Using the Military Intelligence Training Strategy to Conduct Battalion Collective Training

by Major Benjiman A. Smith

Introduction

The 303rd Expeditionary-Military Intelligence Battalion (E–MI BN) recently undertook a deliberate training progression to achieve a "T" rating (i.e., "trained") on military intelligence (MI) specific mission essential tasks (METs) to maintain proficiency as one of the Army's focused ready units. This article describes how the 303rd E–MI BN ("Longhorns") leveraged the recently published Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS) framework to plan, prepare, and conduct a battalion-level field training exercise that tested collective-level proficiency.

This article outlines a way to conduct training of the MITS tasks leading up to Tier 2 collective training for an expeditionary-MI battalion. It further addresses lessons learned by the 303rd E–MI BN during training progression through the four MITS levels: individual, crew, platoon/platform, and intelligence warfighting function. TC 2-19.400, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy*, provides a fundamental understanding of the MITS certification program.[1]

Background and Battalion Task Organization

Operation Longhorn Forge was a battalion-level field training exercise conducted in March 2019. It marked the first time the Longhorns conducted battalion collective training with all organic companies and systems since 2015. Since that time, the battalion had been geographically separated. B/303rd, the collection and exploitation company, was stationed at Fort Gordon, Georgia, in support of intelligence reach; and A/303rd, the counterintelligence (CI) and human intelligence (HUMINT) company, was deploying to and from Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. Both Alpha and Bravo companies had focused on supporting counterinsurgency operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and had limited experience with supporting large-scale ground combat operations to nest under the battalion's METs. The battalion reassembled at Fort Hood, Texas, in October 2018 and conducted reintegration, personnel turnover, and task organization change to return the formation to its modified table of organization and equipment configuration.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Army

Soldiers from the 303rd Military Intelligence Battalion prepare for unit training utilizing a terrain model at Camp Bullis, TX, July 2019.

The expeditionary-MI battalion consists of 285 Soldiers and is task-organized with three organic companies. The companies bring expanded analytical and collection capabilities compared to an MI company assigned to a brigade combat team.[2] The battalion is intended to provide MI support to either a division or a corps headquarters, performing both collection and processing/analysis in support of a combat arms commander. The headquarters detachment contains the intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW) systems integration section (equipped with the AN/TSQ-226(V)2 Trojan SPIRIT) and a wheeled-vehicle maintenance section, in addition to typical battalion-level staff sections. As shown in Figure 1, Alpha Company is organized with CI and HUMINT collection and management teams and contains a HUMINT operations cell to perform analysis and help direct future collection operations. Bravo Company is organized with both geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT) processing, exploitation, and dissemination (PED) platoons, a Tactical-Intelligence Ground Station (TGS) PED platoon equipped with an AN/TSQ-179 TGS vehicle, and a multifunction platoon intended to conduct both SIGINT and HUMINT collection from the Prophet Mine Resistant Ambush Protected–All Terrain Vehicle. The battalion can be task-organized to support multiple echelons across a division or corps commander's area of responsibility. By December 2018, the battalion was manned appropriately and prepared to begin a deliberate training progression oriented on its four mission essential task list (METL) tasks.

Mission: Conduct multidiscipline intelligence operations in support of III Corps and subordinate units during multi-domain operations.

Figure 1. 303rd E–MI BN Task Organization

The 303rd E–MI BN METL tasks are divided into three areas to support both collection and analysis functions:

✦ MET One, *Direct Operational Intelligence Activities*, focuses on the battalion providing command and control over MI operations and integrating into the intelligence architecture necessary to support the combined arms team.

✦ MET Two, *Process Collected Operational Information*, tests the battalion's ability to turn information into intelligence and to manage the information and data required to support a commander's decision cycle. MET Two assumes the battalion will process SIGINT, HUMINT, and GEOINT information collected by the intelligence community, partners, allies, other services within the Department of Defense, and adjacent Army units.

✦ MET Three, *Collect Relevant Information*, tests the battalion's ability to collect HUMINT and SIGINT information in direct support of an operational commander's priorities and decision cycle.

