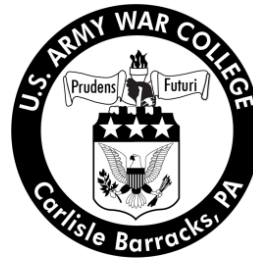


Civilian Research Project USAWC Fellow

CSS Teams - Effective Practice of Mission Command

by

Lieutenant Colonel Timothy D. Luedeking
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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by

Lieutenant Colonel Timothy D. Luedeking
United States Army

Mr. Larry Napper
The Bush School of Government & Public Service, Texas A&M University
Project Adviser

Dr. Don Snider
U.S. Army War College Faculty Mentor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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This research will determine why logistics units in the sustainment war fighting function so successfully executed the practice of mission command. It will demonstrate how structural changes and improvements in technology further enhanced and improved a logistics unit's ability to conduct sustainment operations under mission command. Logistical units have operated under a modular construct and as a collection of dispersed teams for years allowing them to create a support environment that has become part of our Logistics Corps cultural values. Logisticians commonly operate in small teams with junior non-commissioned officers in the lead, carrying out a senior commander's intent by exercising disciplined initiative and conducting decentralized operations. Reorganizing Army logistics units under modularity improved a logistics unit's ability to conduct mission command. The addition of the Forward Support Company, transition from Forward Support Battalion to Brigade Support Battalion, and collapse of the Division Support Command all enhance a logistics unit's ability to conduct mission command. Improvements in technology over the last decade have contributed and further enhance a logistics unit's ability to conduct mission command.

CSS Teams - Effective Practice of Mission Command

The hierarchical structure of the United States Army challenges its ability to achieve the desired principles of mission command. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq provided a benchmark for how the Army can achieve these principles; however, our return from deployment to garrison-structured operations contests the principles of mission command. Fortunately, Combat Service Support teams in the sustainment war fighting function provide an effective example of mission command practices while deployed both in combat and in garrison operations.

This study will determine why logistics units in the sustainment war fighting function so successfully executed the practice of mission command. It will demonstrate how structural changes and improvements in technology further enhanced and improved a logistics unit's ability to conduct sustainment operations under mission command.

Defining Mission Command

What is mission command? Mission command in our past is best described by General of the Army Ulysses S. Grant, April 4, 1864, in a letter to MG William Tecumseh Sherman before the 1864 campaign: "I do not propose to lay down for you a plan of campaign, but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done, and have you free to execute in your own way."¹ We've attempted to conduct mission command using decentralized execution since early in our Army's existence. Unfortunately, our hierarchy and adherence to policies and standard operating procedures often make it difficult to apply the principles of mission command. A more modern definition in a Joint Chief of Staff White Paper, given by General Martin Dempsey last year, defines mission command and describes the commander as the central figure in mission command:

“Mission command is not a mechanical process that the commander follows blindly. Instead, it is a continual cognitive effort to understand, to adapt, and to direct effectively the achievement of intent. Balancing the art of mission command with the science of control, the commander positions himself as needed to best accomplish the mission.”²

In a recent discussion among Army senior leaders, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Ray Odierno provides a similar description of mission command: "Done well, it [Mission Command] empowers agile and adaptive leaders to successfully operate under conditions of uncertainty, to exploit leading opportunities, and most importantly to achieve unity of effort...., Mission Command is fundamental to ensuring that our Army stays ahead of and adapts to the rapidly changing environment we expect to face in the future."³ Regardless of the definition, each provides a useful framework for the effective practice of mission command.

To understand how a collection of dispersed Combat Service Support (CSS) teams fit into mission command, we must first understand the principles of mission command. “The exercise of mission command is based on mutual trust, shared understanding, and purpose. Commanders understand that some decisions must be made quickly at the point of action. Therefore, they concentrate on the objectives of an operation, not how to achieve it. Commanders provide subordinates with their intent, the purpose of the operation, the key tasks, the desired end state, and resources. Subordinates then exercise disciplined initiative to respond to unanticipated problems. Every Soldier must be prepared to assume responsibility, maintain unity of effort, take prudent action, and act resourcefully within the commander’s intent.”⁴ Army Doctrinal Publication 6.0 provides the principles of mission command:

- Build cohesive teams through mutual trust.
- Create shared understanding.
- Provide a clear commander's intent.
- Exercise disciplined initiative.
- Use mission orders.
- Accept prudent risk.

