



INTEGRATING

THE MANEUVER ENHANCEMENT BRIGADE

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Integrating the Maneuver Enhancement Brigades into Corps and Division Operations

Maneuver enhancement brigades (MEBs) were activated in 2007, and since then, the Mission Command Training Program's (MCTP) annual Key Observations reports continue to highlight that integrating them into corps and divisions and synchronizing their activities with the larger scheme of maneuver is still a challenge.¹ When I asked the MEB integrator at the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence (MSCOE) what the biggest inhibitors were to achieving better integration of MEBs at corps and divisions and synchronizing their activities with corps and divisions operations. The answer was surprisingly simple and echoed a variation of the old military maxim of the seven Ps – proper prior planning and practice prevents poor performance.² First, corps and divisions need to fund the MEB's participation in all corps and division military decision-making process (MDMP) planning events and rehearsals. Second, role and responsibilities for the rear command post (RCP) and the MEB must be clearly delineated and codified during planning.

The MEB integrator's response points to poor planning as the root cause of the problem. This article offers commanders and staff at corps and division levels a non-exhaustive list of considerations and best practices to complement their planning processes. The structure mirrors the operations process of plan, prepare, execute, and assess with setting the conditions added to provide key pre-operations process activities to lay the groundwork that helps ensure a smoother transition to planning. Although the focus is on MEB integration, these considerations and best practices are also applicable to other Component (COMPO) 2 and 3 units.

All 19 MEBs are either COMPO 2 or COMPO 3 and each is a multifunctional headquarters with limited organic structure. The MEB's mission is to provide mission command (MC) for a tailored force that conducts support area operations by employing assigned or attached capabilities to support the conduct of decisive action and stability operations in support of the Army's divisions, corps, and joint, interagency or multinational headquarters to assure the mobility, security, protection, and freedom of action of the supported force.³ The task organization required for the MEB to accomplish its mission is based on mission requirements and identified during planning.

The Army National Guard Bureau aligned each MEB to a corps or division, as depicted in Figure 1.⁴ The intent is to establish a habitual relationship between MEBs and the corps or division they are aligned with. Thus, improved planning and coordination efforts between all involved. Frequently exercising this relationship allows corps and division and their aligned MEBs to identify and work through integration and synchronization issues. They also identify mitigation strategies for resource shortfalls. There is also the opportunity to refine their respective tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

¹ MCTP Key Observations FY23. p. 11.

² 7 Ps (military adage). [https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/7_Ps_\(military_adage\)](https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/7_Ps_(military_adage)). Accessed 23 Aug 2024.

³ MEB mission statement from Force Management System (FMS). [FMSWeb \(army.mil\)](https://fmsweb.army.mil). Accessed 15 Aug 2024.

⁴ Appendix 2. Annex A. Corps Partnership and Alignment. ARNG EXORD 660-24. Echelon above division functional/multifunctional partnership. 29 Feb 2024.

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MEB	RC CMD	COMP	LOCATION	DIV Alignment		ARNG FM Recommended Corps Partnership
1	 196 MEB	ARNG	SD		34 ID	
2	 218 MEB	ARNG	SC		1 CD	 V CORPS
3	 648 MEB	ARNG	GA		3 ID	 V CORPS
4	 55 MEB	ARNG	PA		28 ID	
5	 136 MEB	ARNG	TX		36 ID	
6	 158 MEB	ARNG	AZ		1 AD	 III CORPS
7	 110 MEB	ARNG	MO		35 ID	
8	 67 MEB	ARNG	NE		1 ID	 III CORPS
9	 130 MEB	ARNG	NC		82 ABN	 XVIII ABN CORPS
10	 226 MEB	ARNG	AL		29 ID	
11	 26 MEB	ARNG	MA		42 ID	
12	 404 MEB	ARNG	IL		10 MTN	 XVIII ABN CORPS
13	 149 MEB	ARNG	KY		38 ID	
14	 157 MEB	ARNG	WI		101 AA	 XVIII ABN CORPS
15	 141 MEB	ARNG	ND		40 ID	
16	 204 MEB	ARNG	UT		4 ID	 I CORPS
17	 301 MEB	USAR	WA		7 ID	 I CORPS
18	 302 MEB	USAR	MA		N/A	N/A
19	 303 MEB	USAR	HI		25 ID	N/A
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Figure 1. Army National Guard Bureau's Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Alignment⁵

⁵ Appendix 2. Annex A. Corps Partnership and Alignment. ARNG EXORD 660-24. Echelon above division functional/multifunctional partnership. 29 Feb 2024.

