

trained to establish observation posts, to conduct patrols in built-up areas, to integrate civil authorities into the operations, to evacuate casualties, and to react properly to sniper fire and to bomb threats.

Emphasis is also placed on the strict discipline that will be needed by all of the soldiers if they are committed to a CD operation. This training cannot be geared toward one operation; it must be a continuation of the discipline that has already been developed in garrison. A unit cannot be controlled in a CD situation unless it is a disciplined unit, responsive to the control of its leader.

The final phase of training develops the coordination that will be needed between the platoons and the various other elements of the company that will support them in CD

operations. Platoon coordination is developed by using six company formations: company line in depth; company line in mass; company line with general or lateral support; company echelon right (left) with general or lateral support; company echelon right (left) in depth with general or lateral support; and company echelon right (left) in mass with general support.

In addition, all of the company's elements must be trained to construct and emplace barricades and road-blocks, in particular on erecting triple concertina personnel barriers. This can be done if each squad is trained to lay wire, and it also gives the company commander the flexibility to lay wire at several different locations at the same time.

With positive leadership, the many

aspects of CD training can be combined to form a cohesive force. As a result, this force can be used effectively in a CD operation that calls for an organization capable of reacting quickly and efficiently to changing situations.



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Advance Party

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS STEVE L. OVERHOLSER

During the past few years I have had an opportunity to observe and evaluate many mortar platoons both in training and in testing. Of all the ARTEP tasks, the methods of emplacement used by the various platoons seem to vary the most. What is standard operating procedure for one platoon seems taboo for another, and our current field manuals have little to say about standardization. This is probably good in a way, for it allows experience and imagination to dictate method. But there are certain techniques, including the proper use of an advance party, that can be used to

save time during the emplacement of a platoon's mortars.

The purpose of an advance party is to locate, secure, and prepare mortar positions for the platoon so that when the latter arrives at a selected position it can emplace its mortars with little difficulty. The advance party's actions often determine how successful the platoon will be in occupying a position. And through its level of proficiency, the advance party can provide a degree of momentum that is essential either during an ARTEP or on a battlefield.

To do its job properly, therefore,

the members of an advance party must be well trained in their responsibilities. Their training should include such things as the proper size and depth of a baseplate hole for ground-mounted mortars, the use of directional stakes, the laying of wire (preferably a hot-loop), positioning and preparing the aiming circle, and security.

Our current doctrine calls for the advance party to consist of at least one man from each squad, one man from the fire direction center (FDC), and either the platoon leader or the platoon sergeant. From experience,

though, I have found it better to have two men from each squad involved in preparing a firing position. This number allows for an equal distribution of the workload, a more thorough and speedy preparation of the firing position, and the immediate establishment of local security.

Although the mode of transportation may vary from unit to unit, it is best to use the FDC vehicle for the advance party whenever possible. This vehicle not only has enough room for the soldiers and their equipment, it also provides an FDC that can be immediately operational when the platoon arrives.

ALERT

When the platoon leader receives his warning order, he should alert the platoon sergeant to form the advance party and prepare it for movement. The members of the party should collect their equipment and store it in the FDC vehicle where it can be checked by the platoon sergeant. Their equipment should include shovels, picks, aiming stakes, and a TA-1 or TA-312 (where appropriate) for each gun squad, plus an aiming circle, communication wire, a TA-312, and plotting equipment for the FDC.

Although the platoon leader may conduct his reconnaissance with or without the advance party, it is preferable for him to take the party with him. The party can then accomplish many of the preparatory functions that are conducive to an expeditious and orderly emplacement.

The platoon leader's reconnaissance should include the selection of a position, the location of the FDC, some local security positions, a physical or map selection of alternate or supplemental sites, the designation of ammunition holding areas, and alternate routes of movement. He should accomplish these things in accordance with the established tactical doctrine, the existing tactical situation, and his own common sense.

After the reconnaissance has been completed, the platoon leader can

return and lead the platoon to the new position or, using pre-arranged code words, he can radio for the platoon to displace. In the latter case, the platoon sergeant leads the platoon to the new position.

