

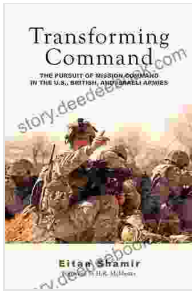
The Pursuit of Mission Command in the British and Israeli Armies: A Comparative Analysis of Doctrinal Development and Operational Implementation

Mission command is a military philosophy that emphasizes decentralized decision-making and the empowerment of subordinate commanders. It is based on the idea that leaders should provide their subordinates with clear guidance and objectives, but then give them the freedom to operate within those parameters as they see fit. This approach is designed to encourage initiative, agility, and adaptability on the battlefield.

The British and Israeli armies are two of the most prominent proponents of mission command. Both armies have developed extensive doctrinal frameworks for mission command, and they have both implemented it successfully in a variety of operational contexts. However, there are also some important differences between the two armies' approaches to mission command.

This article will compare and contrast the doctrinal development and operational implementation of mission command in the British and Israeli armies. It will begin by providing a brief overview of the concept of mission command. It will then discuss the historical development of mission command in both armies. Finally, it will compare and contrast the two armies' current approaches to mission command.

Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the U.S., British, and Israeli Armies



by Eitan Shamir

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Mission command is often contrasted with the more traditional approach of command and control, which emphasizes centralized decision-making and the direct supervision of subordinates. In a command and control system, leaders make all of the decisions and subordinates are expected to follow orders without question. This approach can be effective in certain situations, such as when time is short or when the situation is highly complex. However, it can also be inflexible and slow to adapt to changing circumstances.

Mission command, on the other hand, is designed to be flexible and adaptable. It allows subordinates to make decisions based on their own knowledge and experience, and it encourages them to take initiative and responsibility. This approach can be more effective in complex and rapidly changing situations, where it is difficult for leaders to make all of the decisions themselves.

The British Army has a long history of decentralized decision-making and the empowerment of subordinate commanders. This tradition can be traced back to the 18th century, when the British Army adopted a system of "light infantry" tactics. These tactics emphasized the use of small, independent units that were able to operate autonomously on the battlefield.

The British Army's emphasis on decentralized decision-making was further developed during the Napoleonic Wars. In these wars, the British Army faced a numerically superior enemy, and it was often forced to rely on the initiative and adaptability of its subordinate commanders. This experience reinforced the British Army's belief in the importance of mission command.

In the 20th century, the British Army continued to develop its approach to mission command. The army's experience in the Boer War and the First World War led to a greater emphasis on training and education for subordinate commanders. The army also developed a number of new doctrinal manuals that outlined the principles of mission command.

The British Army's approach to mission command was put to the test during the Second World War. The war saw the British Army fighting in a variety of different theaters, including North Africa, Europe, and the Far East. In each of these theaters, the British Army was able to successfully implement

mission command, and it was credited with playing a major role in the Allied victory.

After the Second World War, the British Army continued to develop its approach to mission command. The army's experience in the Korean War and the Cold War led to a greater emphasis on the use of technology to support mission command. The army also developed a number of new doctrinal manuals that outlined the principles of mission command in the context of modern warfare.

Today, mission command is a cornerstone of the British Army's doctrine. The army's approach to mission command is based on the following principles:

- **Decentralized decision-making:** Subordinate commanders are empowered to make decisions based on their own knowledge and experience.
- **Empowerment of subordinates:** Subordinate commanders are given the authority to act independently within the parameters set by their superiors.
- **Mission-oriented leadership:** Leaders provide their subordinates with clear guidance and objectives, but then give them the freedom to operate within those parameters as they see fit.
- **Training and education:** Subordinate commanders are trained and educated to be able to make sound decisions and to act independently.