Setting the Conditions

As COMPO 2 and 3 units, there is no command relationship between MEBs and corps and divisions until after they are mobilized and attached to the gaining corps or division. This limitation requires corps and division commanders and staffs to actively cultivate a relationship well before the MEB's mobilization. This reduces the friction normally associated with the establishment of any new supported-supporting relationship. The Army's cyclical personnel assignment process requires corps and divisions to be deliberate and consistent in their effort to establish and maintain a working relationship with the MEB. Below are some recommended best practices:

- Establish dialogue with the MEB's key leaders – commander, command sergeant major (CSM), deputy commander, executive officer, operations officer, etc.– to establish and maintain shared understanding. The objective is for corps, division, and the MEB to have a clear understanding of each other's capabilities, limitations, dependencies, SOPs, planning horizons, TTPs, and current and future operations.
- Corps and division G-2, Intelligence, obtain specific intelligence and assessment requirements from the MEB. This way the G-2 can factor in the MEB's requirements before conducting intelligence preparation of the operating environment (IPOE).
- Have commander-to-commander discussion on expectations. Provide commander's intent and guidance to the MEB on operations in the rear and support areas. The discussion should also include the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the MEB and the RCP. The roles and responsibilities must be codified in corps and division tactical standard operating procedures (TACSOPs) once agreed upon by the commanders.
- Establish and codify a "plan to plan" with the MEB's commander and staff. The plan should be incorporated into the corps and division battle rhythm to help ensure execution.
- Corps and divisions must create engagement opportunities with their aligned MEB to gain familiarity to the MEB and to also build and strengthen the bonds of trust that are crucial for success during exercises and operations. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Get the MEB's monthly drill and annual training (AT) schedule and coordinate a visit with them.
 - Provide MEBs with corps and division exercises or training events which would be mutually beneficial for them to support or participate in. The MEB's ability to participate and their level of participation must be deconflicted with their drill and annual training schedule and funding limitations.
 - Invite the MEB's leadership to attend key corps and division battle rhythm events (e.g., plans update, operations synchronization, logistics synchronization, semi-annual training brief, etc.) to create and maintain shared understanding. The means and methods to accomplish this must be addressed (i.e., in person, Microsoft Teams, secure video teleconference, etc.).
 - Explore and maximize the use of active duty for operational support, or some other funding mechanism. Bring onboard key MEB personnel to support corps and division planning efforts. Conversely, corps and division can send planners to

the MEB during their monthly drills or annual training if time and circumstances permit.

Planning Phase

There is less friction during the transition to planning and subsequent phases if corps and divisions are successful in setting the conditions. This requires that corps and divisions monitor, assess, and adjust (as necessary) their setting efforts. Appendix A, Example MDMP with recommended best practices, provides amplifying details to supplement this phase. The following are some recommended best practices for the planning phase when a mission is received or anticipated:

- Request key planners from the MEB to participate for the entirety of MDMP. They provide the MEB's perspective and requirements as it relates to their mission in the rear and support areas. The MEB's task organization and resource shortfalls are identified upon conclusion of mission analysis, which are then given to the proper staff sections for appropriate action. The resulting planning products (e.g., situation template, modified combined obstacle overlay (MCOO), civil considerations, etc.) enable the MEB to further their own planning and preparation. See Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 2-01.3, *Intelligence Preparation of the Operating Environment* for additional details.⁶
- Have MEB prepare and submit initial running estimates and other "fighting products" (e.g., synchronization and decision support matrices, etc.) along with a submission timeline for updates to these products.
- Corps and division commanders provide their intent and clear and concise guidance to the MEB commander – priorities by phase, objectives, desired end state, and risk acceptance.
- Corps and division identify liaison officers (LNOs) needed from the MEB. This mitigates integration issues and helps ensure and maintain shared understanding throughout the operations process between corps, division, and the MEB. It is recommended that MEB LNOs are sourced with the following corps and division staff sections: G-2, Intelligence; G-3, Operations; G-4, Logistics; G-5, Plans; G-33, Current Operations; G-34, Protection; and G-35, Future Operations.
- Corps and division commander's assign an area of operation (AO) to the MEB, normally the support area. This decision is informed by mission analysis and IPOE. It is recommended that the corps and division commanders delegate tactical control of all friendly forces for protection, defense, and security to the MEB commander.⁷
- The MEB's participation in the protection working group better informs protection-related decisions since the bulk of the corps and division protection capabilities (e.g., military police; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN); engineers, etc.) are located in the rear area.

