



Commandant's NOTE

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RECONNAISSANCE AND SECURITY

Effective reconnaissance and security are prerequisites to success in battle. Meeting the challenge of training infantrymen to the standards necessary to accomplish these critical tasks is a continuing priority at the Infantry School. My intent here is not to present final solutions but to discuss our current efforts to overcome these deficiencies at organizational levels from squad to battalion.

First, some definitions are in order. The following are the definitions of terms found in our present doctrinal literature:

Reconnaissance. Missions undertaken to obtain information by visual observation or other detection methods about the activities and resources of an enemy, or potential enemy, or the geographical characteristics of a particular area.

Security Operations. Operations designed to obtain information about the enemy and to provide reaction time, maneuver space, and protection to the main body.

Guard Force. The force that prevents enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body. It reconnoiters, attacks, defends, and delays as necessary to accomplish its mission.

Screening Force. The force that maintains surveillance, provides early warning to the main body, impedes and harasses the enemy with supporting indirect fires, and destroys enemy reconnaissance elements within its capability.

Lessons from our combat training centers have shown the strong correlation between successful reconnaissance and security and overall tactical success. This correlation is hardly surprising, for surprise and security have been proven historically and are included as principles of war by all armies.

Because of the importance of reconnaissance and security operations, commanders must avoid assigning more missions and tasks to their scout elements than the scouts have the resources to accomplish; these include such tasks as marking routes, screening, continuous observation of objectives, and the like. Commanders must either augment their scout elements or assign some reconnaissance and security operations to their maneuver or line elements. Many units at the combat training centers tend to try to handle reconnaissance tasks with their scout platoons and security tasks with platoon-sized units. The leaders of those units have learned that this is not sufficient, because the requirements are simply too large and too important. In actuality, analyses of units that provided adequate security and responsive intelligence show that at a given time during a battle one-third or more of the maneuver elements in a battalion were involved in some form of reconnaissance and security tasks either for themselves or for other units in the battalion.

What then are the capabilities and the limitations of TOI reconnaissance units that routinely require us to provide additional resources to them?

In a heavy battalion, the scout platoon consists of six M3 Bradleys (or three M113s and three improved TOW vehicles) and 30 soldiers. This scout platoon is capable of performing reconnaissance and limited security (screen) missions mounted or dismounted in various terrain conditions and under all weather and visibility conditions, day and night. As "the eyes and ears" of the unit commander, the platoon has the function of providing intelligence, not of initiating direct fire engagements with the enemy.

In addition to its primary missions, the scout platoon can conduct liaison; perform quartering party duties; provide traffic control; conduct chemical detection and radiological survey and monitoring operations as part of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) defense; conduct limited pioneer and demolition work; and participate in area security. Once again, however, the challenge is to avoid overtaxing the platoon to the point where its primary mission is jeopardized while it performs these other, secondary functions.

The heavy scout platoon also has some limitations. First, it depends upon its parent unit for combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) to augment and sustain its combat operations. In addition, the platoon can normally reconnoiter only one route during a route reconnaissance and cover a zone no more than three to five kilometers wide during most missions. (Terrain conditions may increase or decrease the zone.)

During screening operations, the platoon is limited in its ability to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance units. During counterreconnaissance operations, the platoon can certainly acquire and maintain contact with the enemy, but it must be augmented with infantry or armor or both to have enough combat power to kill the enemy's reconnaissance elements.

Another limitation is that the platoon can provide only six observation posts (OPs) for limited periods of time (under 12 hours) or three OPs for extended periods (over 12 hours).

The distance the scouts can operate from the main body is restricted to the range of communications and the elements needed to support their mission. Heavy battalion scout platoons cannot operate continuously on all necessary battalion nets (command, intelligence, logistics, mortar) while operating on the platoon net. And the platoon leader can monitor only two nets at one time.

In a light battalion, the scout platoon consists of 19 soldiers. Because it has no organic transportation, it is either footmobile or dependent on transportation provided by its parent battalion. It normally operates two to eight kilometers from the battalion, and its primary mission is to gather intelligence and perform only limited security. The scouts emphasize stealth, avoid enemy contact, and engage enemy forces only in self-defense.

A light, dismounted scout platoon can perform the same second-

dary missions as the heavy scouts, although its small size and foot-mobility dictate that it concentrate on the most likely enemy avenues of approach in the defense.

It also has certain limitations—a lack of mobility to conduct all reconnaissance missions and its sparse communication assets.

Although information requirements will differ, a thorough intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) and a responsive reconnaissance and surveillance plan are essential for the success of all task force missions.

In the offense, an IPB coupled with aggressive reconnaissance provides the commander with the following:

- The location of existing and reinforcing obstacles.
- The enemy's strength, composition, disposition, and orientation.
- The enemy's intent.
- Friendly and enemy avenues of approach.
- Enemy courses of action for employing his reserves and combat support elements.

At the same time, a task force must maintain *continuous* surveillance of the enemy's defensive positions and the terrain critical to the friendly scheme of maneuver while its plan is being developed, coordinated, and executed.

