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HOW CAN THE BATTLE GROUP COMMANDER BEST COUNTER
ENEMY INFILTRATION ON THE ATOMIC BATTLEFIELD

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PREFACE

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I do not consider myself an expert on infiltration, since I have never infiltrated a large unit. I will point out my experience at infiltrating and countering infiltration as a small unit leader in Korea. I have continued my study of infiltration since Korea, and have successfully infiltrated company-sized units on field exercises in Germany.

This knowledge gained from an interest in the offensive use of infiltration allowed me to better understand the measures that might be effective in countering infiltration.

The point of view expressed in this paper is that of the author - not necessarily that of the United States Army Infantry School or the United States Army.

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INTRODUCTION

A variety of problems have developed in conducting operations on the modern battlefield. One of these problems, infiltration, will be covered by this monograph. Success at countering infiltration is necessary for the battle group if it is going to maintain adequate dispersion. Dispersion because of an atomic threat increases vulnerability to infiltration.

Infiltration is an offensive form of action. Defensive and retrograde situations will be borne in mind, then, while discussing ways of countering infiltration.

The purpose of this monograph is to provide specific answers to the question, "How can the battle group commander best counter enemy infiltration on the atomic battlefield?" It will include:

- a. An examination of current Soviet doctrine on use of infiltration.
- b. A discussion of United States thinking on countering infiltration.
- c. Developing measures for the battle group to counter infiltration based on a comparison of Soviet and United States doctrine.

The monograph will be limited to a discussion of countering infiltration by regular military units in battle areas.

Two assumptions are made:

First, that the current budget will limit development of the present battle group to its present or a similar size for several years.

Second, that Soviet-trained infiltrators will be the type to counter for several years.

Research was limited to unclassified material. Classification prevented ambush actions of the Korean War, in particular, from being included in this study. There is a need to declassify reports on combat actions more rapidly.

Research on this monograph pointed to a possible oversight throughout the Army on a study of foreign tactics. The USAIS Library did not have the only two personally known translations of writings by Mao Tse Tung. There was also a dearth of information on the Indo-China fighting. Yet the United States Army has a MAAG element and defense commitments with Thailand and Viet Nam.

DISCUSSION

WHAT IS THE THREAT?

Unit destruction by nuclear weapons is a problem facing modern armies. Certain advocates in the United States feel infiltration is one way of avoiding excessive casualties from massed fires and nuclear weapons. (31: 10, 6:21) Soviet armies, however, have long regarded infiltration as part of their established tactical doctrine. (17:324-33) Thus, the battle group commander may expect infiltration as part of a Soviet-type attack on the modern battlefield.

Current unclassified publications combine to present a picture of Soviet infiltration tactics. A clear view of this doctrine is essential before discussing ways to counter infiltration.

Soviet doctrine has infiltration carefully coordinated with the attacking unit headquarters. Infiltrating units are given missions and objectives within the overall scheme of maneuver. (19:65) Infiltration often precedes an actual assault. It may take place during the actual assault, with the infiltrating units moving through unguarded terrain into the rear of the battle position while defending troops are busy repelling attacks. (19:66)

No terrain is considered an obstacle to infiltration by Soviet-trained units. Seemingly impassible cliffs, (19:66) heavy woods, and swamps (7: 28) become routes and positions to occupy. Several small units may infiltrate simultaneously over different routes to a pre-designated area. (19: 66, 17:324) Infiltration may take place over a period of time, sometimes as much as fourteen days. (7:248) Poor visibility enhances effective infiltration.

Soviet units quickly establish themselves within the enemy's area.

