

ness. There is simply no question that we are better able to task organize than our colleagues in pure battalions. Of the four ways that a heavy battalion can organize—pure, balanced, tank-heavy or mechanized infantry-heavy (depending on the battalion base), and reinforced—CAMB gives us a leg up on all of those except for “pure,” which is the least likely in any situation.

We must train and sustain as we intend to fight. CAMB is intended to organize our maneuver elements to train at the task force level in order to fight the AirLand Battle. It facilitates task organization changes on the basis of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process and METT-T. It is a partial step toward a favorable wartime maneuver configuration, which is a far cry from no solution at

all. CAMB embraces the combined arms concept to a degree rarely seen before in the history of our Army.

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# Scout Platoon Offensive Reconnaissance

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*The scout platoon will cross the line of departure 30 minutes before the heavy task force's lead element. The S-2 has only vague knowledge from brigade where the enemy forces are, and the task force commander must rely on his "eyes," his scouts, to find them. He tells the scout platoon leader to mark the limits of the enemy's fire sack. The scout leader replies that he has only 30 minutes in which to execute his reconnaissance before the task force moves out. The commander says that is plenty of time, the staff needed eight hours to complete the order and brief.*

*It is 1000 hours as the scout platoon crosses the LD, and suddenly the platoon leader's track becomes a blazing wreck; he has found an enemy kill zone. The remaining scout tracks move toward the flanks of the flaming marker and discover the left and right limits of enemy fire. Burning brightly, the scout tracks now mark the way into the enemy's engagement area.*

If we continue to conduct reconnaissance this way, such failures will become commonplace before offensive

operations. Too often, we pretend that the heavy task force scout platoon is an elite advance guard that can hold the first enemy it encounters until the entire task force can arrive. Then we assume the task force can overwhelm the enemy force without any knowledge of what exists beyond that point.

## OUTRIDERS

Scouts should be used instead like the outriders of the past, ranging far and wide to seek the enemy. Their best chance for success is to operate in a six-vehicle configuration. The six teams, properly trained, can raise the task force's stakes while decreasing the enemy's knowledge of the gathering storm that follows the separate teams.

In approaching a movement to contact or a hasty attack, it must be remembered that a heavy task force scout platoon is not a cavalry unit; it is the eyes and ears of the task force. Regimental cavalry units can fight for information because they have a highly trained scout-and-tank

working relationship. Thus, they can fill the role of advance guard. But if these forces are stripped away by enemy action or other missions, the task force can still create an advance guard that can defeat the enemy security elements found by the scout teams. The role of the scout platoon, therefore, is to approach reconnaissance with complete stealth and accept the fact that it may not see all of its elements again until the mission is complete.

To succeed, a task force must treat the reconnaissance phase of its deliberate attack as the blueprint to winning the offensive battle. The commander and the staff must realize that time is critical to the scouts and must give them enough time to locate and confirm the S-2's offensive intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). Given that time, the scouts can find more than the regimental outpost—they can also see what is behind the security belt. The combination of flexible reconnaissance planning by the battalion staff and the scouts' execution once they cross the

line of departure enables the task force leadership to find and fight the enemy. The task force will be handing out the surprises instead of running into them.

Planning is the first step toward winning the reconnaissance phase of an offensive battle. The task force commander and his staff must develop simple, highly flexible plans and be ready to respond to the results of the reconnaissance. The reconnaissance phase itself takes place while the rest of the task force prepares for the battle. A task force commander who sends out reconnaissance after his operational plans have been developed creates two problems: There is not enough time for the reconnaissance to be executed properly or to obtain enough information, and the route and area to be reconnoitered usually constricts the scouts' freedom of action. When the scouts are packed together, the enemy's ability to confirm and kill these elements increases.

A successful task force planning process involves three parts working together to get the scouts out as early as possible with the proper support. The scouts work for the commander. The S-3 allots the assets and conducts the coordination with artillery, air assets, and adjacent units that enables the scouts to go forward. And the S-2, as the intelligence interpreter, clarifies the enemy picture and helps the commander decide on the correct course of action.

First, the commander gives the scout platoon leader as much time as possible to conduct his mission, which is carried out preferably during periods of limited visibility. Upon receiving word of upcoming operations from higher headquarters, the commander briefs the scout leader on exactly what needs to be seen in the entire sector. The commander must be specific in his intent to the scout leader but allows him as much flexibility as possible in deciding how he is going to reconnoiter the area.

Second, the S-2, who should be able to think like his commander, provides the scout leader with an effective offensive IPB. Just as important,



and despite (probably) having only limited information from higher headquarters, the S-2 wargames the way the enemy fights his defensive battle on the terrain where the battle will take place. The offensive IPB is the scout's road map to detecting the enemy's strengths and weaknesses.

Third, the task force closely analyzes its additional assets to help the scout leader in his mission. The task force S-3, though, is careful to avoid overloading the scout teams with support elements, because if those elements have never been trained to do independent stealth reconnaissance, they can be a hindrance.

