

than by truck is one example of incorporating a task (aerial delivery procedures) into a routine mission. There are many others, of course.

Maintenance, too, is important to mission accomplishment. Fortunately, the support platoon's transportation section is manned by soldiers whose job books require that they perform numerous maintenance-related tasks. The time they spend in the motor pool, therefore, not only increases equipment readiness but has a great training benefit.

The advice offered here was developed and tested during many

months of battalion ARTEPs, FTXs, OPFOR missions, and a major joint readiness exercise. We hope that other leaders and logisticians will add their own ideas and experience to

eventually develop the logistic organizational knowledge that is so sorely needed. Then, perhaps the new support platoon leader will find his job a little easier.



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## No Simple Task

**CAPTAIN GARTH T. BLOXHAM**

The mechanized infantry company commander's Bible for offensive movement is Field Manual (FM) 71-1. It contains a lot of good and useful information, but when this "FM theory" is put to practical application on the ground, several things seem to be missing. The commander encounters too many variables in a hasty attack that the theory doesn't help him deal with.

For example, I will never forget the first mission statement I received from my battalion commander: "Captain, conduct a movement to contact along Axis White and attack Objective Foxtrot." I carefully analyzed the terrain over the five-kilometer route and thought to myself, "A piece of cake." Within minutes my mechanized infantry

team was moving along the unknown terrain of Axis White and I was trying to command and control three infantry platoons, a tank platoon (cross-attached only hours before my LD time), an ITV section, the FIST track, and the medic track.

### OVERWATCH

Soon I found myself also personally controlling the indirect fire war, acting as TC for my own track, and trying to keep the battalion commander informed of the situation. This was no simple task for an inexperienced, mechanized infantry commander of twenty days.

Suddenly, my sixth track was destroyed, one platoon was lost, two

platoons were driving in cartwheels, and I was desperately frustrated and giving ambiguous orders over the radio. Quickly I realized there is more to a bounding overwatch than meets the eye.

FM 71-1 has the following guidelines on the bounding overwatch (pages 4-30, 4-31):

- The length of the bound is based on terrain and the range of the overwatch weapons.
- Bounding by platoon is a more secure method, but it is slower and needs terrain with good fields of fire.
- In bounding overwatch all movement is keyed to the next overwatch position.

The manual goes on to give a good example of a bounding overwatch, but it fails to give the inexperienced

commander the "how to's" he needs to control the confusion and the variables involved in that operation. To say the least, he needs some other things to help him. He needs, for example, a flag SOP that makes sense and is easy to remember, a method of controlling his maneuver elements, and, most important, a method of giving orders clearly and precisely in the heat of battle.

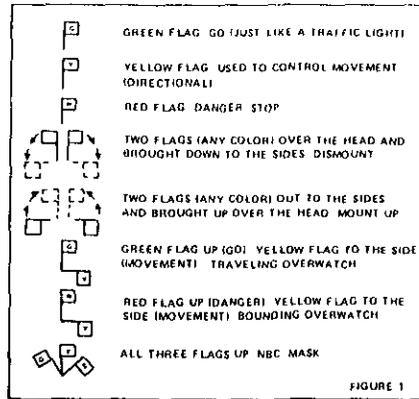
The first of these, an easy to remember flag SOP that makes sense, is shown in Figure 1. Since simplicity and standardization within the company are the keys to good communication, platoons should be discouraged from adding to these eight basic signals.

The following is an example of how the flag system works:

The first platoon is in bounding overwatch. The platoon leader takes his yellow flag (movement), points to the second squad leader, and then points with the yellow flag to a hilltop two hundred meters away. The squad track moves out using terrain driving. When the squad leader gets to his overwatch position, he places his track in a hide position, dismounts some soldiers to provide security, and uses his binoculars to study the terrain to his front. If he waves his green flag, then it is "all clear" (go). But if he picks up his red flag and points to his right front, he is saying, "Danger. Stop. Enemy to my right front."

## CHECKPOINTS

Although a good flag SOP offers a mechanized infantry platoon leader an excellent means of tactical communication, a company commander must have more than this if he is to control his maneuver elements. At the same time, his system must be simple and flexible so that he can handle rapidly changing situations. A solution to this problem is for him to use checkpoints, as the field manual recommends, to "help control maneuver" and to "serve as target reference points to coordinate



direct and indirect fire."

Depending on the terrain, at least one checkpoint per grid square is needed, but in heavy woods as many as four or five per grid square could be used. All of the company's leaders must know where the checkpoints are.

Checkpoints are also needed along both flanks of the planned route and on all proposed platoon overwatch positions.

A platoon leader should be allowed 200 meters of leeway when he is given

an order to move to a certain checkpoint. This gives him the freedom to use the terrain and to occupy the best overwatch position available. If he cannot stay within that 200-meter leeway, then he should be required to call in his new position.

