army would make certain that the battalions of that regiment would be kept in being for long periods of time. The battalions would rotate throughout the world as complete units.

The above suggestions might cost money and a regimental system would require extra effort to organize and administer. In the long run, however, it would result in a more efficient and professional army with better morale. Each soldier would feel that he had a stake in the success of his own battalion, a feeling that he might never find as a member of a more impersonal organization.

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forum

THIRD JOB

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RANDOLPH T. POORE

The battalion S4's job is one that few officers will stand in line to get. And yet his job is an important one, probably as important as any other. Unfortunately, though, the S4 is the one most likely to be criticized when something is not where it is supposed to be when it is supposed to be there.

There is no standard description that fits every battalion S4. He may be brand new or he may have some experience. He may be overseas with a well-defined readiness mission, or he may be stateside with a deployment mission. Although he may be a former company commander, he is more likely to be in a holding pattern waiting for a command to open up.

Not many people fully understand his position and its difficulties — and that sometimes includes his battalion commander, who in most cases has never served as an S4 himself. The chief problem with this lack of understanding is that, in most battalions, when it comes to the tactical training cycle, the S4 has to take his place in line behind the S2 and the S3. In addition, because his performance can be more easily measured than that of the other key officers in a combat battalion, he is especially vulnerable to failure and criticism.

My purpose is not to try to get sympathy for the battalion S4; neither is it to ask for relief on his behalf. My purpose is to remind everyone concerned that the S4 has what amounts to three jobs, not just the two that usually come to mind.

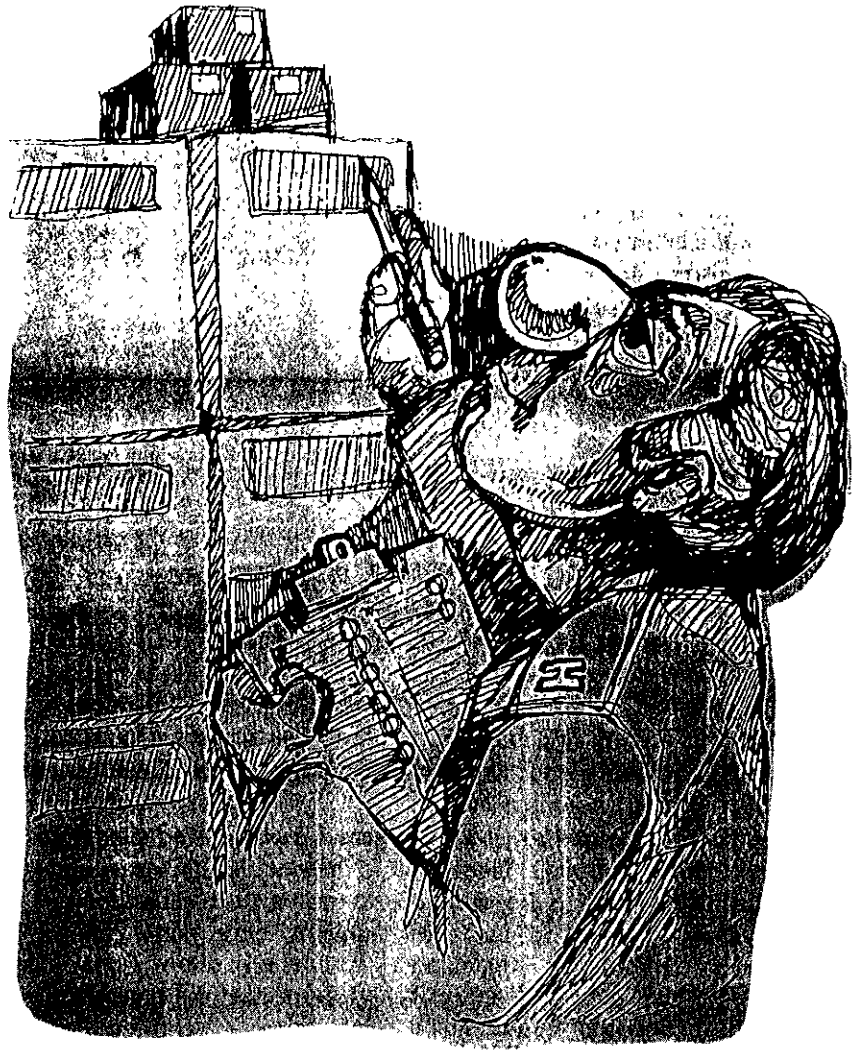
First, he has to see that the battalion and company commanders get the equipment they need when they need it. His second job is to see that the logistics regulations are followed and that the appropriate reports are prepared. His third job is to be ready to handle the battalion's logistics needs in combat. And it is dangerous for him and for others to assume that doing the first two jobs will automatically prepare him to do the third. But an S4 may have trouble coming to grips with this aspect of his job for two reasons.

First, too many battalion commanders change their S4s too frequently, which does not allow an S4 time to get comfortable in the job. Secondly, an S4 is usually so tied up with his first two jobs, which are probably more pressing at the time, that the third one is usually shunted aside. But what the S4 and the other people on the battalion staff must realize is that when combat comes, those first two jobs will seem like small potatoes.

