

embodiment of soldier power. This is by far the most difficult element of the dynamic to achieve, but there are several ways in which it takes root.

It begins with a group of men who know each other, who will stay together, and who will draw strength from each other. (COHORT is an essential part of a light infantry force.) Then these men are put into a strenuous physical fitness program, including foot marches and combatives. Next, they are presented a series of challenges to be met both individually and in small groups—mountain climbing, rappelling, river rafting, obstacle and orientation courses, long range patrols, and survival situations.

Once their bodies are hard and their confidence in themselves and each other is high, their leader begins to train their minds. This requires a working education program that includes the Basic Skills Education Program

(BSIEP), General Test (GT) score improvements, college courses, and leader-taught classes on military and non-military subjects. The smarter the soldier gets, the more he becomes a weapon, and a weapon that can wield itself.

The final element in the dynamic of thinking light, and in the process of building a light infantry force, is spiritual battleproofing. In this the battalion chaplain plays a key role. A soldier who is spiritually in tune is less likely to become a stress casualty. The U.S. fighting man has had a long history of valor and dedication, but the light infantryman of today must develop the same hardened body, keen mind, and resolute spirit found in the consummate martial artist.

The light infantry divisions are not "elite" units. Their size and the variety of the missions they will be called on to do prohibit them that status. But they

are different, and what makes them different is not just the MTOE or the tenets and tactics developed for their use. The difference is that, faced with the requirement to do more with less, the soldier in a light division learns to *think* "light." His special orientation and the way he looks at the battlefield are different. The increased use of decentralization and the scarcity of resources cause him to lead and to solve problems differently. And most importantly, the light infantryman himself becomes a weapon through disciplining his body, his mind, and his spirit. In essence he becomes like a spider—light, silent, and deadly.

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# The "Jet"

## A Streamlined Movement Formation

CAPTAIN NOYES B. LIVINGSTON III

Mounted and dismounted movement for many units seems to be more difficult than it should be. Just as we use certain drills to allow crews and units to act in the absence of orders, we can also use simple unit formations to facilitate movement.

Some leaders are opposed to prescribed formations, because they view them as inflexible and dogmatic. Actually, though, a well rehearsed and familiar movement formation allows leaders to be more aware of the situation and more flexible in their response to it, because they are not wrapped up

in the mechanics of moving.

There is no good substitute for the proven staggered column for tactical road marches, but there is an elegant formation that is suitable for all cross country traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch techniques. It is called the "Jet" formation because seen from above it looks like a high-speed jet aircraft (Figure 1). The Jet formation is nothing more than the traveling overwatch formation shown in Figure 4-19, FM 7-7, but with the left rear APC moved back abreast of the one on the right.

The Jet formation allows a unit to change from the traveling formation to traveling overwatch to bounding overwatch without altering the basic formation, just the distance between the elements. The Jet provides good observation and fire to the front, flanks, and rear and, unlike wingman pairs or sections, it also makes contact with the smallest element—the point or lead element.

The formation also allows the point element to concentrate on land navigation, route selection, and forward security. This permits the control element to

follow the lead element safely and to concern itself with navigation and the overall situation. The other two elements key off of the control element, following its example at all times, and focus on flank and rear security.

The Jet formation can be used for M113s, tanks, and Bradleys, and it is equally effective for dismounted elements as shown in Figure 2. It can be used by a platoon or company team with their squads or platoons moving in platoon Jets. For example, a company Jet in bounding overwatch would have its lead platoon Jet moving in internal bounding overwatch with the two wing platoon Jets moving in internal traveling overwatch as shown in Figure 3.

## TASK FORCE

A battalion task force wedge, diamond, or double-column formation can be made up of company team Jets employing the movement technique that is appropriate for their position in the task force formation (Figure 4). Regardless of the echelon using the Jet, every subordinate element in it continues its own Jet formation and all around security coverage.

The distances between the three elements in the wing of the Jet formation depend on the terrain and conditions, as does the distance between the wing and the point element. There are occasions, in close terrain, where the Jet at any level may have to be compressed into a column or rocket formation.

