



Bundessprachenamt

Referat SMD
Auftragsnummer

Übersetzung aus dem Deutschen ins Englische

Originaltitel Sind OBL und Führen mit Auftrag das Gleiche?

Zieltitel Are OBL and Mission Command the same thing?

überprüfte Übersetzung

unüberprüfte Übersetzung



Forsvarets høyskole

Are OBL and Mission Command the same thing?

An analysis with special emphasis on the leadership techniques of the German and Norwegian Armies.

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Masteroppgave Forsvarets høyskole 2016

Dette er en engelsk gjengivelse av originaloppgaven på tysk (Sind OBL und Führen mit Auftrag das Gleiche?), oversatt av forfatteren selv.

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit analysiert die Streitkräfte in Deutschland und Norwegen im Hinblick auf Auftragstaktik. Es wird ein geschichtlicher Überblick gegeben. Anschließend werden beide Armeen im Hinblick auf Führung, Erziehung und Ausbildung analysiert. Die Arbeit kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass in Deutschland die Auftragstaktik praktische Konsequenzen hat. In Norwegen bleibt sie jedoch auf der Ebene einer allgemeinen Philosophie stehen.

Summary

This paper analyses the armed forces of Germany and Norway with a special view to mission-type tactics. A historical overview will be given. Afterwards both armies will be analysed with regard to leadership, education and training. The paper comes to the result that mission-type tactics in Germany has practical consequences. In Norway, however, mission-type tactics does not exceed the status of a general philosophy.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The leadership philosophy of mission-type tactics is legendary. Much has been written about it in good German tradition. It was and still is considered as the guarantor of the success of the Wehrmacht. Van Creveld calls it the cause of Hitler's quick successes. Its origins have been explored, as Oettinger has done. Its slow end in the face of bureaucracy has been explained (Senger) and even its "death", including the attempt to resuscitate it, has been described (Uhle-Wettler). But all these studies and all this research have come to a halt at the level of philosophy. The special features that the German armed forces have developed due to their isolation of almost 200 years have been discussed on the sideline only. These special features in the fields of leadership, education and training, which – sometimes contrary to NATO practice – are kept as a tradition by the Bundeswehr still today, have never been analysed. The aim of this paper is to contribute to closing this gap.

This seems to be necessary especially as mission-type tactics is a phenomenon which is difficult to grasp until today. All western armies are conducting research in this area. The Bundeswehr, generally considering itself as the "guardian" of mission-type tactics, often complains about the end of this philosophy. There is hardly any soldier who does not protest as soon as a superior goes into detail during the issuance of orders or during a check. But while a querulous basic mood is considered to be good form so to speak with regard to the end of mission-type tactics in Germany, other countries are conducting research on it. The lectures that are given at Forsvarets Høgskole (FHS) are intended to serve as an example in that regard. These lectures deal with the origins and the implications of this philosophy. It is generally considered to have been implemented in the Norwegian armed forces.

However, when the author of this paper – a typical "product" of German officer education and training – came to Norway and was thrown into the Norwegian staff and planning process without much preparation, he did not find essential elements of mission-type tactics as understood in Germany. Occasionally he even had the impression that the Norwegian planning process is incompatible with mission-type tactics as it is practised in Germany.

Nevertheless, each Norwegian officer the author talked to about this observation was astonished, yes even uncomprehending. "Yes, we also have mission-type tactics or oppdragsbasert ledelse. We, the Norwegians, have known this for a long time already. We have adopted them from you." The relevant Norwegian doctrine, Forsvarets fellesoperative doktrine, leaves no doubt in this regard in Chapter 6.2, Para. 06008:

Kommando og kontroll i Forsvaret er basert på oppdragsbasert ledelse (...)

In the next paragraph, Para. 06009, the doctrine clearly shows what it means by mission-type tactics:

Oppdragsbasert ledelse innebærer at alle oppdrag må sees i lys av intensjonen med oppdraget. Det skal følgelig skapes rom for desentraliserte beslutninger i sjefens ånd. Opplysninger knyttet til hva og hvorfor er derfor langt viktigere ingredienser i ordre og styringssignaler enn opplysninger knyttet til hvordan.

Along the same line, the German Army Regulation HDv C1-100, *Truppenführung von Landstreitkräften* (Command and Control of Land Forces), stipulates in Chapter 2, Para. 2002:

Mission command is the supreme command and control principle in the German land forces. It provides subordinate commanders with freedom of action in executing their orders. The extent to which freedom of action is granted depends on the type of missions to be accomplished.

The two Armies even agree as regards the preconditions for mission-type tactics. In the second sentence of Para. 06010, the Norwegian FFDO doctrine also stipulates the following: *En slik veksling mellom sterk ordrestyring og desentralisert handlefrihet krever trening og en betydelig grad av tillit.*

Para. 2003 of the German Army Regulation HDv C1-100 reads as follows:

Mission command is based on mutual trust: (...)

Then the regulations differ, however. The German regulation requires superiors to tolerate errors and stipulates that mission-type tactics involves accepting errors committed by subordinates. Then it describes where this tolerance has its limits and what can and must be demanded from subordinates with regard to individual responsibility and the willingness to assume responsibility. The paragraphs 2006 to 2009 of HDV 100/100 focus on subordinates.

By contrast, the Norwegian regulation warns superiors not to give orders which are too detailed. It requires them to delegate decisions to subordinates. Otherwise, the willingness to take decisions and accept responsibility would be destroyed. The paragraphs 0611 and 0612 of the Norwegian doctrine underline the responsibility and role of the military leader.

Both Armies have obviously raised mission-type tactics to their dominant leadership philosophy. Thus, according to the individual observations by the author of this paper, there is a gap between the regulations and his practical experience.

This gap leads to the following question:

Are OBL and mission command the same thing?

An analysis with special emphasis on the leadership techniques of the German and Norwegian Armies.

1.2 Definitions

The term "mission-type tactics" is misleading because it is not about tactics at all. The term "tactics", which is derived from Greek meaning the "art of arranging things", describes how forces are employed. This paper, too, will use the term "mission-type tactics" nevertheless.

1.2.1 Mission-Type Tactics and Order-Type Tactics

Within this paper, mission-type tactics is defined as a leadership philosophy that aims at a decentralisation of power. As responsibility is delegated, mission-type tactics involves a controlled loss of control.

It is the opposite of order-type tactics. While mission-type tactics focusses on the question "What is the aim?", this question only plays a subordinate role in order-type tactics. Here the questions "How?", "When?" and "Where?" are much more important. Mission-type tactics grants subordinates as much freedom of action as possible. By contrast, order-type tactics requires subordinates to follow instructions as closely as possible.

1.2.2 Leadership Philosophy and Leadership Technique

Within this paper, the term "leadership philosophy" implies a generally applicable idea of leadership, power and responsibility. It is about a basic principle which has the effect of a standard. It is intended to have an effect on the leadership technique which is hierarchically subordinate to the leadership philosophy. Leadership techniques, in turn, describe all practical methods of leadership. They include training, leadership and education of the entire military apparatus, but also of the individual soldier.

1.2.3 OBL and Mission Command

OBL, or oppdragsbasert ledelse, is the Norwegian term for the Norwegian leadership philosophy. It has its roots in mission-type tactics. By contrast, "Führen mit Auftrag" (mission command) is the term for the German leadership philosophy. The term "Auftragstaktik" (mission-type tactics) does not exist in German regulations. In everyday speech, the terms "Führen mit Auftrag" (mission command) and "Auftragstaktik" (mission-type tactics) are used synonymously, however. For this paper, the basic hypothesis is that OBL and mission command are leadership philosophies of identical origin which are summarised here under the generic term of "mission-type tactics".

1.3 Method

This paper is designed as a qualitative study. It is a descriptive analysis of the historical backgrounds and the current regulations in Forsvaret and in the Bundeswehr. Subsequently, the results will be analysed and interpreted.

This analysis and interpretation is largely based on participating observation. The author is a product of German officer training who has completed the career of a typical infantry officer up to the rank of major. Afterwards, he was posted to Norway where he took part in tactical courses up to division level. Subsequently, the author participated in the Norwegian general staff officers' training and thus gained a deep insight into the Norwegian view of things.

It cannot be denied that the author's interpretation of the results has been influenced by his personal biography. For this reason, the author will point out in the relevant sections of this paper that a statement or interpretation is based on personal experience. This is supposed to give the reader the possibility to assess the reliability and scientific value of the statements (Jacobsen 2015, p. 166 seqq.).

It must be stressed that the fellow students of the author in Germany and Norway did at no time have the feeling of participating in a scientific study. The author himself was not aware at the time that his experience would be suitable for such an analysis. This is important as the soldiers

concerned learned all their lessons in a "*natural setting*" (Creswell, 2014, p. 185). The results thus obtained are interpreted inductively, and generally applicable rules are derived from it.

1.4 Delineation

This paper does not offer deductive evidence. It does not analyse the integration of the armed forces into society. It does not deal with political requirements. This is especially important as tight political requirements could suffocate mission-type tactics. The effects of mission-type tactics, such as excessive bureaucracy, will not be mentioned, described or examined either. The same applies to the effects of the *revolution in military affairs*. The digitisation of warfare will change mission-type tactics. For this paper, it does not play any role. During the comparison of the Armies, only those differences or similarities will be dealt with which concern leadership, education and training. The background is that the historical section will show that mission-type tactics develops in these core areas.

Main Part

2 History

2.1 Germany's Special Approach

The historical consideration of mission-type tactics actually starts with a historical error. Anyone who listens to German combat force officers and asks them about the history of mission-type tactics, will be surprised to hardly hear the name of Moltke but rather the names of Gneisenau or Scharnhorst. Every time, however, Frederick II of Prussia, affectionately called "old Fritz" or Frederick the Great in Germany to this day, is mentioned almost inevitably. His military success is not only attributed to his military genius but also to his force commanders who often took decisions independently. The probably most famous independent decision in accordance with the superior command's intent and without an order is von Seydlitz' cavalry attack during the Battle of Rossbach.

But especially Frederick the Great was in favour of independent action to a very limited extent only – if at all – and was rather inclined towards strict obedience. The claim that force commanders should have freedom of action was discussed at that time already. Prince Frederick Charles, for example, felt obliged to stress in a letter to his king that Prussian officers did not know or could not handle exceedingly tight rules and regulations as used by other European powers (he especially mentioned Russia and England). He wrote that a Prussian officer needed a certain degree of freedom to be able to freely develop his capabilities. This was the only way to support success at any time, he argued. Even against the order of his commander, if absolutely necessary (Uhle-Wettler, 1992, p. 133).

It can be proved by numerous examples, of course, that the Prussian generals enjoyed much more freedom of action than their foreign counterparts. It may be that the Prussian spirit, also called Prussian virtues at the time (and called secondary German virtues today) was the reason for exploiting every success beyond any order. This was fertile ground for the mission-type tactics that was employed later on. It was not the seed of it, however!

Germany's complete military breakdown in the face of the French attacks under Napoleon shows very clearly that one cannot say that the German/Prussian conduct of combat operations was superior.

Napoleon's column tactics, harshly criticised by the Prussians as bad style, did not only sweep away the linear tactics with their rigid forms and constraints. The twin battles of Jena and Auerstedt (the youngest field-grade officer on the German side being 64 years old) represented the seminal catastrophe which, in a long and difficult process, developed those leadership mechanisms that are informally called "Auftragstaktik" (mission-type tactics) in Germany today (Senger, 2011, p. 29).

One cannot praise the historian Stephan Leistenschneider enough for having written the book *Auftragstaktik im preußisch-deutschen Heer 1871-1914* (Mission-Type Tactics in the Prussian-German Army 1871-1914) which is a very nice-to-read and detailed analysis of the development of mission-type tactics.

Leistenschneider vividly describes that mission-type tactics has its root in the Prussian reforms of 1806. It then took until 1906 (i.e. an almost 100-year-long process), through the wars of German unification, before mission-type tactics was reflected in the Prussian drill instructions for the infantry in the form of a German-language regulation.

Reformers like Stein, Gneisenau and Scharnhorst created a new liberal order which continues to have repercussions to this day. It should be sufficient here to mention key phrases such as compulsory military service, abolishment of the privileges of the aristocracy, achievement principle and consistent academic training at specifically established war academies.

Compulsory military service and the credit system ensured that the political elite no longer had to rely on a limited, standing army. Now there was almost unlimited access to both most important political factors of war, namely money and personnel. In political terms, a war thus reached a completely new dimension.

But in military terms, too, the gate to a new age was pushed open as a result of the changes carried out by the Prussian reformers. With his unfinished and really long-winded book *Vom Kriege* (On War), Clausewitz completely redefined war. War was now no longer seen as something calculable and something that follows rules. From now on, war was considered to be something chaotic, unanticipated and, above all, unknown. For the unanticipated, von Clausewitz used the word "Friktionen" (frictions) and for the unknown he coined the term "Nebel des Krieges" (fog of war). Both are platitudes of the German officer corps and NCO corps to this day; they can be heard during each conversation in an officers'/NCO club¹.

The maintenance of the command and control capability was massively threatened by the disappearance of rules, rapidly growing conscript armies and (thanks to technical progress) increasing speed. While Frederic the Great was still able to watch and lead friendly and hostile forces in the terrain in front of him from the "commander's hill", this became impossible with the appearance of mass armies. The Prussian-German Army Command realized this dilemma and first responded slowly and then more and more intensively. The liberation wars against France (1815) and Denmark (1864) as well as the war of German unification against Austria (1866) clearly showed that although Germany had won every time, this could not at all be taken for granted. The independent actions of individual commanders were sometimes helpful for the purpose of the overall objective. Sometimes they were counterproductive, however. Military success was the result of improvisation and flexibility and not the product of comprehensive, brilliant military planning.

