

## NIGHT ATTACK

Your September-October 1985 issue, as always, contains some stimulating material. Lieutenant Colonel William A. DePalo's article, "Dismounted Night Attack" (p. 26), prompts these comments:

Technological developments have brought no less than revolutionary changes in night combat. Image intensifiers, thermal imagers, ground radars, seismic sensors, and an array of other surveillance devices are changing everything. Darkness no longer conceals, no longer negates the advantages of the defender, and no longer simplifies the problem of attaining surprise as it did in the past. Night operations undertaken using the traditional night doctrine that stems from World War I could easily prove more costly than the same operations undertaken in broad daylight.

The 1st Battalion, 10th Infantry's experience in REFORGER 85 was undoubtedly valuable training and reflects high credit on the unit, but it does not seem to have added much in the way of critical night combat skills. Even the scenario is troublesome. It is difficult to accept that a competent enemy strong enough to challenge the advance of a mechanized division would so ignore the basic requirements of security, surveillance, and outpostting that heavily laden company-sized columns could penetrate a distance of 14 miles and cross an unfordable river without being detected. Given the level of opposition, a continuation of the mechanized advance would seem to have been the more productive move.

But that point aside, we were not told any of the crucial details about how the reconnaissance was conducted; whether reconnaissance teams were left in place to observe and report enemy movement; the use made of other surveillance means; route selection and techniques of navigation; the formations used by the three col-

umns; consideration given to diversions/covering operations; how night vision devices were allocated and used; plans for the use of supporting fires, smoke, illumination; course of action to be pursued in the event of detection or solid enemy contact; and other similar matters. These details are far from trivial. Technology has given them new importance — and demands new approaches. Traditional doctrine does not recognize that the enemy will have a night vision capability and therefore no longer provides adequate guidelines.

Physical conditioning, load-carrying capability, and forced marches are important training goals, but they do little more than scratch the surface when it comes to effectiveness in night combat. The point of this then is to suggest that all military units have their work cut out for them when it comes to preparing for fighting at night. They simply face a new ballgame with new rules and must learn those rules if they intend to play successfully.

I have not seen the recent TRADOC study that led to the decision to procure night vision aids of one type or another for every member of the Army squad. But I suspect, judging from its effect, that it would get units started in the right direction. In any event, you have given us an important, provocative article on a subject that needs more attention.

One final point, on the combat load. You may not be running a "Nightmare-of-the-Month Contest," but I would nominate this one for such a competition: Explaining to the late Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall why mechanized troops, tasked with conducting a dismounted 14-mile trek through foot-deep snow and

conducting a river crossing and a night attack, were burdened with 60-pound rucksacks. Marshall's classic *The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a Nation* is still in print (MCA, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, \$2.75 postage included). It's 120 pages of worthwhile reading.

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## MISSING THE TARGET

Lieutenant Colonel Wayne A. Silkett's article "72 Ways to Win Bigger" (September-October 1985, p. 38), in which he proposes turning 72 men in an infantry battalion into snipers, is certainly unique. His analysis of the deteriorating marksmanship skills in the U.S. Army is correct, but creating 72 snipers per battalion is not the answer.

What the Army needs to do is to return to a known distance basic marksmanship program with dedicated full-time marksmanship instructors. Training each soldier in proper shooting fundamentals will bring results on the modern battlefield.

Sniper training and employment by the U.S. Army at the present time is poor at best. By reviving formal sniper training and combining it with an accurate bolt action rifle, the Army could have an effective sniper program.

On the rifle battalion level, under Division 86, four or five sniper teams would be more than enough. Seventy-two snipers per battalion, even if used as teams, could never achieve any degree of proficiency or be accurately trained. The key to their effectiveness would be their proper employment as an additional supporting arm. Used correctly, they could be effective in an urban environment.

**We welcome letters from our readers and print as many of them as we can. Sometimes it takes a while before we find room. But keep writing on topics of interest to our readers, and we'll do our best to publish your letters, sooner or later.**

Sniping is a precision skill that requires much patience and a high degree of shooting ability. It is not a skill that everybody can or should learn, and it is by no means a substitute for sound marksmanship instruction.

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**IMAGE OF LEADERSHIP**

I would like to comment on Lieutenant Gary W. Ace's concept of having a platoon leader carry an M203 (see letter, September-October 1985, p. 5). I agree, and there is another reason or two why this is a good idea.

A minor point is that enemy snipers do not expect leaders to carry grenade launchers. Just as a .45 pistol, or now a 9mm, on an infantryman's hip draws the interest of a sniper, a grunt with a grenade launcher would present a less tempting target, for a while at least.