The definitions of mission command highlighted above emphasize mission orders, clear commander's intent, and the exercise of disciplined initiative.

Unfortunately, the rigidity and hierarchy built into many Army formations make it difficult to achieve these desired principles of mission command. However, CSS units, operating in small teams with junior non-commissioned officers in the lead, allow logistics units to effectively practice mission command. Operating in small teams at distances away from their headquarters and the chain of command hierarchy creates an organizational culture shift that flattens our organizations by reducing power distances and promoting decentralized execution. These conditions bring CSS units closer to the desired principles of mission command.

CSS Team Culture

We judge Army units by their military effectiveness, which is due to their training, leadership, personnel and technology. Recently, the Army added culture as another metric to assess the effectiveness of Army units.⁵ The Army expresses culture in military units as military culture; however, the literature available to help describe military culture is limited. Therefore, this research focuses on organizational culture to define and argue how CSS units effectively practice mission command.⁶

Army logistics units in the 1983 Army of Excellence structure and under the modularity structural changes made in 2003 operate as a collection of dispersed teams. These teams generally consist of 3-5 personnel led by junior non-commissioned officers

who carry out the principles of mission command described in ADP 6.0. Teams of logisticians operate at a distance from their headquarters and rely on the clarity of a commander's intent to execute their mission. Maintenance support teams, water teams, mortuary affairs teams, armament teams, missile teams, fuel teams, ammunition transfer teams, movement support teams, medical teams and an assortment of other teams operate throughout the sustainment war fighting function.

Infantry and Armor units operate in similar small teams. A TRADOC study conducted in 1980 reveals that at the time, there were 63 infantry teams, 37 armor teams compared to 40 CSS (quartermaster, ordnance and transportation) teams.⁷ The contrast between Infantry and Armor teams compared with CSS teams demonstrates that CSS teams operate at larger distances away from their immediate chain of command while Infantry and Armor teams have a more proximate distance to their chain of command. The distance of CSS teams from their headquarters fosters the effective practice of mission command while the proximity of Infantry and Armor teams to their headquarters challenges the principles of mission command.

CSS teams operating at a distance from the chain of command provide effective logistics support because they understand the commander's intent, have the flexibility to take initiative, and conduct decentralized operations. Logistics commanders must trust CSS teams due to their distance from the chain of command and their requirement to make immediate decisions that affect support operations. This environment creates a less rigid structure, provides flexibility, promotes disciplined initiative and leads to lower power distances (flatter organizations). These conditions create a cultural shift from the standard Army hierarchy to a culture with an inherently less rigid structure.

Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn developed a framework shown in Figure 1 that helps define and understand culture in military units. Their model is “derived from a list of thirty-nine indicators of effective organizations.”⁸ The statistical data from the model emerges in four clusters and two dimensions. “The first dimension differentiates effectiveness criteria that emphasize flexibility and discretion from those that emphasize stability and control. The second dimension ranges from criteria that emphasize an internal focus and integration to those with an external focus and differentiation.”⁹ These quadrants represent four types of cultures: the hierarchy, clan, adhocracy and market cultures. Each culture represents what people value about the organization: its mission, policies, procedures and how people view the organization in terms of what’s good, right, wrong and appropriate within the organization.¹⁰ Traditionally, Army units are found in the bottom left quadrant as a hierarchy because of our focus on structure, the chain of command, well-defined policies, and standard operating procedures. However, because of their distance from the chain of command, leadership by junior NCOs, need for flexibility, less focus on structure and control as well as the need for adaptability, CSS teams tend to shift from the cultural hierarchy norm and operate more

in the top middle of the upper quadrant as a clan or as an adhocracy.

