

⁵ US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), foreword.

⁶ Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1.

⁷ Michael J. Arena, and Mary Uhl-Bien. "Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting from Human Capital to Social Capital." *People & Strategy* 39, no.2 (Spring 2016): 23.

Training Center (MCTP) identified in over two years of division level warfighter exercises that division staffs are overwhelmed in the operations process. Staffs possess limited capacity to forecast, anticipate, or adapt to new information due to a lack of understanding in how the plan had intended to shape operational environment.⁸ Complexity Leadership Theory identifies this condition as organizational bureaucracy that can generate hindrances to interconnectivity and understanding.⁹

Division staffs are caught between the rigid garrison bureaucracy and the operational adaptability where all too often the bureaucratic hierarchy outweighs the adaptive. Regrettably, history shows that the rigid structure cannot compete in an adaptive environment. Williamson Murray denoted “It is this inherent tension between the creation of disciplined, obedient military organizations, responsive to direction from above, and the creation of organizations adaptive to a world of constant change that makes military innovation in peacetime and adaptation in war so difficult.”¹⁰ The threat of a near-peer DA conflict will require split-second adaptive decision-making. The divisions in the US Army today must act and react faster than ever before. The US Army’s adversaries will adapt quickly to overwhelm and defeat US forces. The United States future adversaries will use a Multi-Domain approach to defeat our divisions. Cyber-attacks coupled with various forms of jamming to enable multiple types of indirect fires that shape the battlefield for various echelons of ground forces all occurring near-simultaneously that will aim to overwhelm American forces. Then Major General H.R. McMaster identified the need for unified solutions that “acknowledge the complex nature of the environments in which we are working and that take into account the determined, adaptive, and often brutal nature of our

⁸ US Department of the Army, *Mission Command Training Program FY 15 Key Observations*. (April 2016): 8.

⁹ Arena and Uhl-Bien, “Complexity Leadership Theory,” 23.

¹⁰ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 3.

enemies.”¹¹ Division staffs may only have minutes to gather information and make recommendations to the commander increasing the need for greater adaptability.

The bureaucratic habits honed in garrison operations have decreased the division’s ability to be adaptable in uncertainty. In a 1990 *Military Review* article, then MAJ Daniel Bolger declared “Unfortunately, the time and effort wasted in peacetime by the external staff-to-staff haggling probably exacerbates friction in wartime, if only because the staffers will fight as they have trained.”¹² The bureaucratic hierarchy strives for formality, efficiency, and standardization above all else. However, the uncertainty, risk and instability of war do not lend itself to the current division model. The MCTP has witnessed incidents where overwhelmed staffs offered nothing to the commander but unanalyzed data containing minute predictive analysis or description of impacts to future operations that generate more questions than answers.¹³ Division staffs must anticipate and react against an enemy that thinks, plans, and operates much quicker than ever. MAJ Bolger concluded, “Speed, simplicity, and supervision must characterize decisions.”¹⁴ To this end, division staffs need to develop adaptability in analyzing, predicting, and planning.

The division staff of the future should be adaptable to the ever-evolving battlefield and threats. MG McMaster stresses that rather than picking specific countries, we should look broadly at emerging capabilities and create innovative ways to defeat them and adapt to the total environment.¹⁵ This includes the ability to disrupt the enemy’s decision-making cycle, forcing the

¹¹ Andrew Erdmann, “How Militaries Learn and Adapt: An interview with Major General H.R. McMaster,” *McKinsey & Company*, April 2013, accessed February 5, 2018, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/how-militaries-learn-and-adapt>.

¹² Daniel P. Bolger, “Command or Control?” *Military Review* 70, no. 7 (July 1990): 75.

¹³ US Department of the Army, *Mission Command Training Program FY 15 Key Observations*, 9.

¹⁴ Bolger, “Command or Control?” 78.

¹⁵ Andrew Erdmann, “How Militaries Learn and Adapt.”

enemy commander to adapt to US forces depriving him of the initiative. However, current division staff outputs demonstrate the opposite, within the construct of the warfighter, the enemy maintains the initiative and forces the division to react. Fostering adaptability and creating flexibility in the staff will establish a shared understanding across the division and more importantly to the commander, which in turn will make the division more proactive and ultimately more lethal.

MCTP has identified that staffs frequently fail to acknowledge what events are critical when advising the commander.¹⁶ Current staff processes are lengthy, dogmatic and occur within numerous meetings. Product production (slides and reports) becomes the critical output. Staffs tend to hoard information and wait until the perfect picture is established and withhold vital information that the commander needs to make sound decisions with to begin developing a plan to prevent catastrophic failure. MCTP highlight, division staffs fail to deliver comprehensive assessments, commanders then rely on their own intuitive knowledge to describe situations associated to anticipated decisions.¹⁷ Not for lack of trying, staffs are misguided, under-directed, and under-trained neglecting the true purpose behind their critical roles. The CoS must weigh in, provide guidance and direct the staff, find training opportunities in a time-constrained atmosphere. Military historian and theorist, Martin van Creveld stressed “A proper command system should be able to set itself goals, and then strive to attain those goals in spite of the clear realization that things will go wrong, but also in the confidence that, when they do go wrong, the system will be able to overcome the obstacles.”¹⁸

Staffs and commanders have indeed become too consumed with maintaining rigid

¹⁶ US Department of the Army, *Mission Command Training Program FY 15 Key Observations*, 9.

¹⁷ US Department of the Army, *Mission Command Training Program FY 15 Key Observations*, 8.

¹⁸ Martin van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 194.

garrison style mentality, diminishing adaptability. Staffs cannot be tied to a zero-defect atmosphere and must be allowed “freedom of imagination” when planning to defeat an enemy force.¹⁹ An adaptable approach to battlefield situations will permit the staff the ability to process information and make informed recommendations to the commander that diminish the complexity and friction of war. GEN (R) Stanley McChrystal emphasizes “gaining understanding is not always the same as predicting.”²⁰ Flexibility and adaptability are where the staff will be able to reduce the enormous amounts of raw data into the “so what” allowing the commander to make a decision based on facts while assuming risks on the assumptions. During the Vietnam War, the need for adaptability was essential, the enemy determined, the terrain unforgiving and the mission was evolving almost daily. General Westmoreland summarized by saying “commanders and headquarters must be able to gather intelligence, process it, prepare orders, and issue them while on the move.”²¹ The US Army division staffs must rekindle this mentality to take the fight to the enemy again, like the 1st Infantry Division in Desert Storm, adapting to the terrain, enemy and mission. This ability to adapt is showcased in the 1st ID’s campaign in Desert Storm. Conversely the lack of adaptability is highlighted in the 1973 Yom Kippur War where the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and more specifically the 162d division struggled to adapt to the Egyptian Army.

Section I looks at US Army divisions through an organization theory approach providing understanding of how and why divisions structure to support operations. Through the lens of contingency theory, a framework of understanding division staffs explains the relationship between the commander and staff in the overall hierarchy of the division organizational structure.

¹⁹ Creveld, *Command in War*, 195.

²⁰ Stanley McChrystal, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2015), 72.

²¹ William Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 75.

Organizational design offers divergent views regarding enhancing performance within the division with emphasis on advantages and disadvantages to better task organize to confront various threats while maximizing flexibility.

Section II looks at the role of the staff and commander in recent history. Specifically, it examines the 1973 Arab-Israeli War to determine the impact on operations through staff processes and organizational theory. Then the section reviews the relationship between the role and structure of division in regards to mission command and staff functionality.

Section III looks at the 1st Infantry Division in the Gulf War. Historical extractions will examine how this division's staff enabled the commander and ultimately the division to defeat the Iraqi Army and how the staff became a decisive part of the overall victory.

Section IV concludes the monograph and assesses the recommendations that will enable current staffs the capacity to execute actions more quickly, providing the commander the information he needs to achieve timely decisions. The role of the chief of staff and how he/she can increase agility and adaptability within a division staff is vital in enabling the commander the ability to make timely decisions.