Positions are rapidly dug and camouflaged until a sturdy perimeter is fixed. (7:52, 8:38) Reinforcement of the infiltrated unit continues as long as it exists, bringing it up to company-size, and then battalion-size, complete with staff, communications, heavy weapons, and sometimes artillery. (7:248, 8:38, 19:68)

Missions of infiltrating units are either to assault designated defenses or to set up strong points in the enemy rear to block counterattacks and withdrawals. Sufficient build-up of a unit established in an area may cause the enemy to withdraw prior to an all-out assault because his position has become untenable. (7:288-30) Assaults are carried out from the rear in conjunction with the main force's attack from the front or flanks, or are limited to communications and supporting weapons. (19:68) Panic is created among enemy defenders in either case. (9:32, 19:68) Defensive positions set-up by infiltrating units in the enemy's rear deliver enfilade fire on opposing troops and adjust artillery fire. (8:38, 21:53) Attempts to resupply enemy positions are prevented and counterattacks halted short of their objectives. (7:248-53, 19:68) Road blocks and obstacles further hamper enemy lines of communication.

Enemy attempts to break contact finds Soviet doctrine stressing widespread infiltration to prevent loss of contact and counterattack. (9:20) Retreating enemy formations are attacked from the flanks again and again while other units lodge road blocks to halt his movement. (19:20, 21:293) Pursuit action continues until the enemy is split into small groups and destroyed. (9:20, 21:360)

Rare occasions do arise when infiltrating units leave an area after obtaining maximum benefits from their operations, rather than continue maintaining their positions. The infiltrated unit leaves a rear guard and filters out of the area to friendly assembly areas, although supposedly completely encircled. (7:254, 28:193)

Rifle units, including regiments, of the Soviet infantry division are capable of ably using infiltration tactics. German accounts from World War II disclose Russian gains from using infiltration. A bridgehead

sprouted into German river line defenses from Russian infiltration. (7:228) Rifle units established a large position within the German battle area and carried out assaults from within the position. (7:248-54) Mechanized divisions successfully employed the sub-machine gun company of the tank regiment on infiltration missions during attacks. (9:32) Current information has this company enlarged to a sub-machine gun battalion. (26:21)

Mention has been made of "Soviet-trained divisions" in this discussion of infiltration doctrine because these tactics are not unshared by the Red Army. Russia, China, Korea, and Indo-China -- the four major campaigns of Soviet or Soviet-trained armies in recent times -- have each featured infiltration as part of the employed tactics.

Infiltration, while often held to periods of poor visibility, is not consequently limited to dismounted troops. Mechanized and helicopter-borne units can infiltrate or reinforce an infiltrated unit undetected. The author infiltrated company-sized armor units several times during field exercises in Germany. Attention is drawn here momentarily to the current Soviet personnel carrier and helicopter. Their current personnel carrier is a fully-tracked, squad-carrying vehicle, and is amphibious. (24:23) The Soviets were able to bring artillery into positions occupied by infiltrating units during World War II. (8:38) Development of the "Horse" helicopter furthers this ability to supply and fortify positions won by infiltrators.

Thus is seen the pattern of tactical infiltration by Soviet units. Infiltration is part of their established offensive doctrine. It is undertaken as part of an assault or pursuit by regular military units operating in sectors of opposing divisions. Many successes have resulted from these infiltration tactics during fighting in Russia, China, Korea, and Indo-China.

WHAT GUIDANCE DO WE HAVE TO COUNTER THE THREAT?

Defense against infiltration is a special operation within United States Army doctrine. (15:1) Our doctrine treats infiltration as a

means of reconnaissance, or as a threat to rear area security. Stress is placed on countering infiltration tactics that have rear area locations as their targets. (15:13) Infiltration by stealth, deception, airborne or waterborne means, and involuntary means, is conceived. (15:14)

Three weaknesses of infiltration tactics are listed:

"a. Infiltrators are incapable of gaining a major decision by quickly defeating well-trained and well-equipped regular forces.

b. Unless mass infiltration tactics are utilized, normally infiltrators are unable to seize and hold important terrain features for a prolonged period of time against regular forces.

c. Infiltrators run the constant risk of defeat in detail in order to gain protection afforded by dispersion." (15:16)

Current thinking of the United States Army Infantry School on basic defensive measures by the battle group is contained in an advance sheet. "Infantry Division Battle Group" is an interim publication until FM 7-40 is printed. A concept of defense in the cited advance sheet includes, "The enemy's use of . . . infiltrators . . . creates requirements for defending in more than one direction, for establishing defensive areas in great depth, and for adopting specific measures to provide security for artillery and administrative installations within the defensive area. (1:51)

Specific measures to counter infiltration are described. These include: (1:10)

- a. Local security.
- b. A warning system.
- c. An illumination plan.
- d. Designating a rear area commander.
- e. Establishing a striking force.