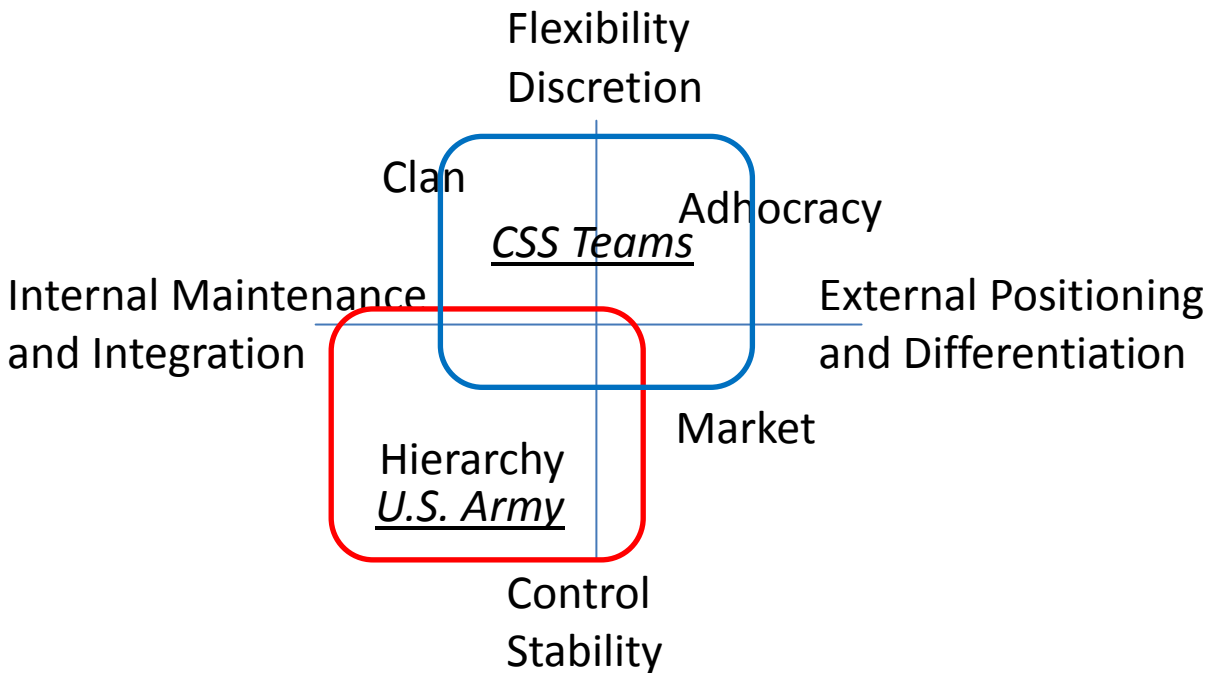


Figure 1. The Competing Values Model

A logistician's duty to provide support has become more than a mission. No matter the command or support relationship, providing support has become a deeply held, cultural value built into the Army Logistics Corps. CSS Teams have evolved into a new culture. CSS Teams are small and normally consist of 3-5 personnel led by a Sergeant or Staff Sergeant deployed across the battlefield at distances ranging from 50 to 200 miles away from their parent organization. A CSS Team's structure and distance from the chain of command feed the opportunity for young, subordinate leaders to exercise disciplined initiative, act decisively and enable trust from their superiors. Although this model provides reasonable evidence as to why logistics units might practice mission command effectively, a brief look at research done by Geert Hofstede on power distance reinforces the idea.

Hofstede's study, conducted in 1965, focuses on four dimensions of an organization's culture: power distance, individualism, uncertainty and masculinity.¹¹ For the purposes of this research, we will focus on power distance (flattening the organization) and its effect on the organization. "Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Cultures that endorse low power distance expect and accept power relations that are more consultative or democratic."¹² Our leadership challenge in the U.S. Army today is an over-reliance on hierarchy. Power distance in the U.S. Army is high and members of our organization still expect hierarchical decision making with one-way participation.¹³ The struggle over power distance is best described in summary by BG Fastabend and Richard H. Simpson: "The Army's culture has an enduring, legitimate pull between essential centralized control and necessary, decentralized innovation."¹⁴ If today's Army is to create learning, thinking and adaptable leaders and build agile, effective and high performing teams as described by the 38th CSA in "Marching Orders,"¹⁵ then we have to lower our power distance for mission command to succeed.