Organizational Theory within the US Army division

Organization is defined as:

A social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. All organizations have a management structure that determines relationships between the different activities and the members, and subdivides and assigns roles, responsibilities, and authority to carry out different tasks.²²

While still classified as a tactical organization, the division is the bridge between operational and tactical levels of war. The division produces coherence to tactical efforts: combined planning and

²² Oxford English Dictionary, "organization," accessed March 9, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/organization>.

operations within immense operational environments that structure the future operational environment.²³ The roles and structure of the division organization expand from the lower echelon command organizations. ATP 3-91 defines the division as “a self-contained organization with a command group and a fully functional staff that requires limited staff support from subordinate units to provide functional staff capabilities for its primary role as a tactical headquarters.”²⁴ However as the battlefield becomes more and more complex and interconnected the division is more than just a tactical headquarters. BG Batschelet contends, “In today’s operating environment, the division is the juncture of complex tactical actions and operational and strategic efforts.”²⁵

Within the division, there is a very rigid structure. This structure fits suitably within the scope of the very bureaucratic garrison environment. Scheduled meetings, cubicles, and detailed planning provide efficiency and marginalize flexibility. However, as the division transitions to field conditions the same rigid structure that works in an office setting does not translate as effectively in the field, especially in a time-constrained atmosphere. Organizational theorists Mary Jo Hatch and Ann Cunliffe acknowledge, environments that are complex and rapidly changing with high uncertainty and ambiguity, “bureaucracy is unlikely to provide an organization enough control for timely adaptation to its environment.”²⁶ Strict timelines with meticulous briefing products consume valuable time and effort that could be directed elsewhere. MAJ Bolger acknowledged that staffs are powerless to control the battlefield as straightforwardly

²³ Alan Batschelet, Mike Runey, Gregory Meyer, “Breaking the Tactical Fixation: The Division’s Role,” *Military Review* 89, no.6 (Nov-Dec 2009): 36.

²⁴ US Department of the Army, Army Training Publication (ATP) 3-91, *Division Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1-1.

²⁵ Batschelet, Runey, and Meyer, “Breaking the Tactical Fixation,” 37.

²⁶ Mary Jo Hatch and Ann L. Cunliffe, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 264.

as the range control schedule, the big staffs can coordinate away and at least try to control each other.²⁷ So, how then does this organization manage the transition from garrison to wartime fluidly? Contingency Theory offers an approach to shift between the two. Hatch and Cunliffe define Contingency Theory as “the most appropriate way of designing and managing an organization depends upon the characteristics of the situation in which the organization finds itself.”²⁸ Hatch and Cunliffe expand further that to be effective numerous elements, including environment, goals, technology, and people are required to build a adaptable organization.²⁹ While garrison offers a very stable atmosphere in which to operate, the complete opposite is true for a forward deployed division staff. The Joint Staff’s Deployable Training Division acknowledges the challenges that enormous headquarters and multifaceted methods obstruct operating [while deployed] at the speed of the challenge, discovering it problematic to find time to recognize opportunities to restructure or remove superfluous or redundant requirements/processes.³⁰

Contingency Theory offers the division organization many advantages when faced with differing operating conditions against an enemy. Instead of focusing on the whole organization for restructuring, only those affected by the changing dynamics need alteration. In essence, current and future operations would be the focus point not the 590 Soldiers assigned to the division headquarters. Division Chiefs of Staff (CoS) must establish a critical path to remain flexible and gather information that informs the commander. Theorists Clifford Gray and Erik Larson define a critical path as “project activities that must be completed, the logical sequences,

²⁷ Bolger, “Command or Control?” 69.

²⁸ Hatch and Cunliffe, *Organization Theory*, 41.

²⁹ Hatch and Cunliffe, *Organization Theory*, 41.

³⁰ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff J7, Deployable Training Division, Joint Headquarters Organization, *Chief of Staff Roles and Functions at the Joint Headquarters* (Suffolk, VA: Government Printing Office, April 2015), 1.

the interdependencies of the activities to be completed, and in most cases the times for the activities to start and finish along with the longest path(s) through the network.”³¹

This critical path is the nexus of the staff and commander relationship that enables the organization the ability to remain adaptable. In an environment ripe with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), the chief of staff must “synchronize versus control staff efforts.”³² The Chief of Staff should shift leadership styles to address the situation while maintaining the critical path. Time becomes a significant concern for the staff and commander; the CoS must adjust and synchronize early and often. William Livsey provides an example of a time-intensive production that needs constant monitoring, the commander's daily briefing as, “an activity that takes too many people too much time to prepare and present to meet the schedule of pre-briefs and dry runs, the cut-off time for new material is several hours, disregarding the timely critical information.”³³

Consolidating information to input into PowerPoint presentations sacrifices critical information timeliness in a rapidly changing environment against determined enemy forces, recommendations for decisions are often added to a slide instead taken directly to the commander to disrupt the enemy's decision cycle. Numerous divisions at warfighter exercises often wait for commander touch points within the battle rhythm to update the commander on information that should have been delivered outside of these scheduled touch points. Historian William Livsey asserts, “Critical information is not more, but better, information with which we can synchronize

³¹ Clifford F. Gray and Erik W. Larson. *Project Management: The Managerial Process* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2006), 89.

³² US Department of Defense, *Chief of Staff Roles and Functions*, 1.

³³ William Livsey, “Tin Cans and Strings”: The Concept, Design, and Construction of an Evolutionary C2 System,” in *Principles of Command and Control*, Jon L. Boyes, and Stephen J. Andriole (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1989), 77.

our combat power.”³⁴ Denying marginalization, staff officers' produce products to remain relevant within their Warfighting function to prevent obscurity. Major General Fuller remarked, "The staff becomes an all-controlling bureaucracy, a paper octopus squirting ink and wriggling its tentacles into every corner. Unless pruned with an axe it will grow like the fakir's mango tree, and the more it grows, the more it overshadows the general.”³⁵

However the goal is that the staff must remain adaptable to prepare for any threat that it is presented with. No longer is being efficient good enough; future conflicts will require more from our leaders. GEN (R) McChrystal stated “the pursuit of efficiency was once a laudable goal, but being effective in today’s world is less a question of optimizing for a known (and relatively stable) set of variables than responsiveness to a constantly shifting environment. Adaptability, not efficiency, must become our central competency.”³⁶ Staffs struggle to remain adaptable to the environment that they are thrust into. Locked into an efficient set of prescribed systems, staffs do not transition easily against an enemy that fights outside of these prescribed systems.

1973 Arab/Israeli War-Suez Canal

As long as logic, in Arab limitations will remain dominant. ... I think that in coming years the Arabs do not estimate that they can win a war against Israel.

—Major-General Eli Zeira, Director of Military Intelligence, 24 April 1973

At the close of the Six-day war in 1967, the theories and assumptions coming from the Israeli military and government were all very optimistic. Major General Avraham Adan, Israeli 162d division commander, expressed "the dazzling victory in the 1967 war, contributed to the

³⁴ Livsey, "Tin Cans and Strings", 81.

³⁵ John Frederick Charles Fuller, *Generalship: It's Disease and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Studies Publishing Company, 1936), 66-67.

³⁶ McChrystal, *Team of Teams*, 20.

building of a myth around the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and its personnel. The common expectations from the IDF were that any future war would be short with few casualties.”³⁷ This myth that followed the war would set an unrealistic standard that would plaque Israel in just six short years.

Israel and its military failed to consider two primary factors at the conclusion of the Six-day war. First, the war ended without peace. Historian Dr. George Gawrych expressed “Israel’s impressive battlefield accomplishment in 1967 had failed to bring peace with any Arab state. In fact, the Arab’s resolve was strengthened by the humiliation of their decisive defeat.”³⁸ Egypt, during the Six-day war, lost “85 percent of its air force and 80 percent of its ground equipment.”³⁹ This humiliation sparked a drive that influenced a change in military planning, equipment, and tactics for Egypt as well as politically in terms of endstate. Second, the quick and decisive 1967 win gave Israel a false sense of military supremacy that would shape future national and military planning as well as division level training and tactics. Unfortunately for the Israelis, they fell into what Theorist Daniel Kahneman refers to as the overconfidence effect, taking the word of overconfident experts with costly consequences.⁴⁰

After the six-day victory in 1967, the Israeli military and government thought that if any further attack were to occur Israel would have no less than 96 hour warning. This assumption was one of the first critical mistakes of the war that incapacitated the military planners 1973.

³⁷ Avraham Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez* (Novato, CA: Presided Press, 1980), .xii.

³⁸ George Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: The Albatross of Decisive Victory* (US Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC, 1996), 1.

³⁹ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 3.

⁴⁰ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 262.