Up until the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Moltke succeeded in increasingly integrating force commanders in accordance with the intent of the superior command. Despite frictions, mission-type tactics – which as a term did not exist at the time – prevailed. At the tactical level, however, the Prussian Army still fought in a battalion column, a formation stemming from the year of liberation. As a result, it suffered high losses in some cases during the liberation of Schleswig-Holstein and in the war of German unification. Opportunities were carelessly missed. Moltke was striving until the end to delegate responsibility down to the tactical level. He had at least the company level in mind. He believed that this was the only way to gain sufficient flexibility to transform a tactical success into an operational or even strategic victory.

The military leadership was in danger of almost completely losing control during the Franco-Prussian War as well when the entire corps, misinterpreting the situation, launched battles which had never been planned this way. The Prussians deserve credit for the fact that this initiative was

¹ Even today, the German Army Regulation HDv 100/100 contains the defining sentence that a leader must often establish his point of main effort on spec – with an incomplete or even missing situation picture.

not punished; it was the moment of a military genius who realised the inconsistency of strict obedience and autonomous actions. Helmut von Moltke, Chief of the General Staff from 1857 to 1888, realised that it was not sufficient to delegate responsibility to the corps level (Senger, 2011, p. 29), and that the local commanders, watching the battlefield, could not wait but required freedom of decision. This was the only way for them to seize every tactical opportunity and to turn it into a success. It was Moltke who realised that, thus, there were going to be two different types of commanders from then on. One who, knowing his forces and the terrain, leads from the front just like before and exploits every opportunity. And one who sits in front of a situation map and focuses on the great whole. What Frederic the Great had done alone on the commander's hill until then, was then divided. This division of responsibilities also resulted in a decentralisation of power. Moltke's search for an element which could combine the requirements of these two different types of commanders showed his real genius. He invented "leadership through directives". He presented his own intent, and this intent had to be made known to every soldier. During the battle, each soldier was supposed to bring his/her actions into line with this intent. With, without or against an order. This was the beginning of mission-type tactics. Given this analysis of new military dimensions, Senger rightly calls von Moltke the forerunner of mission-type tactics (Senger, 2011, p. 29).

In 1888, i.e. in his last year of service, Moltke achieved the breakthrough. From then on, battalions and regiments went into battle as company columns. This meant that battalions and regiments were no longer led into battle in closed formation. Commanders at that command level were then able to coordinate assets and time autonomously. Much more important, however, was the right and the possibility to establish reserves because in military terms a reserve is a force without a mission that can be employed at the discretion of its commander. Thus, regimental and battalion commanders were suddenly able to autonomously block enemy penetrations, launch counterattacks and reinforce their own units. Below battalion level, i.e. at company level, the reserve becomes so small that it does no longer play a tactical role. It therefore makes no sense to employ the reserve at company level. As a result of Moltke's innovation to enable company commanders to exercise command and control in combat, however, the authority to deploy forces in closed formation was delegated downwards in the hierarchy. Company commanders and platoon leaders were now free to decide, lead, seize opportunities and act autonomously (Millotat, 2002, p. 12 ff).

This type of organisation was revolutionary and is common in each western army still today. It enables company commanders to become an element which can decide battles.

However, it was not at all clear right from the start that, in parallel with this new organisation, the leadership principle of mission-type tactics would also become accepted or even develop to become the "DNA" of all German armies today. The obvious contradiction between strict obedience on the one hand and freedom of action on the other hand seemed to be a dilemma which could not be resolved. How was it possible to overcome this contradiction in leadership, education and training – the core elements that enable a military leader to form an efficient army? The solution was to further develop leadership through directives, which had already been practised by von Moltke. It was "the higher commander's intent" which became the factor combining obedience and freedom of action. Thus, it was no longer the higher commander's order which was the determining parameter but the purpose and intent of this order. As a result, the military leader was and is not only obliged to provide assets, personnel and time for a mission but he must also allow his subordinates the freedom to deviate from this mission as required by the situation. This deviation may have such an extent today that subordinates do not carry out a mission at all if they assume that their superior would not have given the initial order if he had possessed the same information his subordinates have available now. The basic requirement no longer was blind formal obedience, and the military was no longer determined by

following orders to the letter but internal discipline, composure and the iron will to perform one's duties.

This resulted in considerable resistance within the new German armed forces. The term "mission-type tactics" was long used as an insult by opponents of this new philosophy. These officers were convinced that, also and especially because of the lessons learned in previous wars, mission-type tactics would inevitably end in chaos. These officers were concerned that Germany – which was surrounded by superior enemy forces because of its geopolitical situation and therefore had to use every conceivable advantage – was even experimenting in a core area of military order. They were also concerned that NO other military power in Europa to be taken seriously took a similar approach. On the contrary, the centralisation of the power structures seemed to increase especially in the Anglo-Saxon area because of the rising complexity of the battlefield. The discussion between preservers and innovators continued. The preservers, as opponents of the new philosophy, criticised the word "mission" as being part of the order and built up a "mission-type tactics versus order-type tactics" conflict.

They committed a cardinal error, however. Mission-type tactics, too, cannot do without orders and obedience. On the contrary: It even requires more discipline and also internal discipline. For a soldier who is allowed to use every means, including the refusal to obey an order, to achieve a higher purpose, must

- 1) potentially do more than was originally expected from him/her;
- 2) justify his/her autonomous decision to his/her superior later on;
- 3) justify himself/herself for not having taken action.

Leistenschneider identifies a preserver as the one who has coined the term "mission-type tactics". It was Lieutenant-General von Boguslawski, who wrote as late as in 1892 that he had serious doubts about the viability of mission-type tactics. When reading the original quotation, one can almost hear the mockery in the voice of the 3-star general: "The big question is whether we are on the right track as regards our mission-type tactics." (Leistenschneider, 2002, p. 101)

Eventually, two foreign conflicts helped mission-type tactics to succeed. First it was the analysis of the Boer War in South Africa (Senger, 2011, p. 29). When analysing this conflict, the Germans came to the result that the Anglo-Saxon tactics did not react flexibly and rapidly enough to the partisan warfare of the Boers. Indeed, the British did win the conflict only because they took the relatives of the Boers to concentration camps. The Boers gave up when they heard about the conditions in these camps. Militarily the British never were a match for the Boers, who were fighting autonomously and in a flexible way. The second conflict was the Russo-Japanese War. The Japanese, who had exported mission-type tactics to the Far East in addition to canons and ships made by the armaments companies Krupp and HDW, destroyed the Russian fleet in the war of 1904/05. The Russians lost their entire fleet in individual sea engagements, while they were able to sink only three torpedo boats of the enemy (Stern, 27 May 2005).

In 1906, the debate finally ended. The drill regulations of the infantry then obliged military leaders to check whether a deviation from the mission was expedient. The question of a fundamental change in the situation, which made it possible to rescind a decision or an issued order, was now becoming part of German order formats. You have to read it twice at least to realise the dimension of the matter. A German officer is obliged to continuously check the order given to him and to ignore it, if necessary. This tactics was and is still trained during leadership education and training (Senger, 2011, p. 29).

In a typically German manner, this innovation was integrated into training so thoroughly that it motivated Germany to achieve maximum performance or that Germany was led into disaster. Thanks to training documents of a World War II officer which were found by chance in the 1930s, 22 map exercises also survived to this day. Map exercises simulate war situations and are

intended to train thought processes. The participants are supposed to show how they would solve a military problem. The output at the end is a plan showing how the battle is launched. Most armies (including the Norwegian one) train that way until today. In most cases, it is "paperplay" without real forces. The map exercises of the 1930s distinguished themselves by only four of them training a thought process, however. The remaining 18 soon or later confronted the exercise participants with the situation of having to check and, if necessary, ignore the issued order and to state which course of action they intended to follow, i.e. which new order they wanted to give to themselves in order to implement the higher commander's intent (Uhle-Wettler, 1992, p. 135).

Fundamental changes in the situation are trained in officer and NCO training still today. These are always situations in which the leader in charge must take a far-reaching decision on his own that makes him deviate from his original mission and that forces him to ask himself two questions:

- 1) What contribution can I make so that my superior is able to implement his intent?
- 2) Would he have given the order to me if he had known what I know now?

In order to be able to appropriately answer these two questions, a corps of leaders needs a common understanding of the higher commander's intent. As a result of this finding, the training of each post incumbent is at least one level higher than actually required by the tactical post. In the case of officers, the Bundeswehr even goes one step further by training each officer from the rank of second lieutenant in such a way that he/she is able to command and control battalions at the operational level. This capability is part of the qualification to become an officer and will be checked in a written examination. Those wishing to become a senior officer must attend an obligatory course for land forces. This course enables the participants to command and control a brigade. In each of these training courses, dealing with fundamental situation changes is a central part of the curriculum. The objective is to enable each commander at any level to follow the lines of argument at the next higher command level or sometimes even three hierarchical levels higher, to "read" the battle and to act in accordance with the higher commander's intent. This was not the end of the development of mission-type tactics yet, however. The treated elements of mission-type tactics were implemented in the German field service regulations as early as in 1894 and 1908. And, as already mentioned, the infantry integrated this leadership culture in its drill regulations in 1906. It was still a long way to go from order-type tactics to education in thinking and acting independently, however.

Acting independently in the military was considered by contemporaries as an affront or as something impossible. The well-known soldier and poet Rudolf G. Binding commented serial number 38 of the field service manual, which reads:

"Resolute action remains the first priority in war. Every man - from the highest commander to the youngest soldier - must always be conscious of the fact that omission and inactivity are worse than resorting to the wrong expedient."

Binding's comment was as follows:

"Incredibly daring that! The juxtaposition of highest commander and youngest soldier! This demand on an army of millions! - They² cannot emulate that. The French field service manual has no similar provision...Yet by no means has resolute action always been regarded as the first priority in war."

² Germany's enemies. The majority of the remaining world at that time already.

This assessment is correct. No enemy raises independent action of his military personnel to a guiding principle, not even today, apart from a few exceptions³ (Milotat, 2002, p. 17). In everyday German military language, Binding's pompous wording has somewhat flattened. Nevertheless, the proverb "Better a wrong decision than no decision at all!" and the even more simplified and blunt saying "If shit at all, than real shit", which is used in the NCO corps, permanently accompany the German soldiers' everyday life in all rank categories.

The outbreak of the First World War was to demonstrate the superiority of the new concept on European soil for the first time. The result is the birth of a myth which represents mission-type tactics as the "Holy Grail" of the German Armed Forces to this day. At the beginning, there was a military problem again. Just as the enemy, Germany surprisingly faced the question of how it was possible to break through a trench system in the depth without being able to destroy the reserves of the enemy by artillery at the same time. For the range of the German artillery was not long enough. The success of an attack was therefore mainly dependent on whether the breakthrough could be managed before the enemy was able to concentrate his reserves at the point of penetration. Lack of time during the conduct of tactical combat operations thus became the decisive problem.

Germany, which was inferior in this war from the beginning, had to reckon with this problem much more than the Entente, which was superior by a factor of three even in its worst times. The two opponents solved this problem in very different ways. It is another myth of historiography that the soldiers engaged in the First World War were only sitting in their trenches and awaiting a piece of metal that would fly into their heads. Without a plan. Without a strategy. On the contrary. Also and especially on the rigid Western Front where the war was waged much more statically than in the east. Numerous technical but especially strategic and tactical innovations of warfare emerged on these battlefields. The book of Colonel Groß is highly recommended in this context.⁴ The same applies to the less academic but well-written book *In Stahlgewittern (The Storm of Steel)* of Ernst Jünger. It is a masterpiece about the First World War of this great author.

The Entente developed the approach to build large armoured vehicles on tracks and to equip these vehicles with heavy machine guns and other tank guns. This was intended to create striking power and save one's own troops. The Germans recognised this approach, but had doubts about it.⁵

As a result of the heavy losses suffered in the first few years of the war⁶ and due to its scarce resources, Germany developed a new and mobile method of attack from 1917 onwards. The assets used were infantry, artillery and – notably – mission command. The objective was to achieve a higher degree of flexibility, mobility, surprise and speed. Surprise was ensured by a new artillery firing procedure which made an adjustment of fire unnecessary. Enemy artillery was engaged with gas and the infantry was massively supported by artillery during its attack operations. For this purpose, the infantry was reorganised into so-called assault forces or storm troopers. They were equipped with light machine guns, handguns, hand grenades, flamethrowers and grenade launchers. They were designed to probe the main fire trench of the enemy behind the rolling barrage of the friendly artillery and to identify weak spots. When such a weak spot had been identified, a penetration was carried out irrespective of open flanks and abandoned enemy elements. The aim was to break through the trench system. Heavy security teams

³ The U.S., which is one of the exceptions, and its approach to autonomous action will be discussed later.

⁴ See Bibliography.

⁵ Allegedly, the German leadership first considered it inconceivable that tanks could be commanded by land forces. As the Navy was believed to be the only armed service to have experience in the use of large and heavy firing platforms (i.e. in the form of its ships), the matter was initially handed over to it. Numerous naval commands and terms are therefore used in Germany's armoured forces to this day.