CSS teams are empowered and enabled to exercise initiative since logistics units are flatter (have a lower power distance) than that of our contemporaries. In 2007, former Army Vice Chief of Staff, General Peter Chiarelli described the flattening of our organizations. He explained that the Army should seek to increase horizontal integration and find ways to facilitate rapid knowledge transfer to eliminate stove-piping of information and function similar to that of our enemies. Most interesting is his mention of enabling those who need information the ability to access it without the filters of the

chain of command.¹⁶ Although not necessarily planned, CSS teams are by their organizational structure, with junior leaders out front, horizontally integrated and able to facilitate rapid knowledge transfer. This allows Information to move across units swiftly by removing the chain of command filter, enabling disciplined initiative, rapid decision making and decentralized execution.

CSS Teams offer a superior example of a low power distance (flat organization). For example, consider a water purification team operating in Iraq at a distance 50 miles from its parent unit. This team of three led by a Sergeant has a mission to produce water to provide life support for 250 people living in an outlying base camp. Unfortunately, the base camp is located at an elevation 200 feet above the Euphrates River, and their pumps are not strong enough to push water from the Euphrates to the purification system. However, the team leader understands his mission and exercises disciplined initiative by arranging multiple pumps in-line to push water from the Euphrates to the purification unit to solve the problem. The team leader never consults his commander, platoon leader or anyone in the chain of command. He contacts only his parent unit and asks them to send more pumps. This team leader understands the process, the procedure, and the way to carry out his support mission. Involvement from the chain of command is limited, which breeds decentralized execution. This same type of culture and low power distance exists across the logistics teams highlighted previously. Whether it is a water team or a maintenance support team operating at distances away from their chain of command, junior leaders in the CSS community are empowered, are clear about their mission and are able to execute knowing their commander's intent. As effectively as CSS teams practiced mission command in the

past, Army structural changes improved mission command by creating new logistics commands, moving personnel and assigning CSS teams to brigades.

Structural Changes in Army Logistics

In 2003 the Army transitioned from an Army of Excellence, Division-based organization to a modular Brigade-centric construct with more expandable and capable units. Logistics units transitioned as well. CSS teams once attached to the Main Support Battalion units became part of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT), forming new logistics commands that pushed logistics expertise forward to further flatten the organization. In the BCT, Forward Support Battalions (FSB) transitioned to Brigade Support Battalions (BSB) and support and maintenance platoons in maneuver battalions transitioned to Forward Support Companies (FSC). Each case added increased capability and improved the potential for logistics sustainment under mission command. At echelons above Brigade, Division Support Commands (DISCOM) transitioned to become Sustainment Brigades, effectively pushing more teams and materiel managers into the BCT. Reorganizing these units created an interesting set of command and support relationships between the FSC, BSB, BCT and Sustainment Brigade Commanders. Currently, the level of support among these units depends more on personal relationships than on command responsibilities and directly impacts how a commander conducts mission command. Fortunately, the same cultural values towards mission effectiveness that exists in CSS teams also exists with commanders of support units, which allows mission execution no matter the command or support relationship. The following sections of this paper will examine how Army structural changes improved logistics mission command.

Adding Forward Support Companies

As the Army created the logistics modular force, maintenance and support platoons assigned to maneuver battalions under the Army of Excellence (AOE) structure transitioned to Forward Support Companies assigned to the Brigade Support Battalion. Under this structure, logistics elements of these platoons, part of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, were reassigned to the FSC with the BSB as its parent organization.¹⁷ The addition of the FSC brought significant capability increases to the maneuver battalion commander. Increased distribution capability, increased maintenance capability and additional leadership (Logistics Commander, First Sergeant and Executive Officer) all contributed to increased logistics capability for the maneuver battalion and improved mission command. However, there are skeptics. In the article, "Making the Forward Support Company Work," Major Kevin Poling argues that by replacing the Headquarters Company with the FSC, we removed an experienced commander, support platoon leader and Battalion Maintenance Officer and replaced them with a less experienced logistics commander and staff of new logistics officers.¹⁸ Although I agree with some of the author's insights, I disagree that we simply swapped "personnel experience levels" without regard to mission accomplishment. Creating the FSC improves the maneuver commander and BSB commander's ability to conduct mission command. The maneuver commander now has an expert logistician commander and staff at his disposal. He can provide intent and expect that his team of logisticians will execute. Furthermore, this team of logisticians, the FSC Commander, his executive officer, first sergeant, supply and maintenance platoon leaders communicate requirements more effectively to the BSB by providing the specific

logistics requirements to improve support to the maneuver battalion. This structural change allows the maneuver commander the ability to maintain his focus on combat operations while his FSC commander focuses on sustaining the maneuver battalion through close relationships with the BSB commander and support operations officer.