A rear area security commander is designated by the battle group commander. (1:58) He is usually the battle group reserve commander. His duties are to coordinate all elements to assure surveillance throughout the group's rear area. (1:70)

Infiltrators are not mentioned in connection with retrograde operations. However, "Infantry Division Battle Group" offers guidance by stating, "An aggressive enemy may be expected to follow any retrograde relentlessly and to strike withdrawing columns from all directions." (1:81)

Present battle group commanders will also have infiltration brought to their attention in the latest Army Training Test. ATT 7-31 "Training Test for Infantry Battle Group (TOE 7-11)" includes specific reference to the group commander preventing infiltration through the flanks of his position. This item is found in the defensive phase of the test. Successful measures to prevent infiltration are weighted a total of five points. (3:31)

A comparison of Soviet offensive doctrine and United States Army defensive doctrine on the subject of infiltration reveals:

a. Defense against infiltration is considered a special operation in Department of Army manuals, while offensive use of infiltration is a normal part of Soviet tactics. This variance is further heightened by the statement, "Unless mass infiltration tactics are utilized, normally infiltrators are unable to seize and hold important terrain . . . ". Soviet warfare has already shown that mass infiltration tactics are normal to their operations.

b. Current Infantry School thinking comes closer in alerting the group commander to the infiltration problem. It is vague in describing the effects of infiltration. Rear area security is drawn specifically to the attention of the battle group commander. Mass infiltration in retrograde operations -- the Soviet doctrine -- is not described.

WHAT ARE SOLUTIONS TO THE THREAT?

The first thing a battle group commander can do in countering infiltration on the atomic battlefield is to recognize it for what it is. He must recognize when infiltration is taking place. He must know infiltration is a method of Soviet attack, not merely a guerilla technique. He should be aware that infiltration can take place more during periods of poor visibility and during retrograde operations. Finally, he must realize

that infiltration is just one defensive consideration. All defensive reflections must include the enemy's use of nuclear weapons, mechanized and dismounted attacks, airborne threats, infiltration, air attacks, and use of CBR agents. (1:70) Each one does not necessarily take place as an isolated act.

One action in Korea stands out as an example of quick recognition of infiltration and effectively acting against it. A regiment of the 8th North Korean Division, the 81st, had the mission of infiltrating to objectives behind the United States 3d Infantry Division. The 81st Regiment crossed the Han River under cover of darkness. One infiltrating unit bumped into a 3d Division battalion around noon on 13 February. Night found the entire North Korean unit beyond 3d Division front-line elements.

Major General Robert Soule commanded the 3d. He had been released from house arrest by the Chinese Communists a few months before taking the 3d to Korea. His unique background on Chinese tactics quickly alerted him to what was taking place. Effective command on his part set the Division in action. Twenty-four hours later the 81st Regiment had a loss of 1,418 killed or captured. (10:145-48, 30:1-7)

Contrast this action to more successful enemy infiltration elsewhere in Korea. (21:82) General Soule continued his division attack on 14 February with one regiment while other division units decimated the 81st Regiment. Entire divisions were pulled-off line to fight guerillas in other corps areas during this same period. (15:7, 8, 17, 22)

The battle group commander will probably consider measures for all-around defense after recognizing the dangers of infiltration. "Defending in more than one direction" (1:51) will prevent damage from infiltrators. A reinforced company or a battle group forming a perimeter presents an immediate problem of becoming an atomic target. A balance must be struck between the unit becoming vulnerable to nuclear weapons or being defeated in detail by enemy infantry and armor, including infiltrators. (1:54)

