

Certificate in Military Planning

Operational Art and Design

Operational Art and Design (OAD) is a critical area of study for military planning, focusing on the development and execution of campaigns and major operations. It involves the translation of strategic goals into operational-level objectives and the orchestration of military resources to achieve those objectives. Here are some key terms and vocabulary related to OAD:

1. **Operational Art:** The mental process that links military strategy to tactical actions, involving the design, planning, and execution of campaigns and major operations. It is the employment of military forces to achieve strategic objectives within a theater of operations.
2. **Operational Design:** The process of creating a campaign plan that supports strategic objectives. It involves identifying the operational environment, defining the mission, establishing operational objectives, and developing a concept of operations.
3. **Operational Environment:** The physical, cultural, and human conditions that influence military operations. It includes geography, climate, infrastructure, social and political structures, and cultural norms.
4. **Operational Objectives:** The specific goals that military forces must achieve to support strategic objectives. Operational objectives are usually expressed in terms of control of terrain, population, or resources.
5. **Concept of Operations:** A broad statement of how military forces will achieve operational objectives. It includes the allocation of resources, the sequencing of operations, and the coordination of forces.
6. **Center of Gravity:** The source of power that provides military forces with the ability to achieve their objectives. A center of gravity can be a physical entity, such as a military base or a logistics hub, or it can be an abstract concept, such as morale or leadership.
7. **Decisive Point:** A specific point in time or space where military forces can achieve a significant advantage over their opponents. Decisive points are often associated with key terrain or resources that, if controlled, can provide a significant advantage.
8. **Operational Vignette:** A hypothetical scenario used to explore operational art and design concepts. Operational vignettes are used to test assumptions, identify gaps in planning, and evaluate the feasibility of proposed courses of action.
9. **Campaign Plan:** A detailed plan that outlines how military forces will achieve operational objectives. It includes a concept of operations, a timeline, a resource allocation plan, and a risk management plan.
10. **Course of Action:** A specific plan for achieving operational objectives. Courses of action are developed based on an analysis of the operational environment, the identification of centers of gravity and decisive points, and the allocation of resources.
11. **Operational Rehearsal:** A simulated exercise used to practice operational art and design concepts. Operational rehearsals are used to identify gaps in planning, refine tactics, and build confidence in the plan.
12. **Operational Risk Management:** The process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks associated

with military operations. Operational risk management includes the development of contingency plans, the allocation of reserves, and the establishment of communication protocols.

13. Operational Art and Design Process: A structured process for developing and executing operational plans. The process includes the identification of strategic objectives, the analysis of the operational environment, the development of operational objectives, the identification of centers of gravity and decisive points, the allocation of resources, the development of a concept of operations, the development of a campaign plan, the rehearsal of the plan, and the execution of the plan.

Operational art and design is a complex and challenging field, requiring a deep understanding of military strategy, tactics, and logistics. Here are some practical applications and challenges related to OAD:

1. Practical Application: OAD is used to plan and execute major military operations, such as invasions, counterinsurgency campaigns, and humanitarian assistance missions. It is also used to support interagency operations, such as disaster response and peacekeeping missions.
2. Challenge: OAD requires a deep understanding of the operational environment, including the cultural, social, and political context in which military operations will be conducted. This requires extensive research, analysis, and collaboration with subject matter experts.
3. Practical Application: OAD is used to allocate resources, including personnel, equipment, and supplies. This requires a detailed understanding of the capabilities and limitations of military forces, as well as the ability to prioritize resources based on operational objectives.
4. Challenge: OAD requires the ability to anticipate and adapt to changing conditions on the battlefield. This requires a high degree of flexibility, innovation, and creativity, as well as the ability to make quick decisions under pressure.
5. Practical Application: OAD is used to coordinate and synchronize the actions of multiple military units and agencies. This requires strong communication, collaboration, and leadership skills, as well as the ability to build and maintain relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders.
6. Challenge: OAD is conducted in a complex and dynamic environment, with multiple actors and factors influencing the outcome of military operations. This requires the ability to analyze and synthesize large amounts of information, identify patterns and trends, and make informed decisions based on incomplete information.

Examples:

1. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a major military operation that required extensive operational art and design. The campaign plan included the identification of strategic objectives, such as the removal of Saddam Hussein from power and the establishment of a democratic government. It also included the allocation of resources, such as personnel, equipment, and supplies, as well as the development of a concept of operations that involved a combination of air and ground attacks.
2. The response to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 was a humanitarian assistance mission that required operational art and design. The campaign plan included the identification of operational objectives, such as the provision of medical care, food, and shelter to affected populations. It also included the allocation of

resources, such as personnel, equipment, and supplies, as well as the coordination and synchronization of actions with multiple agencies, including the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and local authorities.

In conclusion, operational art and design is a critical area of study for military planning, involving the development and execution of campaigns and major operations. It requires a deep understanding of military strategy, tactics, and logistics, as well as the ability to analyze and adapt to changing conditions on the battlefield. Practical applications of OAD include the planning and execution of major military operations, as well as support for interagency operations. Challenges include the need for extensive research and analysis, the ability to anticipate and adapt to changing conditions, and the coordination and synchronization of actions with multiple military units and agencies. Examples of OAD include the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the response to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010.