

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Response to Maj. Matthew S. Blumberg's "The Integrated Tactical Network: Pivoting Back to Communications Superiority"

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I am responding to the article "The Integrated Tactical Network: Pivoting Back to Communications Superiority" by Maj. Matthew S. Blumberg, U.S. Army.

I have commented before about mission command and I have said that the commander who can utilize the modern communications, signal, and data will be the one very successful in mission command.

Why? The radio was the tool that made mission-type orders happen in World War II. Corps would issue orders via the radio, division then pushed that down, as did the subordinate units. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army orders were on one piece of paper with an overlay on the back.

When looking at sustained operations in World War II, much of the day-to-day operations were not covered in any order unless there was a specific change. Staffs knew the other staffs up and down the chain. Staffs worked together to ensure that combat operations were not negatively affected by their jobs.

### The Integrated Tactical Network Pivoting Back to Communications Superiority

Maj. Matthew S. Blumberg, U.S. Army

While the U.S. focus was focused on Iraq and Afghanistan over the past two decades, our nation's most dangerous adversaries set their sights elsewhere: Russia, China, North Korea, and others prioritized investments in advanced communications equipment, cyber capabilities, and cognitive warfare technologies. At the tactical level, the advances made by these adversaries cast serious doubts on whether the U.S. Army has maintained its technological or communications edge. Because the Army's current and future combat operations, missions, and mission command are increasingly dependent on tactical networks, there is justified concern regarding its ability to maintain the tactical advantage. This is not a new phenomenon



(left) is working on the equipment with the Army's Future Command, the Network Core Functional Team and other core functional teams. (right) Army program executive officer (PEO) and other stakeholders. Early indications are positive, with initial requirements established through joint capabilities documents. Recently, the Army vice chief of staff pushed a directed requirement to have M41A1 with Joint IPTN operational use. Overall, the proposed IPTN architecture is fundamentally sound and offers significant advantages over existing tactical networks. However, the IPTN concept is plagued by an excessive lack of accuracy across the Army and the Joint Force. Additionally, there is overconfidence and there are important assumptions that technical solutions can overcome words doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and policy (DOTMLPFI) deficiencies.

**What Does History Tell Us?**  
The tactics of Army historically relies on sound tactical communications for beyond line of sight.

To view this article, please visit <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/May-June-2020/Blumberg-Int-Tactical-Network/>.

When you look at the size of a tactical operations center (TOC) from brigade on up, it is an anchor to the maneuver force. How can your tactical operations center maintain maneuver beyond sixty miles plus and keep up with the speed of battle? What is needed to keep the commander and the TOC moving, supplied with a current common operational picture and with a reduced signal footprint?

One brigade commander of the Third Infantry Division (3rd ID) who took part in Desert Storm fought from his M1A1 Abrams main battle tank. The 3rd "Phantom" Brigade, 3rd ID, with its infantry, armor, cavalry, field artillery, engineer, and forward support battalions conducted a 110-kilometer movement to contact in Desert Storm.

How do we do that today?  
**Master Sgt. Karlen P. Morris, U.S. Army, Retired**