Beyond personnel improvements, the addition of modern distribution equipment and the Army's two-level maintenance system further improve mission command. The addition of the Palletized Loading Systems (PLS) in the FSC allows the maneuver battalion to execute distribution operations with limited or no support from the BSB. Under the AOE structure, the ability to move supplies almost always depended on external support from the parent support battalion or from a Division asset. Under the FSC construct, the FSC commander can move the majority of the maneuver battalion's equipment. This change allows both the maneuver and BSB commanders to better facilitate mission command.

As the Army created the FSC under modularity, they also developed two-level maintenance. This initiative allows direct support maintenance work to be conducted in the FSC. Under the AOE construct, this type of work was normally completed by a maintenance support team attached to the maneuver battalion or by evacuating the disabled piece of equipment to the parent support battalion. This adaptation allows disabled equipment to be repaired as far forward on the battlefield as possible, improves operational readiness, and gives the maneuver commander understanding of his current fleet maintenance in relation to mission requirements. Although one might infer that this provides an additional burden on the maneuver commander, I would argue that with the addition of the FSC and a team of logisticians as far forward as

possible, the maneuver commander has been given the ability to “understand, to adapt, and to direct effectively the achievement of intent”.¹⁹ Adding Forward Support Companies to the logistics force structure significantly improves mission command; however, the transition of the Forward Support Battalion to the Brigade Support Battalion has a more dramatic effect on mission accomplishment and mission command improvement.

Forward Support Battalion Transition

FSBs in the 1983 Army of Excellence structure relied heavily on support from higher headquarters, the Division Support Command. The DISCOM augmented the FSB with the capability to produce water, provide mortuary affairs support, and transportation support for personnel and heavy equipment. In addition, the DISCOM maintained most of the leaders who conducted materiel management, a critical task to support units in garrison or deployed in combat. A recent study on sustaining Army Forces in Iraq produced by the Rand Corporation states, “When ground forces attacked in March 2003, there were not enough cargo trucks to move the needed supplies.”²⁰ A number of factors contributed to this finding. At that time, the FSBs had limited transportation resources and limited ability to react to changing logistics requirements. Transition from FSBs to BSBs fixed the distribution problems and provided increased capability by moving CSS Teams assigned to the DISCOM to the BSB force structure.

The first improvement was with personnel. In the pre-modular heavy brigade force structure, the ratio of combat to logistics personnel was 2.4/1. The total number of logistics personnel in the brigade at that time was 652. Under the modular construct, the ratio improved to 1.9/1, and number of logistics personnel increased by 79 to 731

personnel.²¹ Most of these Soldiers, now assigned to the BSB, brought new capability once held at the Division level to the BCT.

Although personnel increases offer the first glimpse at improved mission command, structural and equipment changes show a significant shift in the BSB commander's ability to conduct mission command. As the FSB transitioned to a BSB, a number of structural changes improving capability took place. Water teams, mortuary affairs teams, and the combat service support automation office, once assigned to the DISCOM, were now permanently assigned to the BSB. These changes gave the BSB commander an unsurpassed level of flexibility and broke the commander's reliance on support from the DISCOM. CSS teams once attached to the FSB to support the Brigade Combat Team were now assigned to the BSB and part of the BCT. In essence, the BSB commander no longer had to look over his shoulder for support. He could provide most of his BCT's requirements. With these structural changes, the BSB commander could clarify his intent to CSS teams, create a shared understanding, and allow the newly assigned teams to exercise disciplined initiative under the command of the BSB. CSS teams previously assigned to the DISCOM, now assigned to the BSB, experienced the same cultural shift described earlier although these teams already had a the initial cultural orientation to provide effective support. In sum, the transition of the FSB to the BSB and the creation of the FSC in the maneuver battalion were a resounding success in improving mission command.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have provided countless opportunities for CSS teams to practice mission command. Extended lines of communication and support requirements that demand critical thinking cultivate opportunities to execute mission

command. Technological enhancements during the same period also advanced our ability to practice mission command.

