



*Lt. Col. Benjamin Ogden, commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Air Defense Artillery (1-1 ADA) Regiment addresses officers from the battalion during an officer professional development (OPD) session on 29 August 2013 at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. (Photo by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. David M. Wren, Adjutant, 1-1 ADA)*

## **1-1 ADA OFFICERS EXPLORE MISSION COMMAND PHILOSOPHY DURING RECENT OPD**

By Major Joel C. Seppala, 94<sup>th</sup> AAMDC

What is mission command? The officers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Air Defense Artillery (1-1 ADA) Regiment, referred to as the 'Snake Eyes' battalion, explored this question through education and conversation during an officer professional development (OPD) session before departing for a long Labor Day weekend. The leaders, present at the Tee House on the grounds of the Banyan Tree Golf Course at Kadena Air Base, shared thoughts and experiences related to mission command during the mid- to late-afternoon hours of 29 August 2013.

Mission command is an enabling leadership philosophy that has, at its core, a relationship of trust between the leader and his/her team. Mission command, emphasized heavily by leadership at the highest levels of the United States Army, is not a new concept. In fact, Captain Joshua Unverzagt, commander of E Company, 1-1 ADA, as well as the facilitator of the OPD, cited numerous historical examples in which leaders used one or more of the six principles inherent in mission command to achieve their objectives.

Unverzagt said, "I researched doctrine and military historical examples in developing the OPD training."

According to Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, the principles which guide the mission command philosophy are: build cohesive teams through mutual trust; create shared understanding; provide a clear

commander's intent; exercise disciplined initiative; use mission orders; and accept prudent risk. Army leaders recognized throughout more than a decade of war that the current operational environment demands leaders who are adaptive and agile.

Much of the discussion centered on the principle of creating a shared understanding. Capt. Christopher Renoll, the battalion intelligence officer, said that his greatest role in mission command is conducting the intelligence preparation of the operational environment (IPOE).

"The IPOE contributes greatly to creating a shared understanding which then lays the groundwork for the commander's guidance," Renoll said.

Indeed, without a shared understanding of the operational environment, the commander and his subordinates would not be able to synchronize their efforts to accomplish a mission. Incorporating mission command into the current operations paradigm means the leader giving the mission order must provide sufficient commander's intent for the subordinate to clearly understand what must be done to accomplish the assigned mission. Such is the essence of the art of command within the mission command philosophy.

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery (HHB) Executive Officer 1st Lt. William Garza described the art of command as "using all the resources available to a leader and directing [the resources] to accomplish or realize the leader's vision."

As the Snake Eyes leaders discussed during the OPD, adopting mission command does not involve abandoning the science of control element found in earlier doctrinal terms such as command and control. Indeed, applying effective control measures ensures the ability of the subordinate to exercise initiative in ever-changing operational environments. Control measures often take the form of systems such as regular meetings and backbriefs. Measures such as these ensure that subordinates meet the commander's intent and that everyone in the unit maintains a mutual understanding of the operational environment and the mission.