

CIPC

CAPTAIN JOHN L. WOLF

One of the most essential but most often overlooked areas of training for combat arms soldiers is that pertaining to intelligence-related tasks. In combat we expect our soldiers to be able to process prisoners of war, identify friendly and enemy vehicles, and observe and report information, as well as many other similar tasks.

Fortunately, these are skills that can be practiced in a unit during both individual and collective training. Most of our soldiers can recite the five steps in processing prisoners and can explain the meaning of the SALUTE acronym. But many of them have little idea of how to apply these concepts in a realistic situation or of the importance of timely and accurate intelligence reports to higher headquarters. Too many units, during their FTXs and ARTEPs, either completely overlook these important tasks or give only cursory attention to them.

A course such as the combat intelligence proficiency course (CIPC) conducted in my battalion at Fort Lewis can be an excellent way for a commander to improve the intelligence proficiency of his unit. Using a squad reconnaissance patrol as its vehicle, this type of course combines several events and incorporates them into a tactical environment. In most cases, few training aids are needed, and support personnel can be kept to a minimum. The CIPC is flexible in that the assigned tasks can be changed each time a block of training has been completed. Also, various non-intelligence tasks, such as conducting a passage of lines, breaching a minefield, reacting to an enemy contact, and

countering an NBC hazard, can be added or substituted.

A sample course will illustrate how a CIPC can be conducted. In this sample, a patrol conducts a passage of lines, reconnoiters a suspected enemy position, reacts to an enemy contact, processes a prisoner, and re-enters friendly lines.

The first phase of this CIPC (as in any patrol) is the planning phase. In an assembly area, the squad leaders from one platoon are issued an operations order by the platoon leader. The order specifies the route both to and from the objective, and staggers the starting time for each squad by 30 to 45 minutes. It also contains debriefing instructions for each patrol.

A tactical situation is developed so that the squads are considered part of the reserve element of a larger unit that is occupying a defensive position. Each squad, therefore, is required to coordinate and conduct a passage of lines both going out and coming in. The platoon leader, or platoon sergeant who acts as the evaluator, serves as the point of contact for the passage of lines.

The second phase of the course, the execution phase, begins with the passage of lines. The evaluator guides the squad to the passage point; after the passage has been conducted, he follows the squad on its patrol. His function at this point is to observe the squad and to make it move along the designated route.

The reconnaissance of the objective is conducted in accordance with the unit's tactical SOPs; it includes making sketches of the objective and disseminating the acquired information

to all of the squad members. At some point along the return route, the squad is ambushed and has to try to break contact and continue toward the friendly lines. At another point, the squad encounters an enemy soldier and takes him prisoner. This requires the squad leader to search, segregate, silence and safeguard him, and speed him to the rear.

The debriefing is a CIPC's most important phase, for it is during the debriefing that the soldiers demonstrate their understanding of the SALUTE report. The evaluator can make the debriefing even more successful by asking questions that lead the members of the patrol to describe their observations in detail. The after-action review is conducted at the same time so that the evaluator can lead the squad through a self-critique. This enables the individual soldiers to point out their own shortcomings and identify areas in which they need improvement.

With a little planning and some imaginative thinking, a combat intelligence proficiency course such as this one can be tailored to fit the training needs of any unit. It is a valuable training tool that can be used to develop a critical yet generally overlooked set of soldier skills.



Captain John L. Wolf recently completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course and is now assigned to the Infantry School's Ranger Department. Formerly, he was S3 of the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry, at Fort Lewis. He is a 1980 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy.