

Company PME

Successful leaders consistently challenge subordinates with a comprehensive education. Successful units incentivize subordinate self-study.

Scope

Company-level PME techniques—conducted in the field and in garrison. It applies to our ground combat element companies and subordinate units. If it develops technical skill and techniques, it is training—outside our scope. Education—*how to learn how to teach how to think*—is in scope.

Purpose

Build trust. *Trust is the center of tactics. Trust is two-fold: trust in the superior by demonstrated competence. Trust in the subordinate through performance.*

The company PME program builds trust in three ways:

By demonstrating. Leaders demonstrate tactical proficiency to subordinates. The demonstration of competence is crucial for subordinate trust in the leader. Subordinates demonstrate understanding of a commander's intent. Everyone shares experiences and lessons.

By acknowledging. No one knows everything and when you pretend to, it is quickly unmasked—degrading trust. When leaders admit to not knowing something, they don't fake it—they learn it. Acknowledging teaches self-reliance and professional growth positively. Asking a subject matter expert elevates them. It gives their knowledge and experience prestige.

By making mistakes. All Marines make mistakes. All Marines learn from mistakes. We learn the most from mistakes. To genuinely learn, leaders foster a command where creativity, decisiveness, and a willingness to learn is prized over the perfect solution or *'not looking dumb in front of the CO.'*

Create a shared understanding. *Learn implicit communication through PME.*

PME introduces tactical concepts. Leaders analyze problems together. Leaders discuss responses together. Subordinates see how their superior analyzes the battlefield. and the expectations of subordinates in solving them. The lesson teaches tactics.

PME teaches the leader's values—their intent. For example, a group frequently fights decision games together. Each time, the leader issues intent, priorities and information requirements before the game. Over time, the leader's directives are internalized by subordinates. Familiarity limits the need for new guidance again and again. Familiarity allows anticipation, generating speed and tempo.

“Learn in peace as you prepare your map problems, field exercises, and war games, to give false or exaggerated reports; otherwise, your subordinates will become accustomed to accepting all information they receive at its face value.”

— Captain Adolf von Schell, *Battlefield Leadership* 1933

Practice decision-making.

PME tests judgment—good PME practices timed decision-making with limited information. With consistency, participants acclimatize to these battlefield conditions. Leaders train what they are expected to do well: estimate an enemy, make a decision, and issue orders. Challenge subordinates with problems with no clear solutions: tactical, technical, or moral.

PME examines military history. Past commanders—with their victories, defeats, opportunities, reversals—speak to leaders through their decisions.

PME reveals how men react with uncertainty—making the simple, difficult. Force subordinates to acknowledge the nature of war. Expose friction, chaos, virtue, and suffering within combat studies.

What PME is not

Financial Readiness

B-Billet Opportunities and Assignments

Career Progression

Master Brief Sheet Explanations

FITREP Classes

Legal

These are informational briefs. They provide knowledge on military administration and career progression. They are **not** PME—they do not directly prepare individuals for combat.

Techniques for PME

Case Study: Biographies, books (battles, campaigns, different militaries), unit after-actions and histories, military journals, films, documentaries and veteran interviews. Train leaders in estimates, decision making, the nature of war, and character development.

Tactical Exercise without Troops (TEWT): Train leaders in teamwork, SOPs, command and signal standards. TEWTs focus on demonstrating tactical or technical techniques.

Wargaming: Board games, computer games, double-blind TDGs. Train leaders in estimates, decisions, and issuing orders.

Terrain Walks and Staff Rides. Train leaders in estimates, decisions, and issuing orders. Terrain walks focus on employment, decision-making and judgment against a notional enemy.

Decision Games: Sand table exercise (STEX), tactical decision game (TDG), decision forcing case (DFC), map exercise. Train leaders on weapons and unit employment. A STEX, a TDG, DFC and a map exercise are equivalent. Participants fight against a notional enemy. The leader provides enemy dispositions, actions, and updates.