⁶ Especially after the dramatic experience made in Verdun in 1916.

followed and provided cover.⁷ The objective of the infiltration was an unplanned penetration at the tactical level which was designed to be extended to a strategic breakthrough later on. The Supreme Army Command issued the following directive:

"Despite all planned preparations and precise regulations, an attack does not proceed mechanically, commanders must command and control, everyone must act autonomously." (Groß, 2002, p. 152)⁸

This new tactic has become known as "Gefecht der verbundenen Waffen" (combined arms combat) and is the core of each tactical training of the German armed forces. It was only in 1999 that it was renamed "Operation verbundener Kräfte" (composite land force operations) because of the extended task spectrum. It is a type of combat which relies on cooperative thinking, especially among combat support troops. This also and especially applies to the company level. The author himself was a company commander in the armoured infantry and in the airborne infantry for almost six years. He led reinforced companies of both service branches in combat, during manoeuvres and during operations within the extended task spectrum and knows that a company commander leads 15 to 20 elements on the three-dimensional battlefield by means of a radio set. Artillery, engineer, army aviation, air defence, close air support, naval gunfire, foreign combat arms and reconnaissance elements. Each with their own special capabilities and possibilities. The company commander himself leads by watching the terrain, with a rudimentary map and without a staff element which could relieve the strain on him. He is nearer to the battlefield than any other military tactical decision-maker. He therefore relies on each of his aids closely following the battle, continuously interpreting the enemy, terrain and intent as well as thinking and acting cooperatively. A very good company commander has his organic subunits and platoons under control. An excellent company commander can say the same thing about all those who support him. At the end, victory is not the result of a single genius but of successful team work. Defeat, by contrast, may be the result of the failure of one single element, especially if one's own forces are inferior. The company commander himself can be this element. The author of this paper has even experienced that weak company commanders were successful nonetheless because of their capable subordinates and supporting forces.

The lessons learned about combined arms combat, mission command and autonomous decisions even against an explicit order left their mark on the German armed forces. These lessons were taken in by the young front-line officers of that generation and were burned into their minds. Among these officers were Rommel, Guderian, von Kleist and Manstein. Whoever gets hold of one of the few copies left of Erwin Rommel's book *Infanterie greift an (Infantry Attacks)* and has some military expertise, will immediately recognise this. These officers were to take their experience into the next war and thus create a new myth, namely the "blitzkrieg", which never really came into existence, however.

The German military waged an intense fight in the course of which the increasingly well-developed mission-type tactics increasingly became an integral part of army warfare. Regulations were adapted, and the German decision-making process became more and more sophisticated and accomplished. Especially the analysis of the mission, including an examination of whether a fundamental change in the situation had taken place, gained in importance.

No less a person than Charles de Gaulle confirmed with regard to the First World War: "How else could the permanent success of the German armies against so many opponents be explained. All in all, they suffered 1.7 million killed in action. But as they were better trained than anyone else, they were able to kill 3.2 million of their enemies in action. They lost 750,000 prisoners but made 1.9 million prisoners" (Uhle-Wettler, 1992, p.135).

⁷ Incidentally, this was another decisive innovation which has strongly influenced the battlefield ever since. Fire and manoeuvre. No manoeuvre without fire. No fire without manoeuvre.

⁸ This did not help, however. Germany achieved some tactical successes but it was not able to conduct deep operations without tanks or trucks.

Nevertheless, it must be stated clearly that this attempt to make the strategic level depend on the tactical level eventually failed. Without wishing to describe Operation *Michael* (1918) on an epic scale, it is nevertheless intended to serve as an example of how tactical successes were squandered or did NOT result in a strategic breakthrough.⁹

As I do not want to hold out hope especially to the German readers of this paper who do not have a broad knowledge of history, I would like to state outright that everything was in vain. Germany lost the war.

When Germany analysed after the First World War why it had been defeated, the appointed commissions came to an astonishing conclusion, however. It was not the excessive number of enemies which was the cause.¹⁰ Instead, the stab-in-the-back myth¹¹, leadership errors and a distortion of the attack plans, especially the Schlieffen Plan, were considered as the cause. While an almost naive conclusion was reached at the strategic level, a very professional and consistent evaluation was carried out at the tactical level. In the years between the end of the First World War and the seizure of power by the National Socialists, the fate of the German defence was in the hands of von Seeckt. He commanded the Reichswehr and added a further heritage to the German armed forces which has a lasting effect to this day. While the whole of Europe evaluated the First World War in the way that trench warfare was the future, von Seeckt came to another conclusion. He knew that Germany would have an inferior number of forces in a further armed encounter as well. Accordingly, with the experience of the world war at the back of his mind, he concluded:

- Whoever is inferior must conduct a mobile defence.
- Whoever conducts a mobile defence must attack.

Attack has become and still is the determining maxim. Even in the defence, which was trained for the very first time then, the counterattack was the top option among one's courses of action. The extreme arms limitations which had been imposed on the Germans resulted in a total lack of modern weapon systems. Mission-type tactics, now a firm element of the German military and interpreted as something unique worldwide as early as then, and manoeuvre warfare were supposed to compensate this deficiency in case of another armed encounter.¹² However, the Reichswehr did not have sufficient assets to exercise these new mobile tactics. All it could do was carrying out map exercises and employing trucks that served to simulate tanks (Groß, 2002, p. 156 ff).

Then the National Socialists assumed power in Germany. They provided the military with all assets that had been longed for. The idea of mobile combat and mission-type tactics now

⁹ The very good treatise on "Operation Michael" by Christian Haller is recommended here for additional information.

¹⁰ At that time, public opinion in Germany was in line with the saying "The more danger, the more honour". It did not occur to them that there could have been too much honour.

¹¹ A propaganda lie. Allegedly, the German Army had not been defeated but political treason had led to the loss of the First World War. The term "Dolchstoßlegende" (stab-in-the-back myth) is widespread in Germany.

¹² Germany always had the geostrategic problem of having two open flanks. France, which has become Germany's closest ally only after a long reconciliation process following the last world war, was perceived as a threat in the west. Even the father of the author still learned at school that France was Germany's "hereditary enemy". And in the east there was Russia. That relationship has always been ambivalent. The trauma of the Russian invasion had a long-lasting effect, however. The experience of 1945 and of the preceding invasions left the impression in Germany to be encircled by enemies. Germany's accession to NATO could never fully eliminate this feeling. Only NATO's expansion to the east, which was mainly driven forward by the German government, ensured that Germany has been "encircled by friends" since the end of the 1990s. In parallel, Germany recognised its borders for the first time in 1990, and this recognition was returned. It took a long way, i.e. almost 120 years and two world wars, to reach this status. The increased strength of the National Front in France, with its anti-German politics, and the Crimean Crisis thus arouse primeval German fears believed to have already been forgotten. At the same time, Russia is demonstrating extreme aggressiveness. As a result, Germany took the decision in January 2016 to gradually increase its defence budget by €4 billion each year from €33 billion to €125 billion.

encountered perfectly suited assets: combustion engines, tanks, radio sets. Germany focused on building light tanks so as to increase mobility. In order to compensate for the inferiority of these tanks and to develop striking power, it was decided after long discussions to employ this new branch of service not as infantry support but as a closed formation. Because of the enthusiasm for this idea and due to the conviction that one's own leadership philosophy was superior, attacks became a dogma. Defence and delay operations were hardly trained any more. At best, they served to prepare an attack.¹³

The Reichswehr developed to become the Wehrmacht. A rapid buildup phase began. The motorisation, training and equipment could not keep pace with the rapid buildup phase. The key service regulation applicable at the time was Army Regulation HDv 300, *Truppenführung* (Command and Control of Armed Forces), issued in 1939. It demanded an education which created independent and energetic leaders who acted in accordance with the higher commander's intent (Sigg, 2014, p. 73 ff). Mission-type tactics were presented as THE central leadership philosophy. That was the definitive manifestation of the new idea in the German regulations. Nevertheless, when Germany joined the war, the Wehrmacht was not at all the highly-trained "fighting machine" as which it is often presented still today. Hitler did not expect a war against the West. There could be no question of a strategy or even a blitzkrieg concept (Frieser, 1996, p.16 ff). The campaign against Poland could just as well have ended in a fiasco. Most military personnel had not yet internalised mission-type tactics and combined arms combat. At that time, only 16 of the 157 divisions were able to conduct combat operations in a motorised way and in accordance with mission-type tactics. As a result, a training campaign was carried out which was intended to correct these deficiencies (Groß, 2002, p. 159).

Then the western campaign started. Despite excellent preparatory planning in line with Moltke¹⁴ and despite preparations against frictions of any kind in line with Clausewitz, the campaign against France almost ended in a disaster. This had already been recognisable in the planning phase. Unclear command relationships, complex reorganisations and diverging tactical opinions complicated the whole undertaking in such a way that the freedom of action of the leaders of all levels was increased considerably so as to solve potential problems (Sigg, 2014, p. 234).

This freedom of action, which is inseparably connected with mission-type tactics, finally ensured victory. Erwin Rommel and Heinz Guderian are to serve as examples here. At the outbreak of the campaign, Rommel behaved like an unleashed German shepherd. He rushed forward and crossed the river Meuse at a speed which even surprised his superior command. He exercised command and control while personally watching the terrain (as a division commander!), helped to build rafts if problems occurred, led combat assaults of an infantry battalion and hurried his men forward, exploiting each tactical opportunity. As a division commander, he acted like the First World War combat patrol leader he once was. As such, he improvised continuously and without any planning. If his bridge material was used up, he just appropriated to himself the first suitable material available elsewhere. In one case, it was the material of an adjacent division. When the heavy tanks of this division had to cross "his" bridge, he placed these tanks under his control as well. At the same time he advanced further and further. When he received a halt order, which served the purpose of establishing a link with the adjacent divisions, he ignored it. When Hitler gave the order personally on 16/17 May, Rommel did not even answer the radio call and continued fighting. Occasionally he penetrated so far into enemy territory that the French called

¹³ The author himself was also trained so as to always consider attacks to be the "crown" of all types of combat. Each of the author's commanders considered attacks to be their training focus. Even delay or defence situations always ended with a counterattack in order to "regain the initiative". This applies to all command levels at which the author has been trained.

¹⁴ "A mistake in the initial assembly of the armies can hardly be compensated in the further course of the campaign!", quotation by Moltke according to Sigg, 2014, p. 234.

Rommel's 7th Division a "ghost division" and that even his own HQ sometimes did not know at all where Rommel's division was located.

The boundary between mission-type tactics during offensive operations and foolhardiness is often blurry and one can rapidly turn into the other one.

The same happened as regards Guderian. He even commanded an armoured corps. In his memoirs he wrote: "I took decisions independently until the arrival at the Atlantic near Abbeville. The higher command exerted an inhibiting influence on my operations most of the time!" (Guderian, 1951, p. 82). He, too, crossed the Meuse extraordinarily fast, continued his attacks autonomously while ignoring various halt orders and coordinating independently with the Air Force and thus dictated the course of action to his superior command. Guderian did not adopt Rommel's trick of "not being contactable via radio", however. Instead, he was removed from his command for half a day because he had confronted his superiors with the statement that their warfare was too static and that they did not realise in his opinion that it was now possible to defeat France. This short-term removal from his command was the only way to enforce Hitler's halt order. But as soon as he had assumed his command again, he continued as before. The halt order was still valid but combat reconnaissance was allowed. Guderian took this opportunity by conducting reconnaissance operations with his armoured corps as far as to the Atlantic coast. France was defeated (Sigg, 2014, p. 243 ff).

Only those men who had learned to act independently in the trenches of the First World War were able to develop the courage to disobey Hitler's orders, act autonomously and impose the course of action on their own operational command. Guderian and Rommel, but also von Manstein, often acted without or even against Hitler's explicit orders, also later in the war. That was the secret of the Wehrmacht. Although the blitzkrieg was later often interpreted by Germans and others as a planned phenomenon, it must be stated clearly that the collapse of France was not planned and that the Germans themselves were surprised by their success.¹⁵ If subordinate leaders of all levels had not constantly acted for the purpose of the overall objective, sometimes even disobeying orders, the Germans would not have been as successful as they were. Many German generals had not yet recognised the possibilities offered by the combustion engine. (Guderian is rightly celebrated in the Bundeswehr as the "father of the tank force" to this day.) However, the Battle of France also showed the limits of mission-type tactics. The decentralisation of the initiative was successful and placed pressure on the Allies. If it fails, however, it can result in a complete breakdown. Hitler, who usually was an advocate of absolute obedience, (still) forgave them and even decorated them at the time. The decisive factor to find favour in his eyes was success. In case of failure, the refusal to obey orders – which was then an integral part of mission-type tactics – was severely punished. In the course of the war, Guderian was removed from his post, Manstein was relieved of his command and Rommel was forced to commit suicide. It became more and more risky to disobey Hitler's orders. Be it to rescue forces or to prevent defeats.¹⁶ Paulus and the decision not to break out with the 6th Army show how it ends if a subordinate leader does not have the courage to take decisions which are opposed to the order issued by his superior. For mission-type tactics means that a subordinate must act and decide on his own. For a superior it means, however, that he may have to live with the errors of his subordinate. Under Hitler, that was possible to a very limited extent only. In the end, one's fate partly depended on the dictator's personal sympathy or his mood on a specific day. Nevertheless, excellent examples of members of the Waffen-SS (Armed SS) and the Wehrmacht can be found even until the last day where officers in charge even risked their own lives in order to rescue other lives or to gain tactical advantages. An example I would like to mention here is

¹⁵ I highly recommend the book *Blitzkrieglegende (The Blitzkrieg Legend)* by Frieser.