As no published MITS exists to support the expeditionary-MI battalion, the 303rd E–MI BN commander and staff used MITS as a guide to develop a deliberate training strategy to train the 303rd E–MI BN along these METs.

MITS outlines a progression for certification of an MI company in a brigade combat team (BCT); the strategy has been practiced by multiple divisions and is generally led and organized by the division G-2. The strategy identifies nine different crews within the BCT MI company and tests the individuals and crews separately before integrating the intelligence warfighting function into a brigade-level operation. The strategy calls for a deliberate certification progression:
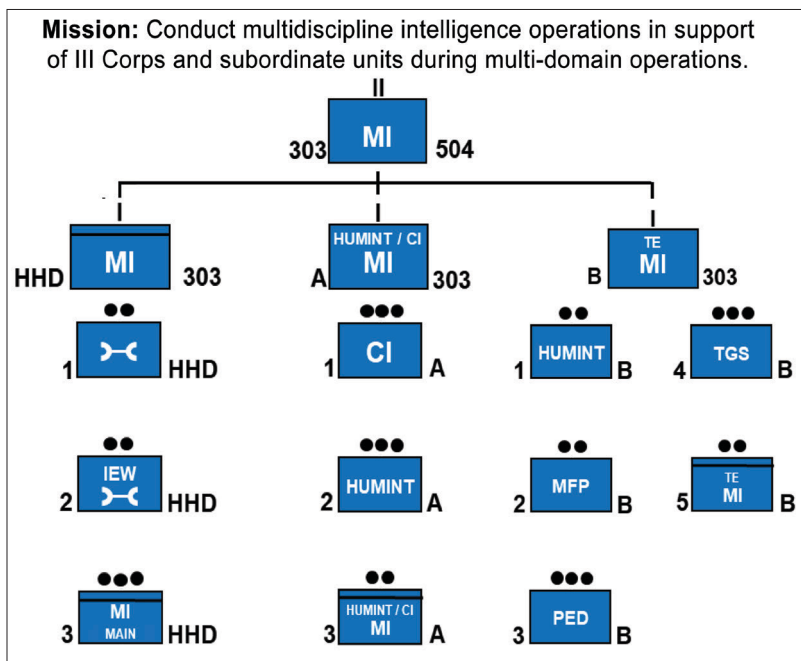
✦ Individual (Tier 4).[3]

✦ Crew (Tier 3).[4]

✦ Platform, intelligence warfighting function (Tier 2).[5]

✦ Intelligence warfighting function, integrated with BCT (Tier 1).[6]

Tier 4 certification focuses on individual military occupational specialty skills. Commanders can utilize institutional, operational, and self-development training courses to maintain their unit's military occupational specialty proficiency.[7] Tier 3 certification culminates with testing small units within the MI company to ensure they can perform a necessary group of tasks that support the intelligence process; these crews are certified in isolation from one another to ensure their performance does not affect or interfere with the other crews.[8] Tier 2 consists of an intelligence warfighting function certification exercise,

which tests MI systems and processes independent from combined arms formations. Units reach Tier 1 when they integrate the MI company and BCT S-2 section into a BCT collective training exercise. This methodical approach to training progression and tiered certification works well for a modular BCT that culminates with a collective training exercise at a combat training center. The 303rd E–MI BN used the MITS concept to develop a 5-month training strategy to progress from Tier 4 to Tier 1, as shown in Figure 2.

The 303rd E–MI Battalion Training Plan and Operational Approach

The Longhorns began their training progression in December 2018, with individual training and new equipment fielding of the Distributed Common Ground System-Army (DCGS–A) software package 3.4. The battalion conducted Tier 4 training throughout the training period, as individual course availability demanded that Soldiers attend specialized military occupational specialty training when possible. Tier 4 training included ongoing GEOINT PED support to U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility and individual training courses, such as:

✦ Source Operations Course.

✦ Defense Advanced Tradecraft Course.