In a mechanized company team Jet, the tank platoon normally leads in its own platoon Jet. If the ground is unsuitable for armor, this Jet moves in the wing on the most exposed flank, or right behind the team commander if a column of platoon Jets is necessary.

Regardless of who leads, during bounding overwatch the point element moves to a good overwatch position and remains there. The three wing elements move up near that position at the same time, guiding on the controlling element. The point element then moves out on order in another successive bound while the wing elements over-

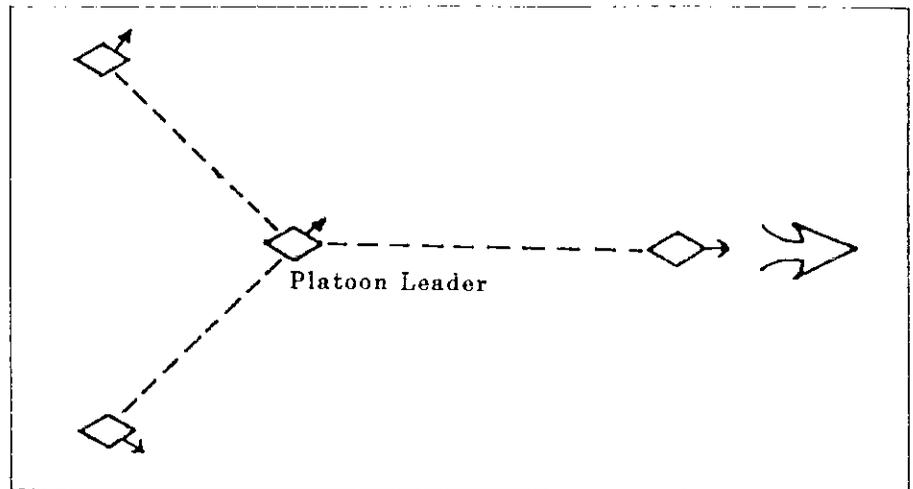


Figure 1. Mounted platoon Jet formation in traveling overwatch.

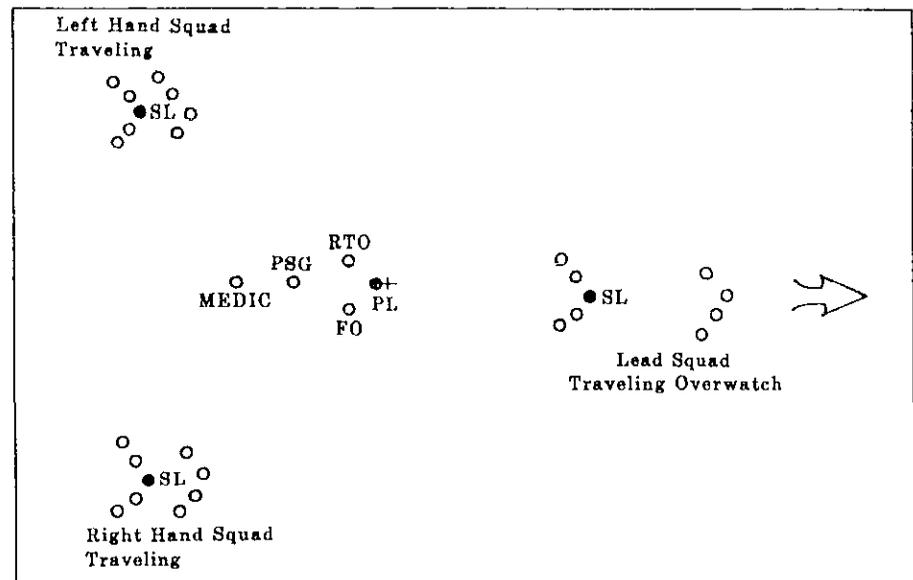


Figure 2. Dismounted platoon Jet formation in traveling overwatch.

