IOBC Tactical Problems

CAPTAIN STEPHEN A. JOHNSON

During the past two years the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC) has implemented many training incentives, ranging from live fire exercises to an increase in performance oriented training. One of these incentives, in particular, can easily be adapted for use in almost any infantry unit to supplement Military Qualification Standards II (MQS II) for lieutenants.

This particular incentive involves a series of 16 tactical problems that have been developed to give the young lieutenants a greater breadth and depth of tactical knowledge and experience. These problems are much like the "What Now, Lieutenant?" series, which was conceived by Major General Harold F. Stone a few years ago at Fort Lewis, in that they cover actual combat actions. (See INFANTRY, May-June 1981, pages 24-26.)

The objectives of the program are to reinforce the students' knowledge of how to think, give them more experience in writing fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) and operations orders (OPORDs), and help prepare them mentally for the possibility of becoming company commanders within days or weeks of entering combat.

The stated purpose of IOBC is "to develop an infantry lieutenant skilled in weapon systems, equipment, leadership, and tactics, and in training subordinates to maintain, operate, and employ weapons and equipment in combat." The tactical problems that are used contribute to this development and also meet several of the IOBC's mission essential tasks—to produce infantry lieutenants who are sound in infantry tactics, from individual to platoon level; who are conversant with rifle company operations; and who are clear and articulate in writing and speaking, especially in preparing and issuing combat orders. The degree to which the problems help, of course, is largely dependent upon the time and effort the platoon cadre puts into them.

CADRE

An IOBC platoon cadre normally consists of one captain, one sergeant first class, and one staff sergeant, and they usually supervise 35 to 40 students. In this particular program, the captain grades the work and leads the discussions, and the noncommissioned officers, with assistance from the cadre manual, highlight principles from their own years of experience.

STANDARD DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Mission/Intent Two Levels Up.
2. Main Effort.
3. Rehearsals/Battle Drills.
4. Reconnaissance (Physical, Map).
5. Know Your Enemy.
6. Know Yourself.
7. Be Creative, Unpredictable.
8. Reserves.
9. Courses of Action (Wargaming).
10. Risk.
11. Depth.
12. Initiative.

Example 1

The cadre manual contains all of the problems that should be presented to the students as well as specific aids to the cadre. One such aid, for example, is the recommended sequence of the tactical problems. Thus, in the 16-week IOBC program, only FRAGO problems, two per week, are used until the formal OPORD instruction is given in Week 4. Afterwards, one a week may be used, except for the weeks the students spend entirely in the field. Another aid is a list of 12 standard discussion points (see Example 1) to supplement the specific discussion-point sheets.

A typical tactical problem normally has a requirement/sketch map sheet, a historical result sheet, and a specific discussion-point sheet. The combat actions used for the problems are drawn from World War I, World War II, the war in Korea, and the Arab-Israeli Wars. In some cases, division examples have been converted into battalion or task force problems, but they retain their application to AirLand Battle principles.

For each problem, the lieutenants are given a handout that includes a sketch map, the particular situation, and the requirements (Example 2). The situation consists of forces available, information on the enemy, and a mission. The requirements include showing the locations of the main attack, the supporting attack, support by fire positions, objectives, defensive positions, and the like. Enough information is provided to enable the officers to display the plan on the map. Finally, each lieutenant must

write a FRAGO or some portion of an OPORD. He may have as little as 30 minutes to complete a problem with a FRAGO or as much as several days for a more complete order.

These tactical problems put each lieutenant into the role of platoon leader (two times), company commander (five times), and battalion commander (nine times). Each commands both light forces (seven times) and mechanized forces (nine times). He gains knowledge about integrating A-10 aircraft, attack helicopters, artillery, mortars, M113 APCs or Bradley fighting vehicles, and M60 or M1 tanks on the combined arms battlefield. He is also exposed to the operation of specialized units—Rangers on a raid, for example.

SOLUTIONS

The solutions are graded on the feasibility of the plans and the clarity and conciseness of the FRAGOs or OPORDs. The tactical problems are then returned to the lieutenants along with copies of the historical result (Example 3), which normally includes a sketch or a map with the narrative of what actually happened. Each tactical problem is then discussed during time allocated to the cadre, or it is used as hip-pocket training.

To guide the discussion, the cadre members use a specific discussion-point sheet (Example 4), the standard discussion points, and notes on the mistakes most commonly made by their students. The standard points stress the tenets of the AirLand Battle and other areas that are important in the development of tactical proficiency. The best results come when selected students are asked to read their plans and orders and carry the discussion or critique while the cadre uses the discussion points (specific and general) as prompts.

The benefits of this program, as identified by the lieutenants themselves, cover a wide spectrum. It gives each lieutenant 16 more opportunities to prepare a FRAGO or OPORD beyond the three or four he

TACTICAL PROBLEM #4

DUE _____ NAME _____

SITUATION: A reinforced OPFOR battalion is dug in and in control of villages L, P, V, C, and K (see map). You are a battalion (task force) commander with three light infantry companies reinforced with four tank platoons and a company of TOWs. You have local air superiority and have A-10 ground attack airplanes and Apache attack helicopters on call. Your mission is to destroy enemy forces vicinity village V in order to open up the road network around village V. At 0640 today you attacked with two groups (North: 1 infantry company, 1 tank platoon, and 1 TOW platoon; and East: 2 infantry companies, 1 tank company, and 2 TOW platoons) and seized every village except village V. You have just reorganized and are preparing to execute the final attack at 1200 hours. At 1145 hours you receive a report from air reconnaissance that an OPFOR battalion is moving toward village V and will arrive in two hours. How will you deal with this new threat and still accomplish your mission?