Another aspect may be more important:

An old buddy of mine, Tony Avgoulis, who commanded the Ranger Company of the 101st for one of his five tours in Vietnam, carried an M79. When the troops were hotly engaged, the distinctive "bloop" from the CP area let them know that "the old man" was taking an active part. General Pickett's plumed hat thrust high on his saber, heading for the angle at Gettysburg, served the same purpose.

The image of an officer showing the way is a crucial component of leadership.

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**EXECUTION MATRIX REFINED**

I have used execution matrixes on overlays for several years and, except for small improvements, had never thought to expand the information on the matrix. At the same time, I had been trying to figure out a way to make task force operations orders shorter and simpler.

Major Robert J. Henry, in his article on a modified matrix ("An Execution Matrix," September-October 1985, p. 34), has shown us a way toward that goal and has probably written the opening chapter in the search for the ultimate execution matrix.

Here is my contribution. All I did was include more elements from an operation, and its order, to fill up an 8 1/2 by 11 page with useful information. Obviously, anyone using this form would have to have it preprinted before an operation began. After the operation had been planned, about a dozen of the forms could

be filled out to distribute along with the overlay at the oral task force order. This would speed up the company team's planning, because there would be no need to wait for a written order.

Some of the information on the matrix, like call signs, could be filled out in pencil and updated by its user. Other items, like unit status and locations, could be revised as needed. The matrix itself would be given a two-digit identifying number, which, along with varying subject numbers and letters, would allow it to be used as a simple message code during its operational life.

**TF 2-114 MECH EXECUTION MATRIX (2) (7)**

TF CALL SIGN	F7N	ON HAND	TANK	ATTACHMENTS											
CDR 13	53 67	NOT USED	MECH	4/2-BO MECH											
XO 57	53A 18	ADA	TOW	4/2-104 ENG (20)											
SZ 64	54 39	CEWI	SC	3/8/111 ENG (20) F3T 27											
	NCS 72		ENG	4/D/3-S22NULCAN (25) M7027											
UNIT-STATUS	TM A	G	B(-)	G	INTANK	X	DELTA	G	E(-)	G	SCOUTS	G	A,2	G	
CALL SIGN	RZA		NSC		07D		EOP		LSM		PRQ		BSX		
TASK ORG	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204	1/2-204
TF MISSION - INTENT TF 2-114 DEFENDS IN SECTOR 120030 JAN 85 FROM NB430276 TO NB413253. WE ACCEPT BATTLE MANOEUVRE, ASSIST THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE COVERING FORCE AND DESTROY THE ENEMY WEST OF MUDDY RIVER. WE WILL RETAIN SP LION AND KILL THEM AS THEY MASS TO BYPASS IT AFTER CROSSING THE RIVER. THE BDE CDR WANTS US TO FORCE THE SECOND ECHELON NORTH INTO 2 ARMOR TF FIREPOCKETS.															
5 OCCUPY	TIGER	STRAWBERRY	OWL	CAT	ROBIN	SCREEN TF FRONT	GRID								
KILL (3)	RED (BLUE)	BLUE	WHITE (TRP 3)	YELLOW (CP 22)	RED (BLUE)	0/0	NB428305								
7 PREPARE	CUB		FLY	DOG	MINX	SCREEN TF RT FLANK	0/0 GRID								
KILL (3)	SILVER (TRP 25)		BLACK (GREEN)	PINK (CP 17)	PINK (TRP 28)	BACK TO CP 6	NB435297								
6 RECON	BLUE			YELLOW	RED	CP 9 TO CF	0/0 GRID								
RECON OF INITIAL BP	BLUE	BLUE	TRP 3	CP 22	RED	PP T&B	NB448112								
4 RESERVE			TF RES				0/0 GRID								
COUNTER ATK (2)	LION		LION	CAT	ROBIN (TIGER)	0/0	NB446121								
MISSIONS	0/0 ECHELON OBSERVE #6	STRAWBERRY DEFENSE	DEFEND AND DESTROY	DEFEND AND RETAIN	DESTROY FROM BATTLE POSITIONS	ASSIST BH	DISPLACE IN SECTION								
FIRES	DEFEND AND RETAIN	DO NOT UNDERGO WITH OUT ORDERS	FIRE FOR TM A CATX INTO LION		ESTABLISH ALT TOL 0/0	GUIDE CF THROUGH PP AND TF SECTOR	ONLY SUPPORT SCOUTS W/SMOKE & ILLUM								
OBSTACLES	3/8/111 PREPARE OB #6. PRIORITY COUNTERMEASURE PROTECTION		TF RESERVE			SCREEN J RIGHT FLANK	PRIORITY TARGETS TO TM A & CO D ON PL								
LOCATIONS	3 TOC NB413645	0 CBRTNS NB413682	A FLD TNS NB413825	LRP 1 NB413822	LRP 2 NB413121	LRP 3 NB413182	MCP NB428182								
MOVEMENT ORDER	0/0 SCOUTS TM TANK	CMND GP TOC	TM A	B(-)	3/8/111 MAX CBT TNS	ECHO (-)	DELTA								
MOPP	1	0 OEG 50 RADIS	C ADA TIGHT	F MOVE COMB AMBER	E IREXON TWO	B SP 101430	H RP 101945								