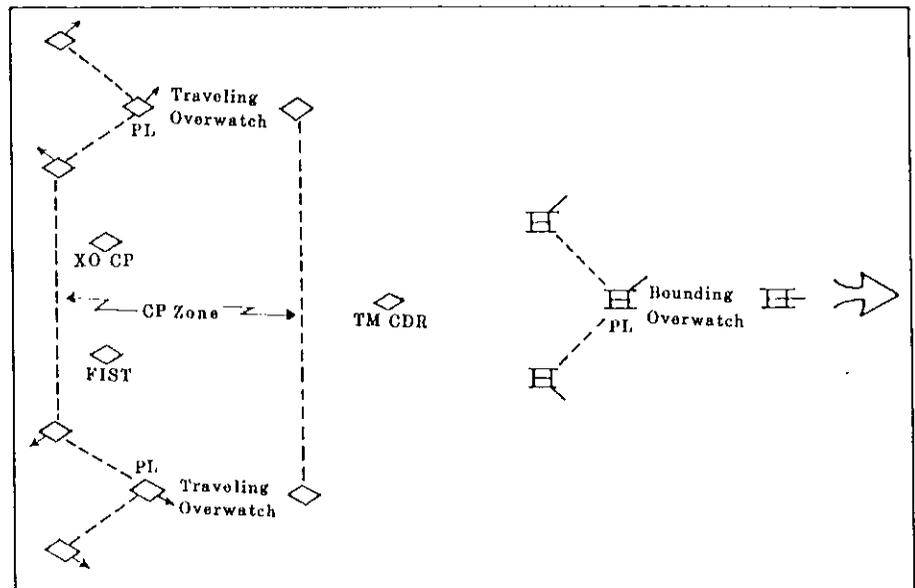


Figure 3. Mounted company team Jet formation in bounding overwatch.

watch. Depending on the terrain or the fatigue of the lead elements, the lead can be exchanged at any overwatch position by having a wing element continue on in an alternate bound.

It is important to remember that the overwatching elements must be able to engage an enemy force that might fire on the bounding point element. This means that the bounding element can bound only about one-third to one-half of the effective range of the overwatching elements' most important weapon. Direct fires must range beyond the bound position.

Open areas can be crossed quickly in traveling overwatch, or by bounds, but each vehicle should perform zigzag terrain driving while doing so. Although zigzagging will take a little longer, an enemy antitank guided missile gunner will find it harder to hold a steady sight

picture and smoothly track the vehicle. This maneuver should not be a violent post-launch anti-Sagger drill; the zigzag legs should be fairly long and the turns moderate to avoid mechanical damage and crew injury. To an ATGM gunner looking through a sight at 2,000 meters, short zigzag legs do not present much relative change. If the vehicles are fired on, they must return fire to suppress the gunner and dodge right or left to avoid the missile.

Arm and hand signals are the most effective way of controlling the Jet, so long as each vehicle or element has dedicated front and rear lookouts, both doubling as local security. When an element leader signals an action, the lookouts must alert their own leader and repeat the arm and hand signal. If an element is mounted, the track commander should also repeat the signal to

relay it from his more conspicuous position. Repeating a signal also lets the leader know that his sub-elements have received it and that they will act upon it.

The alternate signal for the wedge shown in Figure 4-9 of FM 7-7, which is both hands held together over the head so the arms form a delta wing shape, can be used for the Jet formation. The wedge formation itself can continue to be signaled by holding both hands up at a 45-degree angle, which is the other alternate wedge signal, described in the text on page 4-8 of FM 7-7, and one that most units are already accustomed to using. By using arm and hand signals, a platoon or company will find it easy to go on line or into echelon from the Jet, or into a wedge in the case of a mounted platoon.

The radio must not be used as the primary means of controlling the Jet.