¹⁶ Nothing else was more important in the Wehrmacht from 1942 onwards.

SS General Hausser who, in order to prevent a second Stalingrad, abandoned the city of Kharkov, thus disobeying Hitler's order.¹⁷

Uhle-Wettler, an analyst of mission-type tactics, thinks that mission-type tactics "died" in parallel with the end of the Second World War. His article "Auftragstaktik – was ist das? Können wir sie wiederbeleben?" (Mission-type tactics – what is it? Can we revive it?) of 1992 should be read in this connection. In the academic field, there is no thesis without an objection, of course. The Koblenz-based Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre of the Bundeswehr would be greatly astonished about a thesis which diagnoses the death of mission-type tactics. Ever since the establishment of the Bundeswehr, this centre has been tasked to further develop this leadership philosophy and to adapt it to the respective conflicts of the nation. This development process started directly with the lessons learned from the crimes of the National Socialists. Colonel Wolf Graf von Baudissin, one of the founding fathers of the Bundeswehr, pointed out in this connection that although the infantry drill regulations of 1906 were able to bring about tactical advantages by means of planned disobedience, this disobedience was not suitable to prevent war crimes. He stated that the misuse of military virtues could not be prevented by mission-type tactics. The political will curtails the freedom of the military leader. Hitler's halt orders and interventions across all hierarchical levels are a shining example of how it is possible to ruin mission-type tactics. The example of Hitler also shows that mission-type tactics had so far been about a tactical advantage only. It was purely about military skills. This was about to change. Baudissin therefore dared to make a decisive modification. In the future, soldiers of all levels should not only ask themselves "What does my superior command want?" and "How can I contribute to it?" but also "For what purpose does my superior command want it?" The objective was to enrich mission-type tactics by a moral component and to provide the soldiers with a moral conviction, so to speak, in addition to their military duties. This inner attitude, this moral superiority is meant in the Bundeswehr today if one talks about "Innere Führung" (leadership development and civic education)¹⁸ (Senger, 2011, S. 30). The Bundeswehr, then for the first time a German military force that was not isolated but integrated into NATO, caused concern among its allies, however. When it was established in 1955, it intensively employed mission-type tactics and even more intensively engaged in combined arms combat, but now had to fight in a multinational framework. In order to defend Western Europe, NATO developed the General Defence Plan. This plan specified exactly where a tank had to be positioned and how it had to shoot. The contents of the plan were trained twice a year. It was a war simulation under real-world conditions. With a German division deployed beside a British, a French and an American division. The idea was to fight shoulder to shoulder. These manoeuvres usually went wrong, however, because the Germans even held their positions when all allies had long been forced to withdraw and had used up their forces under the simulated Communist attacks.

And the Bundeswehr continued learning. A new element was the intervention of the force commander across all hierarchical levels in order to quickly correct mistakes and to exploit opportunities. What initially looks like micromanagement, is actually a way to effectively counteract the frictions mentioned by Clausewitz.

There, however, the limits of mission-type tactics began to show. In a world where a subordinate is allowed to do everything if it only serves the own goal, matters become difficult when the subordinate is explicitly NOT supposed to use this freedom. Detailed regulations are evidence of this. Own control bodies become important and are provided with special rights. This can

¹⁷ Hausser was not executed, by the way.

¹⁸ "Innere Führung" is a topic area of its own which is closely linked to mission-type tactics but which would go beyond the constraints of this paper. All I can reveal to those readers who are interested in history is that the concept of "Innere Führung" is comparable with a concept of the Waffen-SS, namely the "inner overcoming of the opponent". The author of this paper could not verify the myth that both concepts are related.

sometimes take on a dramatic scale. Anyone who wants to get an idea of the strange forms this can take on in the Bundeswehr, should read the article of Ulrike Demmer titled "Die Ritter der Drachenburg" (The Knights of the Dragon Castle). The result is a bureaucratic trap. Textualisation becomes extraordinarily important.¹⁹

Mission-type tactics became an "export hit" nevertheless. In 1980, the Americans commissioned a study. Central question: What is the reason for the enormous tactical success and sustainability of the Germans during the Second World War? It was an Israeli called Martin van Creveld who was commissioned to do the study. He was absolutely unsuspecting of being German-friendly.²⁰ His conclusion was this:

As a result of the decentralisation of responsibility, the Wehrmacht operated more quickly and more effectively than the U.S. Army. The latter had strongly centralised all powers and decision-making authority. Van Creveld attributed the decentralisation of power and responsibility structures directly to mission-type tactics. Accordingly, the Americans introduced it under the name of "mission command". They, too, recognised the intent of the higher command as a combining element between superiors and subordinates. And they, too, transformed orders into declarations of intent, at least in their regulations (United States Army, 2003, Field Manual No. 6). In the course of the introduction, frictions occurred. Subordinates understood it as a basis for discussion.²¹ In addition there was another problem that Shamir describes in his book *Transforming Command*. The recruitment offices of the U.S. Armed Forces had created an officer corps which strictly obeyed orders and did not tolerate errors, or only very few, committed by themselves or their subordinates. This corps had never learned to assume personal risks beyond the usual dangers encountered on the battlefield (Shamir, 2011, p. 165).

2.2 Norway's Path Towards Mission-Type Tactics

The U.S.A. had actually recognised this development at an early stage and attempted to react to it. The background of this reorientation was serious enough. The Cold War imposed a simple realisation on NATO and, thus, also on the U.S.A.: The Warsaw Pact was far superior with regard to the number of weapons systems, personnel and materiel. Until then, the Americans thought they could compensate for this weakness thanks to the quality of their own military personnel and military technology. The Americans had learned from the Vietnamese experience, however, that even a relatively poorly equipped enemy was able to achieve military success against U.S. forces. The decisive question was: How was it possible to achieve a military success against an enemy in Central Europe who is far superior in number?

The step from this question to an analysis of the Second World War, during which the German forces were able to fight for an astonishingly long time despite their clear numerical inferiority, was obvious. Van Creveld's analysis, which was already mentioned above, triggered off a far-reaching reassessment of the American position in military matters.

¹⁹ This freedom-restricting bureaucracy was going hand in hand with an increasing number of budgetary constraints. In the military, tight budgets always imply more coordination and, thus, more bureaucracy which, in turn, costs more money. This is a vicious circle by which almost all western armies are affected.

²⁰ Actually, his hatred towards everything that is German is reflected in almost every work he has produced. For a German, it would probably be difficult to encounter similarly hostile positions even in northern Norway and eastern Poland. And the author knows what he is talking about. He spent time in eastern Poland with people from northern Norway. An exciting and memorable experience.

²¹ The author has experienced himself in West Point how machine gun emplacements and individual firing positions were planned in the course of long discussions. Answering his question of why such decisions were discussed at all, they [the U.S. soldiers] told him in earnest that they dealt with something new and pronounced the German word in an American way: "Auftragstaktik". This means that the U.S. cadets pronounced the German word with an American accent, considering it as an Arch-American innovation.

Van Crevelde's theory of mission-type tactics as the source of German combat power was supplemented by a wide-ranging discussion in American specialist journals on the planned reorientation (Sæveraas/Henriksen, 2007, p. 50 ff).

Finally, a group around the military theorist William S. Lind was able to prevail in the discussion. Lind analysed historical lessons learned from Genghis Khan to the Second World War. He concluded that it was not about the numerical and physical destruction of the enemy. According to Lind, the means for a fast success, especially for successful raids such as the Mongol invasion of Europe and the blitzkrieg, was the destruction of the enemy's cohesion. Lind created this idea based on Boyd's thought models (Lind, 1985, p. 89 ff). Boyd, a retired Air Force officer, had in turn developed a theory according to which each decision-making process was identical. A new situation results in the military decision-maker initially observing it, then orientating himself and taking a decision and finally taking action. Boyd described these four phases as a recurring cycle. The military decision-maker who succeeds more quickly in solving problems will win. The objective in this context is to present a new situation to the opponent faster than the time the opponent needs to deal with the four above-mentioned phases of observing, orienting, deciding and acting. Thus, the mental cycle of the opponent will be destroyed. In this context, time is the decisive factor.²²

Lind as well as several other military thinkers such as Luttwak or Downing called for a fundamental reform of the American doctrine. Away from the pure destruction of Soviet tank armies towards a selective target discrimination. The aim was to identify units and infrastructure that were important to the enemy and to destroy them with one's own scarce resources. This demand was derived from the assessment of history, providing exemplary cases of inferior armies who were victorious. Lind was convinced that this principle, which had been applicable for more than thousand years, was simply rediscovered by the Germans, thus accounting for their successes. Based on the military history and philosophy of the Germans, he gave the major American commanders three pieces of advice:

- 1) Issue mission-oriented orders
(to be understood as "not every detail must be controlled")
- 2) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy
(in order to use one thing to destroy the other)
- 3) Determine the main focus
(the main focus of the subordinate as a link to the intent of the higher command)

He designated this model as "manoeuvre warfare".

Lind thus believed to have discovered what made the Germans so successful. And all other successful armies in history. He did not call his concept "blitzkrieg concept". But he believed to have isolated the key elements of blitzkrieg and assault team tactics and thus to have created a new and better military philosophy (Sæveraas/Henriksen, 2007, p. 54).

At least the judgment of Sæveraas and Henriksen on this was pretty harsh. In their judgment, manoeuvre warfare is a mixture of the OODA loop and a selective view of history aimed at breaking the combat morale of the enemy by exploiting his weaknesses (Sæveraas/Henriksen, 2007, p. 55).

It is necessary to point out, however, that Lind was tilting at windmills in the early 1980s. The western world, in search of an answer to the superiority of the Warsaw Pact, analysed the two world wars. The central question was: What lessons can we learn? The answer to this can be summarised in two words:

Mission-type tactics and blitzkrieg warfare.

²² In literature, Boyd's thought model is called the OODA loop. The abbreviation refers to the terms "observe", "orient", "decide" and "act".

What Lind did not and could not know at the time is that a doctrine for the blitzkrieg did not exist. And never did. It was only 20 years later that Karl-Heinz Frieser, who is mentioned in Footnote 15, proved conclusively in his standard work *Blitzkrieglegende (The Blitzkrieg Legend)* that Germany did at no time have a doctrine on warfare. The fast victory over Poland was possible only because Germany was far superior in terms of technology and completely exposed its western flank. If the campaign against Poland had lasted only a little bit longer than 18 days, the German logistics system would have broken down (Frieser, 2005, p. 18 ff). The western campaign, one of Hitler's greatest successes, was a series of near-disasters. The war was badly prepared or not at all in terms of economy, technology, personnel and strategic planning (Frieser, 2005, p. 29 ff). Frieser's work fully dispels the myth of a blitzkrieg doctrine of any kind. This book has a lasting effect. It can be considered as a new start of research on the military success of the Wehrmacht. Lind's bad luck: The book was written only 15 years later.

By the way, related doctrines are difficult to find in the German Armed Forces to this day. This is a surprise as the country is usually rather bureaucratic. On the one hand, there are many regulations which are very pedantic. Joint Service Regulation ZDv 3/11, *Gefechtsdienst aller Truppen zu Lande* (All-Arms Ground Combat Training), for example, states that a soldier must stop on his own one meter before the treetop when climbing a tree. And according to Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/5, *Leben in der militärischen Gemeinschaft* (Life in the Military Community), soldiers are forbidden to "compress and accelerate a moist white precipitation layer".²³ And there are more of these peculiarities. On the other hand, the key regulation about ground warfare, Army Regulation HDv 100/100, does only provide for rough rules of conduct and capability descriptions. Doctrines, especially those with a degree of detail as NATO requires it also from some major commanders, are unknown in the Bundeswehr.

Lind did not know this. This was not to the detriment of his ideas concerning manoeuvre warfare, however. They found their way into American doctrine and became an integral part of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*.

The tactics, rather born out of necessity, used by the Germans to protect the open flanks of the deep attacking armoured units by airpower (Frieser, 1996, p. 112 ff) was reinterpreted in this context as a brilliant strategy, the "blitzkrieg doctrine". As a consequence, the U.S. forces developed an *Air/Land Battle Concept*. The aim was to combine airborne and ground-based weapon systems.

This development, which had been purely American until then, started spreading across Europe. Due to its geopolitical situation, its historical experience and the size of its population, Norway in particular had begun focusing completely on the U.S.A. as its ally as early as shortly after the Second World War. The Norwegians systematically aligned themselves with the U.S.A. and NATO. Norwegian officers were trained in the U.S.A. Command and control processes were adjusted. The result was a profound American influence on the Norwegian leadership, education, training and regulations (Saæveraas/Henriksen, 2007, p. 143 ff).

In this context, a training accident during a military manoeuvre in 1986 had the effect of a catalyst.

16 Norwegian soldiers died in the course of an avalanche disaster in Vassdal, during which orders had been enforced and implemented despite the fact that it was well-known that the life of the exercise participants was in danger. The Norwegian military identified the uncompromising adherence to orders as the cause of the disaster. As the concept of mission command / mission-type tactics was very popular in the U.S. military at the time, it was adopted [by the Norwegians]. Using the term "oppdragsbasert ledelse (OBL)", they also tried to create room for initiative and a climate of trust ((Pederson, 2013, p. 3 ff). It was a paradigm shift in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

²³ i.e. snow

In the course of a process which became more firmly established over several decades, the Norwegian Armed Forces adopted the American concepts. Superficially, it was only about the use of tanks and aircraft. But the adoption, translation and interpretation of the U.S. Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, by the Norwegians also influenced the *Forsvarets fellesoperative doktrine (FFOD)*. And thus the Norwegian perception of mission-type tactics (Sæveraas/Henriksen, 2007, p. 144).