Mutually supporting platoon perimeters within company areas is one solution to an initial battle group disposition problem. This offers a

chance for all-around defense without becoming too susceptible to atomic or air attack. Supplementary positions for an entire battle group perimeter must be prepared. Conditions of isolation or relative lack of mobility will find the battle group occupying these positions for all-around defense. (1:74)

Fire support units and the supply and maintenance area must be considered in the all-around defense picture no matter what measures the battle group adopts overall. Both will be exposed to attack by infiltrators in any extreme of all-around defense up to the tight battle group perimeter. (1:52)

Artillery units must be prepared to defend themselves. A problem of dispersion consistent with the mission faces the artillery set-up much as it does battle group disposition. Effective dispersion against air attack and counter-battery fire conflicts with a good defensive posture against infiltrators in battery positions. (4:16) Supplementary positions will have to be prepared to allow fire support units to form a perimeter-type defense during periods of low visibility.

Some artillery training has already been oriented in this direction. Eight hours of "defense of battery area" are included in advanced individual training of artillery. Another eight hours is devoted to training the battery sections to operate as infantry squads while the unit training phase is in progress. (2:27, 114)

Defense of the supply and maintenance area must be largely dependent upon positioning it near or within a reserve unit. Other security measures would be less than adequate. Supply and maintenance platoon personnel are not properly armed nor are in sufficient numbers to successfully defend this vulnerable area. (18:6, 78)

Poorly armed American troops demonstrated a need for all-around defense early in our history. Two companies infiltrated behind a British position too stout for frontal assault near Bennington in 1777. Early morning fog aided this movement. Successful attack from the rear resulted in a British loss of 207 killed and 658 prisoners. (31:9)

All-around defense will likely keep the battle group intact as a fighting unit. Defense in depth will limit the effects of infiltrators. It will hinder and block their movement. Depth of defense will deny infiltrators a free range of fire support units, command posts, and service areas.

A danger of reinforcement remains as long as infiltrators are in an area, however. Mobile forces capable of counterattack must employ the more active form of defense and destroy infiltrators in the battle group area. Tank-infantry teams are ideal for this situation. These teams can move into action rapidly before infiltrators build up in strength and make the battle group position untenable.

Lack of mobile reserves at Dienbeinhphu led to the pinching off of the strong Dominique position from the rest of the French defenses. Employing infiltration tactics, the Veit Minh gradually squeezed the French position into a compact mass and then subjected this target to heavy artillery fire. (16:122, 23, 34)

A battle group reserve of one company may not be able to quickly maneuver against infiltrators. A narrow frontage would ideally leave two companies in reserve over a greater depth. One solution to the problem of a more maneuverable reserve is full use of attached tank company headquarters by forming two tank-infantry teams with the one reserve rifle company. Conditions favoring infiltration do not usually complement every armor attack. Two tank platoons might then be available for reserve, allowing a pair of balanced tank-infantry teams to be formed.

All-around defense and defense in depth, to include a strong, mobile reserve, are defensive measures against infiltration. A successful battle group will undertake a more vigorous method of countering infiltration by using ambushes. Destruction of infiltrating parties in movement will prevent their occupation of terrain or build-up in strength.

Successful employment of ambush patrols will require special training for the battle group. Ambush tactics are not covered during the normal training cycle. Little attention is paid this subject in FM 21-75, "Combat

Training of the Individual Soldier and Patrolling." Five paragraphs cover ambush patrols in the cited manual. An inflexible organization for ambush is shown, and no details are mentioned of the vital control factor. (14:224-31)

A second publication, FM 21-50, "Ranger Training", devotes a lengthy paragraph to ambush. Again, scant attention is paid to technique. (13:13) Sound techniques are vital to successful ambush patrols, else the patrol itself will be ambushed. "You can't beat Davy Crockett with a boy scout" best sums the need for sound technique if the ambush patrol is not to be ambushed. (22:291)

Concurrently with necessary training on ambush patrolling, flexible organization and new methods of control must be developed. Indirect fire support must be integrated into ambush planning. (20:37)

Once techniques have been improvised and the battle group trained in ambush, S2 and S3 must decide where to set up ambush sites. Certain parts of the battle group area will lend themselves better to infiltration than others. Enemy tactics will have to be kept in mind. Finally, a warning system should be set up to get ambush patrols into position if infiltrators are known to have passed an area.

