BRMRG Search Base Practical for FTLs
Part 2: The TAF
EKM 4-11-01

Objectives:

- Describe how a TAF is used in information management
- Fill in the "automatic" blanks on a TAF
- Write a Task Description that can be used without a map
- Create a task package ready for briefing/debriefing

THE BIG PICTURE

Up until now we have asked you to keep your nose to the ground and concentrate on the gritty side of searching. You may also have been asked o think very conceptually about search theory and strategy. This class is about neither of those skills directly. Insisted, you will need to draw on both skills in order to the OPS functions that tie practical field experience to conceptual Base thinking.
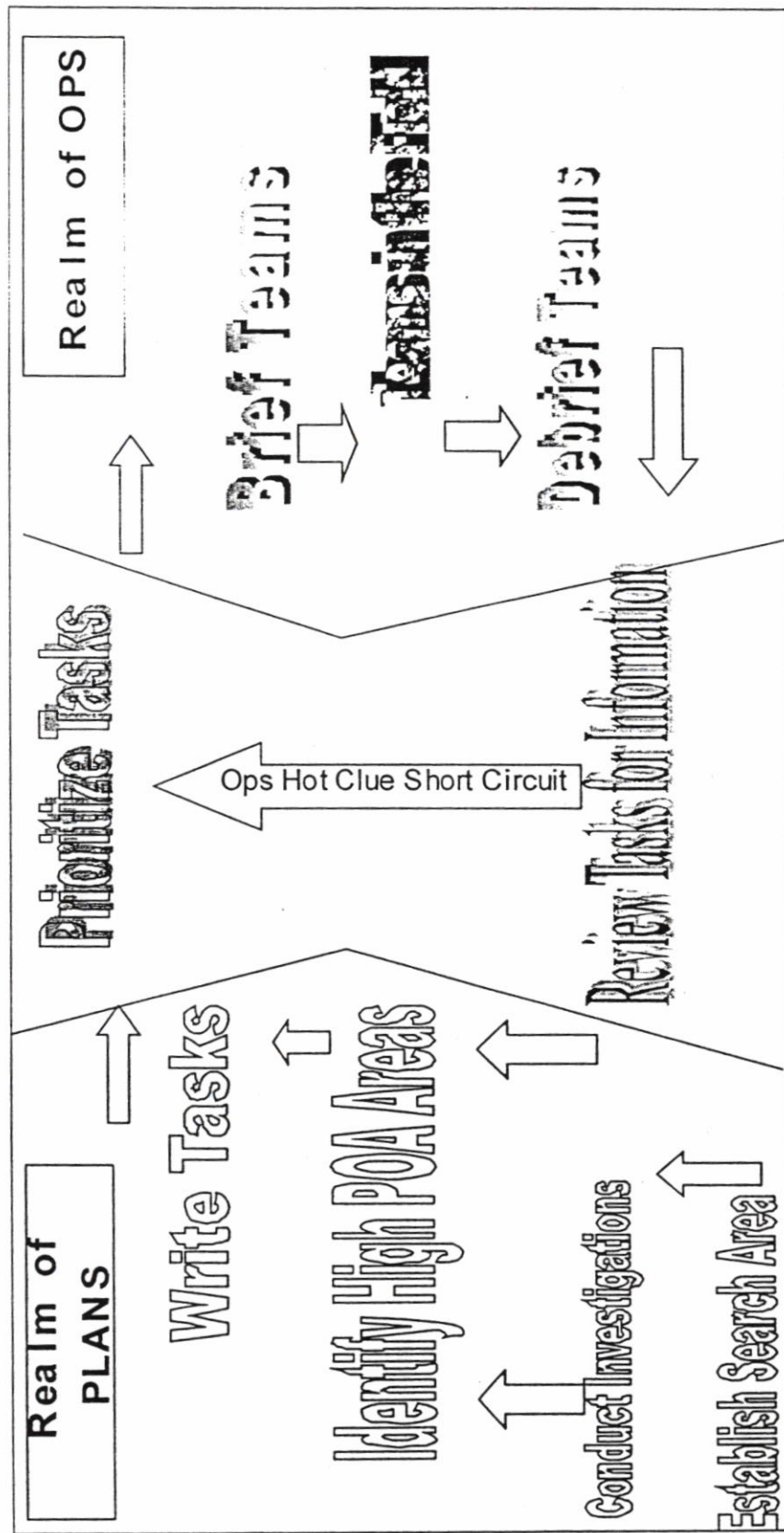
If Fieldwork is concerned **with gathering information** in the form of clues, terrain, weather, hazards etc. Then Base is concerned with **managing the flow of that information** through channels that either direct it back to the Teams for their use, or through channels that lead to higher decision making about the overall direction of recourses and search strategy.

The one crucial link in this system is the Briefer/Debrief with the TAF as her only tool. Briefing/Debriefing and Deputy Ops require a synergy of conceptual and practical search experience because it is the only place where these **two different languages are translated into one another**. Your job is to learn to translate Base talk into Practical Field talk.

