

# Thoughts on Recovery

CAPTAIN STEVEN D. CAGE

Recovering from a field exercise can be tough for any type of unit, but to different degrees. In a line company, for example, recovery generally continues to occupy the attention of the company commander until he feels the standard has been met. In a headquarters and headquarters company (HHC), however, planning for the next exercise or other training often begins as soon as the staff sections have returned from the field. In this case, therefore, a different approach is in order. What follows is a recovery plan that was developed for the HHC of a light infantry brigade.

The key people in the recovery operation are the section sergeants. They supervise their sections in recovery actions and also execute missions for their section leaders. While still in the field, they can prepare for recovery by doing the following:

- Ensuring that the section's vehicles, weapons, and equipment are maintained throughout the exercise.
- Continually accounting for all sections and individual equipment (and knowing from packing lists and inspections what is in the field).
- Documenting any known loss of or damage to equipment.

Although the section sergeants are the points of contact within their sections during recovery, the company executive officer (XO) is charged with managing recovery at the company level. He does this by collecting reports and, with the company first sergeant, conducting spot inspections to make sure the sections are on the right track.

## PHASE I

### SECTION EQUIPMENT

Off loaded and inventoried.

List of damaged or missing items submitted with statements (use reverse side).

Secured.

### INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

Off loaded and inventoried per packing list.

List of DX/missing items submitted (use reverse side). (Statements required only if extraordinarily damaged or a report of survey is requested.)

Secured.

### VEHICLES

Off loaded and cleaned off/out.

After-operations PMCS completed.

DA 1970 turned in to dispatcher.

Weatherproofed (if required).

BII/OVM inventoried.

List of damaged/missing items submitted with statements.

Mileage driven by section drivers recorded.

### WEAPONS AND SENSITIVE ITEMS

Ammunition/pyrotechnic shakedown and turn-in conducted.

Weapons cleaned, turned in, and accounted for.

CEOs accounted for and turned in.

VINSON equipment zeroed.

Section-drawn sensitive items accounted for and turned in.

List section personnel who deployed:

(Acting) Section Sergeant's Signature

**PHASE II**

**SECTION EQUIPMENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cleaned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Replaceable supplies replenished.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Turned in for servicing or DX as needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Borrowed equipment cleaned and returned.

**INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cleaned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Items for DX consolidated by section sergeants and turned in to supply.

**VEHICLES**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Washed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Topped off with fuel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly/monthly PMCS conducted as appropriate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ BII/OVM cleaned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Turned in to DS maintenance, if necessary.

**WEAPONS AND SENSITIVE ITEMS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Weapons drawn and cleaned for a second time (and a third time if firing was conducted).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Weapons needing maintenance identified to armorer with DA Form 2404.
- \_\_\_\_\_ DA Form 2404 on communications gear turned in to brigade communications officer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ PMCS conducted on VINSON equipment/vehicle radios.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Section-used sensitive items drawn and cleaned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Award recommendations turned in to XO on company recommendations DF.

List section personnel who deployed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Acting) Section Sergeant's Signature

**PHASE III**

**SECTION EQUIPMENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Layout/100% inventory conducted.

**INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ DX/replacement of equipment completed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helmet/LBE put together per SOP.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Layout of TA-50 conducted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adjustment actions completed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rucksacks, duffel bags repacked per packing list.

**VEHICLES**

- \_\_\_\_\_ BII/OVM layout conducted and vehicles inspected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up on vehicles turned in to maintenance.

**WEAPONS AND SENSITIVE ITEMS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up on items turned in to maintenance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up on NBC or communications items turned in to maintenance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recommended changes to recovery SOP submitted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Acting) Section Sergeant's Signature

Company recovery consists of three phases, and a checklist is provided for each phase. (Once these procedures become institutional knowledge in a unit, however, these lists probably will no longer be needed.)

Phase I is completed immediately upon redeployment and before the company is released. Of key importance in Phase I is accounting for all equipment or documenting any damages or losses. The section drivers' mileage is also recorded for use in ultimately awarding driving badges to those who qualify. (See Phase I checklist.)

Phase II is marked by cleaning equipment, turning it in for maintenance, if required, and turning damaged TA-50 items in to company supply for direct exchange (DX). Award recommendations are also turned in at this time. (See Phase II checklist.)

Phase III ensures that all individual and section gear is inspected for accountability, cleanliness, and serviceability. Finally, proposed changes to the unit's recovery SOP can be submitted at this time. (See Phase III checklist.) At the completion of Phase III, the company is again prepared to deploy the field.

Suspense dates for Phases II and III are normally determined by the company's leaders and the section sergeants before deployment. In most cases, the number of days allowed will vary with the length of the exercise and the season of the year.

Recovering from the field is a tough job that requires work, planning, and supervision. A failure in any of these areas could mean that a radio, a weapon, or a vehicle will let the unit down when the bullets fly during the next deployment.

While this recovery method may not work for others as well as it has for this unit, it should at least trigger thoughts on better ways of dealing with this sometimes-neglected aspect of field operations.

Captain Steven D. Cage commanded HHC, 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Benning during the development of this recovery SOP. He is now an ROTC instructor at Western New England College. A 1978 graduate of the United States Military Academy, he also holds a master's degree from Central Michigan University.