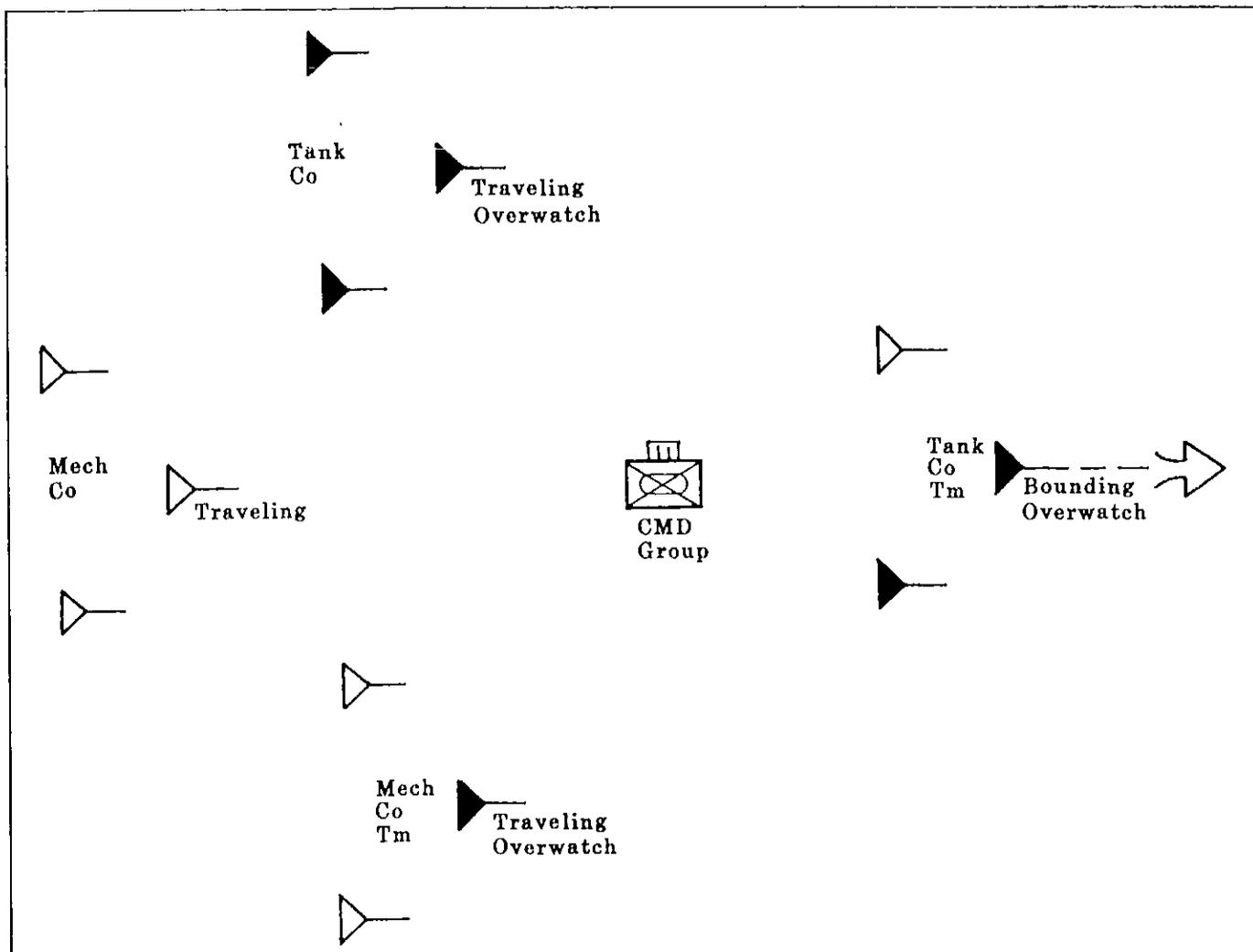


Figure 4. Balanced mechanized infantry battalion task force diamond attack formation employing company team Jet formations.

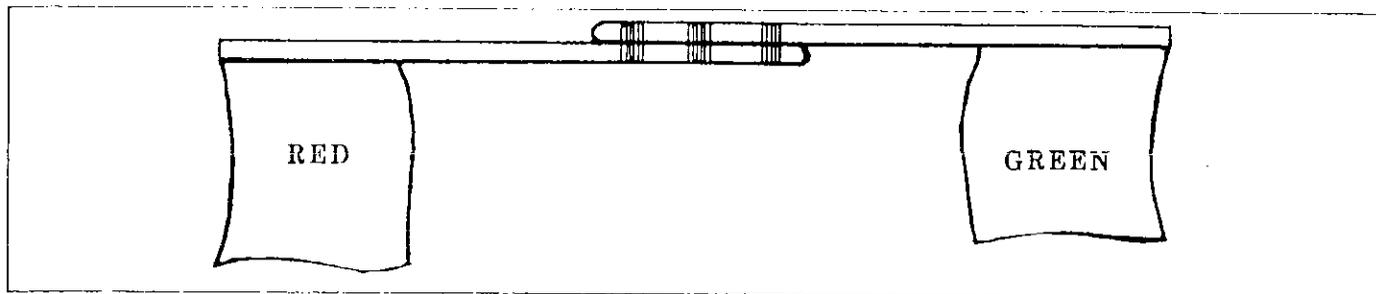


Figure 5. Signal flags taped together to make an extended length STOP/GO drill signal device.

