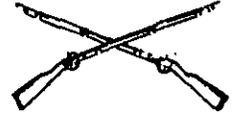




# Commandant's NOTE



**Major General John W. Foss**

Chief of Infantry

## BRADLEY ORGANIZATION AND TACTICS

The Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) has been in the field for two years. Eight Bradley battalions are now operational, and two more will receive their vehicles this year. We are beginning to build up a base of experience among soldiers, NCOs, and officers who have served in Bradley units, and this experience is helping us to update our tactics and fine tune the way we organize our squads, platoons, and companies.

Although the original tactics and organization have served us well, we have now gained insights that allow us to refine our earlier approach. Our latest doctrinal changes have been incorporated into FC 7-7J, The Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad (Bradley), which was distributed to the field in April. This FC was published to get evolving Bradley tactics to the field quickly pending the publication of FM 7-7J through the Army's AG publication system.

Several key problems have now been solved:

- The basic level of tactics for Bradley infantry is the platoon. Once the rifle teams have dismounted, the platoon is the lowest level at which the rifle teams and fighting vehicles interact.

- Drills have been integrated with tactics. Drills are the norm at squad level.

- The platoon leader's gunner, formerly a sergeant, has been upgraded to a staff sergeant master gunner, thus adding technical expertise to the platoon for the mounted fight and improving the platoon's ability to train itself in the complex skills of Bradley gunnery.

- The roles of key leaders in the platoon — the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and squad leader — have been clearly defined for both the mounted and

the dismounted fight. The platoon moves and fights mounted whenever possible. When the entire platoon is mounted, it fights as a single force under the control of the platoon leader.

- Normally, the platoon moves as a unit. The platoon leader selects the platoon route, the unit formation, and the distance between vehicles. The platoon sergeant maintains station on the platoon leader's vehicle. The other two vehicles orient on the platoon leader and platoon sergeant, respectively. The common term for this role is "wingman." When the platoon moves independently of the company, the platoon leader may conduct movement by bounds and use his and the platoon sergeant's vehicles to form the two pairs. Their wingmen will make up the second vehicle of each pair and will always move and orient on them.

- When the tactical situation requires the platoon leader to dismount his platoon, he dismounts and exercises overall control over the platoon while moving with the dismounted element, because the dismounted action is usually the most critical. He is accompanied by the squad leaders, who assist him in controlling the dismounted fight. The platoon leader ensures that the Bradleys, under the direct control of the platoon sergeant, fight in relation to the dismounted element.

- In the case of a hasty dismount, a situation that will be common on the mechanized battlefield, the platoon leader will not have time to carefully analyze all of the factors of METT-T. Since speed of reaction is critical if the momentum of the fight is to be maintained, drills must replace the METT-T analysis.

- In a more deliberate situation where time is avail-

able for an estimate based on the factors of METT-T, the platoon leader may organize his unit as he deems appropriate. Leaders may be positioned to accommodate a particular situation, and the organization of the mounted and dismounted elements can be different from that used in a hasty dismount situation.

- Regardless of whether the dismount is hasty or deliberate, the platoon leader retains overall control of the platoon.

- The capabilities of the 25mm gun now allow the Bradley and the dismounted infantry to fight when up to 2,000 meters apart, but always in relation to each other. This will occur in offensive situations when infantry dismounts to attack or clear an area while the vehicles overwatch, and in the defense when Bradleys may fight offset from dismounted platoons to take advantage of terrain conditions that make the most of their long range weapons. When separated from their Bradleys, the dismounted infantry will continue to fight in relation to the vehicles by remaining within range of their 25mm guns.

- Bradley gunnery, as outlined in FM 23-1, is based on a realistic evaluation of the crew and platoon gunnery skills required to win on the AirLand battlefield. Gunnery requirements reflect the threat that crews and platoons can expect to encounter. Crew qualification precedes platoon qualification, and both require the attainment of high standards of individual and collective skills. The doctrinal changes have precipitated a requirement to train additional gunners and vehicle commanders. This must be factored into the unit's gunnery and training programs and must receive command attention. A squad exercise will be included in the gunnery programs.

The Infantry is beginning to master its new fighting

vehicle. Soldiers are quickly developing an understanding of the complicated equipment systems of the Bradley, and leaders are learning not only the mechanics of how the vehicle works but the relation of how the infantrymen and the vehicle work together. Units equipped with the Bradley have made tremendous progress toward achieving high standards in gunnery and tactics, thus realizing the Bradley's full potential.

Many challenges still remain. The Bradley and its on-board weapons form a complex mechanical system. The young leader at squad and platoon level is hard-pressed to master both the vehicle and the associated mounted combat skills while simultaneously mastering dismounted tactics. The challenge facing units is to balance their training on mounted and dismounted skills. The training of the Bradley rifle teams must place a premium on their intelligent employment as well as on their synchronization with the vehicle element during the fight.

Clearly, the Bradley platoon is the greatest training challenge for the infantry. We need to keep in mind that infantry will dismount to do the things infantry has always done on the battlefield — take and hold ground. So we need our dismount skills as well as the new fighting vehicle skills of the Bradley.

I think we can do all these things, but it will be tough. The use of drills as outlined in FC 7-21B will help, as will the publication of FM 7-7J. The new doctrine places greater emphasis on the indirect approach to tactics. We must not timidly wait to see if the doctrine works — we must use the doctrine and make it work. If problems with the doctrine become apparent, and some will, tell your chain of command about them and give us your possible solutions.