The difference is the medium. Conduct a STEX over an unscaled sand-table with terrain depicted by sand. Conduct a TDG/DFC over an unscaled map with highlighted terrain features on paper or a whiteboard. Conduct a map exercise over a scaled, topographical map.

Progress through decision games from STEK, TDG/DFC and then map exercises. Decision game progression addresses problems of terrain and weapon employment from the most visual medium (STEX) to the most conceptual (map exercise).

TDGs and DFCs differ in their solutions. TDGs have no set solution—no school solution. Linked to specific historical events, DFCs have an outcome. The outcome—the solution of the person or unit studied—provides comparison for participants’ decisions.

Note: during decision games, the commander gives their solution too! Their decisions deserve the most scrutiny. They don't simply poke holes or ask questions. In the end, all subordinates need to understand how they see the situation!

“Developing your character and competence—and the character and competence of your subordinates—is one of your most important duties. It is not a duty you can take up when you come in the hatch in the morning and drop when you go home at night. It must guide and be part of everything you do, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It must become a central part of what and who you are.”

— MCI 8404 *Marine Corps Leadership*

Plan PME

Field Techniques	Garrison Techniques
TEWTs Terrain Walks	Decision Games Terrain Walks Staff Rides Wargames
Continuous: Professional Reading and Historical Study	

When

During company-level field exercises, the company commander leads PME at least **once**. Plan PME in the field or garrison but NOT during continuous or service-level exercises.

Weekly in garrison, the company commander leads PME. Each week, schedule three hours for PME in garrison. Schedule **one** session a month to walk terrain.

Planning Techniques

Schedule PME concurrent with field events to allow small-unit leaders to train independently.

Readings from military history are assigned for performance or decision outcomes. A wide scope of military leaders and references are introduced; book reports and long projects for battle studies are avoided.

All preparatory work and knowledge of military history are the responsibility of the company commander. All research is conducted prior to commencement of a PME session.

Include the machine gun and mortar section leaders within company-level PME—tasked by company commander, educated by company commander.

Contributors

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References

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Annex A: Example PME

Example Field PME

The company is on a live-fire range conducting day and night squad attacks.

1200: Break in training. Commander reconnoiters local terrain for ridgelines perpendicular to a road.

1600: Day live-fire training complete. Company commander assembles officers and SNCOs to inform them of an expected mechanized attack along the road. The company commander intends to defend the reverse-slope. Assigns platoons sectors and one hour to develop engagement areas.

1700: Company commander and gunnery sergeant walk sectors with subordinates, review positions and offer critiques.

1800: Critiques complete. Company commander assigns readings on reverse-slope defense from Stormtroop Tactics. Leaders return to units.

During PME, rifle squads and weapons sections prepare for night training, rehearse and rest.

Example Garrison PME

The company returned from squad attacks; it is Friday morning.

0630-0800: Company commander and officers conduct pool PT.

1300: Battalion formations and meetings complete. Company commander, gunnery sergeant and officers assemble in CP. SNCOs meet with the commander next week—they ran platoon-level PME last Monday in garrison.

1300-1315: Review readings from Stormtroop Tactics. Discuss differences between German elastic defense and British blob defense.

1315-1400: Review Warfighting Skills Program *MCI 8401: Tactical Fundamentals*, Chapter 3.

1400-1530: Conduct double-blind TDG from Mastering Tactics. Lieutenants play against each other with commander and gunnery sergeant umpiring.

1530-1600: After-action conducted. Company commander assigns readings based on field performance. Two lieutenants ignored commander's intent assigned readings from Killer Angels on Jeb Stuart. One indecisive lieutenant assigned readings about Richard Ewell from the same book. The final two lieutenants assigned readings about Gouverneur Warren's use of terrain at Little Round Top.