My suggested matrix does not present a particular battle scenario or pretend to be the final edition. It is just an expanded version of Major Henry's excellent contribution. If we are to advance in our profession, infantrymen must continue to improve on each other's ideas and actions. INFANTRY magazine helps by providing a forum for these ideas.

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### FSB GOLD REUNION

On 21 March 1967 a large VC-NVA force clashed with units of the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, at Fire Support Base GOLD near Suoi Tre, Republic of Vietnam. The units included the 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery; 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry; 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry; 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry (Mechanized); and the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.

A 20th anniversary reunion is being planned to commemorate this outstanding combined arms victory. The reunion is scheduled for 20-21 March 1987 at Fort Carson, Colorado, home of the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), which is participating in this event to honor its Vietnam veterans.

The principal speaker at the banquet will be General John W. Vessey, Jr. (Retired), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who commanded the 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery during the battle.

Anyone who is interested in attending this reunion or who would like more information may write me at P.O. Box 775, Ferriday, LA 71334, or call (318) 757-8500/2331. (I am a veteran of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.)

LARRY MOSS

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### MILES vs LIVE FIRE

I was disappointed to read Lieutenant Mark A. Dorney's comments (September-October 1985, p. 4) about my article "Concerning Safety" (May-June 1985, p. 10), because they represent some

widely held and incorrect views of the details of close combat and training for close combat.

Under certain circumstances MILES is an excellent training device. It is inherently incapable, however, of doing many important things that live ammunition does quite well. MILES does not provide immediate feedback for misses to a firer and only very near-miss feedback to a target. This prevents a firer and his leader from correcting his aim. With live ammunition the impact of a bullet on bark or dirt, or a visible tracer, gives a definite reference point that can be used to correct errors in aim or fire control. MILES lacks anything resembling a tracer element, and this makes it all but useless at night (near ambush being a partial exception).

MILES is stopped cold by the lightest concealment, while a soldier firing live ammunition at a target behind a bush could be given credit by an evaluator for suppressing or killing the target. This defect tends to warp tactical perceptions in training. Doing away with all natural concealment devalues training even more.

Finally, because MILES is a straight line-of-sight system, which does not correspond to the trajectory of a bullet, it cannot teach much of combat marksmanship. MILES was never intended to substitute for live ammunition but to improve the training value of blank ammunition.

Live grenades are usually allocated at one or two per combat soldier per year, which tends to make scoring a live grenade range pointless. All this is irrelevant, however, because such things as accuracy of throw and safety procedures can be taught quite well with inert grenades and practice fuzes. What cannot be taught is the confidence and courage it takes to use a live hand grenade under combat conditions. This confidence and courage can be taught by placing a man just outside a bunker and having him put a grenade inside the bunker (which is at least as safe as placing him inside the bunker and having him throw the grenade out). Live grenades are issued to train soldiers morally. They must be used for that purpose.

Lieutenant Dorney suggests that such

demolitions as may be required for post projects be done by soldiers, and I endorse that suggestion. Such projects are not as common as is implied, of course, but the idea still has some value. What is missed, and this is the real flaw in his thinking (he is not alone in this), is that what would be taught by doing this is mere mechanical skill. Setting off all the demolitions in the world will not prepare a soldier for the day when he must crawl forward with a satchel charge, place it, light the fuze, and crawl back to cover, the whole time trusting in his comrades to keep the enemy suppressed. This can be taught only by employing live demolitions as part of normal tactical training with live ammunition.

Lieutenant Dorney hails from a branch (field artillery) in which mechanical skills are held in highest esteem, and rightly so for that branch. It would be well for the Army as a whole, however, if it were widely understood that in the ground-gaining arms mechanical skills must play second fiddle to moral strength and physical courage, for only with courage can mechanical skills be used to advantage.

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### REVAMP ECHO COMPANY

In their recent articles, Captains Michael S. Hackney and George E. Knapp have made strong cases for the versatility and effectiveness of the new antiarmor company. But without the proper equipment and support, it will not be able to live up to its potential. (See "Echo Company: The Fifth Player," July-August 1985, p. 20, and "Echo on the Battlefield," September-October 1985, p. 30.)

