



**FM 5-0**  
(FM 101-5)

**Army**  
**Planning and Orders**  
**Production**

**JANUARY 2005**

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# Army Planning and Orders Production

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## **Preface**

Doctrine provides a military organization with unity of effort and a common philosophy, language, and purpose. FM 5-0 is the Army's keystone manual for planning operations. It is the Army's doctrinal source for problem solving, the military decision making process (MDMP), troop leading procedures (TLP), and formats for Army plans and orders.

### **PURPOSE**

FM 5-0 promotes a common understanding of the fundamentals of planning and provides the foundation for developing tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for planning in all Army publications. It provides a doctrinal approach to decision making that helps commanders and their staffs examine a situation, reach logical conclusions, and make informed decisions. FM 5-0 is the common reference for planning within the Army education system.

### **SCOPE**

FM 5-0 includes MDMP and formats for plans, orders, and briefings formerly found in FM 101-5. Staff responsibilities, staff officer duties during preparation for and execution of operations, rehearsals, information management, and liaison duties formerly addressed in FM 101-5, are now covered in FM 6-0.

Chapter 1 describes the Army's approach to planning and discusses the nature of plans and planning activities. Chapter 2 discusses Army problem solving in general terms and prescribes the steps of the Army problem solving process. Chapter 3 explains the MDMP. Chapter 4 discusses TLP. The appendixes are planning tools to assist commanders and staffs in planning, decision making, orders production, and military briefings.

### **APPLICABILITY**

FM 5-0 applies to all Army leaders. Chapters 1 and 2 contain doctrine and TTP that apply to planning and solving problems at all echelons throughout the institutional and field Army. The primary audience for Chapter 3 is battalion-through corps-level commanders, leaders, and staffs. Chapter 4 applies to leaders and Soldiers at company-level and below. The appendixes support Chapters 2 through 4.

Doctrine in FM 5-0 applies across the spectrum of conflict (peacetime military engagement, smaller-scale contingencies, and major theater war), and the range of operations (offense, defense, stability, and support). FM 5-0 does not detail tactical missions or the use of forces during operations. The examples provided are guides only, showing general application procedures.

Army headquarters serving as the headquarters of a joint force land component or joint task force should refer to JP 5-0 and other joint planning publications. Additionally, Army service component commands, and headquarters serving as

ARFOR headquarters, should also refer to FM 100-7 for Army-specific, operational-level planning considerations.

### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Terms that have joint or Army definitions are identified in both the glossary and the text. The glossary lists most terms used in FM 5-0 that have joint or Army definitions. Terms for which FM 5-0 is the proponent manual (the authority) are indicated with an asterisk in the glossary. Definitions for which FM 5-0 is the proponent manual are printed in boldface in the text. These terms and their definitions will be incorporated into the next revision of FM 1-02. For other definitions in the text, the term is italicized and the number of the proponent manual follows the definition.

The glossary contains referents of acronyms and definitions of terms not defined in JP 1-02 and FM 1-02. Some common abbreviations and acronyms—for example, the abbreviations for military ranks and publications—are not spelled out; refer to the glossary. Additionally, since *ARFOR* is a defined term as well as an acronym, it is not spelled out.

All references to annexes refer to annexes to operation plans (OPLANs) or operation orders (OPORDs) unless stated otherwise.

Unless stated otherwise, masculine nouns or pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

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## Introduction

Modern military staff procedures can be traced back to the formation of the Prussian general staff under General Helmuth von Moltke in the late nineteenth century. As warfare became more complex, doctrine on planning and decision making evolved in an effort to help commanders make decisions better and faster than their opponents. While the beginning of a modern staff system in the US Army emerged during the American Civil War (1861-1865), doctrine regarding staff procedures, decision making, and planning was limited until World War I.

Not until the 1924 publication of *Field Service Regulations* did Army doctrine show formatted orders with annexes, maps, and tables. Even then, doctrine only alluded to the requirement for leaders to make an “estimate of the situation” and follow a deliberate process that culminated in a decision.

In 1932, the first manual for staff officers was published under authority of General (later General of the Army) Douglas MacArthur. The 1932 *Staff Officer’s Field Manual* provided the US Army’s first comprehensive command and staff doctrine on which today’s staff procedures are based. The 1932 manual described staff functions, explained a five-step commander’s estimate process, and provided detailed formats for operation orders.

In August 1940, the first FM 101-5—*Staff Officer’s Field Manual, The Staff and Combat Orders*—was published. The doctrine established was broader in scope and depth than that of the 1932 manual. It defined terms and standardized graphics, and discussed commander and staff responsibilities more precisely. It guided Army commanders and staffs throughout World War II and for almost five years thereafter.

FM 101-5 was revised five times between 1940 and 1984. In May 1997, 13 years after its last revision, FM 101-5, then titled *Staff Organization and Operations*, was republished. It focused on command and staff relationships, staff organizations, staff officer responsibilities, the military decision making process, and the mechanics of producing orders. Additionally, it added doctrine on information management and two central concepts of Army command and control (C2) doctrine: the commander’s intent and commander’s critical information requirements (CCIR).

FM 5-0 marks the sixth revision of FM 101-5 since it was first published. Together, FM 5-0 and FM 6-0, replace FM 101-5. FM 5-0 now addresses only planning. FM 6-0 addresses C2, staff organization and operations, the duties of and relationship between the commander and staff, information management, rehearsals, and liaison. This organization mirrors a similar distinction made in joint doctrine.