The FFOD version of the year 2000 leaves no doubt about it:

(...) Den har til formål å lamme en motstanders evne og vilje til å føre striden videre. Teorien legger stor vekt på evne til tempo. Det vil gjøre det mulig å konsentrere styrker overraskende mot fiendens svakheter. Tempo (hurtighet over tiden) betraktes derfor som et våpen i seg selv fordi det øker sjangsene for overrumpling og overraskelse.

Høyt tempo forutsetter desentralisert myndighet for at de utførende sjefer skal kunne utnytte de muligheter som overrumpling og overraskelse skaper. Desentralisert myndighet er også viktig for å håndtere og utnytte friksjonens virkninger.

Det er en teori som legger vekt på å unngå en motstanders hovedstyrker og i stedet kraftsamle mot utvalgte, relativt sett svakere mål.

(FFOD 2000, Del A Grunnlag. Taken from: Sæveraas/Henriksen, 2007, p. 145)

By "decentralisation of power" nothing less than mission-type tactics is meant.

In this context, the *Air/Land Concept* became increasingly unimportant and even disappeared completely from the regulations of some western allies due to historical changes, especially the collapse of the Warsaw Pact.²⁴

2.3 Mission-Type Tactics Today

But the same does not apply to mission-type tactics. Also and especially with the emergence of new wars, it has been stressed in Germany and Norway again and again how important mission-type tactics was and still is for being successful in modern conflicts. In his preface to the FFOD of 2014, Chief of Defence Håkon Brunn-Hansen underlines the up-to-dateness of the edition. He calls it practical, easy to apply and precise, and even dedicates a subchapter about OBL to the regulation, which comprises eight chapters (FFOD, 2014, Preface and Chapter 6.1).

In Germany, there are comparable approaches to discussions. Not with regard to *manoeuvre warfare* but, inter alia, with respect to mission-type tactics and its relevance for the new operations abroad. Increasing digitisation, new tasks, and bureaucratisation seemed to make mission-type tactics unnecessary and impossible. The new commander does not need decentralisation any more. At a click of the mouse, he will know everything he needs to know. In 2009, the leadership of the German Army opposed this way of thinking. Lieutenant-General von Butler, a former commander of the German Army Forces Command, writes that especially the frequently changing situations during the new conflicts and the excessive flood of information more than ever require the presence of a leader who takes decisions and assumes responsibility. He rejects process-oriented managers (von Butler, 2009, p. 6 ff).

A modern example taken from the war in Afghanistan shows that mission-type tactics is still "alive". The town of Quatliam in the district of Char Dara was firmly in the hands of the enemy. On 31 October 2010, a young German staff sergeant and his team became involved in a firefight during the engagements aimed at gaining control of the town. They gained the initiative. The enemy withdrew. The staff sergeant realised the chance that presented itself and continued attacking with his team organised as an assault force and with artillery support. His platoon leader used this opportunity to report to the company commander. Both decided independently to consolidate the success. Quatliam was liberated. The enemy, completely surprised, withdrew

²⁴ Because of the recent aggressions by Russia, the concept is currently experiencing a rebirth, however.

further. The battalion extended the operation. Two days later, Char Dara was clear of enemy forces. Another example I would like to provide is the bombardment of Kunduz. On the morning of 4 September 2009, German Colonel Klein decided to bomb two tank trucks. Actually this was aimed at four high-value targets, namely four Taliban leaders who were standing next to the tank trucks. Two of them were killed, one was seriously injured. But also 94 civilians lost their lives. Asked why he had not consulted the Bundeswehr Joint Forces Operations Command in Potsdam or another authority, Colonel Klein answered: "Who would have had a better insight into the situation than me?" (German Parliament, Doc. No. 17/7400, p. 52-60 and 66 ff).

Back then, many in the Bundeswehr were afraid that mission-type tactics was now going to be abolished for political reasons. German Defence Minister zu Guttenberg, although under considerable political pressure because of a very unfortunate information policy, explained: In hindsight, Klein's decision was militarily inappropriate and politically wrong. He acted to the best of his knowledge and belief and with the intention of protecting his soldiers.²⁵

An independent court confirmed the [minister's] position and even went a step further. Even if Klein had known that civilians were on site, he would have been allowed to bomb the target nevertheless (Bohnert, 2014, p. 131 ff).

Sighs of relief went through the Bundeswehr. Mission-type tactics were allowed to "live on".

3 Forsvaret and the Bundeswehr – A Comparison of Two Allied Armies

As a soldier who knows both armies well, the author will keep to the facts in this section and specifically mark those views for which no empirical evidence exists. Despite a cultural link lasting several centuries, both nations take fundamentally different approaches with regard to the military. In the following, I intend to elaborate those aspects which, according to the observations of the author, differ and could have an influence on the effectiveness of mission-type tactics.

3.1 Leadership (taking the rank structure as an example)

Basically, the military personnel of the Bundeswehr are divided into six different rank categories in legal, disciplinary and structural terms. Each rank category is assigned a minimum level of clear leadership responsibility. The basis is formed by the private ranks which comprise six individual ranks, from a light or armoured infantryman to an *Oberstabsgefreiter*. While private ranks were mere "functioners" within the framework of compulsory military service, this role has changed with the extended terms of service. Meanwhile, it is possible for private ranks to serve up to 25 years in some cases. The result is an increase in professionalisation, making the individual private an expert in the task area for which he/she is responsible. A role which was unthinkable as regards conscripts who served for 12 months. Private ranks may assume leadership tasks in a tactical and functional framework. In individual functions, such as those related to sniping, they are trained to become a team leader.

Their superiors are junior NCOs. The latter are composed of two ranks. Junior NCOs must have a civilian vocational qualification and usually serve as team leaders. A team comprises two to six soldiers. The team leader is intended to relieve the strain on his section leader and stands in if the section leader is absent. He has an educational and training mission and is a member of the NCO corps, which I will describe later on. The role of junior NCOs has changed too. While they served as candidates for future SNCO posts in the past, they are rather specialists today. Nowadays, they tend to be trained for specialist tasks. This especially applies to tasks which

²⁵ The dramatic situation in those days cannot be emphasised enough. The author himself was in Berlin and heard the minister speaking live. Numerous veterans tied their careers to the political decision.

involve more responsibility and therefore justify higher payment in the German perception. It is usually not possible for junior NCOs to become career service members.

Senior NCOs (SNCOs) represent the next higher command level. Composed of five individual ranks, they are the "backbone" of the Army. They are expected to be masters of their trade. They are also the "heart" of the NCO corps, which is led by a company sergeant major ("top sarge") at company level. They are the "craftsmen of the battle". According to an old saying, officers lead wars and NCOs fight wars. SNCOs are in charge of sections (6-9 soldiers) or platoons (up to 36 soldiers). SNCOs provide tactical advice to the company commander. Some S3 SNCOs at battalion level are trained to command battalions. Company sergeant majors, who are decorated with a yellow shoulder cord, are granted special rights. Just as officers, they are allowed to conduct interrogations.²⁶ A company sergeant major is considered to be the most important soldier of a company after the company commander. He is held responsible for discontent in the company and is considered to be the "advocatus diaboli" of the company commander.

Junior officers, i.e. officers from the rank of second lieutenant to the rank of captain, exercise leadership at the platoon and company levels. Depending on their official function, they may have disciplinary power. During officer training, which is concluded with the promotion to the rank of second lieutenant, the officer is a trained platoon leader. No matter whether he/she becomes a company commander or assumes a special assignment later on, e.g. in the area of logistics or IT, he/she will in any case be able to command a reinforced combat battalion. Prior to becoming a career service member, an officer will receive the relevant refresher training. The next rank category comprises senior officers, including the ranks from major to colonel. A special feature of this category is that there are two types of lieutenant-colonels and two types of colonels. The difference cannot be recognised by looking at their uniform. A difference can be made out only through the official function and the pay grade. The financial difference is considerable. As part of the qualification to become a senior officer, a junior officer is trained in the capabilities and skills required by a brigade commander. Training and examination are obligatory. The training covers the employment of a reinforced brigade in all four types of combat operations.²⁷

The final rank category is comprised of generals. In accordance with NATO standards, they range from one-star to four-star generals. They work in the political sphere. However, this applies less to brigade and division commanders. But from the moment when they obtain three stars at the latest, generals are subject to political influence. Generals are appointed by the Federal President on a proposal by the Defence Minister. The Defence Minister may retire them without being obliged to state any reasons.

By contrast, the Norwegian Army almost completely does without an NCO corps. Directly below an officer, there is only a *Sersjant* who is the equivalent of a junior NCO. In Germany, this would be the lowest NCO rank. For nonrated personnel, only the rank of *Menig* exists in Norway. This rank is comparable to the lowest German private rank. In addition, the rank of *Korporal* exists, which is comparable to the German rank of *Oberstabsgefreiter*. There are no senior NCOs at all. Actually, the term "NCO corps" is even considered as not being politically correct.²⁸ For a German soldier, this is very astonishing. Some German NCO corps even have an excessive self-confidence. The NCOs know that they are experts. Those who wish to become a member of the NCO corps are [checked and] initiated by a company sergeant major in accordance with an old ritual. Joint festivities and family events are planned. NCO corps give

²⁶ In Prussia, NCOs who had the right to carry a sword with a sword knot were considered to be entitled to stand in for an officer. The German term for a senior NCO still includes the German word for "sword knot" (Portepe) today.

²⁷ Attack, delay, defence, stabilisation. Except for stabilisation operations, each type of combat operation ends with a (counter) attack.

²⁸ On the sideline of a debate about the reform of the Norwegian rank structure, the author himself was politely told that the [Norwegian equivalent of the] term "NCO" is rather an insult.

themselves rules which are intended to turn individuals into better soldiers. NCO corps are also the mainstay of comradeship. Although comradeship is specifically provided for in Section 12 of the German Act Related to the Legal Status of Military Personnel, it would be unthinkable without NCOs and their esprit de corps.²⁹

3.2 Education

As already mentioned in the historical overview, battalions have been considered as THE decisive tactical units since the times of von Moltke at the latest. For they provide a key interface which is still relevant today. Battalions are the smallest units that can establish reserves in company strength. Companies are too small to establish reserves themselves but strong and large enough to win a battle at battalion level. Let me take a tank company as an example. It is equipped with 14 main battle tanks which are divided among three to four subunits with three to four battle tanks each. In modern battle, three rapidly deployed battle tanks change the strength ratio to a very limited extent only. There is no gain in establishing a reserve. 14 battle tanks under unified command, however, constitute one fourth of the assets of a battalion. Employed as a reserve for reinforcement, containment or counterattack purposes, they can play a very decisive role in a battle.³⁰ This explains why battalions have such a high tactical value still today. They are the smallest and first units to possess a staff element which coordinates planning and assists the commander. Looking from below, it is the first hierarchical level to lead less often by watching the terrain and to lead from the front in exceptional cases only. Even if a company commander – apart from his deputy and a few functioners – more or less provides a "one-man show", a battalion commander can resort to a lot of expertise.³¹

The second decisive tactical formation is the brigade. The special feature of the brigade level is that it is the first level at which combined arms combat takes place. And combined arms combat is decisive for mission-type tactics! The experience made by the Germans during the First World War demonstrates this very clearly.

The brigade level is the first level which is able to combine and effectively employ different arms. A brigade commander has artillery, main battle tanks as well as mobile and light infantry at his disposal. He decides how these assets will be employed and organised. The arms may be mixed as early as in peacetime (like in Norway) or immediately before mission tasking (like in Germany).

I would now like to analyse whether and how intensely officers of the respective armies deal with battalion tactics, brigade tactics and tactics at even higher levels. This is of fundamental importance with regard to mission-type tactics. For officers who are expected to take an autonomous decision in accordance with the higher commander's intent must also be able to identify which intent the higher commander MIGHT have. They will be able to do this only if they have been trained for the relevant command level. If subordinate leaders have no idea of the way how combat operations are conducted by their superior command, they will not realise the decisive moment for action. They will fail to act because, in their subordinate position, they do not have the "bird's eye view" of a superior.

²⁹ According to Section 12 of the German Act Related to the Legal Status of Military Personnel, each German soldier is obliged to protect the belongings, life, limbs and honour of his/her comrade. A violation of this provision is punishable. Adultery with the spouse of a comrade, for example, is to be punished by demotion.

³⁰ This does not mean that there are not numerous examples of individual battle tanks having decided a battle. A closer look shows, however, that these situations are always exceptions which cannot really be generalised.

³¹ An example of such an exception is the ISAF stabilisation mission. A tendency exists there to establish a staff element at company level as well. This is due to the fact that the platoons with their three to four tanks do not play any role numerically in the classic mechanised combat operations. This is quite different as regards stabilisation operations where only few heavy combat vehicles are deployed on the battlefield. In this case, one single tank may lead to success. This increases the tactical significance of the platoon level.