This means, of course, that the S4 must always be ready to shift suddenly from the routine of his first and second jobs into the pressing demands

of his third one. If he is not properly prepared, he will be unable to push aside his other tasks. He will be confused, and his confusion will be harmful to all those around him.

The following list of questions is offered as a starting point for the S4 in establishing a plan for executing his combat readiness responsibility. The questions are directed at the S4, and although they are not exhaustive, they should serve to stimulate his thinking. The questions assume that the battalion already has and practices a basic alert sequence that includes such items as marshalling procedures, CTA 50 shortages, advance party makeup, a method of hand-receipting property that is left behind, the preparation of hazardous cargo forms, a method of checking the serviceability of equipment, and some comprehensive loading plans.



QUESTIONS ON RESUPPLY

C Rations

- How much does a case of rations weigh?
- How many rations will each man carry?
- How many will go on organic transportation?
- When was the last time the concept was verified?

Water

- How many water purifications units (WPUs) are in your parent organization's engineer battalion (company)?
- How many can your battalion count on in combat?
- What is one WPU's capacity for purifying water? Storing water?
- What is your battalion's capacity for storing water?
- Do you have any collapsible drums for water storage, or can you get some?
- Are they serviceable?
- When was the last time you checked them?
- How many five-gallon cans does your battalion have on hand or on order for water storage?
- When was the last time they were inventoried?
- How much water will your men require each day? In an arid climate? In the cold?

Aviation, MOGAS, and Diesel Fuel

- What, if any, is your battalion's capacity to store aviation, MOGAS, and diesel fuels?
- What does each type of fuel weigh per gallon?
- How many five-gallon fuel cans does the battalion have on hand or on order?
- How much MOGAS or diesel fuel is required for each type of vehicle per day in combat? Based on how many hours of use per day?
- Are there any aviation missions your battalion would be likely to support?
- Do you know how to support the operation of a Forward Area Rearm/Refuel Point?

Packaged POL

- What is your plan for packaged POL deployment (including oil and bore cleaner for weapons)?
- How will you move it?

Antifreeze

- Do you have an extra load of antifreeze?
- How much will your battalion need?

• Where is it?
• How much does it weigh?

Barrier Material

• How much of what kind of barrier material will you need?
• Where can you get some quickly?
• How much can you get?
• Where can you place it in you loading plans?
• How much does it weigh?

Ammunition

• When was the battalion's basic load of ammunition last computed and justified?
• Have you included the ammunition for the new weapon systems you have received or are about to receive?
• How will you move the basic load?
• Can you even move the basic load?
• What does it weigh?
• How many vehicles will it take to move it?
• How many aircraft?
• When was the last time you moved it (without cutting corners)?

PLL

• How many vehicles and trailers will it take to move your battalion's prescribed load list?
• What augmentation of PLL will you request when alerted?
• How much of your PLL must be moved for you?

Batteries

• What is your plan for battery resupply?
• Does your parent unit have a battery package set aside for rapid deployment?

QUESTIONS ON CONTINGENCIES

• How can you obtain any or all of the following when they are needed?
• Cold weather gear.
• Extra and larger canteens.
• Goggles.
• Transformers for power conversion.
• Insect bars and repellent.
• Sunburn cream and lip balm.
• Sunglasses.
• Provisions for shade.
• Extra rope and snap links.
• Pallets for storage.
• Bolt cutters.
• Airfield matting for aircraft repair.
• Cement.
• NBC equipment, including extra filters.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

• Are the brake systems for your trailers compatible with your prime movers?
• If you will stage at an intermediate staging base (ISB), does the S3 have a training plan for the time spent at the ISB and if so, have you thought about the supplies needed to support such a training effort? How long do you think you will be at the ISB?
• Suppose your battalion receives an attachment of engineers, armor, air defense artillery — do you know how many men and what type of equipment to expect?
• How much of what type of ammunition do they require?
• Can you answer all of the above questions as they apply to each type of potential attachment?
• How many vehicles in excess of organic transportation do you truthfully require to move your battalion?
• What will you sacrifice first if you cannot get all the transportation you need? What next?
• What new weapon systems will your battalion be receiving in the next year?
• What will it take to support them?
• Will you need extra PLL? Extra personnel? Different ammunition?

FINAL QUESTION

In addition to all of these, there is a final question, one of the most important: Does the battalion commander require the battalion to train with the constraints prompted by the other questions?

Obviously, not all of these questions will apply to every unit. Those that do apply will depend on a battalion's contingency plans, and the S4 should read these plans and then reread them periodically.

Once an S4 really begins to understand this third aspect of his job, he will also begin to realize that he is a logistics tactical planner — a logistics technician — as well as a logistics coordinator. At this point his toughest challenge will lie just ahead: He must share what he has learned with other members of the battalion, in particular the commander and the S3, and in the process help them to appreciate the role of logistics in tactical planning. For unless they have an understanding of the constraints imposed by logistics, the battalion will not be able to perform at its best in the critical early stages of deployment and later in combat.

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