⁶ ATP 2-01.3. *Intelligence Preparation of the Operating Environment*. 23 January 2024. p. xi.

⁷ Field Manual (FM) 3-81. *Maneuver Enhancement Brigade*. 9 November 2021. p. 1-3.

- Ensure that MEB planners engage in developing the risk assessment plan for operations in the rear and support areas. See Appendix B, Risk Management in the MDMP for additional details.
- Corps, divisions, and MEBs operational activities must be underpinned by deliberate collection and assessment plans to maintain shared understanding of current and future operations, and any adjustments made to the plans.
- The corps and division must develop a plan for consolidating gains. The rear area expands as the operation unfolds and maneuver forces move forward. It is beyond the MEB's capability to control or manage at some point unless augmented with additional resources or the rear area's boundaries are adjusted. A tactical combat force (TCF) must be planned as part of the MEB's task organization so that they are able to respond to Level III threats or bypassed enemy units.
- Ensure that MEB has a clear understanding of commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs), particularly those that pertain to the rear and support area.
- Although not specific to the MEB, the corps and division must ensure that knowledge management processes and procedures, including the systems used therein, are codified in the unit TACSOP. "A way" to do this is to ask the following questions:
 - What do I know?
 - Who needs to know?
 - Have I told them?
 - Was information received and understood?
- The corps and division prepare and produce orders, estimates, and other staff products upon the commander's approval of a course of action. An indicator of how well the MEB has been integrated into the corps and division is the clear alignment of task, purpose, and intent with that of the corps and division when the MEB publishes their order.
- Schedule a confirmation brief and/or backbrief with the MEB to ensure shared understanding across the corps and division.

Preparation Phase

This phase assumes that the MEB has been mobilized and has been attached to the corps and division. As with the other steps in the operations process, "prepare" is continuous and is informed by assessments. Some recommended best practices are:

- The corps and division obtain from the MEB specific information to get accountability of the MEB and its starting combat strength. It is critical that each corps and division staff section engage with either the MEB LNOs or their counterparts at the MEB to get information pertinent to their staff sections. Some important considerations include but are not limited to:
 - Detailed personnel breakdown of the MEB's task-organization.
 - Detailed breakdown of MEB mission essential equipment and its current readiness. Corps and division G-4 must have visibility of on-hand supply of class I (rations), III (bulk fuel, POL), critical class V (ammunition), VII (major end items), and IX (repair parts) stockage levels required to sustain operations.

- Ensure embarkation data and all other required information and documents required by the supporting installation to receive and process the MEB's personnel and equipment for deployment are accurate. This must be submitted in a timely manner so that the supporting installation can effectively and efficiently conduct deployment operations. Corps and division's deployment from fort to the area of operations will be contested so corps and divisions, in coordination with the supporting installation, must plan accordingly.
- Conduct functional checks of all command and control systems to ensure that corps, divisions, and MEBs can communicate. Any issues or shortfalls, as well as a primary, alternate, contingency, emergency plan, must be identified and resolved before deploying.
- The corps and division review the battle rhythm with the MEB and provide them with expectations associated with it (i.e., required participants, inputs, outputs, etc.).
- The corps and division schedule and conduct rehearsals with the MEB to synchronize staff processes and procedures and help identify any gaps or issues with the plan.