3.2.1 The German Officer up to Senior Officer

The training in the Bundeswehr is always aimed at enabling each soldier to master the task area at least of their directly superior command and to know the task area of the next higher command. This aim primarily applies to NCOs. As regards officers, the Bundeswehr strives for a much more general training. Officer candidates are promoted to the rank of second lieutenant within three years. With the receipt of their commission and the associated promotion to second lieutenant, they are allowed and able to command a reinforced combat battalion. For this purpose, they have gained experience in planning and computer-assisted training.³² Ideally, they have gained practical experience as section and platoon leaders. Afterwards they usually receive further – purely academic – training at one of the two Bundeswehr universities. Depending on their aptitude, performance and qualification, they earn a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Officers are intended to be stabilised democratically and politically by means of a wide variety of study courses, ranging from pedagogics, politics and history to mechanical and electrical engineering.³³

Following successful completion of the academic education/training, a tactical refresher course will be conducted. This training course takes place at battalion level again. Afterwards, in the rank of lieutenant, the officer will serve as a platoon leader and deputy company commander, as the chief of a staff division at battalion level or as a chief instructor of recruits. Following a selection procedure, the best of those candidates having completed their studies are appointed as career service members in a continuous process. Depending on their aptitude, performance and qualification, they are promoted to the rank of captain (*Hauptmann* in German) and entrusted with commanding a company. Those who become a company commander usually have to attend a specific training course where basics of company leadership are taught. Course participants are expected to know the interrelation between battalions and companies. However, these courses do not provide in-depth training in battalion tactics – in contrast to the courses offered in Norway. The company commander training course focuses on the skills needed by company commanders. Nevertheless, officers are obliged to participate in a further course before being appointed as career soldiers, namely a course in Dresden which exclusively deals with tactics at the battalion level. At least one planning task confronts the military leader with a new situation. Attendance of this training course is obligatory in order to be accepted at the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College.

If the tactical training courses, which each consist of one rotation for the four types of combat operations, i.e. attack, defence, delay and stabilisation, are added up, you will see that a German officer up to the rank of captain is obliged to exercise the planning process at the battalion level 12 times. Statistically, this is almost once a year in case of 13 years of service. In addition, a number of planning processes differing from one soldier to another must be carried out on the respective post in the battalion. There it is a component of the regular exercise cycle as everywhere in the NATO area. A battalion is required to carry out a complete rotation of tactical planning in all types of combat operations once a year. A special aspect may be that an exercise

³² By the way, if instructors at the Army Officer School in Dresden are asked why officers must reach such a high tactical level so early in their career, the term "mission-type tactics" is NEVER mentioned. Often they say: "If all other [leaders] have been killed in action, these guys are able to exercise leadership." Or nothing is heard. This means that the Bundeswehr is not aware of its special character and its roots. Proper academic analyses as carried out in Norway in an exemplary way do not take place. This is dangerous for the Bundeswehr! Those who do not know where their special features come from, will lose them.

³³ The idea of an academic education/training stems from Helmut Schmidt. In a speech which he held at a Bundeswehr university and which was also heard by the author, he said he wanted to achieve that commanders do not "breed" mindless recipients of orders but lead human beings who think for themselves.

is considered to be well developed only if it requires an autonomous decision by senior and junior leaders at least in one phase.³⁴

Following their assignment as a company commander, German officers are concentrated at the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College. The objective is to successfully complete the so-called senior officer qualification course (SOL). Without this course, no officer can acquire the rank of major or a higher rank. During this course, the leadership process at brigade level is trained. This training course is obligatory as well. All types of combat operation are planned there. This is the last joint training, however. Following the SOL, these officers will deal with tactics only if it is required by their individual post or if they are earmarked for a command function. As examples I would like to mention general staff officers and battalion commanders here. General staff officers, who are selected from the best SOL graduates, continue their training in tactics at the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College. First, the planning process at the brigade level is trained again, and then the planning processes up to the NATO command level are trained. German general staff officers are the only ones in the German Army to be trained both in the Anglo-Saxon and the German decision-making process. All other officers only master the German process. The decision-making process up to, and including, the division level is preserved accordingly.³⁵

It must clearly be pointed out, however, that German soldiers are not consciously taught to uphold their own culture. There are neither specific history lessons on the origins of mission-type tactics nor a specially fostered awareness of national peculiarities. This knowledge is reserved for a small group of experts at the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College and the Military History Institute. A consistent history-oriented training, as it is conducted in the Norwegian Armed Forces, does not take place or to a very limited extent only.³⁶

3.2.2 The Norwegian Officer up to Senior Officer

The Norwegian officer training is a little more heterogeneous than its German counterpart. Whether officers do compulsory military service first or directly attend a Befalsskole, they always start as temporary-career volunteers. The Befalsskole, also called grundleggende Befalsutdanning (GBU), has the aim to train junior military leaders. While Germany lets officers enlist for 13 years, though, Norway pursues the strategy to reenlist them for periods of three years each. Once having finished the Befalsskole, the soldiers will be employed as sergeants and section leaders. After five years, they can apply for a post of a junior officer cadet. Depending on their aptitude, performance and qualification, the potential officers in the rank of junior officer cadets will then be chosen in a selection of the best and in a type of "filling and grading procedure" for the grundleggende offisersutdanning (GOU). The GOU, which take place at an academy established for that particular purpose, will enable the officer candidates to be in command of companies. At this point, Norway is giving up its former training scheme. Until that point, the soldiers are trained for their next post only, but now Norway goes one step further and reflects the battalion level. The future officers are expected to be able to think and act at the battalion level. The focus is still on the company level. However, the battalion level is being reflected and trained. Usually, this is the first planned contact with this level of command.

³⁴ "Classic" incidents are suddenly appearing enemy forces, the loss of radio communications, non-identified minefields and similar situations. The aim is to force the decision-making personnel to decide whether the order given by their superior would have been issued in the same way if the superior had known the specific situation. This circumstance is referred to as a "fundamental change in the situation".

³⁵ There is a trend among specialised and special forces to introduce the Anglo-Saxon planning and decision-making process. This is due to the intense planning phase of special operations and the interoperability with international partners. This trend is highly controversial, especially in the airborne infantry.

³⁶ The consistent academic analysis of all facets of the military profession in Norway has deeply impressed the author. In academic terms, the FHS is at least on a par with and in many cases even superior to each German institution that the author attended.

Training is already on an academic level. The officers can get credit points, they write home assignments and much more. This is a solution that Germany does not apply in this form. Subsequently, Norwegian officers will do service in their assignments and then pass a selection and application system to become company commanders after a period of at least three years as a second lieutenant. Having successfully mastered this career level, Norwegian officers will then apply for the third training level. This is the videregående offisersutdanning (VOU). This training is not compulsory. It is a selection of the best in order to determine the future Norwegian forces elite. The staff school at Oslo is in charge of the VOU, and it is complemented by courses at Rena. The VOU reflects brigade, division and corps.

At this point, there is a decisive difference between the Norwegian and the German system: The aim of the course is not the command of tactics. The aim is to internalize the decision-making process.³⁷ At the start of the course, the training level of the participants varies considerably, although many of them have been in the military service for far more than 10 years. Those officers who did operational service in battalions know the decision-making process well and have completed it several times during this service. Officers who started their careers at a basic military organization (for example, at a personnel office or a logistics centre) never dealt with tactics or the decision-making process before.³⁸

This is only partly due to the size of the Norwegian army. As mentioned before, the officer training is far from being as homogeneous as it is in Germany. Soldiers with special assignments cannot and do not have to attend advanced tactical training. The advantage is that they develop a high level of expertise within their field. The disadvantage, though, is that these officers might lose the bond holding the military together, which is the battle. They are reduced to civil servants in uniforms. In Germany, this specialization has been repeatedly discussed. It has even been introduced for the NCOs. Still, it is highly controversial. If the military profession loses touch with its fundamental aspects, which are battle, war and killing, then it will become arbitrary. The Norwegian forces offset this development with an exemplary patriotism that can even be confusing at times. This is undoubtedly impressive.

Nevertheless, the result is a lack of expertise. For this reason, the Norwegian forces offer a non-compulsory staff course between the GOU and the VOU. This training is on brigade level. As the majority of the Norwegian officers will not even be admitted to the VOU, though, it is a problem that it is voluntary. The situation may arise (and it has happened before) that no officer or only few officers with the necessary expert knowledge are available within the North Brigade.³⁹

3.3 Example for training: Bringing About a Decision

One of the oldest books in the world about military strategy was written in China and is now 2500 years old. The author is Sun Tzu. In his work "The Art of War", he clearly describes the fact that the decision of a person mainly depends on four factors: the environmental conditions (weather, terrain and other things) the possibilities of the enemy (strength, position, structure,

³⁷ The author himself has completed this training. The fact that the subject was not tactics but internalizing a work process was repeatedly stressed during the training. Tactics was only used as a means to give the course participants an understanding of the decision-making process.

³⁸ This includes the author. He had been trained in the German-style decision-making process up to the brigade level. However, it was his first encounter with the Anglo-Saxon style decision-making process. The differences were so striking and impressive that they formed the basis for this thesis.

³⁹ This is surprising all the more as appropriate training facilities are available at Rena. Just a simple training order would be required to offset this shortfall. Even thorough investigation did not show a reason for that. In one-to-one conversations, the soldiers concerned mainly stated private reasons for not attending the course. Those who completed the training, on the other hand, complain on the quiet that they have to do the work of the others as well then.

capabilities), the own possibilities (own strength, position, capabilities, structure) and the own military objective.

These fundamental and basic parameters of warfare have not changed until this day. However, the methods of determining and handling these parameters are completely different even within NATO.

3.3.1 The Estimate of the Situation - the German Way

Figure 1 (Source: German Army Regulation HDv 100/100, No. 1027ff):
The Estimate of the Situation

1. Mission analysis
 - Higher commander's intent
 - Essential contribution of friendly forces
 - Constraints / Restraints
 - Essential change of situation
 - Need for action
 - Check questions ("How can it be ensured that...")

Information briefing for the staff

2. Terrain evaluation and other environmental conditions
 - General terrain characteristics
 - Evaluation in sections
 - Conclusions for enemy action
 - Conclusions for friendly action
3. Estimate of the enemy situation
 - Courses of action
 - Probable enemy intention
 - Probable further conduct of combat operations
 - Conclusions for friendly action
4. Estimate of the friendly situation
 - Combat power (combat power table)
 - Conclusions for specific friendly capabilities
 - Restrictions of freedom of action
 - Options of friendly action
5. Force comparison
 - Comparison of combat power
 - Combat effectiveness (taking into account terrain, environment, equipment, morale...)
 - Conclusions for the law of action - capability to take the initiative
 - Tactical overall intent
 - Developing options of friendly action
6. Options of friendly action
 - Determining common elements

- Comparison of combat power regarding options
- Weighing advantages and disadvantages
- Weighing

Decision briefing for the commander on the course of action

7. The decision
 - Who?
 - Does what?
 - How?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Why?

The estimate of the situation is a process that is initiated by a written order from the higher command. As a rule, this order is combined with a verbally issued order explaining the higher commander's concept of operations. The written order will then be incorporated into the staff process and initially evaluated only by primary staff function 3. The higher commander's intent will be identified once more during this evaluation. Consequently, the mission that is the most important one for the higher commander's intent will be selected from the individual friendly missions. This is then the essential contribution of the friendly forces. (German Army Regulation HDv 100/100, C1-100, serial no. 1033ff, 2016)

This important step, i.e. identifying the essential contribution of the friendly forces, is taken **WITHOUT** consulting the higher command. This is decisive insofar as the essential contribution of the friendly forces automatically results in a concentration of resources. The focus is automatically on the essential contribution and its achievement. Mostly, the focus is a geographic point in the terrain where all free resources are being concentrated. This is where a decision is brought about. This is the place of victory or failure. It is a policy where everything is staked on one chance. If there is a failure at this point, then the higher commander's intent is also endangered. The reserve of the respective command level is then often employed to clarify the crisis or to force a decision. Each command level makes the decisions concerning this risky leadership technique, though. The higher command level can only exert influence by means of a thorough issuing of orders.

The sub-point "change of situation", which sounds harmless at first, needs to be emphasized as well. It is a process which every level of command reflects constantly and in each phase of the planning and conduct of combat operations. This sub-point requires a review of the currently issued order with the question:

Would my commander have given me the order if he had been aware of this situation?

Depending on the answer to this question, the respective level of command needs to adapt accordingly. If need be, it needs to ignore existing orders and issue a new order for itself.

However, this point is not very important during the planning phase. Reviewing the change of the situation in the course of the running battle, though, might facilitate complete disobedience in order to fulfil the superior's intent.

Another decisive aspect is the fact that the commander at the respective command level is present only twice during the complete estimate of the situation, as shown in figure 1. A vivid example: a battalion commander was present when the brigade issued an order and passed the written order to his battalion headquarters for processing and analysis. Following phase 1, the mission analysis, the staff will be informed of the new mission with an information briefing of the deputy. Usually, the battalion commander is not present anymore and will not be present up

to phase 6, when he is presented the courses of action in a decision briefing. The staff always gives a clear recommendation as to which option is favourable.

This separation is made deliberately as

- a) the commander is supposed to join the fighting units shortly before a new operation starts
- b) the commander is supposed to look at the results of his staff from outside in the end, thus avoiding organizational blindness.

Within the period mentioned in a), the brigade commander will visit the battalions, too. He will receive an information briefing. This is the opportunity for the battalions to apply for whatever they need to implement their mission. This is command supervision. It is unscheduled, and it is suited to a very limited extent only for the higher command to exercise co-ordinated influence. On completion of the planning phase, the battalion's operation plan will be presented to the brigade for approval. However, it will NOT be reviewed whether the battalion has analysed the orders correctly. It will only be reviewed whether the battalion's plans will endanger the friendly conduct of operations.