The doctrine FM 5-0 prescribes is built on two central precepts: (1) commanders are responsible for planning and (2) effective planning incorporates the concept of mission command.

*Commanders are responsible for planning.* Their knowledge, experience, and personality—along with how they interact with their staff and units—drives the

planning process. While staffs complete much of the detailed analysis and preparations of plans and orders, commanders play a central role in planning through their commander's intent, CCIR, and planning guidance. These guide the activities of the staff and subordinate commanders. Staffs assist commanders with the coordination and detailed analysis necessary to convert the commander's intent, CCIR, and planning guidance into a plan or order.

*Effective planning incorporates the concept of mission command.* Mission command, the Army's preferred C2 concept, concentrates on the objective of an operation and not on every detail of how to achieve that objective (see FM 6-0). Successful mission command results in subordinate leaders at all echelons exercising disciplined initiative within the commander's intent. Staffs support mission command when they produce mission orders. *Mission orders* is a technique for completing combat orders. This allows subordinates maximum freedom of planning and action to accomplish missions and leaves the "how" of mission accomplishment to the subordinates (FM 6-0). FM 5-0 applies this technique to planning and describes how to produce mission orders.

To understand FM 5-0, readers must understand the fundamentals of full spectrum operations described in FM 3-0 and the art of tactics described in FM 3-90. They must discern how the activities described in FM 3-07 carry over and affect offensive and defensive operations. They must recognize the operations process (plan, prepare, execute, and assess) described in FM 6-0, and understand how mission command, commander's visualization, and exercising C2 influence planning. FM 5-0 also refers to joint publications. Reviewing these joint publications stimulates understanding of how Army planning supports and complements joint planning.

Many of the examples provided are based on offensive and defensive operations. Tactical planning for stability operations and support operations is performed in a similar manner to offensive and defensive operations. However, applying combat power in offensive and defensive operations is different than in stability operations and support operations. Planning horizons may be longer and the emphasis on civil considerations greater. FM 3-07 provides planning considerations for stability and support operations.

FM 5-0 expands Army planning doctrine. To plan effectively, planners and commanders must appreciate the nature of planning and plans. Planners must understand the purpose, environment, and characteristics of the planning process. Knowledge of FM 5-0 forms the basis for this understanding.

# Chapter 1

## Fundamentals of Planning

*Successful generals make plans to fit circumstances, but do not try to create circumstances to fit plans.*

General George S. Patton Jr.

This chapter provides an overview of the nature of planning. It describes how planning is part of the broader field of command and control (C2) and an essential activity of the operations process. It emphasizes mission command as the preferred C2 concept for planning operations in uncertain and fluid environments. It describes how planning supports decision making and includes the fundamentals of planning. This chapter also provides key planning concepts, to include how time, uncertainty, and risk influence planning. It describes effective planning and discusses the pitfalls that commonly impede it. Finally, this chapter addresses how modern information systems enhance planning.

### NATURE OF PLANNING

1-1. Military operations are uncertain and unpredictable. They are complex endeavors—struggles between opposing human wills. Commanders face thinking and adaptive enemies. They can never predict with certainty how enemies will act and react, or how events will develop. Even friendly actions are difficult to predict because of friction, such as human mistakes and the effects of stress on individuals. Leaders who understand the dynamic relationship that time and uncertainty have on enemy and friendly forces are better equipped to develop effective plans. Given the nature of operations, the object of planning is not to eliminate uncertainty but to develop a framework for action in the midst of it.

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1-2. *Planning* is the means by which the commander envisions a desired outcome, lays out effective ways of achieving it, and communicates to his subordinates his vision, intent, and decisions, focusing on the results he expects to achieve (FM 3-0). The outcome of planning is a plan or an order that—

- Fosters mission command by clearly conveying the commander's intent.
- Assigns tasks and purposes to subordinates.
- Contains the minimum coordinating measures necessary to synchronize the operation.
- Allocates or reallocates resources.
- Directs preparation activities and establishes times or conditions for execution.

1-3. A plan is a continuous, evolving framework of anticipated actions that maximize opportunities and guide subordinates through each phase of the operation. A plan may be a formal, articulated document or an informal scheme. Since planning is an ongoing process, a plan is an interim product of planning based on information and understanding at the moment that is subject to revision. The measure of a good plan is not whether execution transpires as planned but whether the plan facilitates effective action in the face of unforeseen events.

*Any plan is a framework from which to adapt, not a script to be followed to the letter.*

FM 3-0

1-4. Full spectrum operations demand a flexible approach to planning that adapts planning methods to each situation. An effective planning process structures the thinking of commanders and staffs while supporting their insight, creativity, and initiative. The Army uses three different, but related processes to guide planning activities:

- Army problem solving.
- The military decision making process (MDMP).
- Troop leading procedures (TLP).

1-5. Army problem solving provides a standard, systematic approach to define and analyze a problem, develop and analyze possible solutions, choose the best solution, and implement a plan of action that solves the problem (see Chapter 2). Problem solving applies to all Army activities and provides the base logic for the Army's two tactical planning processes: MDMP and TLP. The MDMP is more appropriate for headquarters with staffs. It provides a logical sequence of decisions and interactions between the commander and staff for developing estimates and effective plans and orders (see Chapter 3). At lower tactical echelons, commanders do not have staffs. Leaders at company level and below use TLP to plan and prepare for an operation (see Chapter 4).