Captain Knapp alludes to many of Echo Company's major weaknesses. With no recovery vehicle organic to its maintenance team, no XO track, limited NBC equipment, no camouflage nets, no ring mounts for its wheeled vehicles, no available FIST, no primary radio telephone operators for the command tracks, and no cook section, Echo Com-

pany can be easily supported only through attachment or extensive juggling of battalion assets.

I firmly believe that there is a strong case for revamping the battalion and antiarmor company TOE. Echo Company should be regarded as a maneuver company, particularly in a heavy division, instead of as a much-diminished combat support company. Antiarmor operations could be more aggressive and sustainable, regardless of how Echo Company was employed.

As a former antitank platoon leader and now an Echo Company XO, I strongly urge the Infantry School to reconsider our support needs. A table of organization and equipment designed only for attachment seriously affects a unit's ability to conduct sustained combat operations.

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## MORE ON COMPANY E

Captain Michael S. Hackney's article entitled "Echo Company: The Fifth Player" (July-August 1985, p. 20) is an incisive piece. As a member of that small but growing fraternity of former antiarmor company commanders, I would like to add my thoughts to his.

The antiarmor company was not envisioned as a maneuver company; its platoons were to be parceled out to its task force's sub-elements. During my tenure as commander of Company E, 1st Battalion, 10th Infantry, however, my unit and sister Echo Companies of the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) were often employed as single entities, but not in the traditional sense of maneuver as the mechanized infantry or armor company teams were.

My experience has demonstrated that the company is best employed this way.

A limiting factor in attaching antiarmor platoons to the mechanized and armor company teams (or attaching infantry and armor platoons to Company E) is the relative slowness of the ITV. The M901 series of vehicles simply cannot keep up with the M60 and the M113, especially during the final stages of an assault or during fast-moving operations.

In the offense, Company E can successfully fulfill its role of providing long range overwatching antiarmor fires by maneuvering to the rear of or adjacent to mechanized infantry and tank heavy teams either as a single entity or as dispersed platoons operating across the task force sector under the command and control of its own company headquarters. This centralized arrangement also keeps the maneuver commanders' span of control at a manageable level.

I concur with Captain Hackney's view of Company E's employment in the defense. Keeping the company "pure" allows the TF commander to mass fires along suspected avenues of approach into the TF battle position. When the TF moves from successive battle positions during a delay in sector, the centralized control of antiarmor elements is highly desirable. With his ITVs under the control of the Company E commander, the TF commander has a single point of contact on the battlefield; if the ITV platoons are attached to the infantry or tank teams, he must deal with as many as four commanders.

Captain Hackney discusses organizing the company into two platoons of six ITVs and one M113 each with the third platoon having eight ITVs and one M113. I believe that eight systems under the control of one platoon leader is too unwieldy. The best way to employ the techniques Captain Hackney describes is to organize the battalion's 20 ITVs into four platoons; each with five ITVs and one M113. This would mean adding one platoon leader, one platoon sergeant, and one M113 to the TOE. Organized in this manner, though, each platoon could es-

tablish a habitual relationship with one of the rifle companies to provide a degree of familiarity and interoperability when the situation does not dictate that the antiarmor platoons be attached out. (This arrangement does not mean that all four platoons would be attached out simultaneously; that would be the exception rather than the norm.)

An appropriate use of an ITV section or platoon that Captain Hackney does not discuss is to attach a section or platoon to the scout platoon when it is ordered to screen along or guard an exposed flank astride a high-speed avenue of approach. (Under the 4X5 ITV configuration, platoon, not section, employment would be the norm.)

Captain Hackney's brief discussion of the lack of recovery, medical, and mess resources to support an Echo Company points to a critical shortcoming in the current infantry battalion organization. In addition, I believe the battalion desperately needs a track-laying, armor-protected, ammunition-hauling vehicle. On a high intensity battlefield, missiles will be expended rapidly, thus increasing the requirement to re-arm far forward.

The lack of a fire support team is difficult to understand when one considers the current employment practices of battalion and brigade commanders. With twenty 13-power thermal sights, the antiarmor company has a great ability to see beyond the FLOT and interdict initial and follow-on enemy elements with indirect fires. The optics on the ITV make any vehicle a potential fire support vehicle.

An Echo Company should not be considered a combat support organization to be parceled out willy-nilly. But it does add a new dimension to the heavy force battlefield. What lies ahead now is a refinement of doctrine and organization; only then will the potential of the "fifth player" pay true dividends.

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