

# Multi-functional communications units reorganize under NetOps construct

By MAJ Lan T. Dalat

Back in 2009, Headquarters Department of the Army directed a Force Design Assessment on the brigade combat team that resulted in the mandate of having the Network Operations functions diverted from the brigade Signal company to the brigade S6 section without increasing personnel.

Furthermore, it became evident that more change was needed as the BCT and Multi-functional brigade S6 sections could not meet all requirements necessary to protect and defend the warfighter network. It became necessary to modify the brigade S6 sections in order to address these shortfalls.

According to the NetOps Capabilities Based Assessment in 2009, the current S6 section cannot fulfill nine major gaps within NetOps and Cyberspace/Electromagnetic functions ranging from protecting to defending of mission command networks and systems against threats that potentially prevent commanders and staff from having access to operational knowledge which may hinder the processes of understanding, visualizing, describing, directing, leading and assessing.

The brigade S6 lacked the ability to dynamically respond to network threat events in real time. This potentially offered unauthorized users access to critical operational knowledge. In addition, the section did not have the ability to collect and report

the threat data once intrusion occurs.

To mitigate these known gaps, the director of Capability Development Integration Directorate of the Signal Center of Excellence at Fort Gordon, Ga., proposed the following changes to the force structure of the BCT and M-F brigade S6 section through an expedited and abbreviated process of the Force Design Update which is known within the Army as the FDU Jr. to ensure fast implementation of force design while the Army is still at war. The changes must meet the requirements stated in the Network Operations construct to include Enterprise Management, Network Assurance, Content Management, and 24-hour operations through all phases of unified land operations.

First, the Enterprise Management section within the brigade S6 must establish restoration priorities for assigned systems and networks. Additionally, the section must develop and oversee the implementation of policies, procedures, and special instructions to its users. This section is also involved in coordinating frequency assignment, Satellite Communications access, Request for Service release, Telecommunication Service Request, tactical Telecommunication Service Order preparation and release, and communications system tasking.

Second, within the Network Assurance section, team members must coordinate the efforts of subordinate network control and operation centers to detect, isolate and contain Information Assurance events and incidents.

Next, the Content Management section must establish priorities for information gathering and reporting through the commander's critical information requirements, emerging intelligence from the commander's operations area, emerging operational information and public affairs guidance.

Finally, the Tactical Current Operations or TAC CP section is required to be present in the brigade tactical command post to represent the brigade S6 at the forward area where they advise the commander and/or his staff on the status of all communications issues.

In order to redesign the BCT and Multi-functional Brigade S6 staffs IAW the tenants of NetOps Signal Corps leaders had to find ways to implement changes without adding more Soldiers. There is a delicate balance to reconfiguring the force structure within the brigade S6 section. During the period in which the Army is downsizing, Signal Corps members



Soldiers try out new digital applications.



Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division collaborate using Mission Command applications inside a Tactical Operations Center at NIE 12.1.

have done more with less to ensure mission success. Signal leaders are making sacrifices to ensure the right Soldiers with the right skill sets perform the right missions. In order to maintain superiority in the Network Assurance arena, Signal Corps leaders had to assign one of its best technicians to that post. In doing so, a position of Network Defense Technician in the rank of chief warrant officer three must be added to the Table of Organization and Equipment at the cost of losing the Signal Company's XO as the bill payer.

As stated earlier, the NetOps functions were directed to move from the brigade Signal company to the brigade S6 section without an increase to personnel. Based on that guidance, a key position at the Signal company must be cut to make room for a CW3 with a military occupation specialty of 255S to provide the necessary network assurance for the entire brigade.

In addition to the changes made with the

organization of the brigade S6 section and adding a new CW3 position to the structure, there are many other changes with enlisted personnel in the force structure to ensure mission success. Without these prudent changes, commanders will have reduced mission command essential capabilities that may impact in execution of missions in unified land operations.

*MAJ Lan T. Dalat is a Force Design Directorate Analyst at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. His education includes a Master's in Information Technology Management from Webster University. He is also a graduate of the Command and General Staff College. MAJ Dalat's former positions include executive officer, 36th Signal Battalion, 501st Military Intelligence Brigade S6, commanded U.S. Deployable Communications Module A, 2nd NATO Signal Battalion, and commanded C Co. 53rd Signal Battalion.*

## ACRONYM QuickScan

**BCT** - Brigade Combat Team  
**CBA** - Capabilities based assessment  
**CCIR** - Commander's critical information requirements  
**CDID** - Capability Development Integration Directorate  
**CW3** - Chief Warrant Officer Three

**FDA** - Force Design Assessment  
**FDU** - Force Design Update  
**IA** - Information Assurance  
**M-F brigade** - Multi-functional brigade  
**MOS** - Military Occupation Specialty  
**NETOPS** - Network Operations  
**RFS** - Request for Service

**SATCOM** - Satellite Communications  
**SATCON** - Satellite Control  
**TSR** - Telecommunication Service Request  
**TSO** - Telecommunication Service Order  
**TOE** - Table of Organization and Equipment