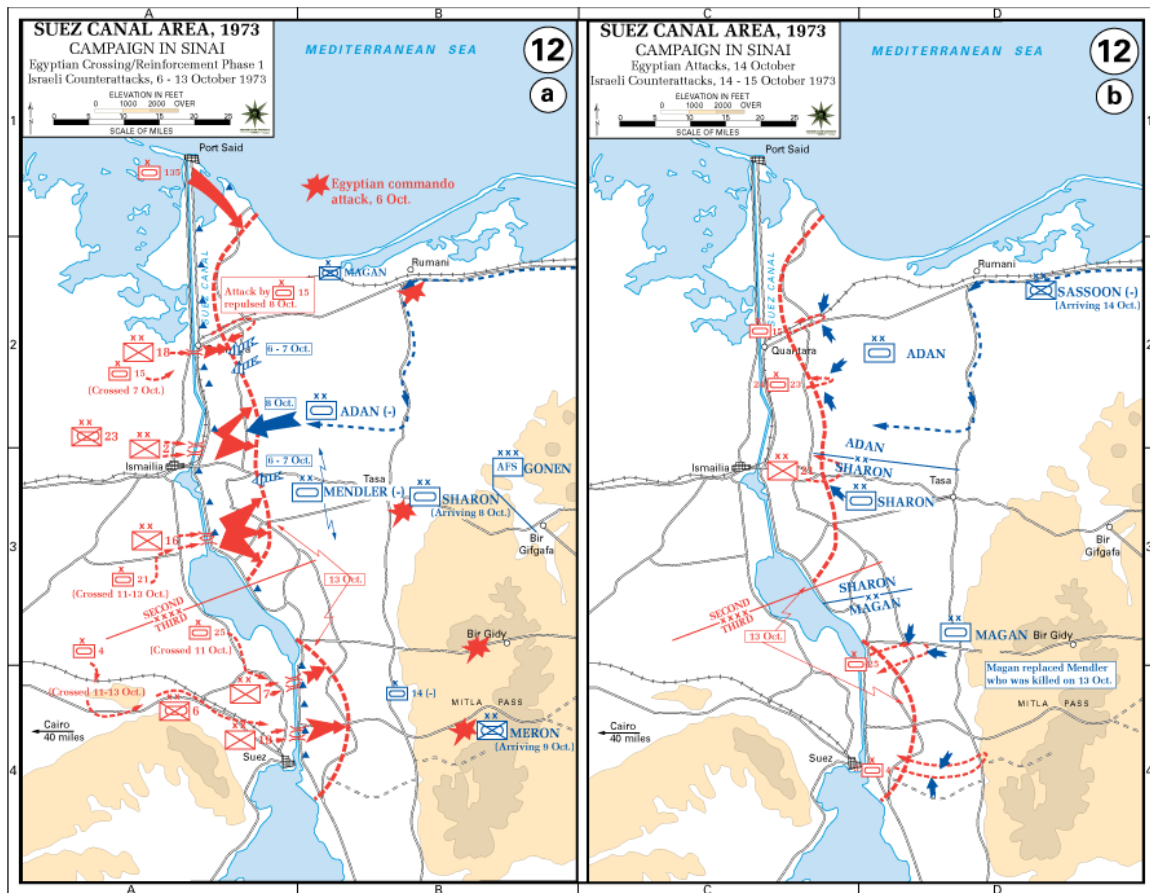


Figure 1. Suez Canal Maps: 6-13 OCT 1973 and 14-15 OCT 1973. Created by the US Military Academy Department of History, accessed November 9, 2017, <https://www.usma.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/Arab%20Israel/ArabIsareli12a.gif>.

Gawrych encapsulated this when he pinned “the dramatic victory (in 1967) unconsciously created an albatross for the IDF, in that it spawned an unrealistic standard of excellence virtually impossible for the IDF to duplicate in its next armed conflict.”⁴¹

One of the critical factors in the immense win in the Six-day war was Israel's use of military intelligence. Israel's intelligence dominance allowed them the ability to destroy the vast majority of the Egyptian Air Force in hours. However, it was the success of Israel's Military Intelligence consequently that lulled Israel into overconfidence.⁴² This intelligence factor also

⁴¹ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 1.

highlighted to the Egyptians that the need for timely accurate intelligence was vital to their future success. For the Egyptians to defeat the IDF, their intelligence would have to dominate their peers in order to gain the military advantage.⁴³ Israeli overconfidence mixed with Egyptian drive and adaptability turned the tide in 1973 leaving the 1967 war nothing more than an afterthought. Israel's blitzkrieg in 1967 served as the stimuli that propelled military thinking until the afternoon of 6 Oct 1973. IDF overconfidence and arrogance enabled the Egyptians to seize the initiative. Leaving the IDF prepared to fight the last war.

Despite early warnings of a pending attack, the IDF denied that Israel was in jeopardy of attack. It was not until early morning on October 6, 1973, that the military acknowledged that an attack was imminent. Israeli division commanders stood astounded by the updates. MG Adan stated that up until the 6th of October “the underlying assessment of the Israeli Intelligence was that the armed forces of the Arab nations were still unprepared for war; hence the probability of war seemed very low.”⁴⁴ However, just across the west bank of the Suez canal stood “five Egyptian divisions-100, 000 soldiers, 1,350 tanks, and 2,000 artillery pieces complete with bridging equipment offering Israeli clear intent.”⁴⁵ The large enemy forces converged on the Israeli border did not seem to cause much attention. Nevertheless, on the morning of October 6th, just hours before the attack military leaders and planners stood in disbelief at what laid just beyond their borders. Planners and commanders quickly scrambled to enact their war plans that up until this moment seemed adequate.

All Israeli planning was founded on the assumption of an estimated forty-eight-hour

⁴² Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 6.

⁴³ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 6.

⁴⁴ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 3.

⁴⁵ Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter That Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2004), 3.

advance warning to be provided by the Israeli Military Intelligence.⁴⁶ Time was now the most precious resource, as the entire country was on alert. Major General Avraham Adan, the commander for the 162d armored division, briefed his staff officers stressing the most important thing at this phase was to mobilize the reserves and issue their equipment quickly so that they could get to the front as soon as possible.⁴⁷ MG Adan took comfort in the fact that his staff was a "well-trained team" who understood the necessity of their task and purpose. However, the mobilization called for more than efficacy at this point. The need for adaptability in Adan's division was paramount. Needing to accelerate the movement of his units, Adan ordered his division to move incomplete, unorganized formations, improvising organizing while on the approach march.⁴⁸ The need for adaptability would remain throughout his fight against the Egyptian divisions now pouring across the canal. However, the surprise Egyptian assault would inflict overwhelming psychological impacts by imposing a degree of restraint for MG Adan and his staff.⁴⁹ The division commander's "struggle to maintain the offensive initiative within the defensive framework would be the constant challenge throughout the war."⁵⁰

MG Adan and the rest of the division knew that Israel's security remained at risk. The military had war plans devised to confront similar threats. Israel was aware of the possibility of a two-front war was highly likely. However, the difference between the plan and reality is that the plan predicted a 96-hour warning that allowed more time to mobilize and deploy forward into pre-established defensive positions. Israeli plans did not anticipate a counterattack against a two-front enemy who had gained significant ground and maintained the initiative that was achieved

⁴⁶ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 18.

⁴⁷ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 7.

⁴⁸ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 9.

⁴⁹ Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War*, 126.

⁵⁰ Jacob Even and Simcha Maoz, *At the Decisive Point in the Sinai* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2017), viii.

through a surprise attack. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said ironically, “the Egyptian and Syrian attack on Yom Kippur came as a surprise, though it was not unexpected.”⁵¹ With mobilization, underway and haphazard forces rushing to the Sinai, MG Adan now needed a plan. MG Adan conveyed to his staff “our plans were in a state of flux; I now found them irrelevant to a situation in which the enemy was already attacking our few front-line forces, with our main forces still far from the front.”⁵² MG Adan and his staff quickly realized to defend Israel an adaptive approach was essential.

Reports coming from the front lines were sparse with intelligence; they were, however, full of medical evacuation requests from the sparsely fortified strongpoints, painting a picture of the enemy’s most dangerous course of action. MG Adan's personal and staff estimates before the attack proposed that the advance across the Suez Canal would consume the enemy long enough to reinforce the strongpoints in a defensive posture and leverage their assets to repel any significant assault. However, the Israelis were operating on a false assumption with their running estimates, which had failed to take into account the innovation and adaptability of the Egyptians. Since all operational plans expected to take place along the Bar-Lev in the defense, the command had no detailed plan to counterattack and regain Israeli territory in a crisis atmosphere.⁵³

The Bar-Lev Line, constructed in 1969, ran along the Suez Canal and was reinforced throughout by strongpoints. This man-made obstacle tied into a natural obstacle was intended to afford the Israelis time and much-needed space to mobilize and move to the strongpoints. Defense Minister Dayan said the Bar-Lev Line was “one of the best anti-tank ditches in the

⁵¹ Moshe Dayan, *Moshe Dayan: The Story of My Life* (New York: William Morrow, 1976), 465.

