



DETERRENT PATROLLING

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The U.S. Army units that are deployed overseas serve two purposes: to discourage aggression by displaying the United States' intent to fight and, if deterrence fails, to work with host nations and allied forces to deny an enemy his objectives.

If these forward deployed units are substantially reduced during the 1990s, which seems likely, the reinforcing units based in the continental United States will have to fill the void. Since implied in their commitment to a theater is the possibility that deterrence may not succeed, these reinforcing units have traditionally focused their training on warfighting. If they are to prepare intelligently for the future, however, they must now incorporate more deterrence operations into their mission essential task lists (METLs). The recent increase in the emphasis on low intensity conflict strengthens this requirement.

Deterrent operations pose unique challenges to commanders and their units. In most combat actions, it is axiomatic that a leader should try to apply overwhelming force and firepower to defeat his opponent. During deterrent operations, however, he has to balance the military requirement to protect his unit with the political need to avoid responses that could be seen as acts of aggression or that could escalate hostilities.

Moreover, those who pose a threat, which can range from host nation demonstrators to elite special operations forces, inherently retain the initiative. Deterrent operations are usually conducted in international boundary regions, and—effective host nation police and military support notwithstanding—these areas are often volatile, are populated with disaffected minority or ethnic groups, and are easy to infiltrate.

Consequently, an enemy working in a border area will most likely be able to create incidents at times and locations of his own choosing. He can also seek to structure situations that will perplex deterrent operations forces and elicit inappropriate tactical responses from them. And in a tense political-military environment, a patrol leader who inflicts unnecessary civilian casualties in neutralizing a sniper, for example, fails to accomplish his mission as surely as one who allows his unit to be overwhelmed by an enemy ambush.

The experience of the 3d Battalion, 325th Infantry (Airborne Battalion Combat Team) serving as part of the land component of the NATO Allied Command Europe Mobile Force—AMF(L)—illustrates some of the problems non-mechanized infantry units face in conducting deterrent operations and also suggests some possible solutions to those problems.

The AMF(L) is a multinational force prepared to deploy rapidly from home bases in Europe and assemble on NATO's northern or southern flanks to demonstrate allied resolve to defend a host nation's sovereignty. The initial and primary mission of this brigade-size force is deterrence.

When they deploy to a contingency area, the 3d Battalion and its sister combat battalions in the force each establish a base camp for one company team (known as the "Key Company") near a threatened border region. Depending upon the particular contingency area and the support agreements with the host nation, the base camps can range from already existing army installations to austere remote sites that require considerable logistic support. Although host nation units furnish external security for the camps, each company is respon-

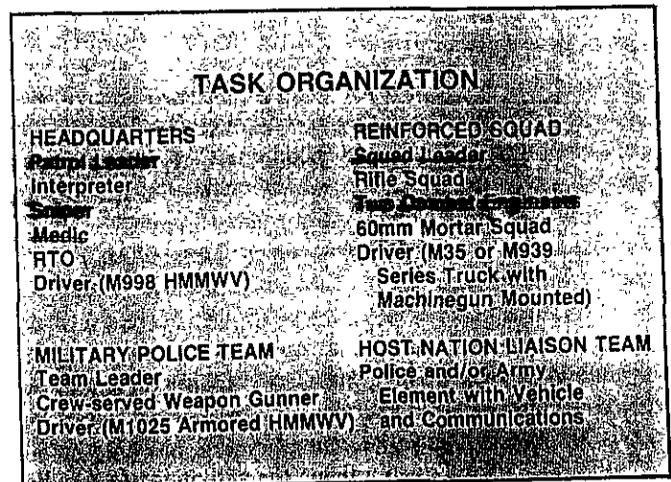
sible for providing its own internal security.

The Key Companies, which are assigned broad sectors along a border, conduct highly visible reinforced squad-size motorized patrols to make NATO's presence and determination known to a potential aggressor as well as to the local populace.

The patrol routes and schedules (generally during daylight hours) for each Key Company are directed by the AMF(L) commander. Host nations, upon request, are prepared to provide the companies with army and police liaison personnel as well as interpreters.