Execution Phase

The MEB's planning and operations can remain integrated and synchronized with corps and division operations throughout execution, by implementing the following best practices:

- The corps and division receive and integrate MEB LNOs identified during the planning phase into corps and division battle rhythm events (i.e., bureaus, boards, centers, cells, and working groups).
- The corps, divisions, and MEBs actively monitor and assess operations to make timely decisions based on operational assessments (e.g., adjust control measures to deconflict space and control movements, adjust boundaries, modify airspace control measures, adjust protection priorities, etc.).

Assessment Phase

Assessments, and their associated measures of effectiveness and performance, must be continuous, deliberately planned for, appropriately prioritized, and properly resourced so that they can inform subsequent planning, preparation, and execution activities. This requires the corps, division, and MEB to identify specific information requirements that are needed to monitor and analyze conditions in the rear and support area. Doing so allows corps and division commanders to make timely decisions that affects current and future MEB operations. Thus, driving the commander and staff to fight the enemy and not the plan. Questions to help inform the assessment process are:⁸

- Where are we?
- How will we know we are achieving commander's intent and meeting intermediate objectives?
- What information do we need?

⁸ Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 5-0. *The Operations Process*. 31 July 2019. p. 5-1 to 5-6.

- Who is best postured to provide that information?
- How has the operating environment (OE) changed?
- Why do we think the change occurred?
- Do changes in the OE impose additional risk or provide additional opportunities?
- Is the current plan still suitable to achieve the objectives?
- What do we need to do?

Conclusion

The best practices in the preceding pages are merely starting points for corps and divisions. Best practices were informed by relevant doctrinal publications, MCTP's key observations, unit after action reports (AARs), key leader interviews, and relevant training and evaluation outlines obtained from the Central Army Registry (CAR). Corps and divisions must temper and tailor each recommendation to meet requirements unique to their organization and operating environment. The more "sets and reps" with the MEB that corps and divisions can perform while in garrison, the more it helps improve MEB integration during each step of the operations process and validates the truism of the 7 Ps - proper prior planning and practice prevents poor performance.

Appendix A

Step	Commander's Actions	Staff Actions/Tasks	MEB Actions/Tasks
Receipt of Mission	Issue Initial Guidance: - Initial time allocation, - Planning approach, - Required coordination, - LNO requirements, - Authorized movements to initiate, - Information collection guidance, and - Initial information requirements. Best Practice: Initial guidance to staff should direct them to bring the MEB into the planning process, have the MEB participate in rehearsals, and to not overlook the rear/support area during planning and IPOE. Although not specific to the MEB, is beneficial to have staff identify: - Security and protection requirements to get the unit from the fort to the area of operation (i.e., "tactical edge") - Any authorities issues that negatively impact operations.	Prepare For Planning: - Determine time/resources available to plan, prepare, execute. - Identify planning team composition and LNO requirements. - Obtain HHQ/other organizations/agencies orders, maps, IPOE and assessment products; Current/updated running estimates from staff and subordinate units. - Issue commander's initial planning guidance. - Issue initial warning order (WARNORD) - type of operation, general location of operation, initial operational timeline, movement timeline, CCIRs, initial information collection asks. - Develop planning timeline - what products are due, when they are due, who is responsible for producing them, who are they submitted to, time/location for meetings and briefings. - Conduct initial risk assessment by identifying hazards based on review of mission and refine throughout planning. Best Practice: - Ensure supporting/aligned MEBs receive initial WARNORD and all supporting documents/products for parallel planning. - Establish means and methods for MEBs to participate in planning and rehearsals throughout MDMP - Not specific to the MEB (but critical to deployment support and operations) - Notify the installation and keep them informed of deployment support requirements. - Ask what is needed in terms of information to fully support the unit.	Alert the staff: - ID planners/LNOs to support supported echelon's operational planning team (may have to modify drills IOT support). - Determine initial information requirements of mission/ operating environment (informs MEB planning and responsibilities in support area). - Update/submit running estimates to supported echelon. - Obtain from supported echelon relevant intelligence and assessment products to inform support area/security/ protection planning. - Ensure staff sections are synchronized with counterparts at supported echelon. - Alert unit of receipt of mission and start preparations for deployment. - Analyze planning, augmentation, and coordination requirements to support operational planning team (OPT). Best Practice: - To ensure synchronization throughout planning, ensure S-3 and S-2 (at minimum) are integrated into supported echelon's OPT. - Persistent and consistent staff-to-staff collaboration to "push" and "pull" information throughout MDMP will inform and drive MEB planning efforts. - Schedule touchpoints with MEB commander to obtain decisions or guidance. - Coordinate with supporting installation(s) and agencies to support mobilization and deployment of the unit.