⁵² Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 10.

⁵³ Dani Asher, *Inside Israel’s Northern Command* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 68.

world.”⁵⁴ The Egyptians knew that to strike deep into Sinai, they would need to make quick work of the obstacle. Leveraging innovation, Egypt used commercial off-the-shelf German and British gas powered water pumps to create breach lanes in less than two hours. The Egyptians new attack plan fell far below anything that was anticipated by the Israelis who disregarded innovation and adaptability.⁵⁵ This, unfortunately, would not be the only faulty assumption that the Israelis made during their crisis action planning process.

After the Six-day war, the Israelis build upon their two successes, their Air Force and their Armored Corps. These two services would lay the foundation for the future wars. Both the Air Force and Armored Corps saw significant increases in personnel and funding while other areas took budget cuts. Foreign Relations editor and former Clinton Staffer Gideon Rose warns against fighting the last war, “any crucial assumptions underlying a plan need to be spelled out explicitly, with at least a rudimentary backup plan prepared in advance for what to do if the assumptions prove invalid and things go better, worse or differently than expected.”⁵⁶ However, Egypt would not let Israel fight the last war.

Realizing just days after their defeat in 1967 that their strategy and tactics would have to change, Egypt set forward in developing a new approach to fighting Israel. Gawrych highlighted that rather than destroying Israel’s armed forces or capture key terrain; “Egypt would instead seek to change attitudes in Israel by means of a limited war.”⁵⁷ Recognizing that Israel’s strength lies in both the Air Force and the Armored Corps, Egypt worked doggedly to improve their defense against these areas. Egypt’s new strategy coupled with improved Soviet tactics and equipment

⁵⁴ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 16.

⁵⁵ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 19.

⁵⁶ Gideon Rose, *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2010), 286.

⁵⁷ Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 9.

would challenge Israel's preconceived plan and their ability to adapt.

As the first rounds were impacting the Israeli defenses and the Egyptians were reducing the Bar-Lev line in support of Operation Badr, the planners for the 162^d division were frantically trying to figure out what had just happened and what they were going to do to try and stop and ultimately defeat it. COL Even, deputy division commander and LTC Moaz, operations planner said: "as a first step, every element of combat preparation was examined: the division's operational plans, ammunition, equipment, vehicle outfitting, training level, manpower, and so forth."⁵⁸ The division worked through the units that were racing to the Suez Canal to defeat the Egyptians, but intelligence was lacking. Early assumptions indicated that the Egyptians had gained the initiative and would keep it, but where would they attack? Carl von Clausewitz stated that "the preparations for war usually occupy several months....It therefore rarely happens that one State surprises another by a War, or by the direction which it gives the masses of its forces."⁵⁹ Egypt had surprised Israel, and now the commanders and staff were reeling in reaction to the chaos and crisis that was quickly unfolding inside their borders.

Rushed to the front, General Adan was given the task to counterattack the Egyptian forces that had crossed the Suez Canal. The plan on October 8th, 1973 was simple in conception. Attack with two brigades from north to south with a brigade in reserve. General Adan's emphasis was on a "coordinated advance to search out the enemy and destroy him, but without entering the 3km zone adjacent to the canal."⁶⁰ This would allow Adan to seek out the tanks while avoiding the dismounted infantry. However, as the day progressed and faulty intelligence poured in, Southern Command now wanted General Adan to begin limited crossings of the canal. One of

⁵⁸ Even and Maoz, *At the Decisive Point in the Sinai*, 3.

⁵⁹ Carl Von Clausewitz, as quoted by P.R. Kumaraswamy, *Revising the Yom Kippur War* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 1.

⁶⁰ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 102.

Adan's brigades were in substantial contact with Egyptian forces, still lacking a clear enemy intelligence picture. General Adan needed a clear understanding of the situation. His staff struggled to update him. The division lacked reconnaissance units that afforded the staff the ability to gain and maintain contact with the enemy that could have altered the staffs flawed understanding.⁶¹ The staff made recommendations based on very sporadic radio updates and assumptions based on 1967 Arab tactics. Complicating the lack of intelligence was the spotty and ill-informed guidance coming from Southern Command. Southern Command failed to comprehend the concept, goals, and stages of the Egyptian offensive plan thus the counterattack was not designed, planned, or instructed to achieve a specific goal; it was kind of division-sized fishing expedition.⁶²

Southern Command believed the Egyptians began withdrawing and insisted that General Adan go on the pursuit "otherwise they are liable to get away."⁶³ However, one of Adan's brigades was now heavily engaged with artillery and enemy tanks and missiles with enemy forces massing.⁶⁴ General Adan's two-brigade attack was quickly becoming unhinged; he had lost control of his forces and did not have a clear picture of what the enemy was doing. Lacking coordination in the attack, Adan had "no choice but to adjust the plan of attack to advance slowly."⁶⁵ Combat power was dwindling by the minute, with Sagger missiles engaging tanks at every chance, coordinated attacks by the enemy coupled with uncoordinated Israeli attacks allowed the Egyptians to create a wedge between the forward forces, posing a threat to the

⁶¹ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 117.

⁶² Even and Maoz, *At the Decisive Point in the Sinai*, 62.

⁶³ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 123.

⁶⁴ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 124.

⁶⁵ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 139.

division's flank.⁶⁶ Adan and his staff fought an outdated plan, not considering the enemy. Plagued with poor communications from both higher and lower levels of command, Adan made assumptions about the enemy and even his forces. Just hours after the start of the counterattack, Egyptians forces were massing on all of Adan's brigades, and he issued orders to withdraw to conserve combat power and formulate a plan to deal with the overwhelming enemy. General Adan had started the counterattack with 170 tanks only to end it with less than 100. Desperate, General Adan met with his staff to formulate a plan to counter the initiative that the Egyptian military enjoyed.

In reviewing the events of the day, General Adan saw multiple areas of failure. He acknowledged his lack of coordination and control, where at one point one of his brigades assaulted its own. He admitted that he did not factor in the terrain and how it favored the enemy and prevented his forces from assaulting efficiently. He also recognized that he conducted an attack “without infantry, without artillery, and —what is less understandable — without air support.”⁶⁷ What General Adan lacked was understanding in the face of uncertainty. At no point did either he or his staff fully understand the enemy, which they faced, nor did they understand where and what their brigades were doing. The staff had failed to provide the commander the situational understanding he needed to make decisions. They lacked the adaptability to deviate from the plan and to make recommendations on what the enemy was doing. MG Adan and his staff wanted a limited attack, focusing only on inland Egyptian forces that had penetrated the canal.⁶⁸ This outlook went against both his higher command and his sister division commanded by MG Ariel Sharon.

⁶⁶ Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War*, 255-256.

⁶⁷ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 160.

⁶⁸ Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War*, 255.

General Adan pulled his staff together and began working on a new plan to regain the initiative from the enemy. It was here that “all agreed that the correct solution was to cross the canal, and so attack the enemy from the rear.”⁶⁹ It was also during this meeting that the staff pointed out the need for “precise advance planning.”⁷⁰ However, the ability to provide precise advance planning is optimistic and not realistic. What the staff should have said is that they needed to explore all available enemy options coupled with current friendly abilities and identify potential seams and gaps that they had, and plan to fill those for future conflict.

The division then took a four-day operational pause while in the defense to plan and build combat power for another counterattack. Without dedicated reconnaissance, the division moved forward as part of a broader offensive within Southern Command. The division had a plan based on limited intelligence and had task organized armored infantry with tank units supported by artillery in order to counter the current threat.⁷¹ Israeli forces discovered a gap between Egypt’s 2nd and 3rd Army.⁷² This gap allowed Israeli forces to cross the canal with little to no resistance. The plan going forward was for General Sharon’s division to open the bridgehead while General Adan’s division would cross and exploit the west bank.⁷³ However, before this could be done, Adan had to hastily redeploy his forces to set an ambush for the 25th Egyptian Armored Brigade along Lexington Road. “With the ambush set, Adan let the Egyptians fall into it, holding artillery and tank fire until the entire 10-mile long column was within range of Israeli weapons.”⁷⁴ This

⁶⁹ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 169.

⁷⁰ Adan, *On the Banks of the Suez*, 169.

⁷¹ John J. McGrath, *An Army at War, Change in the Midst of Conflict* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), 69.

⁷² McGrath, *An Army at War*, 70.

⁷³ Even and Maoz, *At the Decisive Point in the Sinai*, 62.