REQUIREMENT:

a. List four possible solutions to the problem (courses of action). State each one in as few words as possible.
b. Choose one of your four options and explain in one-half page or less why you think it is the best one.
c. Write the oral FRAGO you would give to the commanders to execute your choice.

Example 2

HISTORICAL SOLUTION
Tactical Problem #4

COMBINED ARMS TRAINING ATTACK — 22 February 1942 — Russia

Attack by the German 6th Panzer Division on the Eastern front (taken from "Small Unit Tactics, Part IV, Unusual Situations," by Erhard Raus, Generaloberst a.D., 1954 (MS# P-060g)

Three possible courses of action were presented to General Raus:

1. To annihilate the fresh Russian forces by means of Luftwaffe and continue the attack.
2. To contain the Russians at V with some forces and then attack the new Russian force with the bulk of forces.
3. To withdraw to a line extending from the woods to the northeast through village M to village C and there assume defensive positions.

ACTUAL ORDER GIVEN BY GENERAL RAUS:

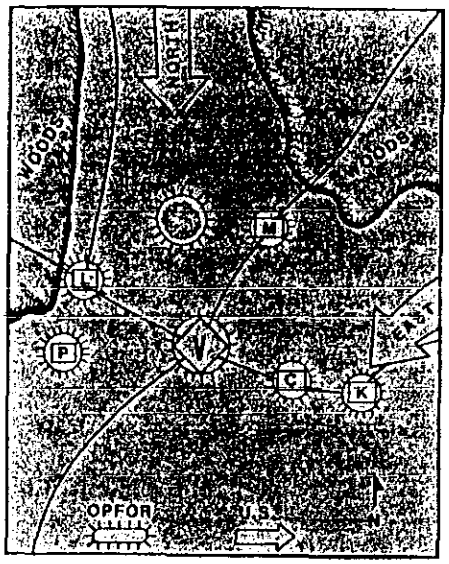
The line reached so far will be held and the enemy troops who are advancing towards V from the south will not be hindered in any way. You will strike only if they attack your positions or attempt to bypass them. If, as expected, they march into V, you will close the gap behind them at the sector boundary between the two groupments and prevent all enemy troops from breaking out of the encirclement. It is contemplated to annihilate the new Russian troops together with the Russian forces occupying V by means of the concentric attack planned originally. The attack will probably start at 1500, and you will wait for instructions to this effect.

Example 3

DISCUSSION POINTS
Tactical Problem #4

- Courses of action (wargaming).
- Know your enemy. For example, what is in a Soviet battalion? (See FM 100-2-3)
- How will your course of action be affected if the reinforcing battalion is a tank? A BTR? A BMP?
- Know yourself. Where would a light infantry battalion get TOWs and tanks?

Example 4



has during the tactical field exercises. By acting as company and battalion commanders, the lieutenants are better able to understand how they, as platoon leaders, will fit into the "bigger picture" and how they will be able to use a commander's intent to guide their own planning process. They learn the importance of knowing the enemy and anticipating events with a limited amount of intelligence information. They seek creative ways of accomplishing the mission while learning the difference between risk and gamble. But the remark heard most often is that they are learning while being challenged and having fun.

Most of the lieutenants keep their tactical problems, and take them to their units. There the problems can easily be used to reinforce and expand upon what the IOBC program covered. With a small investment in time and effort, a unit could develop many additional problems to use in its professional development classes for both officers and NCOs.

Obviously, these problems are not substitutes for leading a platoon during Reserve Component annual training, in a hot MILES battle at the National Training Center, or in actual combat. But along with a good study program in military history (plus MQS II), this program will give lieutenants added experience in judgment and planning, along with confidence in their own ability to make decisions and write orders.

Captain Stephen A. Johnson served as an IOBC platoon trainer for two years. He is now S-4, 3d Battalion (OCS), 11th Infantry at Fort Benning. He is a 1981 ROTC graduate of the University of Oklahoma.

TOW HMMWV Position

CAPTAIN MARTIN N. STANTON

All non-mechanized infantry units in the U.S. Army are now equipped with the HMMWV (high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) TOW carrier in their TOW platoons and companies. This vehicle is a departure from the previous equipment of the non-mechanized TOW squads in that the squad now travels in one vehicle instead of two (TOW jeep and missile carrier jeep) and the TOW HMMWV has some Kevlar protection from shrapnel. It is the latter characteristic that offers several possibilities for the employment of this vehicle that were formerly not available to non-mechanized TOW squads.

Previously, with the M151 TOW jeep the TOW squad was faced with two options--shoot and scoot (that is, fire and displace) or dismount the system from the carrier and build a fighting position that would protect the squad from indirect fire. The problem was that if the squad remained mounted it was vulnerable to all forms of direct and indirect fires. (Literally the only way to survive was not to be where the enemy was shooting.) If the squad did dismount and dig a fighting position, it usually stuck up above ground so far that it was an obvious target for direct fire, and this negated whatever protection against shrapnel it may have offered.

The TOW HMMWV, with its Kevlar top and run-flat tires, is somewhat better protected from indirect fire than the M151, but the personnel and the TOW system of the TOW HMMWV squad are still vulnerable to indirect fire. The vehicle itself still needs additional protection to improve the crew's artillery survivability, but it does give the crew members an option they did not have with the M151--they can dig the entire vehicle in so that the TOW system can engage targets without any other part of the vehicle being exposed.

Digging a TOW HMMWV fighting position requires slightly less effort than digging in an M113. That is, it is as wide (a dozer blade width) but not quite as deep. The basic position must allow for missile clearance when the TOW is launched (Figure 1). Observation of sector is conducted from the vehicle itself. (If constructed to standard, this position still