✦ CI Investigations.

✦ Advanced CI Collections Course.

✦ Full Spectrum Counterintelligence.

✦ Tactical Site Exploitation: Document Exploitation, Cellular Exploitation, Media Exploitation.

✦ SIGINT Mode-1.

✦ Basic SIGINT Analytics.

Tier 3 training took the form of company situational training exercises for the battalion's seven MI platoons and the IEW section. The Longhorns used the Fort Hood Foundry site (Intelligence Training Center of Excellence) and the Fort Hood Mission Command Training Center to isolate the MI crews and train junior officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers to lead their organizations. HUMINT and CI crew training included live interrogations and source meetings, and incorporated the operational management team. TGS, SIGINT, and GEOINT PED training was mostly conducted at the Fort Hood Foundry site and used Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Tactical Proficiency Trainer (IEWTPT) simulation to generate the volume of reporting necessary to challenge analysts. The multifunction platoon conducted live training throughout Fort Hood using Stratomist to simulate a sophisticated communications environment to facilitate signals training. The battalion staff conducted a staff-specific training scenario at the Fort Hood Mission
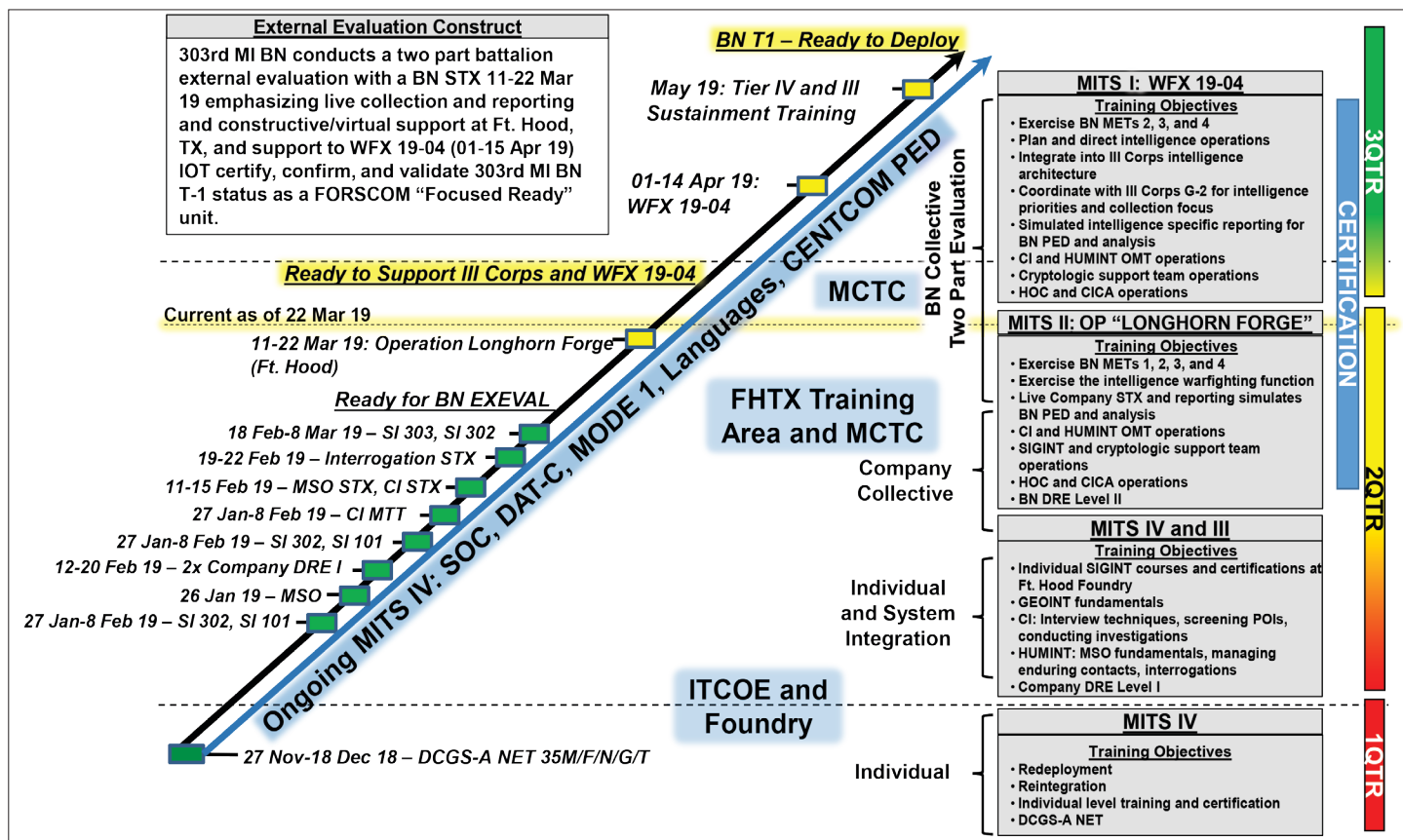

