

deceived. In short, he must be outwitted at every turn.

The failure of his reconnaissance effort can be a fatal blow to the plans of an OPFOR or Soviet commander. Instead of being able to make the most of the shock value of the mass and firepower of his regiment by directing a well-orchestrated and violent attack against known enemy weaknesses, he will be forced to resort to a more hesitant, difficult-to-control approach march forma-

tion that can be defeated in detail by an alert and aggressive defender.

But stripping away the attacker's eyes is not an easy task — it requires detailed planning, tenacity, and audacity. It is not just a side show to be considered only when the "important" preparations have been completed. The U.S. commander who fails to assign his counterreconnaissance effort a priority commensurate with its importance to his survival will most certainly be defeated.



Major David J. Ozolek, shown here in the uniform of the opposing forces regiment at the National Training Center, served as S-3 of the regiment and also as S-3 observer-controller of the NTC's operations group. He is now Public Information Officer at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe.

# Echo Company

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The primary mission of the antiarmor company (Company E, or Echo Company) in a mechanized infantry battalion is to provide effective antiarmor fire in support of the battalion's mission. The satisfactory accomplishment of this mission is a direct result of effective organization and well-planned, realistic training.

In the 3d Battalion (Mechanized), 19th Infantry, all of the battalion's M901 (ITV) assets, except for those in the scout platoon, are assigned to Company E. This centralization facilitates training and maintenance management and adds to the unit's cohesiveness.

The company is organized into three platoons and a headquarters element. The first platoon has eight ITVs divided into four sections. The other two platoons have six ITVs each with three sections per platoon. The company headquarters element follows the MTOE except for the addition of a slot labelled "master gunner." The master gunner is the most technically proficient IH PMOS in the company, and he is responsible for all facets of ITV turret maintenance and ITV-specific training. He advises the

company on training issues and also coordinates the necessary maintenance functions peculiar to the M901's turret. Needless to say, the master gunner plays a major role in effective ITV training and maintenance.

Although Echo Company can be organized in several different configurations, the platoons should always operate as single entities. Usually under the direct control of the Echo Company commander, the platoons must be prepared to operate almost anywhere on the battlefield whether in general support of a task force or in direct support of a company team.

The platoon sergeant of an ITV platoon has many responsibilities. He must coordinate with a supported element or the company headquarters for resupply. He should coordinate closely with the company executive officer (XO) on all logistical matters to take full advantage of all available assets.

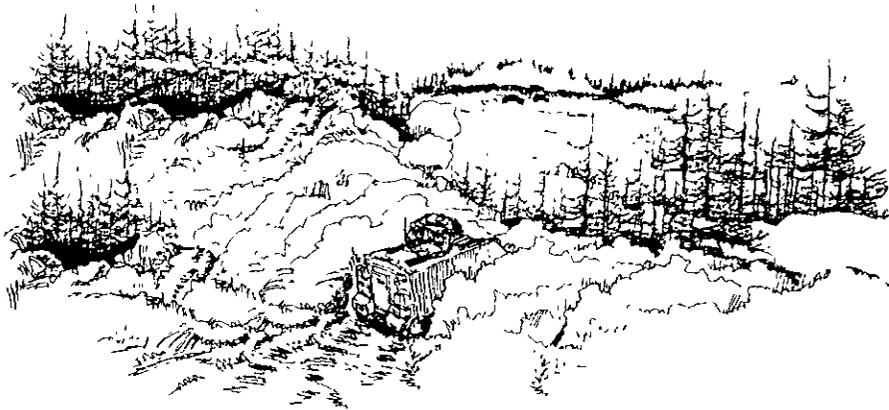
The platoon sergeant is also, by necessity, the most knowledgeable person in the platoon on the technical aspects of the ITV. He should work closely with the company's master gunner in regard to turret problems as well as the resupply

of such TOW-related items as TOW and nightsight batteries and coolant cartridges.

The platoon leader is in charge of all aspects of his platoon's activities. He sees that all logistical needs are met and makes all tactical decisions above section level. He assigns all engagement areas and battle positions and determines the engagement and disengagement criteria for his element. In short, the platoon leader is the direct link between the platoon and the company commander and is responsible for everything his platoon does or fails to do.