⁷⁴ McGrath, *An Army at War*, 82.

mission displayed great adaptability and initiative by both the commander and staff. After the defeat of the 25th Armored Brigade, Adan and his division crossed the canal, isolating the Egyptians in Suez City.

The 1973 war caught the 162d division off-guard and ill prepared. Surrounded by enemy all along the southern border, the division had relied on past wars to form their view of the future. However, this produced confirmation bias that MG Adan and his forces would face a weak Egyptian belligerent that could quickly be defeated through the use of Air Force and Tanks. The Egyptians understood how they lost the last war and didn't want to repeat the same mistakes. Through the use of limited war and new technology, the Egyptians forced the Israelis out of their comfort zone. Improvisation became the hallmark of the war. McGrath attests that “the IDF often replaced good staff work with good, though possibly unnecessary improvisation.”⁷⁵ While a certain amount of flexibility and improvisation is required on the battlefield, good staff work and planning could have significantly reduced the reactionary efforts of General Adan’s division. McGrath concludes “Improvisation is not necessarily a good substitute for planning and routine work.”⁷⁶ Had Adan and his staff adapted to the situation on the ground and planned a counterattack built on intelligence and Combined Arms Maneuver, the initial counterattack could have possibly played out in the Israeli’s favor.

This section displayed the 162d's lack of adaptability. The 162d developed plans that had very little flexibility and forethought outside of their last war in 1967. The 162d along with the IDF revealed a confirmation bias in planning that did not account for Egypt's operational and tactical developments. While the 162d eventually regained the Suez Canal, the inability to rapidly

⁷⁵ McGrath, *An Army at War*, 85.

⁷⁶ McGrath, *An Army at War*, 87.

adapt to the enemy situation cost Israeli lives. Egypt used limited military means to deliver post-war negotiations that would eventually see the return of the Sinai to Egypt.

1st Infantry Division in Desert Storm

Once the results of the first battle are known, the events of the battle and what led up to it are seen in a new perspective; if the military outcome was decisive, the blunders of the defeated and the brilliance of the victor shape the post-battle inquiry, while a stalemate draws attention to the misguided optimism and mistaken predictions of both sides, perhaps to lost opportunities as well. In any case, the experience of the first battle—perceptions, problems, calculations, decisions, and actions—is distorted by knowledge of the outcome.

John Sly, *First Battles in Retrospect*

The 1973 Yom Kippur War highlights how an Army can be overconfident when preparing for its next war. However, on the contrary, the US Army coming out of Vietnam was very cautious in planning for its future war. In a war like Vietnam with numerous tactical wins, but an overall strategic loss, the United States understood it could win the ground fight, but had to look at how to shape the operational and strategic fights of the future. This was the rationale moving forward into the war planning for Desert Storm.

In 1970, the 1st Infantry Division cased its colors and redeployed from Vietnam. The division then embarked on a massive transformation along with the rest of the Army. Volunteers replaced draftees, Non-Commissioned Officer education was formalized, and modernization was implemented across the Army. However, in true Army fashion, modernization was inconsistent with units where certain divisions fully transformed while other divisions did the bare minimum. General Gordon Sullivan stated, the 1st Infantry Division is the prime example of a unit that was low on the Army's modernization priority list but still squeaked its way through on the fly modernization phase.⁷⁷ AirLand Battle was a new sweeping concept that was changing how the

⁷⁷ Gordon R. Sullivan quoted in Gregory Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2017), xiv.

Army thought about war. AirLand battle synchronized operations close, deep, and rear, with four specified tenets: initiative, agility, synchronization, and depth.⁷⁸ While all tenets were essential, agility or the ability to "act faster than the enemy" would carry the Gulf War out of the Vietnam shadows.⁷⁹

On 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and seized it within the course of a day. While the world wondered what had provoked the Iraqi dictator to invade his neighbor, the US Army began looking at options to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty. As strategic planning unfolded, 1st Infantry Division was not planned to deploy. MG Rhame, the division commander, attributed this to the division not being fully modernized, however as the situation developed the division was deployed.⁸⁰ The division's first challenge came well before the first shot was even fired. Previously the division concerned itself with deploying only men, but since returning from Vietnam, the role of the 1st Infantry Division had changed. General Sullivan acknowledged:

A massive transformation from the shambles of a formation suffering a post-Vietnam malaise, to a powerful combined-arms heavy division capable of strategic deployment, modernization on the move while deploying and preparing for combat, combat, and post-combat activities under inhospitable environmental conditions and threat of enemy fire had occurred.⁸¹

Deploying the division would be the first obstacle the division faced and showcased the adaptability and agility that the division was capable of employing. LTC Bullington saw a need to redraft the deployment plan, with a full transformation having recently occurred acknowledging that this deployment "dramatically altered more than twenty years of planning."⁸² Unsure of the

⁷⁸ Gregory Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2017), 47.

⁷⁹ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 47.

⁸⁰ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed* 79.

⁸¹ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, xiii.

⁸² Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 96.

situation that would unfold prior to deployment, the division needed to deploy in a manner that afforded them the ability to fight as soon as they arrived. Once toiled over, rucksacks and duffel bags became afterthoughts, while M1 tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and ammunition consumed algorithms concerning space and weight. The deployment hurdle would soon showcase the division's adaptability as the division deployed into the desert.

One of the critical capabilities of Desert Storm was the planning time available before execution. LTC Fontenot, battalion commander, wrote: "the orders process that began in a motor pool at Fort Riley, Kansas in mid-November 1990 now culminated by good and improving intelligence; by the end of January, plans and orders were published down to the task force level."⁸³ Division Commander MG Thomas Rhame summed this up when he stated, "the division knew all we need to know to execute a successful breach...yet the intelligence is sketchy"⁸⁴ Despite the commander's concerns, the divisions had what it needed.

The 1st Infantry Division's mission in the ground offensive was to lead part of VII Corps through the extensive Iraqi barriers along the Saudi-Iraqi border, cutting paths through berms of sand, reducing tank ditches and clearing landmines and other obstacles to establish twenty-four lanes for the Corps to utilize, all while being engaged by the Iraqi 26th division.⁸⁵ The subordinate commanders would take this intelligence and plan the breach in the finite detail needed to execute.

Managing transitions is one of the most complex things staffs are required to do. Plans are made that identify when the transition should happen. However, the criteria are not always in

⁸³ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 245.

⁸⁴ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 198.

⁸⁵ James Scott Wheeler, *The Big Red One: America's Legendary 1st Infantry Division from World War I to Desert Storm* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 515.

line or fail to occur at the same time; it is here that the staff provides their detailed analysis and recommendation to the commander on whether to move forward or remain in a given phase. The division planners led by the division current operations officer, MAJ Don Osterberg, knew that to adequately inform the CG they would need to plan beyond the breach. Here MAJ Osterberg and the planners looked toward an eventual attack on the Iraqi Republican Guard and refined three contingency operations plans (Jeremiah I, II, and III).⁸⁶ MG Rhame wanted both his brigades and staff prepared for operations post-breach. Fontenot acknowledged, "Rhame did not intend for the Division to be left behind licking its wounds at the breach."⁸⁷

As execution approached, the mission became clearer, 1ID would cross the breach directly into defenses of the Iraqi 26th Divisions. While all efforts were being made to attrit that division, analysis of both indirect fire and air strikes had the Iraqis at over 50% strength post-breach. Division planners worked tenaciously to gather intelligence and paint the most accurate picture for the CG. Worst case scenarios were placed up against most likely courses of action to give the commander the most realistic read on the enemy. Enemy assessments placed casualty levels against the entrenched enemy to be very high. Historian Trevor N. Dupuy wrote, "that American losses in this war would be over 1,200 dead."⁸⁸ These early estimates had planners across the division tiredly working to reduce the risk that the brigades would face. The plan to fight along with the execution were very cautious, rather than audacious.⁸⁹ The planners and CG both knew that they had planned everything to the fullest and casualties were a possibility in every conflict.

⁸⁶ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 208.

⁸⁷ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 208.

⁸⁸ Stephen A. Bourque, *Jayhawk! The VII Corps in the Persian Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2002), 183.

⁸⁹ Bourque, *Jayhawk!* 184.

The day of execution had arrived and with it came horrendous weather, high winds, and rain.

