

ROC DRILLS – OBSERVATIONS FROM COMBAT TRAINING CENTRE – LIVE

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The role of the Combat Training Centre is to deliver advanced collective combat training to high readiness forces in order to prepare them for specific operations and contingencies. In this capacity, the unit has delivered a significant number of Combat Team and Battle Group Warfighting Exercises, Mission Rehearsal Exercises and Amphibious Exercises whilst also supporting Forces Command during Exercise Hamel and Talisman Sabre. One of CTC's key outputs from these exercises is to provide Army with observations to contribute to trends analysis to determine areas where improvement is required.

These observations, gathered from Combat Team through Formation, have highlighted the inconsistent and often under-utilised application of the Rehearsal of Concept Drill. As a result of the lack of detail in Australian Doctrine, in particular LWD 5-1-4 The Military Appreciation Process, the following is designed to apply some rigour around what should be a 'drill' and also to inform participants in the process of their role, inputs and outputs. While not overly prescriptive, the aim of this paper is to provide Commanders and Staff with enough knowledge and guidance so that they can execute a ROC Drill in order to better synchronise the execution of the plan.

References:

LWD 5-1-4 The Military Appreciation Process
Army Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (ATTP) 5-0.1, Command and Staff Officer Guide, Chapter 8 (US)

Rehearsal Of Concept Drill

A Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drill is a dry walk-through of a plan between a commander and their subordinates ensuring a shared understanding of the plan. It is not a repeat of the wargame. It allows a final confirmation of particularly complicated portions of the plan and may result in amendments to control measures.

It must involve the commander, all HQ principal staff officers, battlespace operating systems (BOS) specialists and as many subordinate commanders as practical. The optimal level of attendance would see the presence of subordinate commanders two down and any others with critical roles in the plan. A ROC drill is run by time brackets and ideally conducted around a large mud model, although a map may suffice if time and space are at a premium. The ROC drill provides the commander with an opportunity to ensure that all of their subordinate callsigns understand their role in potential friendly force reactions to specific contingencies. For example, they may wish to have particular elements of the enemy's MDCOA considered, focus on particular areas of risk identified within the plan or confirm conditions to be satisfied in order to inform Commanders Decision Points; at which point branch plans may be

enacted. The level of detail in a ROC drill will be dependent on the level of command, time and staff available; the level of training and interoperability of the force; and the complexity of the operation. A ROC is only conducted once Orders have been disseminated (including detailed Actions On), a detailed Decision Support Overlay (DSO) and Synch Matrix have been produced, subordinate units have delivered their Orders, and the rehearsal location and attendees have been confirmed. The time required for the ROC should be accounted for when the planning timeline is developed during preliminary analysis.

An effective ROC is not a commander's brief to subordinates. Its purpose is to validate synchronization - the what, when, and where-of tasks subordinate units will perform to execute the operation and achieve the commander's intent.

Responsibilities:

The Commander:

- Identifies the key events to rehearse.
- Allocates time for each event.
- Reminds attendees of the Commander's intent prior to the ROC commencing.
- Commands the rehearsal allowing no potential for subordinate confusion.
- Leads an AAR once the rehearsal is complete and authorises or denies proposed changes to the OPORD.

The Chief of Staff:

- Ensures all prelim actions are completed
- Confirms attendance, task organisation, the sequence of briefing, the time line and the start point for the ROC prior to commencing.
- Directs the ROC
- Determines if a decision point has been reached and then decides whether to continue with the current COA or select a branch.
- For each decision point, defines the conditions required to, for instance;
 - Commit the reserve or striking force.
 - Close or emplace an obstacle.
 - Fire planned targets.
- Ensures participants adhere to timings and enforces brevity through provision of a designated script for each briefer; often in a Task, Purpose, and Actions On format.

The S3:

- Reminds attendees of the mission prior to the ROC commencing
- Briefs the friendly force disposition at the start point of the ROC and places the appropriate markers on the map or mud model
- Portrays his actions IRT HQ element movements and actions during the fight.
- Monitors and enforces subordinate unit compliance with the plan.
- Provides the scribe.
- Assists the Commander as required

The S2:

- Orients the attendees to the map or mud model
- Provides participants with the current intelligence update.
- Portrays the best possible assessment of the enemy COA.
- Communicates the enemy commander's presumed concept of operations, desired effects, and intended end state.
- Briefs the enemy force disposition at the start point of the ROC and places the appropriate markers on the map or mud model
- Portrays the enemy force actions realistically and quickly, without distracting from the rehearsal.

Subordinate Commanders:

- Complete their OPORD and DSO prior to the ROC commencing and provide copies to the COFS
- Brief start state and place unit markers
- Effectively articulate their units' actions, contingency actions and responsibilities, including their Actions On at key points.
- Communicate their role in satisfying PIRs, informing CDPs or achieving DEs
- Record changes on their copies of the graphics or OPORD.

BOS Leads:

- Complete their specific synchronisation documents prior to the ROC commencing and provide copies to the COFS
- Brief start state and place markers for their elements
- Brief specific points relevant to their part in the plan as they occur
- The OS BOS Lead monitors the timeline throughout and updates the ROC director if/when a synchronisation issue relating to timings and fire plans is identified.

The Scribe:

- Collates and deconflicts subordinate commanders' control measures prior to the ROC
- Records suggested amendments to control measures.
- Enters approved amendments into the master OPORD immediately.

Conduct:

The ROC is conducted in a sequential manner as follows:

1. Preliminary actions are completed
2. Enemy start state markers are placed and briefed
3. Friendly start state markers are placed and briefed
4. The ROC director confirms the time within the ROC and the first action that will commence the ROC

5. The relevant attendee, whether the S2 for enemy or Subordinate Commander / BOS Lead for friendly briefs their action and moves markers accordingly
6. The subsequent action is completed. This cycle continues until conditions are set for a Commanders Decision Point (CDP) or Decisive Event; at which point the ROC director intervenes and confirms the conditions are / are not set as per the DSO.
7. The Commander directs the ROC as to subsequent actions IRT the CDP. From this point the ROC will either continue IAW the main plan or proceed along a branch as designated by the Commander. If a branch is selected the ROC status prior to proceeding on the branch is recorded IOT allow a swift reset to that point once the Branch has been rehearsed.
8. Once the ROC has covered all events designated by the Commander the ROC director will summarise modifications that have been endorsed by the commander, confirm they will be formalised through release of a FRAGO and then release personnel.

Throughout the ROC the director emphasises integrating fire support, events that trigger different branch actions, and key Actions On. The relevant OS BOS participant states when fires are initiated, who is firing, from where, the ammunition used and the desired target effect. Subordinate Commanders state when they initiate fires IAW their fire support plans. The rehearsal director speaks for any staff section not present and ensures all actions on the synchronisation matrix and DST are addressed at the proper time or event. Minor points of contention are to be dealt with in a sidebar after the ROC IOT avoid slowing the rehearsal and causing confusion.

Post ROC Actions:

The commander runs a post ROC review in order to confirm or deny proposed modifications to the plan. The authorised modifications to control measures and co-ordination are re-briefed and any proposed modifications that are contingent upon the result of an RFI are noted, with a time frame applied for receipt of that RFI.

A FRAGO is struck to formalise any approved modifications ASAP after the completion of the ROC. Changes should be refinements to the OPORD only. If radical or significant changes are required then there is likely a need to re-commence planning in detail and/or rerun more exhaustive wargames.