



VOLUME 3 COMMAND

MULTI-HATTING COMMANDERS/SPAN OF COMMAND

Last Updated: 22 Nov 2016

- Caution should be applied when multi-hatting commanders. Too many “hats” may distract a commander from focusing on the right level of war at the right time, or may simply overwhelm the commander with detail. Of equal importance is the fact that a commander’s staff can usually operate effectively only at one [level of war](#) at a time. **If a commander wears several hats, it is preferable that the associated responsibilities lie at the same level of war.**
- ✦ While it is normally inappropriate for either a Service or a functional component commander to also serve as the [joint force commander](#) (JFC), it is entirely appropriate for a [joint force air component commander](#) (JFACC) to also serve as the [airspace control authority](#), [area air defense commander](#), and [space coordinating authority](#), since all four functions lie at the operational level and all four functions are supported through the same command node (the JAOC). To alleviate the overload, a multi-hatted commander may delegate some functions (but not the ultimate responsibility) to appropriate deputies.
- ✦ More challenging are those instances when a commander’s hats vertically span several levels of war, as in the case when the JFC (normally acting at the theater-strategic level) is also acting as a functional component commander (operational level), and also as the commander of one of the operating (tactical) units. In such cases, the commander may be inadvertently drawn to the tactical level of detail at the expense of the operational-level fight.

AT THE HEART OF WARFARE LIES DOCTRINE...