The British Army's approach to mission command has been successful in a variety of operational contexts. The army has been able to successfully implement mission command in both conventional and unconventional warfare. The army has also been able to successfully implement mission command in a variety of different theaters, including Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

The Israeli Army was founded in 1948, and it has a long history of decentralized decision-making and the empowerment of subordinate commanders. This tradition can be traced back to the army's early experiences in the 1947-1949 Arab-Israeli War. In this war, the Israeli Army was outnumbered and outgunned by its Arab adversaries. The army was forced to rely on the initiative and adaptability of its subordinate commanders in order to survive.

The Israeli Army's emphasis on decentralized decision-making was further developed during the 1956 Sinai War and the 1967 Six-Day War. In these wars, the Israeli Army was able to defeat its Arab adversaries decisively. The army's success was due in part to its effective implementation of mission command.

In the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Israeli Army was caught off guard by a surprise attack from its Arab adversaries. The army was initially overwhelmed, but it was able to recover and eventually win the war. The army's success was due in part to its ability to implement mission command effectively.

After the Yom Kippur War, the Israeli Army continued to develop its approach to mission command. The army's experience in the war led to a

greater emphasis on training and education for subordinate commanders. The army also developed a number of new doctrinal manuals that outlined the principles of mission command.

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The Israeli Army's approach to mission command has been successful in a variety of operational contexts. The army has been able to successfully implement mission command in both conventional and unconventional warfare. The army has also been able to successfully implement mission command in a variety of different theaters, including the Middle East, Africa, and South America.

The British and Israeli armies have both developed and implemented mission command successfully. However, there are also some important differences between the two armies' approaches to mission command.

One of the most significant differences is the level of autonomy given to subordinate commanders. In the British Army, subordinate commanders are given a great deal of autonomy. They are empowered to make decisions based on their own knowledge and experience, and they are given the authority to act independently within the parameters set by their superiors.

In the Israeli Army, subordinate commanders are given less autonomy. They are expected to follow the orders of their superiors more closely, and they are not given the same level of authority to act independently. This difference in autonomy is due to the different historical experiences of the two armies. The British Army has a long history of decentralized decision-making, while the Israeli Army has a history of more centralized decision-making.

Another difference between the British and Israeli approaches to mission command is the emphasis on training and education. The British Army places a great emphasis on training and education for subordinate commanders. The army believes that subordinate commanders need to be well-trained and educated in order to be able to make sound decisions and to act independently.

The Israeli Army also places a great emphasis on training and education for subordinate commanders. However, the army's approach to training and education is more focused on practical experience than on theoretical

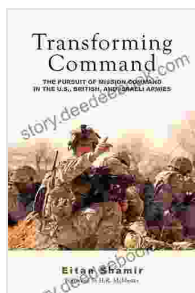
knowledge. The army believes that subordinate commanders need to be able to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world setting.

The British and Israeli armies have both developed and implemented mission command successfully. However, there are also some important differences between the two armies' approaches to mission command. These differences are due to the different historical experiences of the two armies.

Mission command is a military philosophy that emphasizes decentralized decision-making and the empowerment of subordinate commanders. It is based on the idea that leaders should provide their subordinates with clear guidance and objectives, but then give them the freedom to operate within those parameters as they see fit. This approach is designed to encourage initiative, agility, and adaptability on the battlefield.

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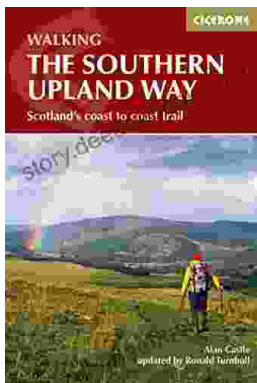
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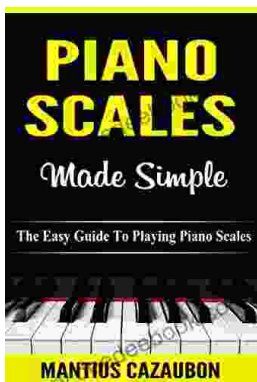
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