Technological Enhancements

In the past, mission command relied heavily on map boards, radio voice communications, and mission type orders. Commanders outside of radio contact with their subordinates were left to trust that their subordinate leaders would execute their mission knowing the commander's intent.²² Isn't this exactly what the mission command principles desire? It is. However, given the adaptability of our enemy and the rapidly changing environment of today's modern battlefield, technology enhances mission command and provides clarity to commander's intent. Unfortunately, some commanders use technology counterproductively and fail to balance technology with their decision making authority.

Figure 2 illustrates that as command and control systems (technology) grow, the role of the commander in the decision making process grows in a similar manner.²³ As a result, the growth of technology and the commander's decision making authority can detract from the principles of mission command. A recent article, "Mission Command at the Company Level" illustrates how technology can detract from mission command by empowering senior commanders. As one junior commander points out, "So long as PowerPoint and the internet exist, I will be required to submit a CONOP 48 hours out for everything from cordon and search, to road guards for physical training hours."²⁴ Another subordinate commander recalls a video clip of a brigade commander in a Tactical Operations Center (TOC) maneuvering a squad via Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) in an assault on a house.²⁵ These examples illustrate how a commander can

become more powerful in the decision making process as technology grows, thus interfering with a subordinate's ability to take initiative and promote decentralized operations. These examples are true for many commanders. The challenge is to find a balance between technology and the commander's role in decision making. If used correctly, technology offers a potential solution, strengthens the role of subordinates in the decision making process and contributes to enhanced mission command practices.