Five ambush patrols a night between the forward and rear limits of the battle group area would assure lively defense against infiltrators. Enemy infiltrators will experience considerable more difficulty getting into an area with ambush patrols added to all-around defense and defense in depth. Ambush will deny infiltrators even more the element of time before visibility returns. A series of successful ambushes will discourage enemy employment of infiltration in general.

Local security must still be stressed no matter how successful an ambush program takes place. (1:113) A battle group cannot afford the lax local security offered the Chinese 94th Regiment in Korea. This enemy unit spotted an American position and moved to a river, approximately eighty-five yards wide, that lay on the American flank. They took off their trousers, waded the river in seven columns simultaneously, put their

trousers on, and attacked. One infantry battalion, a regimental headquarters, and two artillery battalions comprised the American position. (21: 44, 45) Good local security would not allow such an affair to happen.

A new doctrine on rear area defense is needed for local security to operate efficiently. Assignment of rear boundaries for each company sized unit will facilitate establishment of local security. Establishment of these complete boundaries will enhance such techniques as each unit searching its area every morning for infiltrators. (30:7) Better use can be made of the rifle squad's snipers on local security with this system.

Annex A shows a battle group defensive position with complete company boundaries.

All-around defense, ambush patrols, local security, and a strong reserve will all utilize manpower needed for a variety of defense tasks. Success at a defense mission with the manpower available will require the battle group to supplement its manpower to counter infiltration. Supplementary measures will be limited by the equipment and imagination available.

Intelligence training of individual soldiers in the battle group must be mentioned before further discourse on supplementary means of countering infiltration. Soldiers must be alert and report what they see if the battle group commander is to prevent infiltration. Lack of this training allowed two Soviet brigades to infiltrate the rear of the German 16th Army in February 1942. Many individual German soldiers saw snowshoe tracks one morning, but all dismissed it as friendly patrol tracks. Others saw aircraft flying low over a forest to the rear of German lines. German commanders became aware of the existence of the force only after attacked. (29:2)

A good surveillance plan will include countering infiltration in its effects. Soviet infiltrators have already shown that no terrain is regarded as an obstacle. Therefore, surveillance of a battle group area must be complete.

Searchlights supplement local security and ambush patrols by provid-

ing illumination during hours of darkness. Indirect light for an unlimited period of time is a capability. Searchlights are immediately available today as operational equipment to support the battle group. (32:1)

A single artillery searchlight can provide indirect illumination 730 meters in width at a range of 7300 meters. Increased range is available by narrowing the searchlight beam. These ranges allow artillery searchlights to be employed within the battle group's boundaries, making possible closer liaison and control. Possible disadvantages are drawing enemy fire and providing assistance to enemy movement. Logistical support by the battle group would be three gallons of gasoline and one set of searchlight carbons every night for each light. (12:75, 79, 109)

Annex B is an example of using illumination to counter enemy infiltration.

Scout dogs will increase the efficiency of ambush patrols. One dog would be required for each patrol. Local security at night will also be improved by using dogs on listening posts. Two dogs per listening post would be needed to allow each dog rest periods. Use of dogs to supplement security in the supply and maintenance area would not be effective due to heavy traffic. Smoke would not decrease the dog's efficiency at a listening post since he depends mainly on his ears in this case. However, a moving patrol subjected to smoke would find the dog's usefulness seriously ebbing, because then he uses his sense of smell. (25:1)

Searchlights and dogs are operational today to counter infiltration. In addition, a ground radar has been developed for use by the battle group. This lightweight radar can locate infiltrators under all conditions of light up to three miles. It is not limited by smoke as are searchlights and dogs. (33:100) Development in electronic and infra-red equipment will continue. Their present weakness is that they are not yet issued to battle groups.

