

## Breckinridge Integrated Battle Studies

“If every case, or situation, is approached as a complete whole ... the resulting solution, or plan, will be an original work that is singularly appropriate for its purpose.”

James Carson Breckinridge\*

Named in honor of Lieutenant General James Carson Breckinridge (1877-1942), a Breckinridge Integrated Battle Study (BIBS) is an exercise that consists of several component exercises, each of which is set on the same piece of ground. The smaller exercises, which may be Decision-Forcing Cases (DFCs), Tactical Decision Games (TDGs), or free *Kriegsspiele*, combine in such a way as to provide participants with many opportunities to devise, describe, and defend solutions to a wide variety of tactical and operational problems, each of which is connected to the others in a variety of ways, thereby providing them with a deep appreciation of dynamic relationships among the many different elements, whether time, terrain, troops, or technology, at play in a battle or campaign.

An example of a simple BIBS is provided by a group of three exercises, each of which simulates engagements fought along the section of the Rappahannock River that separates the city of Fredericksburg from the town of Falmouth. The first exercise could be a DFC that put participants in the position of Major General Ambrose Burnside, who, on 11 December 1862, attempted to conduct an opposed crossing of the Rappahannock River. The second exercise might be a TDG in which the commander of a present-day (or future) Marine unit must fulfill a similar mission in the same terrain, albeit against an up-to-date (or future) enemy. The third exercise would be a double-blind *Kriegspiel* that dealt with the fighting that might take place within the town of Fredericksburg in the immediate aftermath of a successful river crossing. (This *Kriegspiel* might employ the troops that fought in Fredericksburg in 1862, present-day forces, or forces equipped with weapons that might become available in the near future.)



2019

1862

\* Colonel JC Breckinridge, USMC, “Some Thoughts on Service Schools,” *The Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1927, p. 238