To be effective, each platoon must have well-trained sections that can operate with a high degree of independence with little or no visual contact between the vehicles. Since these sections are the backbone of Echo Company, most training should be geared to the section level.

At the same time, the platoons must be trained to operate as independently as possible. A strong, solid SOP (Standing Operating Procedure) will enable the platoons to react to and execute most missions with only a radio message from the commander to trigger an action. Because



of the extended distances between platoons, it is imperative that each be able to operate independently and sometimes without a face-to-face meeting with the company commander.

The individual crews, sections, and platoons can be trained in offensive operations by extracting and modifying (through experience) the tasks, conditions and standards from ARTEP 71-2 and various other texts. Offensive training is intended to teach movement techniques, overwatch drills, and reaction to both indirect and direct fire.

Whenever possible, offensive training should be conducted in conjunction with task force operations, real or simulated. Training should be conducted in maneuver on the flanks; overwatch of a company team (concurrent with overwatching other ITVs); actions on contact, specifically the movement of the ITVs to positions from which they can engage the enemy at the greatest possible range; and the actions of the ITVs at the objective (consolidation and reorganization). Direct and indirect fire should be integrated into this training to evaluate reaction drills; this is also a perfect opportunity to introduce NBC training into the program.

For training in defensive operations, we developed three basic drills, the first involving one crew taking on three OPFOR targets; the second, one section operating against an OPFOR tank platoon; and the third, an ITV platoon of three sections operating against an OPFOR motorized rifle company. Each drill called for the use of MILES equipment for added realism, and in each a task, condition, and standard was given to the participants, together with nine or ten additional sub-tasks.

Once the basics have been taught, success depends upon the proper employment of each ITV system. Based on one of this unit's successful NTC rotations, there are some basic principles that govern ITV employment in both the offense and the defense.

The first principle of the offense is to employ a platoon on each flank of a task force. This technique immediately gives wide dispersion to the commander's long range antiarmor fires, thus making it difficult for the enemy to suppress those fires. Additionally, these platoons become the task force's flank guard.

The second principle is to employ these platoons far forward so that once contact is made, the TOW becomes a 3,000-meter sniper weapon. This is extremely valuable if a surprise contact is made.

The third principle is for these platoons to stay far to the flanks and move in section bounds. They should try to keep 300 meters between vehicles. Often the platoon will be able to slip behind enemy positions because of the OPFOR's preoccupation with the movement of the company teams. During this type of movement, the ITVs must overwatch each other as well as the lead company team. During all of these operations, the platoon leader gives the antiarmor company commander specific spot reports. The company commander then puts all critical enemy sightings and TOW engagements out over the battalion command net.

(It should be noted that by using these principles, this unit destroyed eight or more enemy vehicles in each of its three force-on-force offensive missions at the NTC. Also, during the live fire movement to contact, TOW gunners were credited with 93 confirmed hits on enemy vehicles.)

The principles of the defense are somewhat similar, with dispersion by fire the most important. The antiarmor assets should be dispersed to prevent all systems from being suppressed at any one time. The ITVs should be emplaced so that each engagement area is covered by interlocking TOW fires. Although the dismounted M220A1 system is easy to conceal and has a high survivability rate, some TOWs must stay mounted. This adds to the commander's flexibility, and this mounted force can often serve as a task force counterattack-by-fire element.

Local security is a problem that must be carefully looked at. Each gun crew must provide its own local security, and this must be a top priority for each crew.

Once again the platoon leaders make all reports to the antiarmor commander who controls all TOW fires in the defense. Aggressive spot reporting again will provide valuable information to the task force commander.

Company E must be prepared to fight in one of three basic configurations: as a pure company with its own sector and specific mission on the battlefield; as a company team with a tank or rifle platoon attached; or with its platoons spread out across the task force sector in general support. In this third configuration, the company may also have its platoons in direct support of company teams. This would be the most arduous one, for it stretches the logistical capability of the company headquarters and makes it difficult to coordinate the task force's heavy antiarmor fire across the sector.

But if the ITV sections and, to a larger extent, the ITV platoons have been well trained, the company will operate effectively in any configuration and will accomplish any assigned mission.

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