An overview of the impulses having an impact on the battalion level is to show the low level of control and the high level of trust in the staff organization:

external-superior (brigade for battalion): 1x (order), poss. 1x command supervision

internal-superior (battalion commander): 1x at the decision briefing at the end of the process

external-subordinate (companies): poss. 1x applications during command supervision by battalion commander

Summing up the impulses that have an impact on a staff, these are limited to 2 standard (initial order, decision briefing) and two nonstandard impulses (command supervision from above/ downwards).

In conclusion, it can be stated that the German decision-making process is staff-controlled. It is a process that is characterized by a high level of trust, significant and extensive parts of which defy control. This planned and controlled loss of control creates a high level of freedom of action, but also a high level of responsibility. For this freedom creates independent action that is oriented only towards the (partly assumed) higher commander's intent. The superior who grants this freedom, though, has to live with his subordinates' errors and he needs to include them in his considerations.

But how does Norway, which has chosen a completely different way of finding solutions and making decisions for military issues, respond to the challenge concerning enemy, terrain and friendly forces?

3.3.2 Norway and the decision-making Process

Figure 2
(Stabshåndbok for Hæren, 2014, p.15):

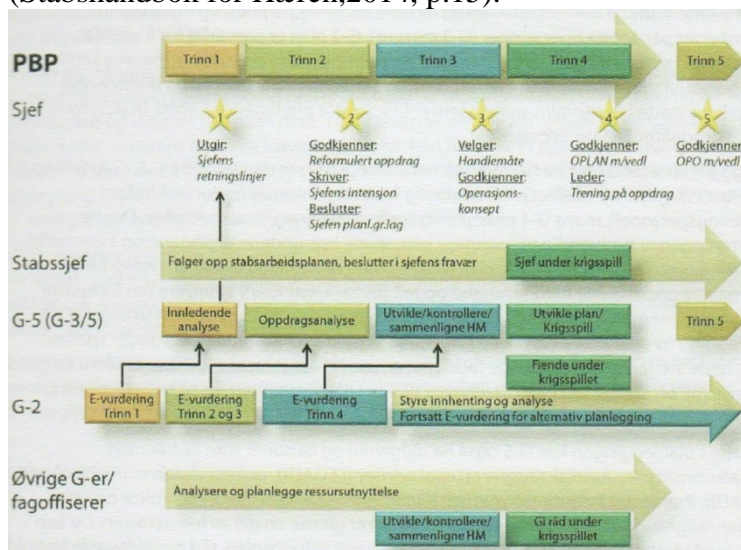


Figure 3 (Stabshåndbok for Hæren, 2014, p. 18):

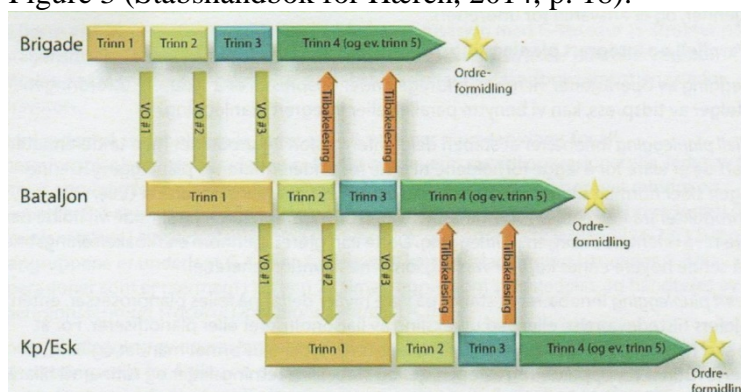


Figure 4 (Stabshåndbok for Hæren, 2014, p. 19):

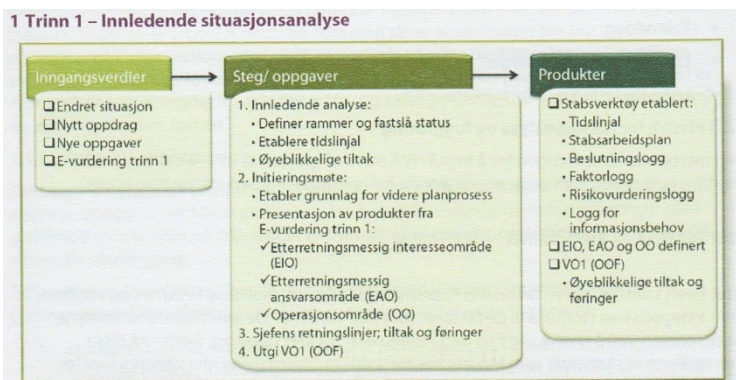


Figure 5 (Stabshåndbok for Hæren, 2014, p. 25):

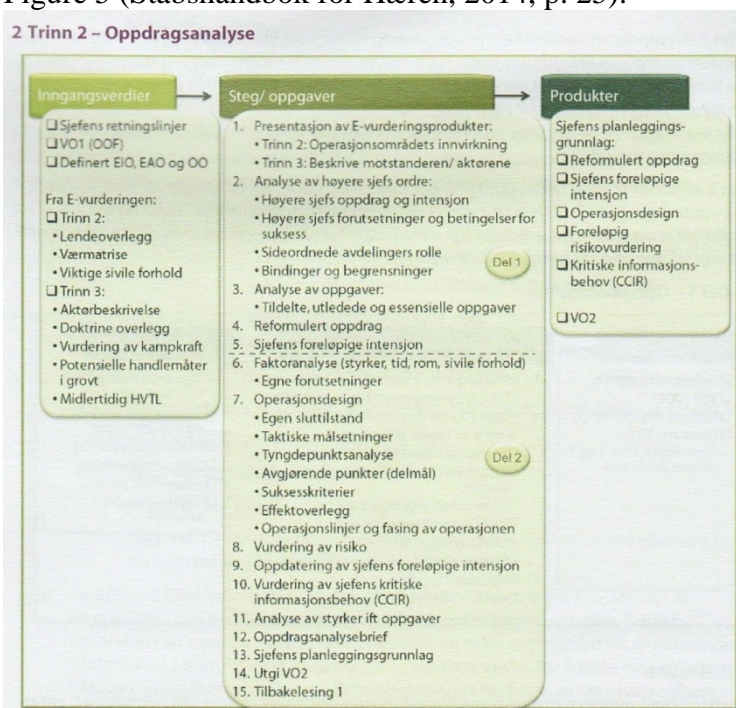
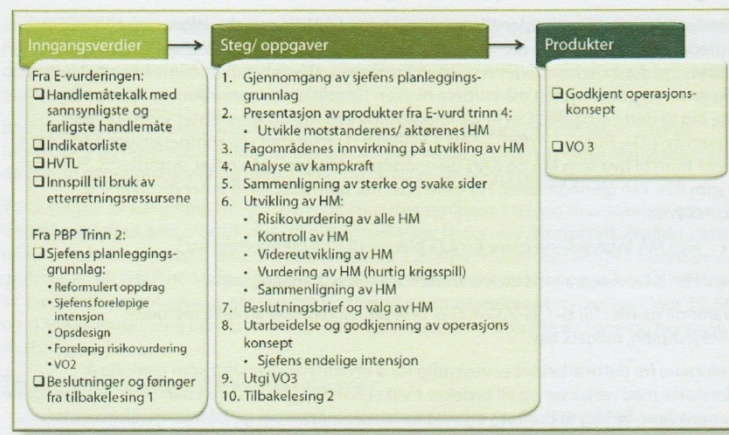


Figure 6 (Stabshåndbok for Hæren, 2014, p. 53):

3 Trinn 3 – Utvikling av handlemåter og konsept



The Norwegian forces have chosen a completely different way, inspired by NATO. The need to connect optimally and as closely as possible to the USA's and NATO's decision-making processes resulted in an adoption of their decision-making processes.

When comparing the processes, the dominant role of the commander is particularly striking. From the very beginning, he controls the complete process. He starts by laying down guidelines which he wants to be used as the basis for any further planning. The commander (not his Chief of Staff) authorizes staff products for the higher command. It is him, too, who shapes the direction and character of the further internal staff process. (Figure 2) He will always be presented finished staff products from which he then makes a selection. Nevertheless, he accompanies the complete process in a certain way. If the German decision-making process is called staff-dominated, then the Norwegian process needs to be called commander-dominated. The process is similarly influenced by the higher commander's level. For example, the brigade will influence the work of the battalion staff no less than five times by means of warning orders and demanding feedback. (Figure 3) It is not only the effective measure of issuing warning orders that attracts attention. Every military process is familiar with these orders. They are intended to save time.⁴⁰ The „tilbakemeldinger“ process is unusual, though. It is a feedback to the higher command stating that the schedule is met, which intentions are pursued and that the higher commander's intent has been understood. It is an ongoing coordination process between the levels of command, which is strictly hierarchical.

The next eye-catching point is the high degree of detail of the regulation. To illustrate the complexity of the matter: figures 2 to 6 are only a selection of individual steps in the decision-making process. On 483 pages, the comparable German Army Regulation HDv 100/100 gives a description of the expectations military leaders have to meet. So this is rather a series of recommendations for action and command. The Norwegian regulation, however, specifies on 260 pages with the reliability of an instruction for use when and how which steps are to be taken. Regarding focus analysis, the Norwegian/Anglo-Saxon system is designed to identify a unit, capability or organizational form that is decisive for the military problem. Resources are not concentrated but protected. (Håndbok for Hæren, 2014, p. 39ff)

The relevance of the mission, i.e. to verify whether the friendly mission is still up-to-date, has also been implemented in the decision-making process. Step 5 (Trinn 5), which is almost at the end of the planning process, requires this review. It will only take place, though, if there is time between the completion and the implementation of an operation plan. That means that it is not at all compulsory.

Summing up the impulses that have an impact on a Norwegian/ Anglo-Saxon type battalion headquarters, the result is

external-higher command impulses (brigade level): 1x initial situation, 3x warning orders, 2x feedbacks

internal-higher command impulses (battalion commander): 5x (see figure 2)

external-subordinate impulses (company level): 2x feedbacks

This is a total of 13 impulses, without taking into account the effect of command supervision, which is unplanned in Norway as well.

In summary, the decision-making process can be described as a process of permanent coordination. The process focusses on mutual understanding. This even gets to the point that the work result in Step 2 (Trinn 2) is a reformulation of the received mission (Håndbok for Hæren, 2014, p.34). This is to ensure that the subordinate command level concerned has understood the mission correctly. The whole process that seems to be bureaucratic and tightly synchronized at first glance has the primary goal of pursuing a philosophy of mutual understanding.

⁴⁰ The German system, too, is familiar with the warning order. However, it is not standardized.

Excursus: The Bundeswehr and the decision-making Process

This has never been apparent to the Bundeswehr officers who are used to making independent decisions. They felt that their hands and feet were tied when they were confronted with the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the German army needs to handle this process as it is involved like all the other European partners. How did it do so? How does it do it today?

The Bundeswehr has always been critical of the decision-making process used by NATO.

German Army Regulation HDv 100/100, valid until 2015, contained a sentence in serial no. 1029, which was as clear as possible: "The decision-making process is subject to strict control. (...) It is not compatible with mission-type tactics."

The wording is now a little less hostile. However, when reading the introductory remarks in German Army Regulation HDv 100/100, C1-100/1-1009, serial no. 1127, the same spirit is discernible: The process is praised for having a "holistic approach", but it is stressed that its complexity "... limits its suitability for the command of ongoing and the planning of short-term operations of land forces in a dynamic operating environment."

How come that the judgment is so harsh, characterized by typical German arrogance?

4 Assessment

The reason seems to be a culture misunderstanding. If German officers go to Norway, they will be surprised. They will go to Norway with the attitude and the idea of encountering an identical army. Frequently, the author heard the sentence: "You are going to Norway? That is easy. They are like us." But this attitude will be quickly qualified. The Anglo-Saxon influence on the Norwegian forces will show at the latest when it comes to practical business. It fundamentally differs from the German approach. In addition, there are cultural characteristics. An example is the very steep hierarchy in Germany, preventing too private contact to subordinates and allowing it at the most after many years of joint service. In Norway, on the other hand, even the highest-ranking general will be addressed with his first name and the informal "Du". This is unimaginable in Germany. The German soldier will automatically ask himself how mission-type tactics can be implemented under these circumstances. To his mind, mission-type tactics will always be fraught with risk. Those who deliberately ignore orders put themselves outside the hierarchy. This decision must always be justifiable, having the purpose of the overall objective in mind. Otherwise, the soldiers run the risk of suffering punishment and hardship, even if it only means the end of their career. Thus, disobedience needs to go hand in hand with a high personal risk. The steep hierarchy ensures that soldiers always have to expect to be made responsible for their decisions. This applies, too, if they strictly obey the orders they are given and cause a catastrophe against their better judgment. The sentence "I just obeyed orders" was not considered an excuse for military failure even before the Nuremberg trials were held.

So it can be stated that the freedom of mission-type tactics needs to be combined with tight rules and regulations with a steep hierarchy and punishment. If this did not apply and everybody could do what they wanted without being punished, the result would be anarchy. The aim is that everybody feels as part of the whole system and acts according to the purpose of the overall objective.

An example from history to make this clear: the Wehrmacht's successes are still mainly attributed to mission-type tactics. At the same time, the Wehrmacht did by no means have an altruistic conception of man, and surely it had one of the most steep and aggressive hierarchies and disciplinary bodies in history.