The scouts themselves have been trained, for example, in engineering tasks and missions such as demolitions, breaching, route and bridge classification, and lane marking. This means that any attached engineers need only to be dropped at certain points to widen lanes or clear bypasses the scouts have found.

A scout also acts as his own forward observer, and he works with a fire support team (FIST) located at the LD to

call fire missions. Sending a FIST or a COLT (combined operations lasing team) beyond the LD with the scouts is not logical, because the slow vehicles in which these teams travel cannot keep up with the scouts.

Ground surveillance radar aids a scout who is on a screening mission, but is seldom used by a continually moving scout in the offensive. Too, Stinger teams may accompany a scout to be dropped within the defensive main belt to shoot down enemy aircraft before they ever see the task force. Other elements can aid the scout, but only if they are small and have been trained in conducting the deep scout mission.

Before the scout platoon leader executes the reconnaissance plan, he conducts his troop leading procedures. Like the task force commander, the scout leader wargames and conducts backbriefs with his entire platoon before crossing the line of departure. Ideally, the scout leader also give operation order briefs on a sandtable followed by a rehearsal, after which precombat inspections are conducted

by the team and track leaders. While checks are being made, the scout leaders continually ask for backbriefs. These checks concentrate on what is needed for continual operation of equipment throughout the mission. Since the platoon's squads operate as separate entities, all of the scouts must know the mission and the status of the equipment.

Once they are satisfied with their plan, the scouts execute it with independence and stealth. Each of the six teams is either assigned a separate zone within the battalion sector, or the teams are assigned zones that check the same important point from different directions. Also, scout vehicles can be assigned the same zone with different departure times. All of them keep in mind the need for maximum reconnaissance forward with minimum concentration.

Reconnaissance zones allow the individual teams the freedom of action they need to accomplish their reconnaissance mission. Each zone generally follows the intended routes or axes of advance for the task force or brigade but avoid the obvious.

When preparing to move along their zones, the scouts keep in mind the following:

- The commander's intent and what he wants to know about that zone.
- The best locations from which to observe enemy activities and positions.
- The centers of valleys, open areas, traveled roads, and known or suspected enemy concentrations that must be avoided.
- Actions at restrictive terrain, obstacles, urban areas, and rivers.
- The planned dismount points.
- Actions upon reaching final observation and listening posts.

The scouts report to the S-2 each time they locate an enemy element or an obstacle. An experienced scout knows that each bit of such information goes hand in hand with others to

assist the S-2 during the execution of a mission.

Scout teams are nighttime infiltration experts, proficient in the use of all night sights, weather effects on sound, use of illumination, night land navigation, and enemy obstacles. At night, along the length of travel within each zone, a scout makes listening halts and dismount checks. A scout team leaves its vehicle in a hide position and moves far enough from it, achieving complete silence. (In addition to the dismounted scout team, the track commander is also dismounted as often as he is mounted.)

The team avoids combat unless it is surprised and has to fight its way out of an ambush. The scouts remember that their vehicle is a vulnerable carrier and not a rolling fortified observation post. Scouts that reconnoiter by fire are like a lone policeman seeking an armed gang, shooting at every suspected hideout; they only give themselves away to an already secure enemy. The task force can reconnoiter by fire those enemy locations that the scouts have detected earlier.

The only types of combat for scouts that can be considered beneficial to the mission of the task force are raids upon lucrative targets such as command and control facilities. (Scouts do not hit these facilities, however, until after they have completed their assigned reconnaissance mission.) The radio and indirect fire remain the best weapons in the scout inventory.

At the end of each zone is a point for an observation and listening post (OP/LP). There, a scout vehicle goes into a hide position upon completion of its mission and reports its final destination to the S-2 and the scout leader. The OP/LP is placed so that the scouts can observe enemy movements, especially when the task force attack begins, and assist in adjusting artillery fire on enemy positions. As the task force closes upon the scout

hiding place, the scout requests permission from the task force commander to assume its place forward as an outrider if it does not need to be resupplied.

Any heavy task force scout platoon can accomplish this procedure if it has been properly trained and has not been treated as a general purpose detail platoon. Scout leaders must continually stress their independence and must not be afraid to allow their subordinates to act independently during field operations. Reconnaissance training should not be limited to the platoon but should include the task force staff as well.

Leaders should include scouts in their training exercises whenever possible, giving them lanes and letting them accomplish infiltrations to an objective against a free play opposing force. When training areas are not available, small team patrols led by enlisted personnel can be sent to reconnoiter crossroads or other units in training. Reverse cycle training should not be just talked about—it should be practiced.

During task force defensive exercises, scouts should be allowed to attempt an infiltration of the battle position. This type of training builds the platoon's ability to operate as separate elements. Leaders should be willing to accept having the platoon together only during administration and reconstitution periods. Leaders at all levels who understand the importance of the reconnaissance phase preceding the battle will allow the scout platoon to do its job as it should.

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