At the new location, the advance party takes care of security matters first. Then each man is assigned a specific task. Thus, if the mortars are ground-mounted, the platoon leader shows one of the men from each squad where to dig his baseplate hole and points in the general direction of fire. He lets the FDC representative know where to park his vehicle, and the proposed location of the guns for the laying of wire. He then prepares the aiming circle for operation.

For mechanized mortar units, the platoon leader uses his compass to

align two aiming stakes at each mortar position four to five meters apart in the direction of fire. When the squads arrive, the squad representatives direct their drivers to align the right sides of their vehicles with the aiming stakes, coming as close to them as possible. This places the mortars in the general direction of fire and usually does away with the need for a subsequent large shift when the reciprocal lay begins.

There are other less conventional methods that can be used to cut emplacement time. For example, after the baseplate holes have been dug, and before the platoon arrives, the squad representatives can be directed to place one aiming stake 100 meters out in the general direction of fire and another on the forward left



edges of the baseplate holes.

Using the aiming circle, the platoon leader then lays the crosshairs on the baseplate stakes and announces and records that deflection for each mortar. He then relays this information to the platoon, by radio or other means, and the gunners place that information on their sights when they displace. This prevents the possibility that the gunners will have to make large deflection changes after their aiming points have been identified. In fact, experience has shown a subsequent change of 10 mils or less to be the rule. Of course, experience and imagination should be the major considerations in using this system.

After the advance party has completed its preparatory tasks, the position is ready to be occupied. Each squad representative then becomes a guide for his squad. For ground-mounted mortars, he directs his squad's vehicle to the emplacement site and, after the squad's equipment has been off-loaded, guides the vehicle to a pre-planned area to be

concealed and camouflaged. At that point he returns to the mortar position to perform his normal duties.

At the same time, the remainder of the squad mounts the mortar in the general direction of fire, and the gunner refers his sight to the aiming circle and performs reciprocal lay according to the guidelines in the appropriate field manual. If the squad uses the alternate method mentioned above, though, the mortar is mounted with the deflection on the sight called in earlier. This enables the gunner to sight in on the aiming circle with a deflection that incorporates a large initial shift. His next reading should change no more than 10 mils, corresponding to a small deflection change.

After the gunner announces "zero or one mil, mortar laid," he then turns his sight to the previously positioned 100-meter stake, emplaces the near stake, and slips the black scale either to 2800 or to that announced by the FDC.

These techniques work very well,

even with Army National Guard mortar platoons, which normally get only about 16 hours of mortar training each year before their two-week annual training period. I have seen these platoons start out taking 15 minutes to emplace their mortars, and then, given 30 minutes of training in these techniques, reduce that time to four minutes or less.

Although these methods are not unique, they are not used on a large scale. Besides the apparent motive of drastically reducing time and avoiding confusion on emplacement, the proper use of an advance party provides stability of operations, an equal workload distribution, and security, all of which allow a mortar platoon leader to concentrate on what he does best — plan.

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Personnel Inventory

MAJOR JOSEPH A. VERRETT

When an officer takes command of a company, one of his first tasks is to conduct a joint property inventory with the outgoing commander. But he must also conduct another important inventory at the same time — an inventory of the soldiers assigned to the unit. Just as a commander would never sign a hand receipt for property he had not seen or counted, neither should he assume all the people are there without conducting a personnel

assets inventory (PAI).

The PAI is a unit level physical accounting of enlisted, warrant, and commissioned personnel by grade, name, and Social Security number (SSN), compared and reconciled with the information on the SIDPERS Personnel Strength Zero Balance Report (PZB-C27) and the Personnel Data Card — SIDPERS (DA Form 2475-2).

Army Regulation 680-31 requires

that a PAI be conducted:

- Within five working days before a change in unit commanders.
- Fourteen calendar days before a unit is inactivated, discontinued, moved to another installation, or temporarily reduced to zero strength.
- By direction of commanders in the chain of command.
- When a unit's strength variance is two percent or more.
- Within 30 days after a unit is acti-