Danger exists in friendly troops firing into each other when the enemy frequently attacks by infiltration. (30:7) A means of rapid identification between friendly troops should be developed to prevent casualties

among friendly patrols, supply units, and wire parties. Otherwise, infiltrators will be aided in their movement by American troops fearful of causing friendly casualties.

Obstacles will limit enemy infiltration to a degree. (1:58) Consideration must once again be given to the overall battle group mission. Lack of consideration will greatly hinder friendly ambush patrols, attacks, and supply actions.

Retrograde operations will utilize all that has been mentioned in countering infiltration. A battle group must stress tight flanks during retrograde to prevent infiltrators from blocking the rear. A strong, mobile reserve will be most beneficial during a retrograde to destroy infiltrators.

The Soviet doctrine calls for all-out infiltration when the enemy attempts a retrograde operation. Army aviation will be needed by the battle group to spot all columns of this widespread movement.

CONCLUSIONS

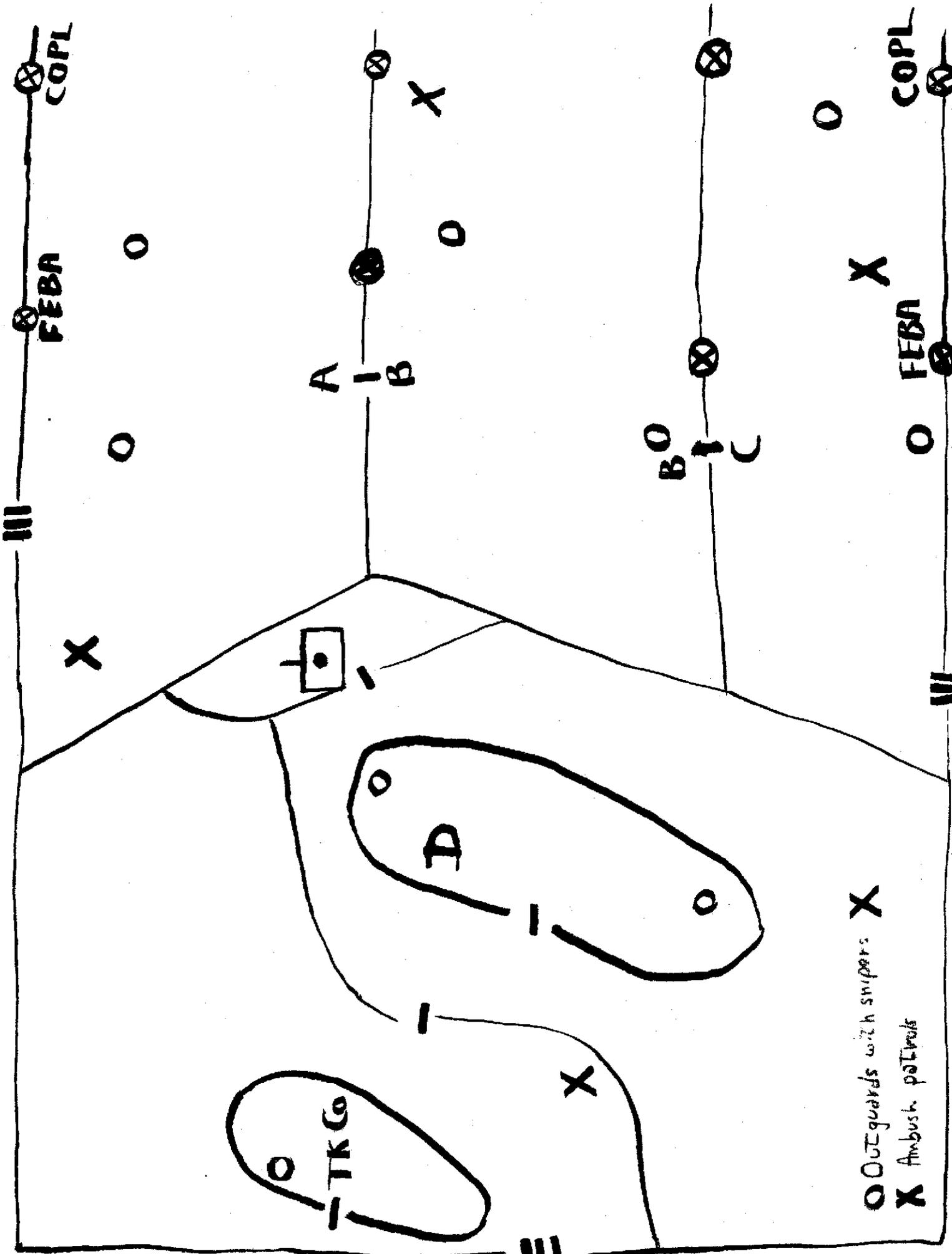
1. A battle group commander must recognize:
 - a. Infiltration is a means of attacking and occupying key terrain as well as a technique of raiding and patrolling.
 - b. Present United States doctrine does not fully alert him to the dangers of infiltration.
 - c. He can expect infiltration on the atomic battlefield by regular military units.
2. Considerations for all-around defense, to include fire support and service units, will greatly nullify immediate effects of infiltration.
3. Defense in depth will limit infiltration into the battle group rear area.
4. Strong, mobile reserves are necessary to destroy infiltrators within the battle group area before they can organize ground or be reinforced.
5. Attached unit headquarters should be utilized in countering infiltration, particularly the capabilities of tank company headquarters.
6. Development of sound ambush techniques and a training program in ambush patrolling will greatly aid the destruction of infiltration in early, less dangerous stages.
7. Local security must be clearly defined throughout the battle group area to insure infiltrators are detected and destroyed.
8. Intelligence training of the individual soldier is important in preventing infiltration from going undetected.
9. Economy of force measures, to include illumination and various detection means, must be used extensively in countering infiltration for the battle group to fully accomplish its mission.