Figure 2. 303rd E–MI BN MITS and Campaign Plan

Command Training Center to prepare the staff to conduct command and control and integrate the battalion's crews into a collective training event. Throughout Tier 3 training, the battalion's IEW section performed multiple MI system communications exercises, which ensured that MI digital systems could communicate. By the middle of March 2018, the Longhorns were staged to progress to battalion collective training.

Expeditionary-MI Battalion Collective Training

The 303rd E–MI BN conducted a two-part certification exercise to progress from Tier 2 to Tier 1 in March–April 2019. The Tier 2 exercise, Operation Longhorn Forge, was a battalion collective training event conducted and resourced from Fort Hood, which included live, virtual, and constructive simulations to unite all intelligence disciplines under a common scenario, as shown in Figure 3. The Tier 1 exercise was the 303rd E–MI BN support to Warfighter Exercise 19-04, a III Corps digital event conducted across Fort Hood and bases throughout the central United States.

✦ from the tactical level (multifunction platoon collection against a ground threat),

✦ to the division close area (interrogations at the detainee holding area, TGS support to the division tactical command post), and

✦ to the division consolidation area (SIGINT and GEOINT PED in support of the division main-command post).

The 303rd E–MI BN chose to consolidate all HUMINT Soldiers under A/303rd to maximize role players and detention facility training resources. The Army's Caspian Sea decisive action training environment scenario formed the common background for the exercise.

Operation Longhorn Forge was designed to stress the battalion's organic communications architecture as much as possible. The battalion used Trojan SPIRIT, the battalion's organic intelligence communications platform, and a closed network database at the Fort Hood Foundry site to link data acquired from the Prophet collection platform with simulated reporting from the IEWTPT. This allowed the SIGINT and GEOINT PED sections to access reporting across the breadth of simulated collection platforms in both the upper and lower enclaves. Secure frequency modulation and the newly fielded Joint Battle Command Platform enabled the MI platoons to test tactical reporting systems and send spot reports to move information quickly and support the commander's decision cycle. An expeditionary-MI battalion is not resourced with organic communications systems to access the Army's
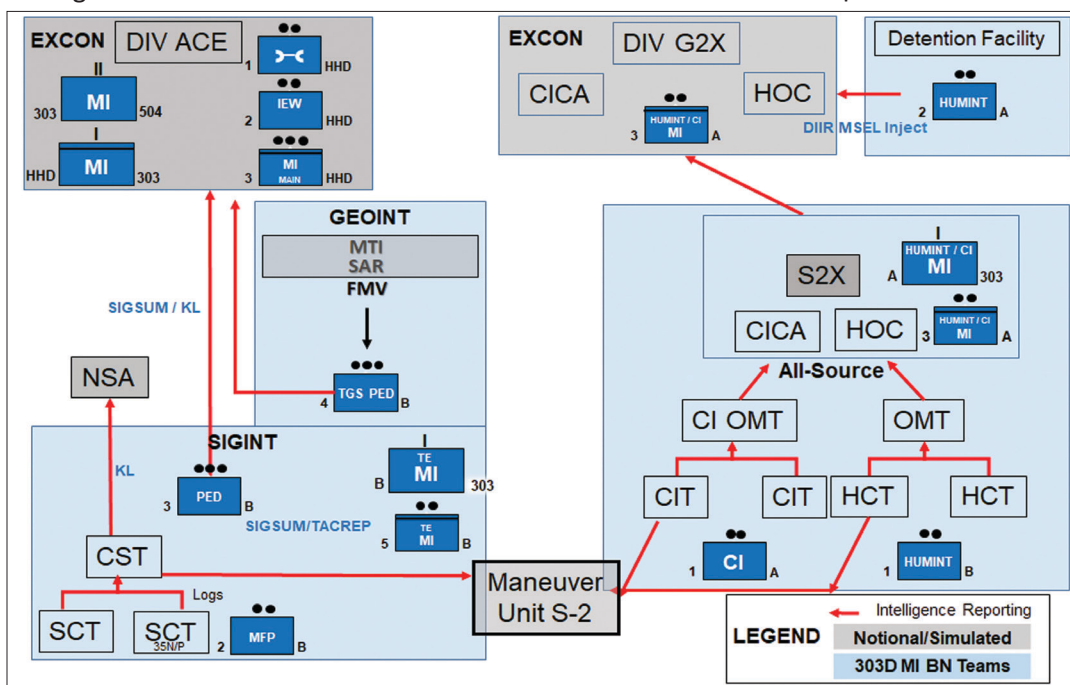