Step	Commander's Actions	Staff Actions/Tasks	MEB Actions/Tasks
Mission Analysis	- Review/approve problem and mission statements. - Issue initial commander's intent and planning guidance. - Review/approve CCIRs and initial information collection plan. Best Practice: - Intent and planning guidance includes operations in the rear and support area, including clearly delineating roles and responsibilities between the rear command post and the MEB. - It is beneficial to also include when and how the battle rhythm should be adjusted so that the unit fights the enemy and not the plan.	- Identify what, when, where, and why of the mission. - Analyze HHQ's plan/order. - Conduct IPOE. - Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks. - Identify resource shortfalls. - Determine constraints. - Identify facts and assumptions. - Develop initial CCIRs and EEfIs. - Develop initial information collection plan. - Update planning timeline. - Develop proposed problem/mission statements. - Develop and issue initial commander's intent. - Present Mission Analysis brief. - Develop COA evaluation criteria. - Develop/issue warning order and planning guidance. Best Practice: - When there is no MEB LNO on staff, contact supported/aligned MEB to support MDMP as they will have specific information requirements for the rear/ support area. - Also, initial commander's intent must include his visualization of operations in the rear/support area.	- Parallel effort with same Mission Analysis tasks as supported echelon's but scoped specifically to the MEB; will be informed by supported echelon's WARNORD and planning guidance. - Ensure planner/LNOs integrated with supported echelon's OPT. - Ensure planner/LNOs stay synchronized with MEB. - Identify resource shortfalls beyond organic capabilities and information requirements, provide to supported echelon. - Recommends to commander priorities of effort/support, essential tasks, and acceptable mission risks. Best Practice: - Develop initial MEB task organization and identify any resource shortfalls to the supported echelon based on IPOE, risk assessment, and supported commander's intent/guidance. - Develop plan for the reception and integration of attachments.
COA Development	- Provide guidance, as required, so that COAs are comprehensive and flexible. - Reviews and select/modify COAs for continued analysis.	- Assess relative combat power IOT generate options for commander. - Array forces IOT determine required forces; serves as basis for scheme of maneuver. - Develop broad concept of the operation. - Assign HQ for a grouping of forces. - Prepare COA statements and sketches. - Conduct COA briefing. - Update/revise running estimates, planning guidance, and assumptions. Best Practice: - Specific to the rear/support area, in determining required forces, consider assigning a tactical combat force (TCF) to the MEB so that the MEB can respond to Level III threats or bypassed enemy units. - Also, in developing the task organization for the MEB, be mindful of its span of control. - Ensure that updated planning products are pushed and pulled to/from the MEB.	- Determine task organization required to support each COA in the support area based on Mission Analysis and IPOE. - Ensure MEB's concept of operation for the support area is nested in the broader CONOPS. - Provide supported echelon updated running estimate and key assets/capabilities. Best Practice: - As COAs start to take shape, identify LNOs that the MEB will send to the supported echelon during mission execution; ideally LNOs will be able to cover-down on each warfighting function. - Recommend having MEB LNOs in the G-2, G-3, G-4, G-5, G-33, G-34, and G-35. - Also, as the MEB's task organization is developed, if the commander has concerns about his span of control, (1) MEB planners communicate this to supported echelon's staff along with appropriate recommendations so forces for COAs can be identified, and (2) Have commander-to-commander dialogue about it.