10. A means of rapid identification between friendly troops should be developed.

These conclusions are based on what has been discussed on Soviet tactics and the means available to the present battle group commander in countering infiltration. They are designed to answer the question, "How can the battle group commander best counter enemy infiltration on the atomic battlefield?"

ANNEX A. Proposed Battle Group Disposition.

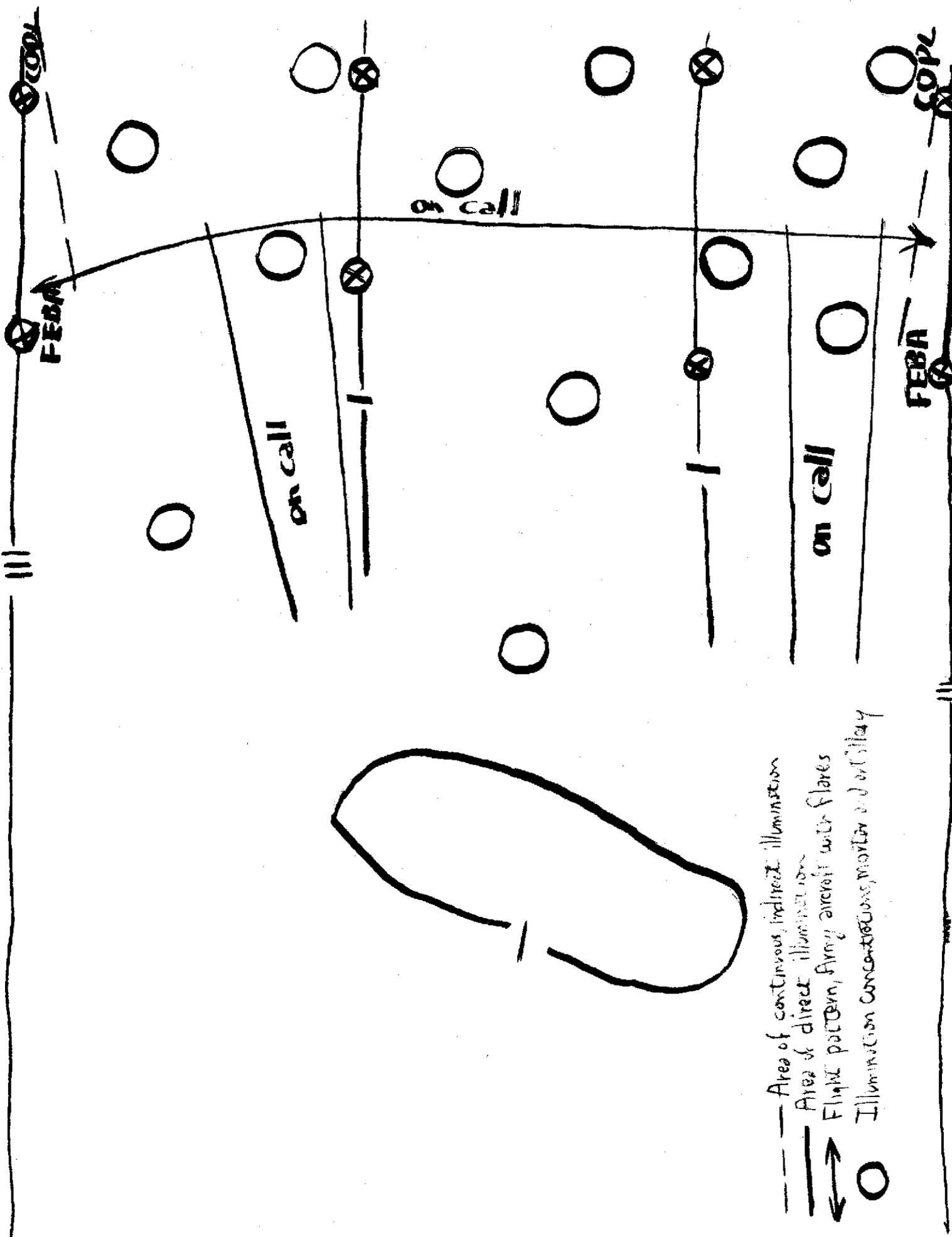
Rifle companies are placed as described in Problem 6020-A6, United States Army Infantry School. Other dispositions and the use of company boundaries are described in the monograph.



O Outguards with snipers
 X Ambush patrols

ANNEX B. Example of Illumination Plan.

Rifle companies are disposed as shown in Problem 6020-A6, United States Army Infantry School. Methods of illumination are described in FM 20-60 Battlefield Illumination.



- Area of continuous, indirect illumination
- Area of direct illumination
- ↔ Flight pattern, Army aircraft with flares
- Illumination concentrations, mortar and artillery

ANNEX C. Summary of Interview with 1st Lt. G. H. Thompson, Artillery.

Lt. Thompson commands Battery B, 29th Artillery (Searchlight), a unit of the 1st Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Battery B is operational and has supported patrol training of the 2d Infantry Division as well as normal United States Army Infantry School support.

A searchlight platoon of six artillery searchlights can be expected to normally support one infantry division. Searchlights are best employed in pairs for continuous lighting.

Searchlights must displace after using their direct beam capability.

George H. Thompson
George H. Thompson
1st Lt. Arty.

ANNEX D. Summary of Interview with 1st Lt. T. J. O'Brien, Infantry.

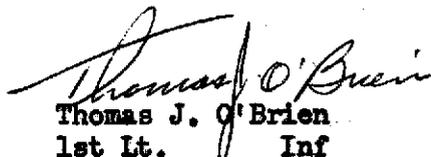
Lt. O'Brien commands the 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon at Fort Benning, Georgia. This platoon supports the United States Army Infantry School and trains scout dogs for overseas duty.

Five dogs could support five ambush patrols. They would require rest in a quiet area at the completion of the patrol.

Two dogs would be effective at each listening post. The heavy traffic in the supply and maintenance area would render them ineffective.

Scout dogs would still be effective on a listening post if subjected to smoke. They depend on their ears when operating in this situation. On a patrol they depend on their nose for detection and would be harmed by smoke.

No large logistical effort would be required to support scout dogs in the battle group area.


Thomas J. O'Brien
1st Lt. Inf

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