A well trained unit should be able to move from an assembly area to contact with the enemy without making an unrequired radio transmission. If the platoon leader needs to talk to the lead element, he can walk or drive to it. It is helpful to develop an arm and hand signal that tells one vehicle to pull within talking distance of another facing in the same direction. A side-by-side chopping motion of both hands over the head can accomplish this, and can also get a mounted platoon halted in a tight line formation for a quick on-the-spot correction during training.

Element leaders and track commanders can wear white or light colored athletic sweat bands on their wrists to help make their arm and hand signals more visible during dusty road marches or tactical movement. Arm and hand signals should be dramatic and emphatic; they must be forceful enough to compel a response. Limp wrists and vague gestures don't work.

Flag signals are also helpful during mounted movement if they are kept simple. Signals that require two or three flags are difficult to perform, are subject to misunderstandings, and are unsafe in a moving vehicle. A red and green single signal flag stop-and-go drill, modified from the "move-out" and "enemy in sight" visual signals in Figure D-2 in FM 7-7, is effective in controlling Jet movement. Because it is awkward handling two separate flags, the staffs of the red and green flags can be taped together as shown in Figure 5, so that only one signal flag device has to be kept track of and held onto. If red, or stop, is the signal the green flag is gripped and the flag staff is almost twice as long this way.

If the lead vehicle in a platoon overwatch Jet waves a red flag it means that

it is set, but the platoon leader and wing vehicles should not move until the position is secure and a green flag is displayed. On arriving at the overwatch position, the platoon leader can use an arm and hand signal or a red flag to hold up the movement of the lead vehicle if he needs to talk to its crew. If not, the platoon leader points with his arm or the green flag in the direction of movement, and the lead vehicle displaces automatically to the next good overwatch position along that axis. Because bounding overwatch is controlled by the terrain and by a unit's standing operating procedures, not much needs to be said in each position if a unit is well trained and the Jet formation has become a skilled routine to its soldiers.

### PROBLEM

Prescribed formations have their problems, too, because leaders are often tempted to take the lead. Figure 4-17 in FM 7-7 shows a platoon commander leading in mounted traveling overwatch, but this is a poor practice even if enemy contact is not likely. First, the platoon is not practicing the skills it will soon need in traveling overwatch or bounding overwatch. Second, when he leads, the platoon leader tends to move too fast, focuses his attention to the front, loses sight of what his platoon is doing, and leads the platoon into trouble. In the first vehicle the platoon leader is more easily pinned down and usually ends up fighting for his life with few weapons when he should be reporting, calling in indirect fire, and leading the rest of his platoon to defeat the enemy. In short, the platoon leader

should always be in the second vehicle back.

Equally important, the habits learned in peacetime will be practiced in combat. For every platoon leader who leads his mounted platoon, there is a squad leader and a squad of soldiers who are not learning their jobs. If a platoon leader has difficulty controlling a platoon from one vehicle to the rear, he will later be overwhelmed trying to command a company team with arm and hand signals from *five* vehicles back when he becomes a company commander.

The Jet formation is not an inflexible formation designed to replace the established movement techniques of traveling, traveling overwatch, or bounding overwatch. It is an all-purpose movement formation that allows the moving element to adapt smoothly and quickly to the terrain and the situation.

The Jet is a logical adaptation of a doctrinal traveling overwatch technique that is applicable to all mounted and dismounted tactical movement at patrol, platoon, company, and battalion levels. This formation minimizes the need to change into other formations and allows the specialization of sub-element functions while promoting fluid, secure movement. Like its supersonic high performance namesake, the Jet formation is streamlined but functional.

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