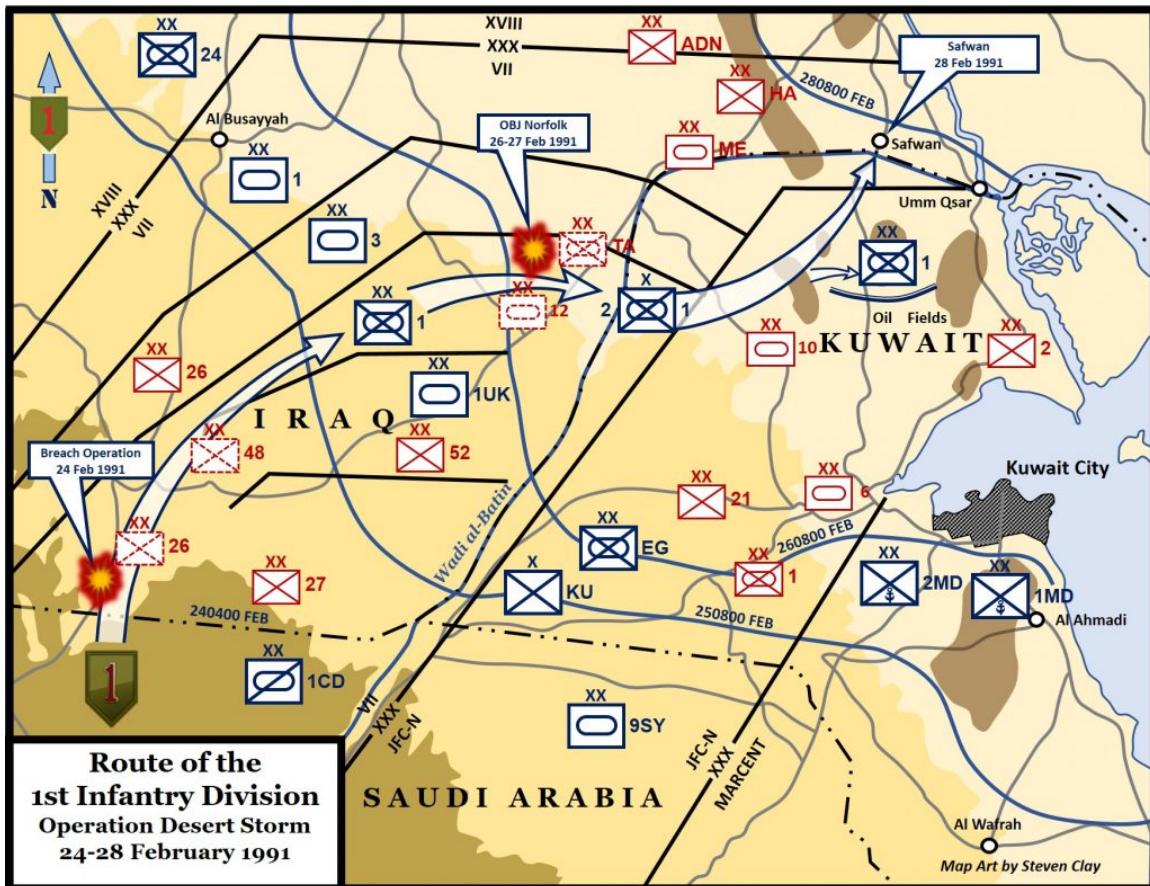


Figure 2: Route of the 1st IN DIV, 24-28 FEB 1991. Created by Steven Clay, accessed November 13, 2017, <http://www.16thinfassn.org/history/regimental-maps/desert-storm-bosnia-1990-2001/operation-desert-storm-route-of-the-1st-infantry-division-24-28-february-1991/>.

Yet the division was ready, rehearsals at every level of command had been completed multiple times. The intense fire support plan was rehearsed so that once the fire lifted from the artillery barrage; the brigades would be sweeping through the Iraqi defenses in short order. Initial operational timelines had the operation starting at 0400 with scouts moving into the enemy's security zone. During this initial phase, the division encountered very little resistance, which was echoed throughout VII Corps. By 0945, the division had achieved all of its assigned opening day objectives, and the division soon realized that the 26th Iraqi division was anything but

formidable.⁹⁰ CENTCOM and VII Corps saw this lack of Iraqi resistance and wanted to speed up the timeline with the ultimate goal of “penetrating the Iraqi 26th Divisions’ main line of resistance in the daylight.”⁹¹ Increasing the timeline to move into the breach early would force all units to move faster and further than they had planned for. Yet, the adaptability of the division staff and subordinate units would enable this change in mission. The staff understood that the breaching operation was very complex and significantly. Hastily making any change would create strain on those coordinating and executing the operation. The change would force the staff to focus on two areas immediately: “how to clear the lanes through the obstacles and how to clear the trenches quickly with minimum casualties.”⁹² The two and half hour artillery barrage would be reduced to 30 minutes and place a significant strain on the not only the division’s artillery brigade but also the division staff. “Planning the revised bombardment may have been fairly easy, but moving thirteen artillery battalions and several separate batteries, and revising the plan in time to fire at 1430, was an incredible achievement.”⁹³ However, the staff would show significant adaptability in planning and flexibility to changing requirements.

The operation to pass through the 3rd BDE of 1st Infantry division was halted as the daylight disappeared. MG Rhames had a severe reluctance about committing 3rd BDE into the breach at night and attacking to its objective.⁹⁴ However, the tasks for both G and G+1 Day were completed and the division was ahead of schedule.⁹⁵ The division had advanced quicker than expected. Concern over heavy casualties on the first day hastened the pace of the division.

⁹⁰ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 257.

⁹¹ Robert H. Scales Jr., *Certain Victory* (Washington, DC: US Army Publishing, 1993), 222.

⁹² Scales Jr., *Certain Victory*, 229.

⁹³ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 260.

⁹⁴ Bourque, *Jayhawk!* 234.

⁹⁵ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 273.

Coupled with this concern was the enemy's most dangerous course of action, that could have the Iraqi forces conducting a counterattack and enveloping the division in the breach.⁹⁶ The Division staff would have a different planning issue; catastrophic success was carrying the operation. The detailed planning calculated 18 hours to cut through Iraqi defenses however the division reduced them in just two.⁹⁷ However, the staff exercised initiative in maintaining a rigorous pace to deny the enemy the opportunity to counterattack.

Early morning on the 26th of Feb, the Division reached phase line New Jersey, which facilitated the transition of the operation to the British division. Yet, MG Rhames did not want to rest on his division's quick defeat of the 26th Iraqi division. He immediately had his staff transition to the next phase of the operation: attacking the Republican Guard in depth.⁹⁸ The staff was more than ready for the mission. It had developed three courses of action to address this possibility. Corps issued their guidance and MG Rhames and his key staff met to plan the transition. The division commander conveyed his intent: "the 26th Iraqi division is dead, the easy part is over, the army in Kuwait is cut off and Hussein thinks he is wining, make contact with 1-4 CAV, division will fight smart, one brigade moves to fix and maneuver two brigades to kill the enemy, no frontal attack."⁹⁹ From this guidance the staff produced a fragmentary order for the division, specifying the need to attack in zone, echoing how little the division knew about the enemy's composition, disposition and location.¹⁰⁰ This on order mission was enacted on the afternoon of the 26th, with the British division engulfed in a substantial fight, the 1st Infantry

⁹⁶ Bourque, *Jayhawk!* 235.

⁹⁷ Scales Jr., *Certain Victory*, 232.

⁹⁸ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 296.

⁹⁹ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 302-303.

¹⁰⁰ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 303.

division would move forward into attack positions and "anticipate the go-ahead for the attack." ¹⁰¹

Carl von Clausewitz wrote, "Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."¹⁰² This was very apparent as the division moved forward to conduct a forward passage of lines with 2 ACR and subsequently attack the enemy. COL Lon E. Maggart quipped "The plan was relatively simple and involved a passage of lines, at night in unfamiliar terrain without any preparation and against an enemy about whom we knew virtually nothing."¹⁰³ Then CPT H.R. McMasters' would describe the passage of lines "like a relay racer picking up the baton, it [1st Infantry Division] passed through the regiment's position and continued to press the attack."¹⁰⁴ The attack onto objective Norfolk was a piecemealed operation, where "combat information about the identity and the location of the enemy was more than a little iffy."¹⁰⁵ As daylight transitioned into darkness, the plan also transitioned. With time becoming the most critical factor, the plan of attack had no elegant maneuver; MG Rhame ordered a straightforward frontal attack.¹⁰⁶ The 1st Infantry division quickly realized that the enemy they were now encountering was not like the forces that they faced during the breach, "these Iraqis intended to fight."¹⁰⁷ The enemy in question (Tawakalna Mechanized Division) was arguably the best Iraqi division, which included approximately 14,000 soldiers, 220 T-72 tanks, 284 Infantry fighting vehicles, 126 artillery pieces, and 18 MLRS.¹⁰⁸ However, the commander and staff, kept the brigades moving

¹⁰¹ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 309.

