

the platoon leader, the platoon sergeant, or the radio-telephone operator, since in movement they also occupied the center of the formation. Noise discipline was also better.

In today's low-intensity conflicts

against small, highly mobile enemy units, the modified platoon wedge provides a practical and efficient means of combat. With practice and leadership, a platoon leader can use this formation to fix and destroy any small guerrilla force.

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Scouting Fire Teams

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Over the past few years, the subject of maneuver warfare has been discussed at length in articles, books, and editorials. In all these discussions, however, we sometimes forget that warfare consists of small units making progress on the battlefield. To paraphrase S.L.A. Marshall, battalions, regiments, and divisions cannot advance if platoons and companies do not advance. All discussions of maneuver warfare must therefore include a discussion of how the platoon and company take advantage of these concepts.

Tactics at company level should be more than simple frontal or flanking attacks. Our manuals tell us that a platoon uses fire and maneuver to close with and destroy the enemy. To many of our leaders, though, fire and maneuver means moving in the direction of the enemy until their lead elements run into his defensive positions. Unfortunately, a key item missing from this definition is locating the enemy: to maneuver effectively against him we must be able to find his positions or formations, determine the extent of his positions, and, more important, determine what he intends to do.

As a result, as studies of Vietnam and observations of our present training show, our companies all too often blunder onto an enemy (or aggressor) position and then react. They often cross open areas without scouting the far side, blindly travel through forested areas without

scouts to their front, or travel with open flanks.

These problems directly affect a unit's ability to accomplish its mission. If a platoon or company is forced to deploy into unfavorable enemy situations, that unit at best may lose a lot of time and at worst may suffer many casualties and be unable to continue with its mission. A positive solution to this problem is for infantry units to train and employ scouting elements. If they do not, they will probably not use them in combat either and will therefore invite disaster by attacking blind into possible enemy positions.

The use of scouting elements is not a new idea, in either the Marine Corps or the Army. Various manuals for small

units in both services discuss either the employment of scouts or some analogous movement techniques. It may be helpful, however, to pull together information from those sources and discuss how a platoon leader can employ his scouting elements effectively. (While my own experience has been primarily with the United States Marine Corps, Capt. A.D. Davis IV of the U.S. Army has offered some suggestions dealing with Army doctrine.)

Army Field Manual 7-8, The Infantry Platoon and Squad, states that the lead platoon uses the movement technique that suits the likelihood of contact. (To a large extent, the platoon leader must take into account the terrain as well.) The three basic techniques that an Army unit uses



for movement are bounding overwatch, traveling overwatch, and traveling. Most units would not use these techniques, however, because—with the exception of traveling—they are somewhat complex and time consuming. But if contact with the enemy is expected, and if his exact whereabouts are not known, bounding overwatch might be the most tactically sound method to use.

A better way of dealing with this problem, and one that offers security and speed with the smallest force forward, is the use of scouting elements.

The Marine Corps' Operational Handbook (OH) 6-3E states that the scouting fire team is the basic tactical unit for scouting. While it discusses the scouting fire team in terms of a five-man fire team, the principles remain the same for a four-man team. The current Army organization of a five-man fire team is easily configured for use as a scouting fire team. Whether Marine Corps or Army, though, it is the principle of scouting itself that should be adopted.

Within a fire team, the scouts normally work in pairs so that they can mutually support each other. (Scouts should not be used individually.) Scouts are normally employed when a platoon is the advance party for an advance guard or the lead platoon in an approach march. During a flanking attack, scouts should be used to help find a route to the objective, verify the flank, and clear snipers or sentinels who otherwise might impede the attack.

The organization of a scouting fire team lends itself to mutual support. A Marine fire team uses the skirmishers formation or the wedge, while an Army fire team might use the wedge or a line formation. The Army's wedge formation should be modified slightly when a fire team is acting as a scouting element: The fire team leader should be behind the formation where he can maintain contact with the squad leader and control the rest of the fire team. The frontage for the fire team should normally be 50 to 75 meters. If it is more than that, a squad should be used as the scouting element.

The platoon leader controls the movements of his scouting element but he may use the squad leader to assist him. The fire team leader controls his fire team.



In open terrain, scouts may be employed as far out as 400 to 600 meters. In dense terrain, they move out to the limits of visibility. Ideally, the bulk of the platoon is positioned to support the scouting elements by fire if they should become engaged.