Figure 3. Operation Longhorn Forge Task Organization

Operation Longhorn Forge was designed to put all organic parts of the expeditionary-MI battalion into action during a single exercise, without partnering with a combined arms headquarters. The 8-day training event involved 162 Soldiers, including all seven MI platoons and the wheeled-vehicle maintenance and IEW sections (Figure 4 on the next page). The battalion task-organized its platoons at different locations throughout Fort Hood to simulate the ways in which an expeditionary-MI battalion would support a division commander during large-scale ground combat operations—

Warfighter Information Network-Tactical, so the battalion staff used a Fort Hood Digital Tactical Operation Center Site to connect to the Non-classified Internet Protocol Router Network and simulate connecting into a division's G-2 and main-command post network architecture. Overall, the exercise was an effective way to test all systems and processes within the intelligence enterprise before integrating the intelligence warfighting function into a larger collective training event.

The battalion also prioritized stressing its organic logistics and support systems in order to practice expeditionary

deployment operations. The battalion used the unit's organic very small aperture terminal system to access the Global Command and Control System-Army and order maintenance parts. The wheeled-vehicle maintenance team provided organic recovery support throughout the operation. Although the expeditionary-MI battalion is not organized with food service or refueling assets, the S-4 section established daily logistics missions to provide Class I and III supply, replicating how the expeditionary-MI battalion would pull resources from the supported division's sustainment brigade.

Figure 4. Operation Longhorn Forge—MITS Tier 2

Tier 1 training and the battalion's culminating training exercise was accomplished by integrating operations into the III Corps Warfighting Exercise 19-04. The III Corps team planned and resourced this event. The Longhorn Battalion provided SIGINT and GEOINT PED support to the III Corps staff and provided MI command and control for intelligence collection systems in constructive simulation. As a digital warfighting exercise, this event did not include a live-collection mission for the HUMINT, CI, or multifunction platoons. Exercising the intelligence warfighting function in isolation during the MITS Tier 2 event allowed the Longhorn Battalion to improve the organization's systems and pro-

cesses, which helped the organization to integrate successfully into a larger training event.

Lessons Learned for Future Expeditionary-MI Battalion Collective Training

The 303rd E–MI BN's approach to training highlighted the following lessons learned for future MITS Tier 2 events:

A systematic training progression from crew and platoon to battalion collective is necessary to operate effectively as a team. The Army's MITS is easily adapted to the expeditionary-MI battalion training for large-scale ground combat operations. MI crews and platoons must understand their specific functions and understand how they integrate into a division's operations. Each crew and platoon requires a specific set of resources to train together.