¹⁰² Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

¹⁰³ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 319-320.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The General's War* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1995), 392.

¹⁰⁵ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 324.

¹⁰⁶ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 324.

¹⁰⁷ Bourque, *Jayhawk!* 333.

¹⁰⁸ Bourque, *Jayhawk!* 324.

forward using the elements of the offense-surprise, concentration, audacity and tempo to overwhelm the enemy. As the 26th of February transitioned into the 27th and the sun rose, it rose to burning tanks and surrendering Iraqi soldiers and the division controlled Objective Norfolk. The initiative and flexibility of the 1st Infantry Division annihilated the enemy. Historian Stephen Bourque wrote “the Tawakalna Mechanized Division never had an opportunity to maneuver, use reserves, or even use his artillery to any effect... he was simply overwhelmed and unable to inflict any significant losses.”¹⁰⁹

The Division’s final offensive plan oriented forces onto Objective HAWK and DENVER-Kuwait City-Basarah Highway with a mission to exploit and pursue the enemy.¹¹⁰ The staff began planning immediately for this operation; MG Rhames understood the urgency to transition from a movement to contact to a pursuit, especially to gain and maintain contact with the enemy. The staff had two concerns moving forward in planning the pursuit; the first was where the enemy was and what their withdrawal route was. MG Rhames "wanted to know if the Iraqis were using the highway" this would dictate if the withdrawal had been completed or if the road network needed to be cut off.¹¹¹ The other concern was resupply. The Division had been on the move for well over 24 hours at this point. Moreover, while the division needed to exploit the previous night’s success, the brigades would need to refuel at a minimum to continue the pursuit. As the staff worked through critical fuel shortages, Corps published the plan to continue. The Corps would conduct a double envelopment of the enemy.

This mission would take the division to the out edges of Objective DENVER. Both division and brigade planners lacked one critical asset to continue the planning effort: a map.

¹⁰⁹ Bourque, *Jayhawk!* 344.

¹¹⁰ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 326.

¹¹¹ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 374.

While most units did not have maps, even the division and brigades had “outrun” their maps to continue the pursuit, staff planners obtained GPS coordinates from the Corps and passed waypoints. Despite the lack of maps and detailed information, the staff adapted and provided guidance and direction to both the commander and the brigades that would take the division to the cease-fire.

Logistics would plague the division throughout the operation. There were never enough fuel trucks to maintain the pace that the division wanted to maintain. This was a significant oversight that continued into the cease-fire operations. Sustaining the operation became more challenging as it progressed, merely because the distances grew longer.¹¹² The staff’s inability to adequately anticipate fuel consumption and pinpoint resupply and transition points impacted the tempo of the division. Fontenot continues “understanding how supplies, in particular, fuel, are brought forward is crucial to understanding how close the division came to culminating in the last day and a half of the ground attack.”¹¹³ Despite a rapid transformation of the division, catastrophic success against the enemy, and enduring logistics issues, the 1st Infantry division staff remained adaptable to every situation that they were presented.

This section highlighted the adaptability that the 1st Infantry division displayed during Desert Storm. While uncertainty and friction were always present on the battlefield in Iraq, the ability of the staff to anticipate and rapidly transition served the division and subordinate brigades throughout the conflict enabling the defeat of the Iraqi Army.

¹¹² Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 380.

¹¹³ Fontenot, *The 1st Infantry Division and the US Army Transformed*, 380.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of relative certainty of doctrine, training, tactics, adversary, and known terrain of the Cold War, our military today is in a sense operating without a concept of war and is searching desperately for the new “unified field theory” of conflict.

General David Barno, *Military Adaptation in Complex Operation*.

The two case studies presented showcased two different staffs in combat working to establish or maintain adaptability against their enemy. The Israelis had a detailed plan, but it failed to counter the enemy’s scheme of maneuver and newly advanced tactics. Williamson Murray wrote, “the IDF had based its conception of war as well as its planning on the belief that it must take the offensive in any conflict.”¹¹⁴ When attacked with little warning, the staff immediately had to reconceive operations to defeat the enemy threat. The 162d were extremely slow to adapt to environment and enemy. Conversely, the 1st Infantry Division in Desert Storm displayed how an army division can quickly adapt to a new environment, with new equipment against a formable enemy in the defense while transitioning. Their ability to rapidly adapt to the situation displayed a clear understanding, commitment and trust from all members of the organization.

The principal difficulty looking towards the future is predicting where and whom the US will go to war next. The capacity to adapt to unanticipated situations and environments of the future becomes of even greater significance in the effectiveness of military forces.¹¹⁵ While strategy, tactics and commanders are examined in finite detail, it is often the staff that is overlooked. How does an adaptable staff contribute to the division’s ability to defeat their enemy? On the modern battlefield, the commander’s ability to visualize and direct is greatly

¹¹⁴ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 272.

¹¹⁵ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 307.

enabled by his staff's ability to provide a clear understanding. However, in an ever-increasing complex operating environment providing this understanding becomes increasingly more difficult. Williamson Murray emphasized "the future will demand that commanders, their staffs, and their subordinates adapt swiftly not only to the kaleidoscope of conflict at the sharp end but also to the cultural, political and social framework in which conflicts take place."¹¹⁶

The demand for adaptable staffs has never been higher. Currently, the United States opposes the utmost multifaceted and ambiguous international environment in history.¹¹⁷ Emerging near-peer competitors like Russia and China present comparable armies that rival our current force capabilities. North Korea and Iran while not as dominant in their military aspects have unpredictable histories and developing nuclear capabilities introducing unstable atmospheres to plan and fight against. Failed and failing states offer a whole other challenge when looking at the political, economic, and strategic encounters that encompass these areas. The United States is on the threshold of an ostentatious transformational discontinuity.¹¹⁸ As the world becomes more globally connected the manner in which wars are planned for and fought will change. The United States cannot afford the luxury of preparing its military for one specific method of war, whether conventional, insurgency or hybrid.¹¹⁹

Recommendation

The division is the conduit that links the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war in the decisive action fight. BG Allen Batschelet identified that "in today's operating environment, the division is the juncture of complex tactical actions and operational and strategic efforts, where

¹¹⁶ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 308.

¹¹⁷ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 305.

¹¹⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *The Future of War* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2017), 286.

¹¹⁹ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 307.

the commander's staff identify, create, or enable exploration of tactical opportunities and link them to stated campaign goals."¹²⁰ The commander focuses the division on the endstate that is nested within the "corps broader complex view of the operational environment and translates that into tactical applications."¹²¹ It is here that the staff plans and directs tactical actions while generating options for the commander. Victory in present conflict involves adaptive thinkers who share a strategic view of warfare, a holistic approach, and a robust judgment of all the underwriting actors.¹²² However, over-reliance on the plan with lack of adaptability leads to a significant staff pitfall. Staffs should recognize and take full advantage of the opportunities presented by enemy actions or by unplanned arrangements of situations to achieve victory or to stave off failure.¹²³

COL Harry Summers Jr. stressed, "Any damn fool can write a plan. It is the execution that gets you all screwed up."¹²⁴ Staffs often find themselves fighting the plan and not the situation in most circumstances. Planners seek to preserve the constancy that planning brings to an organization—planning's main contribution—while enabling it to respond quickly to external changes in the environment—planning's main nemesis.¹²⁵ As the situation unfolds, staffs must have the ability to adapt to the enemy and also understand that as they adjust so too does the enemy. The greatest characteristic of military success is the capacity to adapt to the actual

¹²⁰ Batschelet, Runey, and Meyer, "Breaking the Tactical Fixation," 35.

¹²¹ Batschelet, Runey, and Meyer, "Breaking the Tactical Fixation," 37.

¹²² David W. Barno, "Military Adaptation in Complex Operations," *PRISM* 1, no.1 (2009), 35.

¹²³ Eliot. A. Cohen, and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 161.

¹²⁴ Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 29.