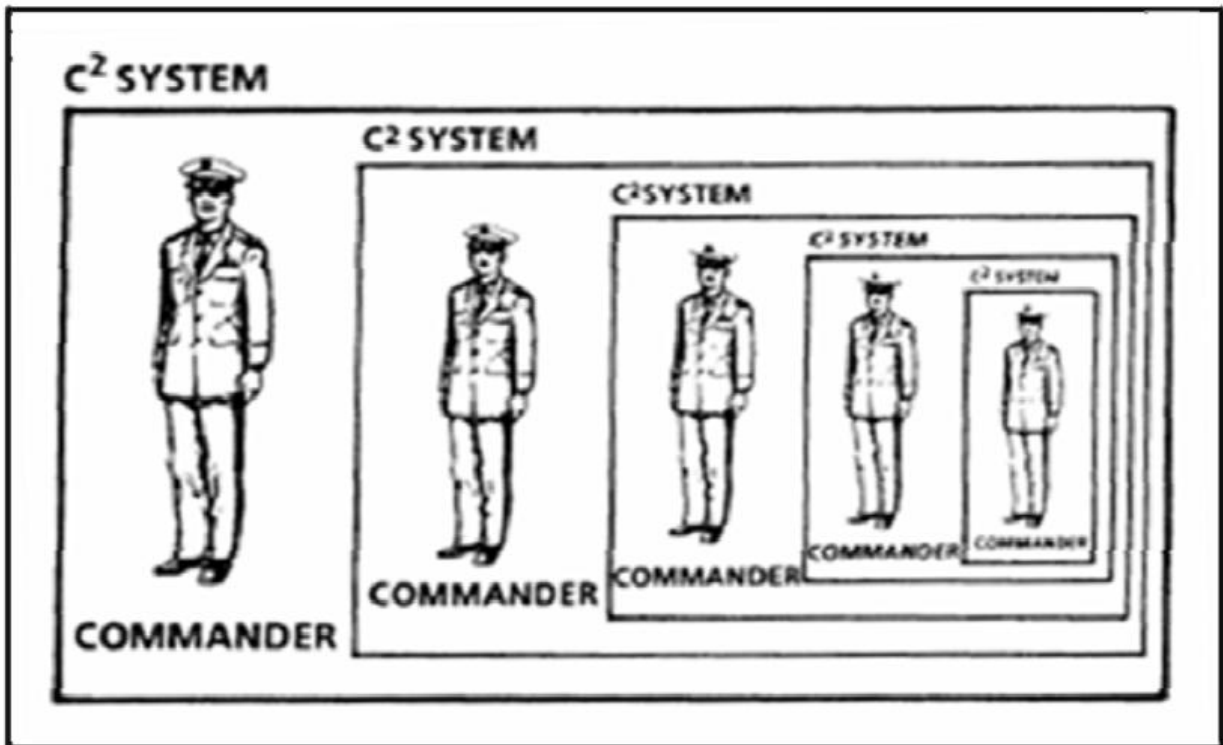


Figure 2. Commander relationships to C2 systems

Technology gives commanders and subordinates power and influence. Those that are connected to a network and have the ability to access information have the power and influence to exercise initiative, make decisions and improve the practice of mission command. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan advanced over the last decade, technology and the Army's ability to connect units and Soldiers to multiple networks

advanced equally. Throughout, logistics technology and our ability to connect logisticians and CSS teams advanced at an even more rapid pace.

In the mid-1990s, the work that logisticians and CSS teams did was predominately completed manually. Requisitions were placed on diskette, moved by convoy and transmitted via Army Material Command satellite systems. In the early stages of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army fielded the Combat Service Support Very Small Aperture Terminal (CSSVSAT) that essentially connected Army logisticians to the internet and eventually to the strategic wholesale system. This innovation, along with improvements in Standard Army Information Management Systems, connected dispersed CSS teams to each other, to their higher headquarters and to strategic logistics systems. Logistics units and CSS teams now had the ability to “calculate requirements more accurately, tell suppliers what customers want or need, validate that suppliers receive requisitions, see the process and fulfillment of requisitions, see the location of supplies in the supply pipeline, and communicate with suppliers and customers to prioritize shipments”.²⁶

The CSSVSAT provided logistics commanders the ability to clarify intent and gave CSS teams power and access to information that enhanced decentralized execution. CSSVSAT also provided the platform necessary to connect to a network via their supporting Standard Army Information Management System and further enhance the practice of mission command. As one Soldier commented, “VSAT is a beast – a combat multiplier. It’s saving a minimum of five trips a day between units. Our Soldiers can get on the ground, get ‘hot’ [get their communications up and running] and get combat ready faster. During lulls, they can order what they’ll need during the fight.

We're using VSAT to share documents, pass requisitions, conduct meetings online, and use like a telephone inside the Division. I don't know who coined the term 'Connect the Logistician,' but by the time I leave here (National Training Center) we will have connected every single logistician in the brigade to the information he needs."²⁷

Technology in logistics and throughout the Army has continued to advance, providing multiple opportunities to exercise the principles of mission command.

CSS teams used technology to enable mission command throughout Iraq in 2011. Movement control teams, maintenance support teams, and ammunition transfer teams could be found in virtually every Forward Operating Base (FOB) across Iraq. They were using Standard Army Management Information Systems (STAMIS), and the CSSVSAT to monitor, manage, and make real time decisions that impacted operations. Movement control teams using Transportation Coordinator's Automated Information for Movement System II (TCAIMS II), maintenance support teams using Standard Army Maintenance Systems (SAMS), and ammunition transfer teams using Standard Army Ammunition System Modernization (SAAS-MOD) were, well-equipped to practice mission command. These well-trained teams operating at a distance from their chain command understood their mission as logisticians, their commander's intent, and were enabled through technology to conduct decentralized execution. Innovations in technology tied information together that CSS teams sent and received using satellite based Army systems. Regardless of a CSS team's distance from the chain of command, advances in technology promoted disciplined initiative and enhanced mission command. This in contrast to other units in the Army whose hierarchical

structure and their proximity to the chain of command inhibited the execution of mission command.

Recommendations

- Educate the force
- Influence organizational cultural paradigm shifts
- Capitalize on technology

Education

Mission command must be part of our officer education system and our non-commissioned officer and Soldier education systems. As General Dempsey describes, “Education in the key attributes of mission command must be progressively more challenging as officers progress in rank and experience.”²⁸ He describes how officers must be taught to give mission orders, express intent, realize the ability of mission command in subordinates and adjust their level of supervision.²⁹ I agree with General Dempsey; however, as important as mission command is to our success, we need to emphasize education equally on our NCOs and Soldiers. We must validate that they understand the principles of mission command, mission orders, intent, and the ways to exercise disciplined initiative. Educating the force will provide commanders confidence because they will know that their subordinates understand the principles of mission command. At the same time, education will improve two-way trust between the leader and the led promoting initiative and decentralized execution.