In the defense, the IPB orients on the enemy's need to conduct a successful attack and on the way the friendly force may use the terrain to gain an advantage. Defensive IPB and reconnaissance and surveillance planning emphasizes terrain analysis using the five OCOKA factors from both the friendly and enemy standpoints. From the friendly standpoint, it addresses key and decisive terrain needed to defeat enemy attacks, and for use as friendly counterattack routes. It also covers named areas of interest (NAIs) to determine the attacker's intent and to shorten friendly reaction time. Counterreconnaissance efforts are critical as friendly elements fight to deny the enemy scouts access and information.

In retrograde operations, effective reconnaissance and surveillance is especially vital to reduce the inherent risks in such operations. Because time is usually critical, reconnaissance elements must accurately identify routes, possible future battle positions, key terrain, and any restrictive terrain that might impede movement. Reconnaissance and surveillance must also locate the enemy so that security elements can deny him information and counter his efforts.

In the conduct of security operations, several aspects deserve to be emphasized. First, every unit routinely practices operations security (OPSEC). In addition, it always maintains security to protect itself. Finally, it performs security missions to support its parent unit.

As in reconnaissance and surveillance planning, units planning security missions use the IPB process to focus their security effort. The commander and S-3 analyze enemy force compositions, intent, and probable courses of actions in conjunction with the friendly force's course of action to develop the security plan and an organization for their own security forces. In a battalion, for example, the scouts may perform screening missions while the maneuver companies or teams perform guard missions.

In the offense, the scout platoon may screen if it is not conducting reconnaissance missions. Engineers and forward observers are attached as necessary, and the scout platoon normally has the initial priority of indirect fires. The platoon maintains contact with the enemy and reports on his activities but must avoid decisive engagement. If the screen requires a larger force, a maneuver company should perform the missions, with the scouts possibly augmenting it.

Companies with guard missions are task-organized on the basis of METT-T considerations. The key point is that a guard force must not allow the enemy to bring direct fire against the main body. In mechanized units, this means that company teams usually conduct guard missions. In lightly equipped battalions, companies with guard missions may have indirect fire priority

and TOWs.

As in offensive actions, scouts may screen when a task force adopts a defensive posture, but stronger forces are needed for more constraining security missions. Thus, all units in the force must plan to counter enemy reconnaissance elements and patrols that may attempt to slip past the forward security forces. Maneuver elements, CPs, CS, and CSS elements must establish their own local security and make maximum use of hide positions. OPs with an ambush capability should cover obstacles, gaps between units, and avenues of approach. Supporting fires should be planned around and between units and on obstacles. Available night vision devices should be positioned to ensure all-around visibility. (The S-3 coordinates these efforts with the S-2 to insure full coverage and avoid fratricide.) Subordinate maneuver elements should be specifically tasked to cover the areas between battle positions and to provide quick-reaction forces that have a tank-killing capability, as required.

It is essential that the enemy be located, that his reconnaissance elements be destroyed, and that he be kept blind. The enemy cannot bring overwhelming force against a friendly force in the defense if his reconnaissance efforts are nullified.

Security planning during retrograde operations is directed toward reducing risk. A task force commander must constitute a security force that is strong enough to secure enemy avenues of approach, deceive the enemy, defeat his intelligence, and overwatch the withdrawing units. The force must also be prepared to provide rear guard, flank security, and chokepoint security.

Because of the importance of effective reconnaissance and security operations to success on the battlefield, key reconnaissance and security tasks should be emphasized on Mission Essential Task Lists (METLs). Units can perform these critical wartime operations only if they master the collective tasks that increase the effectiveness of their own reconnaissance and security efforts, thereby keeping the commander from being surprised while giving him the flexibility to mass his combat power where it can be most effective.

For squads, platoons, and companies, reconnaissance and security collective tasks that must be trained to Mission Training Plan (MTP) standards include: Prepare for combat, maintain operations security, move tactically, employ fire support, reconnoiter zone, reconnoiter area, reconnoiter route, perform linkup, occupy OP/performance surveillance, screen, conduct point ambush, and disengage.

Battalion level collective tasks include: Move tactically, infiltrate, guard, screen, perform operations security, conduct stay-behind operations, conduct intelligence operations, and operate fire support. Most other MTP collective tasks such as assault, overwatch/support by fire, defend, or perform antiarmor ambush have inherent reconnaissance and security subtasks that are key to task completion.

The best way to insure that a unit trains to MTP standards is to establish a training environment in which effective reconnaissance and security is rewarded by mission accomplishment and inadequate reconnaissance and security is penalized by mission failure.

Units can do this best by providing an uncompromising, aggressive, and uncooperative opposing force that executes its counterattacks to standard and thereby forces the friendly unit either to use effective reconnaissance and security or to fail. Such a stubborn opposing force will demonstrate to our infantry units the value of early and continuous reconnaissance and security at all levels for all tasks.

On a nonlinear, dynamic battlefield, effective reconnaissance and security are essential to success, and the IPB process is critical to the planning of effective reconnaissance and security. To prepare for that success, a battalion must clearly define its reconnaissance and security missions and tasks, task organize its units to perform them effectively, and aggressively execute them.