Leverage expertise from the organization's senior warrant officers to plan and resource the best training events. An expeditionary-MI battalion is organized with multiple senior HUMINT, SIGINT, CI, and IEW warrant officers. Integrate these players into the battalion's overall training plan to design a scenario and communications architecture that will replicate expeditionary-MI battalion operations across a division's area of responsibility.

Study combined arms doctrine to understand how an expeditionary-MI battalion could and should best integrate into a division's operations. The expeditionary-MI battalion can task-organize in multiple ways to support the needs of a combat arms commander. Some Army doctrine is rather outdated (ATP 3-91, *Division Operations*, was last updated in 2014 and still refers to the legacy battlefield surveillance brigade),[9] but intelligence planners must have a thorough grasp of combined arms warfare to understand how an expeditionary-MI battalion will support a division commander's operations.

The IEW section must conduct multiple MI system communication exercises to establish a functioning intelligence architecture. The IEW section has the unenviable task of maintaining and integrating a host of MI systems into the intelligence architecture, including DCGS–A, GEOINT Workstation, TGS, Command Post of the Future, Intelligence Fusion Server, and both SIGINT and HUMINT program of
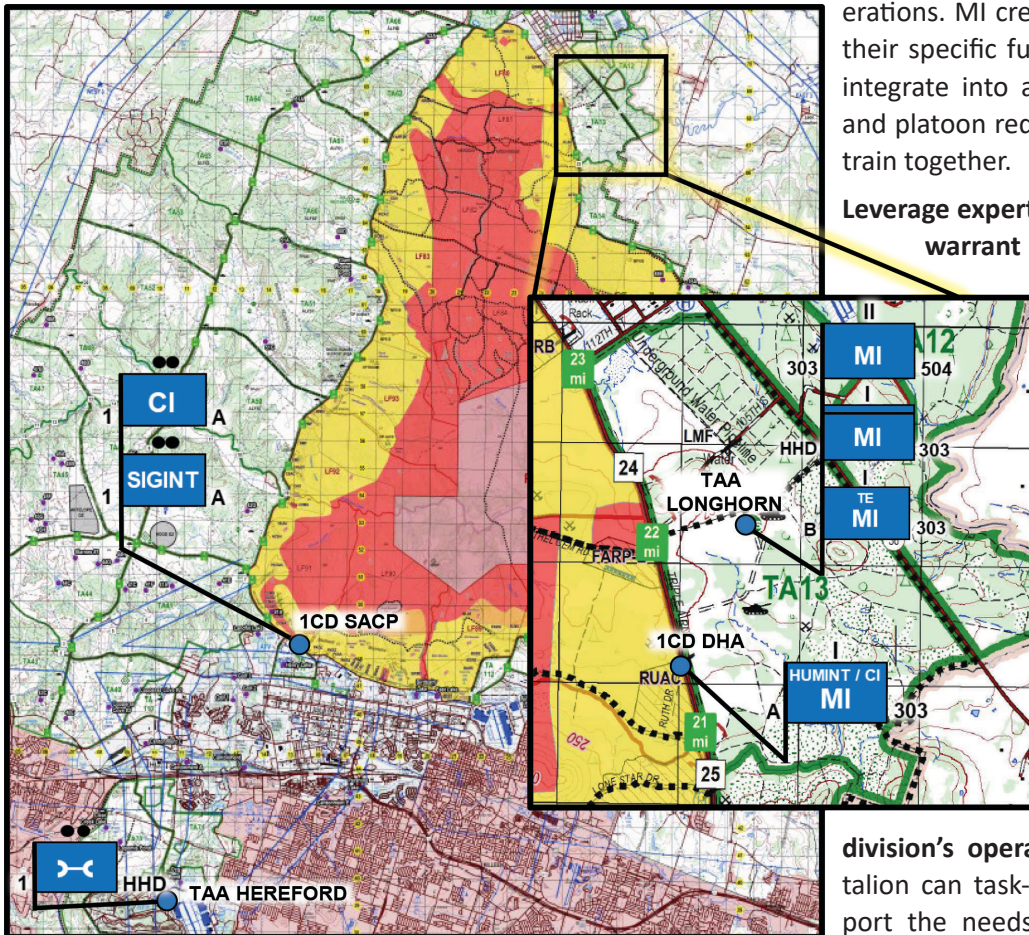
record B-version trucks. Conduct MI systems communications exercise in conjunction with Tier 3 crew and platoon training to establish working MI systems and economize IEW technical expertise.

