

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-

vated and personnel are assigned to it.

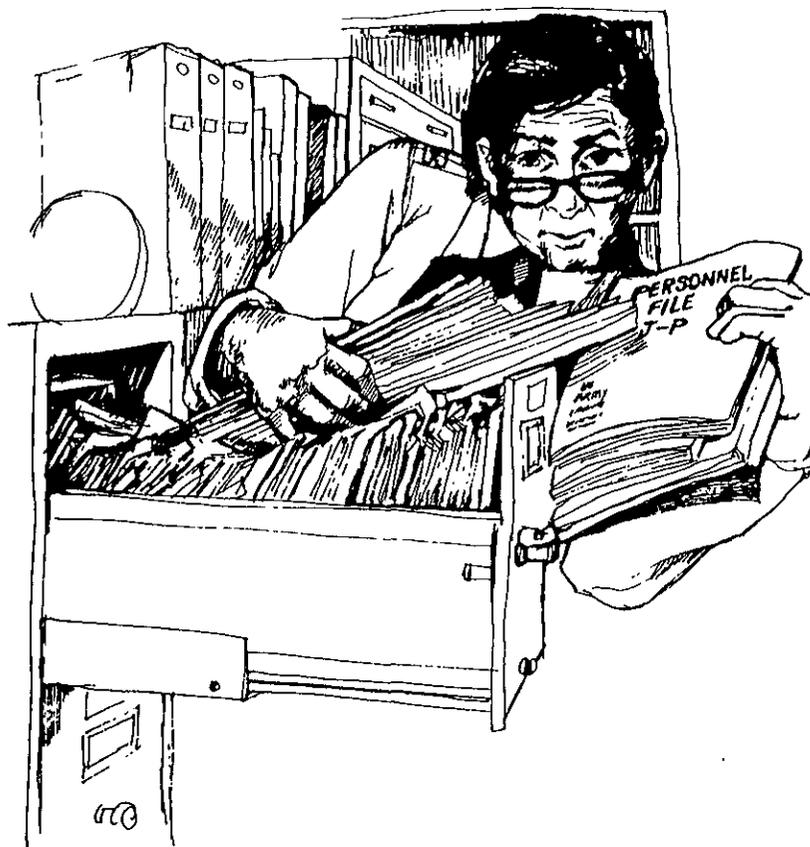
- Within a year of a previous PAI. (When a PAI is performed, for whatever reason, the annual PAI requirement is considered satisfied for that unit.)

A PAI that is required because of a change of commanders is normally conducted jointly by the departing and incoming commanders. When a joint PAI is not possible because of the delayed arrival of the new commander, the departing commander and a designated acting commander should conduct a joint interim PAI. A final PAI is then required within 15 calendar days after the permanent commander arrives.

Units that are organized under the consolidation of administration at battalion level (CABL) concept receive assistance and supporting documents from the Personnel Administration Center (PAC). The PAC provides the unit's SIDPERS personnel data cards, the latest SIDPERS PZB-C27 report, and copies of the Personnel Asset Inventory (DA Form 3986).

Before the PAI is conducted, the unit should check the personnel data cards to make sure that a card is on hand for each soldier assigned to the unit by written or verbal orders (subsequently confirmed in writing), regardless of his duty status. The next step is for the unit to match the personnel data cards to the PZB-C27 report. Thus, everyone listed on the personnel data cards should also be listed on the PZB-C27. Reassignment gains and losses reported after the "as of" date on the PZB-C27 report must be added or deleted, for this provides an updated roster of personnel assigned to the unit on the date of the PAI. Special procedures are indicated in the regulation for accounting for attached personnel.

On the day of the PAI, the departing commander holds a muster formation of all the soldiers assigned to the unit who are present for duty. Orders and other documentation should be available to verify the recorded status of persons officially



absent (hospital, leave, performing essential duties), assigned but not yet joined soldiers, and soldiers absent without leave. Routine pass requests should be deferred for the date the PAI is held.

The new commander should reconcile the information on these documents with an actual physical count of the soldiers, and should also verify each soldier's name, grade, and Social Security number with that shown on each soldier's identification card. Appropriate SIDPERS transactions should be prepared at the same time to update the automated files.

The departing commander must complete and sign Section I (Commander's Evaluation) of the DA Form 3986 in four copies. The new commander must complete and sign Section II (Authentication by New Commander) of the same form and he may either concur with the report or state his reasons for not concurring.

The completed Form 3986, with attachments, must be sent through

command channels and the SIDPERS office to the Military Personnel Strength Monitor (MPSM) at division, installation, or major army command level. When a PAI is conducted because of a change of command, the Form 3986 must be approved by the MPSM before a final clearance can be given to the departing commander. This clearance can be given by telephone.

By following these procedures, a new commander, as well as a departing commander, can ensure a smooth transition and an accurate accounting of a unit's most important asset — its soldiers.



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