Step	Commander's Actions	Staff Actions/Tasks	MEB Actions/Tasks
COA Analysis	Issue COA analysis guidance.	• Have/get updated products required for conducting analysis. • List friendly forces and key assets/capabilities. • Review assumptions. • List known critical events and decision points which will directly influence mission accomplishment. • Select wargaming method (e.g., belt, avenue-in-depth, box) and method to record and display results. • Execute wargame and assess the results. • Update/refine COAs, potential decision points, running estimates, and assumptions. Best Practice: • As the operations unfold and maneuver forces move forward, what decisions are made by the commander as the rear area expands for part of the analysis. • Plan for mass casualties (CASEVAC/MEDEVAC; movement from point of injury to treatment facility; reorganization; regeneration, etc.). • Plan for displaced civilians and EPWs.	Best Practice: • Between COA Development and Analysis, MEB planners/LNOs should be sufficiently informed to refine and solidify the MEB's plan as it relates to anticipated mission.
COA Comparison		• Compare COAs based on commander's approved evaluation criteria. • Update running estimates, assumptions, and IPOE. • Conduct COA decision brief to commander.	Best Practice: • Conduct hot wash/AAR of MDMP up to this point to capture observations and best practices. • Review and update unit SOP as appropriate.
COA Approval	• Review/approve COA. • Refine intent, planning guidance, and CCIRs. • Identifies and discusses acceptable risk with adjacent, subordinate, and senior commanders.	• Issue the WARNORD to subordinate units with information needed to refine plans (e.g., area of operation, mission, commander's intent, CCIRs/EEFIs, CONOPS, tasks to subordinate units, necessary graphics, updated task organization, etc.). • Update running estimates, assumptions, and IPOE.	• Update/refine MEB initial plans per supported echelon's WARNORD (e.g., terrain management within support area, refinement of support area tasks, etc.). • Refine task organization and finalize preparations for deployment.

Step	Commander's Actions	Staff Actions/Tasks	MEB Actions/Tasks
Order Production, Dissemination, and transition	Review/Approve OPLAN or OPORD	- Reconcile plans and orders to ensure they are consistent and nested with higher echelon's commander's intent. - Conduct orders crosswalk with higher and adjacent commanders to ensure unity of effort and that it meets superior commander's intent. Best Practice: - Include in OPLAN or OPORD requirement for subordinate unit commanders to conduct backbrief to the CG; can either specify a schedule or have subordinate unit commanders schedule one themselves. - Provide schedule and coordinating instructions for the conduct of combined arms rehearsals (CARs). - As operations unfold during execution, to help maintain shared understanding, staffs need to continually ask the following questions: 1. What do I know? 2. Who else needs to know? 3. Have I told them? 4. Was it received and understood?	Upon receipt of approved OPLAN/OPORD: - Analyze supported echelon's plan/order two levels up. - Coordinate with adjacent and unified action partners for planning intelligence, security, and protection operations (threat/hazard, criticality, and vulnerability assessments). - Identifies and prioritizes critical assets to protect. - Assign LNOs to integrate with supported echelon. - Plan/coordinate/synchronize cyber-electromagnetic activities operations, implement knowledge and information management procedures and systems. - If required, refine IPOE and refine products. - Plan/synchronize with supported echelon and adjacent units' movement control in the support area. - Plan recovery operations of personnel and equipment in the support area. - Conduct terrain management planning (establish AOs, specifying locations of proposed elements IOT deconflict activities in support area, designate base/base clusters and assign units to them, plan/ coordinate air defense operations within the AO, identify environmental considerations). - Plan/coordinate/synchronize area and local security. - Plan/coordinate/synchronize protection of sustainment operations within support area. - Plan area damage control operations. - Plan/coordinate/synchronize movement corridor operations. - Plan/ coordinate/synchronize defense in support of civil authorities' operations. - Execute deployment as per OPLAN/OPORD. Best Practice: - If not specified in OPLAN/ OPORD, schedule back brief to supported echelon's commander to ensure clear understanding of commander's intent, tasks and purpose, and relationship of tasks to other elements, to include the rear command post, conducting operations.

Appendix B

	Identify the hazards	Assess the hazards	Develop controls and make risk decisions	Implement controls	Supervise and evaluate
Receipt of mission	x				
Mission analysis	x	x			
Course of action development	x	x	x		
Course of action analysis	x	x	x		
Course of action comparison			x		
Course of action approval			x		
Orders production, dissemination, and transition	x	x	x	x	x



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