The main purpose of the scouting element is to provide early warning of enemy to the front, which is consistent with the principle of security. Traveling ahead of the platoon, the scouts look for possible enemy positions and particularly for possible locations of enemy machineguns. They advance stealthily using all available cover and concealment. In some situations, it may be necessary for them to move by bounds so that one element can overwatch the other as they advance. If the scouting elements encounter sentinel posts or patrols, they overcome this resistance as well as they are able. If the enemy force is large, the scouts try to force the enemy to open fire with his machineguns and other weapons so they can determine his dispositions.

One of the most important pieces of information the scouts must obtain and pass on to the platoon leader is the location of the enemy's flanks. The platoon leader will then be able to decide whether to conduct a flanking or frontal attack or to fix the enemy in place while the remainder of the company maneuvers against the enemy position. This prevents the bulk of the platoon and the company from becoming prematurely engaged.

There are three methods that a platoon can use in employing these scouting elements. The first of these methods uses

movement by successive bounds (not to be confused with bounding overwatch). The bulk of the platoon is held under cover while the scouts move forward to an intermediate objective that has been designated by the platoon leader. When the scouts reach and secure this objective they signal the "all clear" to the platoon leader. Upon receiving this signal, the platoon leader signals the platoon to advance to the intermediate objective. When the bulk of the platoon reaches that objective, the platoon leader orders the scouts to move to the next intermediate objective.

Machineguns can be used to cover the movement of the scouts and of the platoon to each objective. In addition, the platoon leader can (and should) direct that only one squad at a time advance to an objective while the remainder of the platoon covers it.

Using another method, which could be called traveling overwatch, the platoon leader follows in the trace of the scouting elements while the platoon sergeant holds the rest of the platoon under cover. The scouts advance to designated intermediate objectives. When the fire team leader signals the all clear, the platoon leader directs the scouts to the next intermediate objective and then signals the platoon sergeant (by radio or messenger) to bring the rest of the platoon up. The platoon leader then moves out with his scouts so that they will arrive at the next intermediate objective while the platoon is moving to or has arrived at the previous intermediate objective.

This method has the advantage of be-



ing faster than movement by successive bounds, but it does not have the same level of security—particularly for the scouts who are moving uncovered while the platoon moves to the previously cleared objective. This method might be used when there are suitable march objectives such as in wooded, hilly terrain. The scouting elements, in this case, should be within visual distance of the platoon so that they can be supported if they should become engaged.

The third method involves the simultaneous movement of the scouting elements and the platoon. Obviously, this method should be called traveling. The scouting elements and the bulk of the platoon move at the same speed, and the platoon leader can move either behind the scouts or with the bulk of the platoon. The scouts can be employed up to 600 meters forward, but it should be noted that although they may be visible in open terrain, they will be difficult to support by fire should they become engaged. This method would be the fastest and should be used in open terrain or when there are no suitable march objectives.

Finally, movement within the scouting element should also be planned with an eye toward security. A scouting element, either fire team or squad, can move in a skirmishers (or line) formation, a method often called "a line of scouts." A scouting element can also move by bounding overwatch, in which a portion of the element moves to a designated objective while being covered by the fires of the rest. In the case of a fire team, two men advance to an objective designated

by the fire team leader while the other two cover their movement. The two men who were overwatching first then move to the next designated objective while being covered by the other two. If the scouting element is a squad, one fire team advances to a designated area while being covered by the fires of the other team.

To implement these concepts, companies must begin training with scouts. This training should fall into two categories. First, a platoon leader should practice employing scouts whenever his platoon is the advance party for an advance guard, or the lead platoon in an approach march. Even in training, platoon leaders will find that when they use their scouts properly they will never blunder into an enemy position.

This training could begin on a sand ta-

ble or a chalkboard as platoon leaders train their squad leaders and fire team leaders in these principles. In the field, aggressors could be positioned at various points forward of the assigned objective. The platoon would be required to find these pockets of resistance and clear or bypass them, depending on the mission. A good idea would be to have the platoon run into a superior force, thereby making the platoon leader fire and maneuver on his own or fix the enemy in place while the company maneuvered.

If small unit leaders are forced to make these decisions in training, they will be able to provide much more creative and flexible leadership in a real conflict where blundering into an enemy position could spell disaster. These techniques will also make a unit better able to conduct hasty attacks, which will probably be the most common type of attack on the battlefield.

Secondly, extensive training should be conducted for the scouts themselves. This training should fall into two general categories—scouting skills and tracking skills.