Integrate live, virtual, and constructive resources to tailor requirements for all MI platoons. MI platoons require a variety of resources in order to benefit their training audience. Incorporate resources to simulate live collection and PED, including HUMINT/CI role-player support, GEOINT platforms such as the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, Stratomist, or other signals-replicating equipment. Incorporate intelligence simulations such as IEWTPT from the installation Foundry site to augment live collection and replicate the volume of reporting necessary to engage the PED platoons.

Resource observer-coach-trainers from higher headquarters and adjacent units to evaluate training progression. The 303rd E–MI BN resourced observer-coach-trainers from the 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and III Corps G-2 section to provide the appropriate subject matter experts to evaluate MI collection, processing, and analysis. Use the task evaluation criteria matrixes published through the Army Training Network as a guide for evaluating crews and platoons.

Whenever possible, integrate combat arms formations and a division G-2 section into the Tier 2 exercise. The multifunction platoon and HUMINT platoon will likely operate in conjunction with a combined arms force during large-scale ground combat operations. Integrate an infantry, cavalry, or armor formation as a training enabler to provide the MI platoons with a partner force to conduct intelligence operations. Integrate military police elements at the detainee holding area to stress detainee handling procedures. When available, request that a division G-2 section establish a cell collocated with the battalion command post to rehearse reporting intelligence and information to a supported headquarters.

Conclusion

Expeditionary-MI battalions can use the MITS framework as a guide for conducting battalion collective training. A proper Tier 2 certification exercise must stress all elements of the expeditionary-MI battalion and use live, virtual, and constructive training enablers to tailor training for each intelligence discipline. The 303rd E–MI BN successfully utilized the MITS framework to develop and implement a training strategy for the unit METL tasks supporting both its collection and analysis missions. ✴

Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, Training Circular (TC) 2-19.400, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO]), 1 August 2019) (common access card [CAC] login required).

2. Department of the Army, *2019 MI Battalion Expeditionary–Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE)*, Document Number 34425KFC01 (Washington, DC, 17 October 2018).

3. Department of the Army, TC 2-19.404, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy for the Brigade Combat Team Tier 4* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 23 January 2019) (CAC login required).

4. Department of the Army, TC 2-19.403, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy for the Brigade Combat Team Tier 3* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 23 January 2019) (CAC login required).

5. Department of the Army, TC 2-19.402, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy for the Brigade Combat Team Tier 2* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 20 May 2019) (CAC login required).

6. Department of the Army, TC 2-19.401, *Military Intelligence Training Strategy for the Brigade Combat Team 1* (Washington DC: U.S. GPO, 14 May 2019) (CAC login required).

7. Department of the Army, TC 2-19.404, *MITS for the BCT Tier 4*.

8. Michael Adamski and William Denn, "82nd Airborne Division Military Intelligence Training Strategy Lessons Learned," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 45, no. 1 (January–March 2019): 33–39.

9. Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication 3-91, *Division Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 17 October 2004).

MAJ Ben Smith currently serves as the J-2X Foreign Entity Vetting Branch Chief at U.S. Transportation Command. His previous assignments include operations officer for the 303rd Expeditionary-Military Intelligence Battalion. He holds a master of science in strategic intelligence from the National Intelligence University and a bachelor of arts in history from the University of Dayton.

DID YOU KNOW?

Throughout World War II, nearly 19,000 Soldiers went through the two-month combat intelligence training course at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, Maryland.