Annex B: Sample Quarterly PME Plan (California)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
Week 1	-Company Commander Counseling of Lts/SNCOs	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	<p><u>1300-1600 (Lts/SNCOs):</u></p> <p>-CC reviews PME plan.</p> <p>-Platoon-leadership STEX from <i>Mastering Tactics</i> conducted by CC to assess orders, estimates, decision-making.</p> <p>-Readings assigned.</p>	<p><u>Officers:</u> Articles from Warfighting Skills Program Book 1 and <i>Battle Leadership</i></p> <p><u>SNCOs:</u> Chapter 1 of Maneuver Warfare Handbook and <i>Battle Leadership</i></p>
Week 2	-Platoon Commander Counseling of NCOs/TLs -CC develops fire support training with Wpns Plt Cdr.	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	<p><u>1300-1600 (SNCOs):</u></p> <p>-CC reviews Ch 1. of MWH and <i>Battle Leadership</i>.</p> <p>-STEX of TDG 1 from MWH.</p> <p>-Discuss <i>Kodiak Actual</i> and <i>Orders Handbook</i></p> <p>-Readings assigned.</p>	<p><u>Officers:</u> Ch1 and 2 of Warfighting Skills Program Book 1 and <i>Battle Leadership</i></p> <p><u>SNCOs:</u> Ch 2 of Maneuver Warfare Handbook, <i>Battle Leadership</i>, Historical Readings based off performance.</p>
Week 3	-SNCOs conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	<p><u>1300-1600 (Lts):</u></p> <p>-CC reviews Ch 1. and 2 of WSP and <i>Battle Leadership</i>.</p> <p>-STEX of TDG 1 from WSP <i>Tactical Problems</i>.</p> <p>-Discuss <i>Kodiak Actual</i> and <i>Orders Handbook</i>.</p> <p>-Readings assigned.</p>	<p><u>Officers:</u> Ch3 and 4 of Warfighting Skills Program Book 1, <i>Battle Leadership</i>, Historical Reading off Performance</p> <p><u>SNCOs:</u> Articles from WSP, <i>Battle Leadership</i>.</p>

Week 4	-Lts conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.	Field-Marksmanship	Field-Marksmanship TEWT - CC leads TEWT on leader's reconnaissance Assigns readings.	Field-Marksmanship	<u>1300-1600 (Lts/SNCOs):</u> -CC reviews TEWT readings and <i>Battle Leadership</i> . -Double Blind STEX of TDG from <i>Mastering Tactics</i> . -Discuss Leader's Reconnaissance Article. -Readings assigned.	<u>Officers:</u> <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Reading off Performance <u>SNCOs:</u> <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Reading off Performance
Week 5	-Lts conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs. -CC conducts fire support training with Wpns Plt Cdr.	N/A-Garrison	N/A-Garrison	N/A-Garrison	<u>1300-1600 (SNCOs):</u> -CC reviews Ch 2 of MWH and <i>On Infantry</i> -STEX of TDG 2 from MWH. -Discuss <i>Art of Maneuver</i> chapter on pursuit. -Readings assigned.	<u>Officers:</u> <i>On Infantry</i> , Articles from WSP <u>SNCOs:</u> Ch 3 of MWH, <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Reading off Performance
Week 6	-SNCOs conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.	N/A-Garrison	N/A-Garrison	N/A-Garrison	<u>1300-1600 (Lts):</u> -CC reviews Ch 3. and 4 of WSP and <i>On Infantry</i> . -STEX of TDG 2 from WSP <i>Tactical Problems</i> . -Discuss articles on ME. -Readings assigned.	<u>Officers:</u> Ch1 and 2 of Warfighting Skills Program Book 3, <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Reading off Performance <u>SNCOs:</u> Articles from WSP, <i>On Infantry</i>