As we continue to plan for Army 2020, we need to focus our efforts to improve mission command at initial entry training and Army schools. Soldiers can begin to gain an understanding of the principles of mission command during basic training. Non-commissioned officers must have the principles of mission command reinforced during

professional schools, and officers must make practicing mission command routine. Our hierarchical organization detracts from mission command, and we have to influence a cultural shift to improve mission command throughout the Army.

Cultural Paradigm Shifts

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq forced us out of our comfort zone. Extended lines of communication and operations conducted from numerous small forward operating bases forced us to provide clearer intent, trust our subordinates, enable disciplined initiative and decentralized execution. As one senior officer points out, “Our entrance into Kandahar and Baghdad marked the beginning of a transition to decentralization and empowerment for our Army upon which we continue to build.”³⁰ He further explains that “we evolved out of necessity” and that “commanders recognized that initiative and adaptability guided by a firm understanding of intent, allowed their units to operate at a much quicker pace.”³¹ As our units return from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, we must apply the lessons learned from the past decade. Unfortunately, our hierarchical nature in garrison detracts from the principles of mission command. We will most likely move back to our cultural hierarchy of rules, regulations and policies unless we influence a paradigm shift within the Army’s culture.

To avoid returning to our original status, we must find innovative methods to train the principles of mission command and not lose sight of the lessons learned over the past decade. Combat Service Support units offer a prime example. As CSS Teams return from combat operations and assume garrison activities, these teams routinely duplicate their support mission whether deployed or at home station. Other units rely heavily on virtual and constructive training venues to duplicate their mission and

practice mission command. Unfortunately, current budget constraints and demand on training resources will limit virtual and constructive training opportunities. Fortunately, garrison operations foster practicing mission command through physical training, command maintenance, and a variety of individual and collective training opportunities. These venues offer ways to enable small teams to flatten the organization and to lower power distances, which can lead to a shift in our culture.

Technological Enhancements

Technology improvements and their impact on our ability to conduct mission command are phenomenal. In the logistics community, use of Army STAMIS and satellite based technology contribute significantly to improved mission command. Army Battle Command Systems, Blue Force Tracker (BFT) and the Command Post of Future (CPOF) contribute as well. These systems, combined with Soldier and leader knowledge, enable precise combat and support operations to be conducted at extended distances. Using improved technology, commanders are able to see, understand and provide clarity of intent enabling mission command.

The work the Army has completed over the past two years in Network Integration Evaluations (NIE) is invaluable. As one senior leader points out, "Considerable progress has been made in developing a tactically deployable digital network, maturing the ability to perform mission command on-the-move functions, extending the network to the Soldier level and developing procedures to quickly organize or reorganize."³² We must continue to capitalize on improvements in technology and evaluations similar to that of NIE. At the same time, we must balance mission command principles with technology to ensure we don't over power the commander with information that can't be shared or

accessed by subordinate leaders and Soldiers who need to know. We cannot afford to create a network that allows the commander to micromanage operations from their TOC and enables the commander to trump a subordinate's decision at any moment, which would detract from the principles of mission command.

Conclusions

CSS teams provide a concrete example of best practices in executing the principles of mission command. Operating at distances well removed from their chain of command has fostered a shift in the culture of CSS teams by reducing reliance on policies and standard operating procedures and encouraging disciplined initiative, two-way trust and decentralized execution. This cultural shifts in CSS teams leads to flattened logistical organizations with lower power distances, which empowers the principles of mission command. Army structural changes improved mission command by aligning CSS teams to their parent organization. Technology advancements enhanced the ability to conduct mission command throughout the Army. As the Army continues toward Army 2020, it is imperative that we capitalize on opportunities to develop agile, adaptive leaders enabled to conduct mission command. To accomplish that task, we must educate the force, find ways to influence cultural shifts away from our hierarchical nature and continue to improve and capitalize on technology.

Endnotes

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