Using checkpoints as target reference points does risk compromising the location of friendly units, but the practice has several advantages. One is the timeliness of spot reports. Another is that fire can be rapidly adjusted from these known points. If a FIST chief, monitoring the command net, hears a spot report, he can automatically call in a fire mission based on the company SOP that "silence is consent." If the company commander does *not* want the mission fired, he will say so. If a checkpoint is used for calling indirect fire, though, it should not be used to control the maneuver elements.

A good flag SOP and checkpoints help a lot, but something more is still needed to accomplish the mission.

BTH INF DIV (MECH) BREVHAT: Read right, then up; encrypt the indices

	STATUS	COORDINATION	MOVEMENT	RADIO	LOGISTICS
9	What is your overall combat status now?	Meet me at my CP	SP now	Listening silence imposed	What is your A (Fuel) B (Ammo status)?
8	My combat power is 90-100%	Meet me at _____	RP now	Listening silence lifted	Request A (Diesel) B (MOGAS)
7	My combat power is 80-90%	Send messenger or LNO	Move the advance	We are on radio minimize	% fuel remaining
6	My combat power is 70-80%	New boundary from _____ to _____ to _____	Move out now	Go to Alt. Freq	% ammo remaining
5	My combat power is 50-70%	Negative SITREP, no change	Requesting auth to move to next position	Return to primary Freq	Request rounds Tank ammo
4	My combat power is below 50%	I am a unit atch OPCON to you	Enemy is within A. 1km, 2km, 3km	I am being jammed	Request A (TOW) B (DRAGON) C (LAW)
3	I have _____ Tanks operational	I am in position	Crossing checkpoint	CEOI compromise	Request _____ (specify item needed)
2	I have _____ TOWs operational	My CP is located at _____	AVLB required at _____	have to high ground use high power	A (Wheel) B (Track) recovery needed at _____
1	I have _____ rifle sqds w/Carriers	My center of mass is at _____	CCV/Dozer required at _____	My Freq is _____ Encode	
0					
	A	B	C	D	E

FIGURE 2

What is needed is a unit SOP that will shorten radio instructions and at the same time allow the commander to give orders clearly and precisely in the heat of battle.

To accomplish this, the 8th Infantry Division uses the "Brevmat," or brevity matrix, a portion of which is shown in Figure 2. Using the coordinates on this matrix, the commander can communicate clearly and briefly. For example, if he says to his first platoon, "Brevmat C6, A," he means "Move out now to checkpoint

A." A response of "Brevmat B3, A, Drop 200, Right 100," tells the commander that the platoon is not exactly on checkpoint A but that it is 200 meters south and 100 meters east of that point. Although its use may take some practice, this matrix can be very useful in improving radio communications.

Using these three techniques — a flag SOP, checkpoints, and Brevmat — a mechanized infantry company commander can avoid the confusion I encountered on my first movement to

contact. He can really be in command and in control of his unit.



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# Improving M901 ITV Training

**MAJOR V. PAUL BAERMAN**

*I visit many of our infantry units each year and am always impressed with their training innovations. Practically every unit has shown me some new method or tool they have developed that enables them to offer better training in a particular area or on a specific weapon system.*

*One such training innovation is the*

*subject of the following article. It was developed and is being used quite successfully by the 2d Brigade, 3d Armored Division.*

*Unfortunately, many of these training innovations remain the "property" of the units that develop them, and other units never hear of or see them. Accordingly, I urge our in-*

*fantry units to use INFANTRY Magazine to tell us about their new training developments so that we can all benefit from their experiences. From these exchanges, too, we can all become better infantrymen. (Major General Sam Wetzel, Chief of Infantry)*

It will still be a number of years before units in the field get the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (BIFV) in large numbers. This means that the M901 Improved TOW Vehicle (ITV) will be with us for a while longer and that training ITV crews will continue to be important.

Presently, ITV crews have to rely primarily on the M-70 TOW tracker system in their TOW training, and difficulties with that system often

cause training to suffer. In an effort to overcome some of these difficulties, the 2d Brigade, 3d Armored Division has devised a system for training its ITV crews that allows them to use the numerous subcaliber ranges and equipment normally used for tank training.

The system consists of a "home-made" bracket, a wiring harness, and the Brewster device (M181), which is available from Training and Audio-

Visual Support Centers (TASCs). The bracket is used to mount either a standard M16 rifle or an M55 laser (also available from TASCs); it mounts on the ITVs turret above the sight, while the Brewster attaches to the bracket and adjusts for deflection and elevation. When the system is used with an M16, a TASC-issued solenoid is used to fire the rifle remotely. The system is powered by a standard military 24-volt electrical system.