The TAF is the piece of paper that flows through ALL of the functions at a search. TAFs are written by Plans, Used by Ops and FTLs, re-read by Ops and Plans, Reviewed by the RA the IC the PIO, Family, Investigations... **Everyone uses a TAF,** and **everything that happens on a search is tracked by a TAF**. Without a TAF to track movements of people, recourses, and information safety and efficiency would be compromised. Take a moment to trace the life cycle of a TAF and look at how it is used in the information flow of a search.

So what do all these people do? Manage Information!

A Crash Course in Information Management, Or the Life of a Task Assignment Form

Realm of OPS

Brief Teams

Identify PIN

Debrief Teams

Prioritize Tasks

Ops Hot Clue Short Circuit

Review Tasks for Information

Realm of PLANS

Write Tasks

Identify High POA Areas

Conduct Investigations

Establish Search Area

^{1.} Resource Type: _____

^{2.} Planning #: _____

^{3.} Priority: _____

^{4.} Task Completed ☐
^{5.} Task Partially Finished ☐
^{6.} URGENT Follow-Up ! ☐

TASK ASSIGNMENT FORM	^{7.} Task Number	^{8.} Team Identifier	^{9.} Resource Type	^{10.} Task Map(s)
^{11.} Branch	^{12.} Division/Group		^{13.} Incident Name	

A S S I G N M E N T

^{14.} Task Instructions

^{15.} Briefing Checklist:
☐ Expected Time frame_____
☐ Target POD subject_____
☐ Target POD clues_____
☐ Teams nearby_____
☐ Applicable clues
☐ Terrain/Hazards
☐ Weather, Safety Issues
☐ Press, Family Plans
☐ Subject Information
☐ Rescue/Find Plans
☐ Others

^{16.} Previous Search Efforts in Area

^{17.} Transportation

^{18.} Equipment Requirements

P E R S O N N E L

^{19.} Role	Name	Agency	Role	Name	Agency
1. FTL			8.		
2.			9.		
3.			10.		
4.			11.		
5.			12.		
6.			13.		
7.			14.		

C O M M U N I C A T I O N

^{20.} Team Call Sign   Freq.

^{21.} Base Call Sign   Freq.

^{22.} Pertinent Phone Numbers
Base:_____

^{23.} Instructions
Check in every _____ on the _____ hour.

^{24.} Function	Freq.	Comments	Function	Freq.	Comments
Tactical I					
Tactical II					

^{25.} Notes/Safety Message:

SAR TAF 5/96	^{26.} Prepared by:	^{27.} Briefed by:	Time out:

Notes on Filling in a TAF

FRONT

Resource Type:

Planning #:

Priority:

Task Completed/Task Partially Finished/URGENT follow-up!

Task Number:

Team Identifier:

Resource Type:

Task Maps:

Branch:

Division/Group:

Incident Name:

Task Instructions:

Briefing Checklist:

Previous Search Efforts in Area:

Transpiration:

Equipment Requirements:

Team Members:

Team Call Sign & Frequency:

Base Call Sign & Frequency:

Pertinent Phone Numbers:

Instructions to check in:

Tactical or other communications:

Notes/Safety Message:

Prepared by:

Briefed by:

Time Out:

BACK

Date/Time Prepared:

Time Task Completed:

Debriefed Name:

Task Number:

Wind Direction Information:

Resource Type:

Search Technique:

Team Performance:

Describe Area Actually searched and how:

Describe Areas NOT searched/lower PODs

Describe Clues Tracks, Alerts, or scent trails (record on clue long and map):

Describe follow-up recommendations/FTL comments (record on F-U log and map):

Hazards/Terrain Noted

POD Summary

Debriefer's Follow-up Section:

Suggestions

Task Summary/ Routing for Review

The TAF goes through 3 stages before it is ready to be used:
Step 1 – Filling in the "automatic" information
Step 2 – Writing a complete Task Description
Step 3 – Creating a Task Package

The "Automatic" Portions of a Task Assignment Form

Filling in the "Automatic" portions of a TAF:
These are the blanks of a TAF that will remain constant throughout a search and can be filled in quickly by a lone person. If these are completed in advance, it can allow Ops and Plans to function more efficiently later.

Writing a Clear Task Description

Why write a clear Task Description:
- **The FTL must understand what they are supposed to do**
- **Base can reconstruct what has happed during each shift**
- **Base can track Recourses**
- **Base can track information**

All information in Base must be triple redundant in documentation. In other words, we should be able to spill 3 cups of coffee on the mission paperwork, and still be able to reconstruct the search. That means that Task Descriptions should be so clear that they **do not require a map** *to understand.*

What needs to be in a Task Description?
- **Exactly where to go**
- **Where to stop and start**
- **Coordinates of multiple bounding features of the task**
- **Anything unique about the task area**
- **If anyone has searched the area, or surrounding areas before**
- **Specific expectations from base, POD, Search Tactics, etc.**

Creating a Task Package

Before a TAF is sent to Briefing/Debriefing it is made into a Task Package. A Task Package includes:

1. **TAF, complete with automatic info and task description**
2. **2 Copies of the Task map stapled to the TAF**