By implication, this means that mission-type tactics is not "soft line leadership" and does not allow this type of leadership to be used. According to the German concept, mission-type tactics and flat hierarchies are mutually exclusive.

This view cannot remain unchallenged. It is striking that the individual soldier in Norway also accomplishes his mission with great commitment although the structures are flat and very

British. The Norwegian soldiers are highly motivated and think and act for themselves. Apart from very few exceptions, the author met only officers who impressed him. He attributes this to the personnel policy of the Norwegian forces, which is far more efficient and motivating. They rely on voluntariness, and every soldier is the architect of his own future.⁴¹ On the other hand, it is also striking that as soon as an operational mission is to be accomplished, the operation instructions that the Norwegian superiors set for their staff are closely, even slavishly, adhered to.

This close attachment to preset processes has its causes. It cannot be denied that Germany has developed an entirely different military philosophy due to its unique historical background in Europe and the western world. No other European country has lived for almost 2/3 of its existence in an isolated situation and was surrounded by superior enemies.⁴² This resulted in a resource-conserving practice, developed over the years, finally with three essential elements:

- 1) Attack is the best form of defence.
- 2) The risk to have to stake everything on one card⁴³
- 3) The freedom of the subordinate leaders to make independent decisions.

Norway has not undergone this development. By contrast, it imported more and more US and NATO structures. By doing so, however, it also imported the same showstoppers to mission-type tactics that have kept the Americans from implementing mission-type tactics for the last 30 years. Rank structure is an essential aspect in this context. German NCOs are mainstays of combat operations and guarantee maintenance of expertise. It is characteristic that Norway now introduces an equivalent based on the last few years' experience. This "specialist" is not called NCO. He is introduced, though, in order to maintain and increase the expertise in the forces. This model is still alien from the model that Germany passes on. Regarding mission-type tactics, the specialist is a step in the right direction, but he is closer to the American non-commissioned officer (NCO). However, there is only a qualified distinction between the NCO and the junior ranks. It is not a caste of its own.

This can cause problems with regard to mission-type tactics, as a trained point of contact at each command level down to the individual soldier is required to delegate responsibility. This point of contact needs to be discernible as a military leader regarding his demeanour, rank and training. Another eye-catching development is the training. The strict dependence on regulations and schemata mentioned above might well originate in the training. Mission-type tactics requires the soldiers to know his higher commander's intent. Even more: he needs to reinterpret it continuously. Therefore, he requires training at that command level.

At the start of their careers, Germany forces its officers to deal with the tactics of the higher command levels. And it maintains this pressure. In Norway, the voluntariness that has been rightly praised above takes its toll and is even intensified by the course of training. While

⁴¹ In Norway, the families are included in the fate of the soldiers. An investment in the soldiers' families and their happiness is seen as an investment in defence. The motto is: If one has family problems on one's mind, one cannot give one's all at work. German personnel policy works differently, though, as a soldier does not apply for a post but he is selected. Family aspects play a part only in a strictly limited number of exceptional cases. To this day, the so-called "special arrangements for hardship cases" are considered to be a career stopper.

⁴² And no other country led the world into such a deep disaster. The world often complains about Germany's military restraint. Surely, one of the reasons was the fact that Germany had to realise that it could not solve its conflicts with military actions. It would have nearly vanished from the face of the earth forever. Today, 70 years after the Western integration of the Federal Republic of Germany, discussions often disregard the fact that before, Germany did everything not to be integrated but to be independent.

⁴³ See also the paragraph dealing with the different approach for derivation and definition of focus in the German and Anglo-Saxon decision-making process.

German officers in the rank of captain, even if they are of below-average intelligence, should have a rough knowledge of the German decision-making process, Norwegian officers are not in a position to do this, even if they are of above-average intelligence. This is simply because they lack training in this subject, probably due to the course of their careers. This is a problem for the instrumentalisation of mission-type tactics in modern combat with major units. He who is not in a position to interpret the higher commander's intent, will miss the moment when victory is possible. He will stick to his orders and will not adapt them as required.

The discrepancies mentioned above do not make mission-type tactics impracticable. They just make it more difficult. In the light of the good personnel policy of the Norwegian forces, it cannot be ruled out that a motivated and talented officer overcomes these limits and makes his own decision. And there is no doubt that it is also conceivable that informal leaders in the junior ranks take charge of this decision and lead it to success. To express it more clearly: the Norwegians are not less capable soldiers in terms of mission-type tactics because, for cultural or organisational reasons, they have other limits.

One of the examined facts, though, is most probably, if not certainly incompatible with mission-type tactics. It is the decision-making process. German Army Regulation HDv 100/100, which has been quoted before in this context, is still valid. What is the reason?

Initially, three factors should be mentioned:

- 1) the excessively dominant role of the commander in the process
- 2) the constant feedback of the order
- 3) the ignorance of the order

The commander binds his staff by giving guidelines at a very early stage, actually at the beginning of the DMP. It is then far more difficult for the staff to be creative or to develop unconventional solutions. Basically, the chief of staff and his personnel are pushed back to one function. The staff is in the position to control and plan details only. The commander's guidelines will not be discussed at any point in time. The staff does not have an opportunity to advise the commander on the preparation of these guidelines.

This permanent control expands even more. A look at figure 2 in the Stabshåndbok for Hæren shows clearly that almost every staff product is subject to the commander's control. He has to be briefed about everything and he gives his blessing to everything. It is hard for the trained military observer to visualize a situation with the staff making a decision, without the commander. The question that needs to be asked is: what should be the reaction of a staff if its commander, who leads from the front, has joined the fighting force? How is this staff supposed to decide independently? A chief of staff with leadership qualities could, of course, take over command in a situation like that and give the component a new mission.

However, the strong position of the commander is linked in an unfortunate manner to the second problem mentioned before. In the planning stage, before the combat operations start, the different command levels coordinate closely. This goes as far as to the higher command issuing an order, and asking to be briefed about its own reformulated order following an analysis phase. This is to ensure that the subordinate agencies have understood the order correctly. If the culture of mutual understanding is so highly developed and so much importance is attached to coordination, what are a command level's chances to break away from this hierarchy? How can the staff suddenly give themselves a new mission? In a fast-moving combat, the time slot for victory and defeat is extraordinarily short. The close coordination process within the DMP, which does not only comprise the issuing of an order, but also a review whether it has been understood correctly, makes it difficult to find the freedom of action enabling an independent decision. This leads us directly to the third problem stated above, the ignorance of the order. A new situation can indeed be an initial impulse for a decision-making process, which obviously

requires a new decision-making process. However, deliberate refusal is not an option in the decision-making process. The highly complex process, which is all-embracing and very thorough, would not leave room for this type of flexibility.

In contrast, the German model requires already during mission analysis right at the start a verification if the order that has just been delivered is still relevant. The German decision making process is far from being as deep and as wide as its Anglo-Saxon counterpart.⁴⁴ And it is by no means as detailed. From the very beginning, it is subject to a continuous transformation process. This transformation is facilitated by another decisive difference in the planning phase. The analysis of the enemy and his options takes up far more space in the DMP than in the German process. Analysing the course of action of the enemy in the DMP is a science in itself. The enemy is being assessed methodically and meticulously, and in the course of a simulation, called *krigsspill*, decisions of the enemy are reviewed and friendly decisions are preplanned. Such detailed planning is alien to the Germans. The German process spends not too much time on the enemy; a short analysis is based on the map, the terrain and the offensive capability of the enemy. The focus is here on the friendly options. This results in a completely different assessment of the own resources. In the end, the DMP defines units that need to be protected in order to gain the victory. If these units are lost, then the battle is lost. Thus, the focus is on defence. By contrast, the German process looks for a point⁴⁵ where the friendly resources can be concentrated and a decision can be sought. This point, though, can be shifted again and again in the course of combat and at short notice, taking advantage of tactical successes. The units and structures to be protected, which are defined as priorities in the DMP, will remain unchanged until the mission is accomplished.⁴⁶

Another factor which has not been investigated within the scope of this thesis is worth mentioning. The Norwegian staff makes a distinction in its organizational chart between G3 (command of current operations) and G5 (operations planning). In this case, the chief of staff is the next higher level of command. This distinction is unusual in a German brigade. Planning and command are joined in one staff division (G3). A separate staff division for the planning process, with all its advantages and disadvantages, does take effect in Germany only from the division level on.

Planning and implementation stay together. This aim of this master thesis, though, is not to determine whether the traditional German staff organisation in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon staff organisation has an influence on the conduct of operations. However, further research should be conducted on this subject.

5 Summary

The initial question was "*Are OBL and Mission Command the Same?*"

⁴⁴ This is no value judgment of the academic quality of the two processes. Another study would be required to deal with this subject, and it would go beyond the scope of this thesis. One of the reasons why the DMP is so controversial in Germany is the fact that especially in Step 3 (Trinn 3) a pseudo-mathematical approach is pursued that may considerably influence and manipulate any results. According to the author's knowledge, there is no further research on the analysis of the German process. With regard to the DMP, the master thesis of Bård Ravn "*Vinner vi krigene?*" may be recommended for further reading.

⁴⁵ This is definitely meant geographically.

⁴⁶ The comprehensive planning approach of the DMP with its system of checking the understanding and rehearsing the combat comes at a price. According to the statements of the officers involved, it takes about eight to 12 hours until a well-coordinated staff can issue the confirmatory orders to the battalions. The German staff using its own model manages to deliver the order within in six to eight hours, according to the statement of the G3 Department, Armoured Brigade 21.

An analysis with special emphasis on the leadership techniques of the German and Norwegian Armies."

The answer to this question, particularly with regard to the leadership technique, has to be a clear "No, but...".

The initially described similarities at the philosophical level quickly disappear on closer examination. It is true that the Norwegian doctrine calls for the delegation of responsibility to the lowest possible level and warns about too detailed orders, as described in the introduction. And the Norwegian military leaders do not have the required means and structures at their disposal. But let us take a step backwards first.

The analysis of history has shown that mission-type tactics is a very offensive leadership method, caused by a lack of material and personnel. It is aimed at a quick decision by forcing the planner to decide on a focal point and to seek success at that point. Furthermore, it forces the planner to use and to optimise all available resources. The wars from the liberation of Denmark up to the Franco-Prussian War show at first a hesitant development. The First World War in particular had a catalytic effect then. This optimization of resources is aimed at gaining a local tactical success which is to be consolidated into a strategic victory through resolute action. The subordinate element requires special command, education and training to be able to recognise and take advantage of this tactical success and its potential.

It requires commanders whose foremost duty it is to live with the mistakes their subordinates make and to include these mistakes in their own planning. Only those who show this tolerance are willing to delegate their influence to subordinates. The instruments required are a single language, a command and control system allowing this freedom, the fact that all possible decision makers on the battlefield have a training status that is as uniform as possible and that they have an understanding⁴⁷ of the higher commander's intent.

It is evident that command and training go hand in hand here. The personnel required for this purpose need to be appropriately trained before they are assigned to such commanders. The personnel needs to have sufficient freedom to make their own decisions with the structures. They need to be trained for at least one command level higher than the one they are deployed on. A hierarchy that is as unambiguous as possible down to the individual soldier needs to be in place to make delegation possible at all. This means that a second lieutenant does not command 36 soldiers of an infantry platoon. Optimally, he commands only six sergeants who in turn command six common soldiers each. So he can take the pressure of himself, delegate and he is clear-headed for planning the next step.

This type of command and training is hedged by a strict education which sanctions the subordinates not asking themselves permanently: "What is my higher commander's intent and what can I contribute?"

This education is graspable in Germany as well as in Norway. It is being practiced.

Another commonality can be deducted. This is the importance of the higher commander's intent. In the German process, though, the subordinates determine it themselves from a number of individual orders. In the Norwegian process, it is determined, reformulated and presented to the commander so that he can check whether it has been understood correctly.

This is the core. Mission-type tactics dies in this decision-making process. And this is irrevocable. All other characteristics of the two nations have an influence on mission-type tactics, but they can be brought into line with it. The lacking sergeant can be substituted by an informal leader among the junior ranks. Probably, even more than that is possible. The flat hierarchy structures and the way to deal with them are a matter of cultural imprint. The described differences in training can be easily compensated.

However, the DMP is not compatible with mission-type tactics, be it mission command or OBL.

⁴⁷ In this case, understanding is not be equated with acceptance but rather with the root of the word: to understand.

The reasons have become apparent before and shall be touched on again only shortly.

The staff has hardly any room for creative thinking and acting due to its strong orientation to the military official in charge. Right from the start, the continuous influence of the superior limits the freedom of action of his staff and his subordinates. It is permanently checked whether the subordinate levels have correctly understood the mission and implement it correctly. Ignoring the order issued by the superior is not provided for at all. Complexity, scope and detail do not allow a spontaneous conduct of combat operations.

In conclusion, it clearly shows that OBL and mission command are not the same concept. In the German estimate of the situation, the philosophy of mission-type tactics turns into concrete demands on the commander and even more on his subordinates. Mission command is developed away from a general concept to a concrete tool for a train of thought. This development has a great influence on the German soldiers' everyday life regarding command, training and education.

The Norwegian OBL, on the other hand, does not seem to have any practical consequences. This is at least not the case in the fields investigated within the scope of this thesis. It remains at a spherical level and is regarded as an advice for the superiors to trust their subordinates and give them freedom of thought. According to the current state of research, this demand cannot be met. How the Norwegian superior is to follow this advice, remains open in the end. This ought to be a reason for further studies.

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