¹²⁵ Henry Mintzberg, *Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 184.

circumstances of combat and the conflict.¹²⁶ Sun Tzu wrote, “Therefore generals who know all possible adaptations to take advantage of the ground know how to use military forces. If generals do not know how to adapt advantageously, even if they know the lay of the land they cannot take advantage of it.”¹²⁷

Most staffs try to gain and maintain stability within their organization. Karl E. Weick identified this quandary with staffs in surrendering of “future adaptability for current good fit” or being continuously prepared to respond to everything in but nothing in practice.^{128 129} Compounding this is the division’s intricate role in the operational sphere of influence. The division must straddle the gap between strategic and tactical often shifting back and forth between the tactical and operational levels of war. While continually tangled in the tactical realm, the division commander regularly reflects on the campaign plan provided by his higher headquarters, and the dynamics of the division’s operational environment.¹³⁰ The delicate balance needs to occur when the staff must manage the tactical chaos of the day while deconflicting the operational appetite of the future. Resisting the tactical appeal and enduring in the operational domain is pivotal. The staff must anticipate the future without being tied to a plan that limits the division’s ability to adapt quickly to both the enemy and the environment. BG Batschelet cautions, “The division staff, almost more than its commander, must start and finish securely

¹²⁶ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 312.

¹²⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1988), 126.

¹²⁸ Karl E. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 247.

¹²⁹ Mintzberg, *Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, 184.

¹³⁰ Batschelet, Runey, and Meyer, “Breaking the Tactical Fixation,” 38.

planted in the operational realm. Each staff team must be committed to creating the conditions and aligning the resources to produce the desired future.”¹³¹

Divisions face many challenges when establishing effective staff teams that can plan efficiently and remain adaptable. Leaders who are adaptable can manage numerous demands without losing their focus or energy and are comfortable with unavoidable uncertainties of organizational life.¹³² Yet, when in a group or staff setting, planning by its very nature commonly elects stability over adaptability.¹³³ Staffs have to train to become adaptable and be given an atmosphere where they can be flexible in adapting to new challenges, agile and limber in their thinking in the sphere of new information or realities.¹³⁴ Williamson Murray acknowledges, “It is all too easy to suggest that the American military needs to be more adaptive and imaginative, however its realization represents extraordinary difficulties because it involves changing military cultures.”¹³⁵ These cultures have been fostered and established over decades through a tight bureaucratic system that actively resists change.

The division chief of staff (COS) can empower this staff change. Just as the division is the bridge between strategic and tactical, the COS for the division is the bridge between the staff and the commander. FM 6.0 states, “The COS is the commander's principal assistant for directing, coordinating, supervising, and training the staff, except in areas the commander reserves.”¹³⁶ It is through the COS that the staff receives guidance unless directed by the

¹³¹ Batschelet, Runey, and Meyer, “Breaking the Tactical Fixation,” 38.

¹³² Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2002), 254.

¹³³ Mintzberg, *Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, 184.

¹³⁴ Goleman, *Primal Leadership*, 254.

¹³⁵ Williamson, *Military Adaptation in War*, 328.

¹³⁶ US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), D-2.

commander. The COS must continually reevaluate the staffs thinking about the complex operating environment. The manual for *Chief of Staff (COS) Roles and Functions at Joint Headquarters* specifies:

The COS coaches, mentors, and leads the staff. The COS is also normally empowered to make certain decisions to retain agility in decision-making, such as in the areas of targeting and messaging. Lastly, but very importantly, the COS is the staff integrator and synchronizer to support the commander's decision-making requirements. This is achieved through a comprehensive understanding of the commander's decision-making style, and the development, management, prioritization, and synchronization of staff processes and efforts.¹³⁷

The role of the chief of staff cannot be underestimated. Army Doctrine Reference Publications 6-22: Leadership stresses the importance of this leader, “one of the most important decisions for a commander is to select the right chief of staff.”¹³⁸ The chief of staff forms the staff, trains the staff and directs the staff on day-to-day operations and is the conduit between the staff and commander. Army Doctrine Reference Publications 6-22: Leadership reinforces the fact that the CoS has the respect of the organization and can take charge of the staff, focus it, inspire it, and move it to achieve results in the absence of a commander. However, it is the chief of staff's ability to enable the staff adaptability in uncertain situations that set them apart from other chiefs of staff.

The chief of staff must establish the direction and goals for the staff. With a clear intent to achieve the goals set, despite the fact that things can and will go wrong throughout the process, but through training and ruthless repetitions, when something does go off course, the staff will be

¹³⁷ Deployable Training Division (DTD) of the Joint Staff J7, *Chief of Staff (COS) Roles and Functions at Joint Headquarters* (Suffolk, VA: Government Printing Office, April 2015), 3.

¹³⁸ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012) 10-6.

able to overcome the hurdles. This is accomplished in establishing broad plans that offer the staff room to be flexible and adaptable when something alters the plan.

However, the goal of most staffs is to build an enduring plan (implicitly static) that provides a competitive advantage over the enemy by using all its given capabilities. Once this plan is developed, it is often left to run its course. However, in the uncertain and often complex operating environment, there are too many variables with emerging situations that call for flexible and adaptive plans. In these complex and unpredictable conditions, the chief of staff must take control of the team and provide guidance “and encourage staffs and subordinates to seek out new paths.”¹³⁹

To be successful in forming an adaptable staff the COS needs build a Learning Organization. This organization is where individuals constantly develop their ability to generate the effects they truly desire, where innovative and expansive forms of thinking are fostered and where people are constantly learning how to learn together.¹⁴⁰ In today's operating environment, a sustainable military advantage no longer occurs entirely from position, scale and capabilities. These are becoming increasingly static as the US Army's adversaries embrace Multi-Domain Battle. It is improbable that any imminent adversary of the United States will allow the US unconstrained access to conflict areas, as Saddam Hussein's Iraq did on two separate occasions.¹⁴¹ What will set our divisions apart from our adversaries is the staff's rapid adaptation to emerging problems. Instead of being good at one specific thing, staffs must be good at learning how to do new things.

¹³⁹ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 308.

¹⁴⁰ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Rev. ed. (New York: Currency Books, 2006), 1.

¹⁴¹ Murray, *Military Adaptation in War*, 308.

Staffs must attain echelons of collaboration and shared support that exceeds those normally expected of them.¹⁴² The chief of staff can harness this staff collaboration and help direct efforts in managing either unforeseen opportunities or setbacks. However, to ensure this is successful, the chief of staff must train the staff in uncertainty.

Training to become adaptable will not come easy. Time must be devoted early and often to increase the training opportunities. It is essential for the chief of staff to develop the team concept within the staff. Team learning is the growth of supporting and developing the capacity of a staff to generate the results its supporters truly desire. Many individuals on staff are talented in their given warfighting functions. It is the chief of staff who must harness this talent and focus it towards becoming an effective and adaptive staff. There are three critical dimensions to establishing a learning team. First, there is a need to “think insightfully about complex issues.”¹⁴³ Multiple ideas, thought processes and insights are channeled against a problem. This holistic approach helps diminish blind spots that individuals may have when looking at a problem. Second, there is the “need for innovative, coordinated action.”¹⁴⁴ This coordinated action begins the development of trust among the team. Historic hierarchical staff structures are streamlined to increase efficiency and spread interaction amongst the group. Staff members begin to feed off each other and develop conscious and unconscious relationships that expand the team dynamic. Third and finally, there is the “role of the team members on other teams.”¹⁴⁵ As working groups develop and staff sections surge, team learning is carried throughout the organization. The techniques and skills acquired help develop other sections and organizations increasing the

¹⁴² Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, 61.

¹⁴³ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 219.

¹⁴⁴ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 219.

¹⁴⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 219.

effectiveness of the organization. This expanded adaptable mindset is inculcated across the organization.

It is through this process that the cultural dynamics of the division staff begin to shift. Multiple repetitions in adaptive planning where members of the staff get to voice their opinions start to develop trust. Trust amongst the team is vital to building a cohesive team and future success. Within these cohesive teams, information is shared more frequently as the trust develops. Repeated exercise of adaptive practices when used in combination with stresses and applied over time, empowers an organization to respond to uncertainties.¹⁴⁶ It is not enough for a division to wait for scheduled warfighter exercises. The staff must be exercised often in the realm of adaptability. The bureaucratic habits fostered in garrison must be offset in adaptability practice to increase the staff's ability to transition into conflict mindset. Each adaptive exercise has the ability to increase learning and develop innovation.¹⁴⁷

Our divisions must be prepared to face any adversary, in any environment at any time. The capacity to adapt to the unanticipated settings and circumstances of the future becomes even greater importance in the success of military forces than was the case in the twentieth century.¹⁴⁸ The Army is at an adaptability crossroads, capitalizing on lessons learned, historic examples and theoretic practices can enable a division the ability to become an adaptable powerhouse needed in today's operating environment.

¹⁴⁶ Arena and Uhl-Bien, "Complexity Leadership Theory," 26.

¹⁴⁷ Arena and Uhl-Bien, "Complexity Leadership Theory," 26.

¹⁴⁸ Williamson, *Military Adaptation in War*, 307.

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