

OPORD Format Reference

Detailed formatting standards for Army Operation Orders (OPORDs) and Warning Orders (WARNORDs).

DOCUMENT FORMAT STANDARDS

GitHub Flavored Markdown (GFM) Requirements

- Write all Army orders in GitHub Flavored Markdown (GFM) format
- Use proper heading hierarchies: `#`, `##`, `###`, etc.
- Use **bold** for emphasis with double asterisks `**bold text**`
- Use *italic* for less emphasis with single asterisks `*italic text*`
- Use proper list formatting: `-` or `*` for bullet lists, `1.`, `2.`, `3.` for numbered lists
- Use tables with pipe syntax `| Header | Header |` for structured information
- Use three backticks for code blocks or preformatted text when needed

Document Structure Requirements

1. Classification and Header

- Begin and end documents with classification markings (e.g., "UNCLASSIFIED") centered and in ALL CAPS
- Include document identifier left-aligned at top
- Include page numbers right-aligned

2. Document Identification Block

- Right-aligned: "Copy __ of __ copies"
- Left-aligned headquarters (e.g., "HQ, 2/116th FA")
- Left-aligned location (e.g., "CBJTC, FL")
- Left-aligned date-time group in military format (e.g., "131200APR18")
- Left-aligned document type and title in ALL CAPS

3. Time Zone Declaration

- Include "(U) Time Zone Used Throughout the OPORD: ROMEO (Local)" after title

4. Task Organization

- List participating units separated by commas

CONTENT STRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

1. Situation Section

1. (U) SITUATION.

a. (U) Area of Interest. [Geographic area]

- b. (U) Area of Operation. [Specific location]
- (1) (U) Terrain. [Terrain description]
- (2) (U) Weather. [Weather data - use markdown tables for structured format]
- c. (U) Enemy Forces. [Description or N/A]
- d. (U) Attachments. [Units attached or "None"]

2. Mission Section

2. (U) MISSION. [Unit] conducts [operations] at [location] from [start date] to [end date] IOT [purpose].

3. Execution Section

- 3. (U) EXECUTION.
- a. (U) Commander's Intent.
 - Purpose: [Why this mission matters to the higher plan – one sentence]
 - Key Tasks: (1) [Condition for success] (2) [Condition] (3) [Condition]
 - End State: [Observable conditions: enemy / friendly / civil]
- b. (U) Concept of Operations. [Overview – see guidance below]
- c. (U) Scheme of Fires. [Fire support plan]
- d. (U) Tasks to Subordinate Units.
 - (1) [Unit (Role – Decisive/Shaping)]
 - TASK: [Specific instructions with grids, triggers, actions]
 - PURPOSE: [Why this squad's task matters to the platoon plan]
- e. (U) Coordinating Instructions.
 - [ROE, PIR, CCIR, Reporting – items applicable to two or more units]

Execution Paragraph Writing Guidance

Each sub-paragraph contains unique information. Do not restate content across sections.

a. Commander's Intent — The "why" and conditions for success.

- **Purpose:** One sentence explaining why the mission matters to the higher commander's plan. Not a restatement of the mission statement.
- **Key Tasks:** 2-3 conditions that must be met for mission success, stated as outcomes (not squad assignments). These are things the PL cannot deviate from even if the plan falls apart.
- **End State:** Observable conditions on the ground when the mission is complete, described through the lenses of enemy, friendly forces, and civil considerations.
- The entire Intent should be brief enough for every squad leader to memorize.

b. Concept of Operations — The big picture of how the platoon fights as a whole.

- Describe the operation by phases (with transition criteria) or by decisive/shaping/sustaining framework.

- Identify the main effort and when/if it shifts.
- Use functional roles (assault element, support element, security element) rather than squad numbers where possible. The mapping of squad-to-role belongs in Tasks.
- Keep to 75-100 words. If it exceeds that, detail is leaking in that belongs in Tasks.
- **Does NOT contain:** grid coordinates, squad-by-squad movement sequences, or specific positions. Those belong in Tasks to Subordinate Units.

c. Scheme of Fires — Priority of fires, fire support assets, restrictions. Unique information only.

d. Tasks to Subordinate Units — The ONE place with squad-specific detail.

- **TASK:** The squad's complete instructions — where to go (with grid coordinates), what to do, triggers/signals, on-order actions, and actions on contact. This is the only place in the OPOD where this detail appears.
- **PURPOSE:** Why THIS SQUAD's task matters to the platoon plan specifically. Test: "If this squad fails, what specifically breaks?" Do not restate the Commander's Intent. A good purpose connects the squad's task to the next phase or another element's success.
- Include the element's role (Assault, Support, Security, Reserve) and whether it is the decisive or shaping operation in the header.

e. Coordinating Instructions — Cross-cutting guidance that applies to two or more units. ROE, PIR, CCIR, reporting requirements, time hacks, restrictions.

Note on Scheme of Movement and Maneuver: This is NOT a separate sub-paragraph for most platoon operations. The phased overview belongs in the Concept of Operations; squad-specific positions and grids belong in Tasks. For movement-centric operations (tactical road march, convoy operations) where movement IS the operation, a Scheme of Movement sub-paragraph may be included between Concept and Fires, but it contains ONLY formation, technique, order of march, route, and speed/intervals — not element tasks.

4. Sustainment Section

4. (U) SUSTAINMENT.

a. Material and Services

(1) Supply

(a) Class I [Food/water details]

(b) Class III [Fuel details]

(c) Class V [Ammunition details]

(d) Class VIII [Medical supplies]

(2) Maintenance: [Maintenance support details]

5. Command and Control Section

5. (U) COMMAND AND CONTROL.

(a) (U) Signal.

(1) Frequency and Call signs.

(2) PACE.

(a) P — [Primary]

(b) A — [Alternate]

(c) C — [Contingency]

(d) E — [Emergency]

(b) (U) Command.

(1) Location. [Command locations]

(2) Succession of Cmd. [Chain of command]

DOCUMENT CLOSING REQUIREMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGE:

[COMMANDER'S LAST NAME]

[RANK]

OFFICIAL:

[STAFF OFFICER]

[POSITION]

ANNEXES:

[List of annexes, appendices, and tabs]

DISTRIBUTION:

[List of units receiving the order]

FORMATTING RULES

Outline Hierarchy

- Main paragraphs: 1., 2., 3., etc.
- First sub-level: a., b., c., etc.
- Second sub-level: (1), (2), (3), etc.
- Third sub-level: (a), (b), (c), etc.
- Fourth sub-level (if needed): 1, 2, 3, etc.

Classification Markings

- Include "(U)" before each paragraph title to indicate unclassified information

Date-Time Groups

- Use military format: DDHHMMMONYR (e.g., 131200APR18)
- For date spans: DDMONYY format (e.g., 31MAY18 to 03JUN18)

Military Grid References

- Format as "MP XXX YYY" for grid coordinates
- Include "vic." (vicinity) before grid references

Time References

- Use 24-hour military time format (e.g., 1500 for 3:00 PM)
- Include time zone identifier when appropriate

DOCUMENT TYPE DIFFERENCES

WARNORD (Warning Order)

- Issued earlier with preliminary information
- Contains tentative information (marked as TBP - To Be Published)
- Less detailed execution information
- Titled as "WARNORD # TO OPORD [number]"

OPORD (Operation Order)

- Detailed and finalized information
 - Complete task organizations and execution details
 - Fully developed annexes and appendices
-

ACKNOWLEDGE:

MATTHEW WAGNER
CPT, FA
FLORIDA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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