Week 7	-Lts conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.	Field- Basic Skills/Team Battle Drills PME - CC leads PME on gear and comm setup with Lts.	Field- Basic Skills/Team Battle Drills CPX - CC, Lts, SNCOs practice comm procedures and orders over radio.	Field- Basic Skills/Team Battle Drills TEWT -SNCOs lead TEWT with NCOs on ambushes, while Lts observe TLs.	1300-1600 (Lts/SNCOs): -CC reviews field PME lessons and <i>On Infantry</i> . -Introduction to <i>Close Combat Software</i> . -Discuss Wargaming Caps/Lims. -Readings assigned on the Battle of San Pasqual.	Officers: <i>On Infantry</i> , Battle of San Pasqual readings. SNCOs: On Infantry, Battle of San Pasqual readings.
Week 8	-SNCOs conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs. -CC conducts fire support training with Wpns Plt Cdr.	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	All Day Staff Ride (Lts/SNCOs): -Travel to San Pasqual Battlefield. -Tour museum with staff. -Walk battlefield: SNCOs and Officers will each be given two tactical scenarios from the battle to work through. -Readings assigned.	Officers: <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Readings off Performance. SNCOs: <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Readings off Performance.
Week 9	-Lts conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs. -CC conducts fire support training with Wpns Plt Cdr	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	N/A- Garrison	1300-1600 (SNCOs): -CC reviews Ch 3 of MWH and <i>On Infantry</i> -STEX of TDG 3 from MWH. -Discuss articles on combined arms employment. -Readings assigned.	Officers: <i>On Infantry</i> , Articles from WSP SNCOs: Ch 4 of MWH, <i>On Infantry</i> , Historical Reading off Performance

<p>Week 10</p>	<p>-Lts conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.</p> <p>-CC plans next quarter PME.</p>	<p>Field- Squad Patrolling/ Force-on-Force</p> <p>CPX- CC and staff practice battle-tracking squads. Verbal orders on radios.</p>	<p>Field- Squad Patrolling/ Force-on-Force</p> <p>CPX-CC and staff practice battle-tracking squads. Verbal orders on radios.</p>	<p>Field- Squad Patrolling/ Force-on-Force</p> <p>TEWT-CC leads TEWT on reverse slope defense. Assigns readings.</p>	<p>1300-1600 (Lts/SNCOs):</p> <p>-CC reviews TEWT readings and <i>On Infantry</i>.</p> <p>-Wargame utilizing <i>Close Combat</i>.</p> <p>-Discuss effects of suppression and fear in combat.</p> <p>-Readings assigned.</p>	<p>Officers: <i>Order in Chaos</i>, Historical Readings off Performance.</p> <p>SNCOs:</p> <p><i>Order in Chaos</i>, Historical Readings off Performance.</p>
<p>Week 11</p>	<p>-SNCOs conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.</p> <p>-CC conducts fire support training with Wpns Plt Cdr.</p>	<p>N/A- Garrison</p>	<p>N/A- Garrison</p>	<p>N/A- Garrison</p>	<p>1300-1600 (Lts):</p> <p>-CC reviews Ch 1. And 2 of WSP3 and <i>Order in Chaos</i>.</p> <p>-STEX of TDG 3 from WSP <i>Tactical Problems</i>.</p> <p>-Discuss articles on combined arms.</p> <p>-Readings assigned.</p>	<p>Officers: Ch3 and 4 of Warfighting Skills Program Book 3, <i>Order in Chaos</i>, Historical Reading off Performance</p> <p>SNCOs:</p> <p>Articles from WSP, <i>Order in Chaos</i></p>
<p>Week 12</p>	<p>-Lts conduct platoon PME with NCOs/TLs.</p>	<p>Field- Squad Attacks</p> <p>CPX- CC and staff practice battle-tracking squads. Verbal orders on radios.</p>	<p>Field- Squad Attacks</p> <p>CPX-CC and staff practice battle-tracking squads. Verbal orders on radios.</p>	<p>Field- Squad Attacks</p> <p>TEWT-Company GySgt leads TEWT on squad defense from ENY perspective. CC assigns readings.</p>	<p>1300-1600 (Lts/SNCOs):</p> <p>-CC reviews TEWT readings and <i>Order in Chaos</i>.</p> <p>-Interview with Vietnam Marine veteran.</p> <p>-Discuss nature of war, combat and death.</p> <p>-Readings assigned.</p>	<p>Officers: <i>Order in Chaos</i>, Readings on Combat.</p> <p>SNCOs:</p> <p><i>Order in Chaos</i>, Readings on Combat.</p>