The scouting skills, which should be taught first, include:

- Observation techniques.
- Listening techniques.
- Battlefield movement.
- Range estimation.
- Reconnoitering.
- Identifying possible enemy positions.

The tracking skills should include:



TRAINING NOTES

- Identifying indicators.
- Interpreting signs—displacements, staining, weathering, littering, and camouflage.
- Reporting.

Training and using scouting elements is an old idea whose resurrection coincides with the rise of maneuver warfare. Units that use scouts aggressively never become engaged until their leaders have

chosen the time and place for engagement. Scouts save lives and help units accomplish their mission by giving commanders at all levels the information they need to act before the enemy does. Most important, scouting elements make possible fire and maneuver—the very bulwark of tactics. We can maneuver on the enemy only if we know where he is.



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SWAP SHOP

The diagram in Field Manual 90-4 (page G-2) shows the configuration of the UH1H (Huey) helicopter for an airborne antiarmor crew using the TOW I. This diagram fails to account for the TOW II and its requirements for a night sight, battery power conditioner, spare batteries, and collimator.

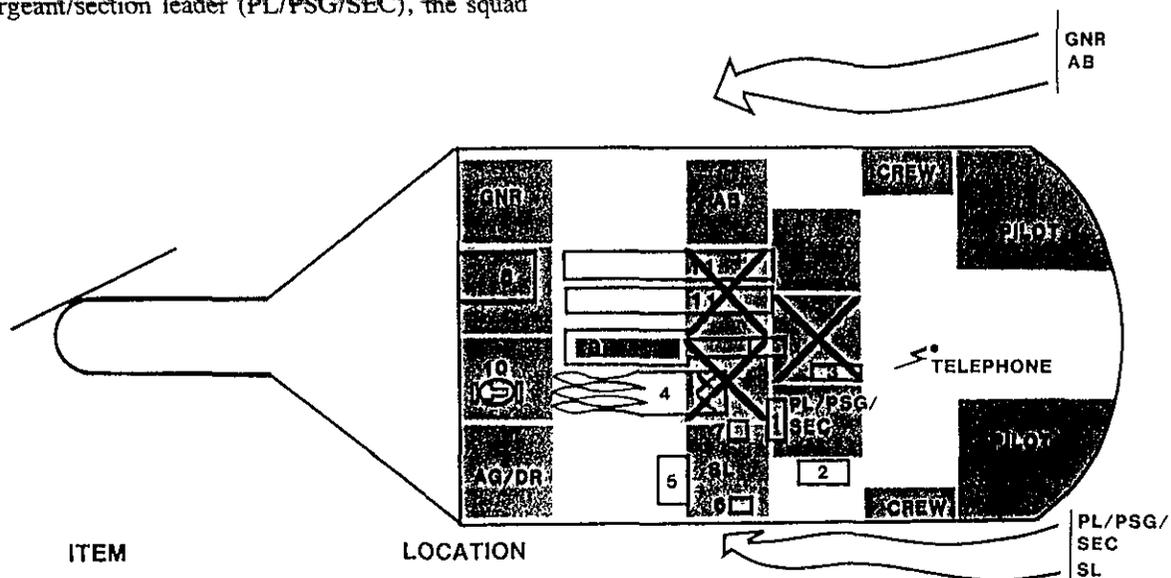
The sketch below shows how a Black Hawk can be configured to carry a TOW II crew. The seats marked with an X should be removed.

There should be five soldiers per chalk: the platoon leader/platoon sergeant/section leader (PL/PSG/SEC), the squad

leader (SL), the gunner (GNR), the assistant-gunner/driver (AG/DR), and the ammunition bearer (AB). Each carries the items shown in the table.

The crew should load from the front with the chalk split as shown. The PL/PSG/SEC, SL, and AB load first, then the AG/DR and GNR. The ammunition bearer helps the gunner store the launch tube. The squad leader holds the traversing unit to allow the assistant gunner/driver to board quickly.

The crew unloads in reverse order.



BEARER	ITEM	LOCATION
PL/PSG/SEC	PRC-77	1
	Night sight	2
	Collimator	3
SL	Tripod	4
	Day sight	5
	Battery power conditioner	6
	Batteries	7
GNR	Missile guidance set	8
	Launch tube	9
AG/DR	Traversing unit	10
AB	Ammunition (2 rds)	11

(Submitted by Lieutenant David E. Johnson, Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Washington.)