On the basis of the political and military situation, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe stipulates precise rules of engagement that will help AMF(L) units respond adequately to acts of aggression while still limiting the possibility that a particular incident will trigger a general war.

Given the dual requirement for a leader to protect his force and also strictly adhere to the rules of engagement, the 3d Battalion task organizes its motorized patrols to give small units the flexibility to respond appropriately. (One such task organization is shown in the accompanying box.) A deterrent operations patrol so organized can effectively react to various hostile enemy actions.



The Military Police team leads the patrols. Since its members are trained to exercise minimal force and skilled at dealing with civil disorder, they are well suited to confront host nation provocateurs. And the armored HMMWVs (high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles) with mounted machinegun are probably the best point vehicles a nonmechanized infantry patrol can have.

The headquarters section provides command and control, with a platoon leader, a platoon sergeant, or a weapon squad leader serving as patrol leader. The sniper assigned to the section is immediately available to provide counter-sniper fire or to act in sensitive situations where there is a risk of injuring noncombatants.

The reinforced squad is a rifle squad augmented with two combat engineers and a 60mm mortar squad. The engineers' mission is to counter the demolitions and booby traps that an enemy is likely to use against deterrent patrols and host nation forces. They are also invaluable in conducting route reconnaissance—an important task if a unit must prepare for a

possible rapid transition to war. The mortar squad enables a patrol to suppress the enemy immediately and to use smoke against far ambushes and long range snipers.

A host nation liaison team is assigned to each patrol whenever possible, because encounters with indigenous personnel are best handled by members of the host nation's own police or army. Its presence is also invaluable because the members of the team will know about the terrain, the population, the logistic infrastructure, and the communication resources in the area of operations.

If the patrols are to be molded into effective organizations, it is imperative that the deterrent operations force and the host nation liaison team or its headquarters establish a close working relationship at the lowest possible organizational level.

An intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) for deterrent operations is difficult for several reasons: The threat is usually complex; routine reporting channels and procedures may be absent (for example, how does a deterrent force acquire pertinent information that has been reported to a local police station inside its area of operations?); and the patrolling sector may be larger than that normally assigned to a non-mechanized infantry unit.

IDENTIFY AGENCIES

After establishing the intelligence requirements for its deterrent patrolling mission, the 3d Battalion, 325th Infantry identifies all of the agencies that might help with intelligence collection. These include U.S. armed forces assets as well as the host nation's armed forces, paramilitary units, police, customs and immigration officials, and maritime patrols for operations along coastal waterways. Because of resource constraints, these organizations may not be able to participate in the battalion's field training exercises, but they should be involved in command post exercises, if at all possible, or at the very least in contingency planning.

Obviously, efforts to coordinate the activities of such disparate sources must begin with the unified command. The objective of all commanders, however, must be to allow for the rapid transfer of intelligence information at the tactical level. They must emphasize the exchange of liaison personnel and the establishment of communications channels and forums. When operating with allied battalions on its flanks, the 3d Battalion dispatches liaison personnel and establishes routine procedures for passing information.

The demand for proficient linguists can rapidly exceed a unit's capabilities, and augmentation should be requested if it is needed. Unit language rosters should be culled to separate the soldiers who can handle only polite conversation from those whose skills include a technical military vocabulary.

During the IPB process, the commander and his staff must focus not only on targets that may have value to the enemy in the event of a general war but also on more subtle objectives that could unbalance the host nation during a time of rising tensions. These include high-value infrastructure sites, the confidence and sympathies of the populace (which could be

influenced by the enemy—staging protests and the like), and the deterrent force itself while on patrol or in its base camp.

Finally, a thorough IPB for a large area of operations requires extensive aerial and ground reconnaissance, and it must involve the small unit leaders who will actually conduct the patrols. With the limited mobility available to many non-mechanized infantry units, additional resources must be provided by higher headquarters.

It is essential for every soldier participating in deterrent operations to clearly understand the rules of engagement. The 3d Battalion posts these rules in its tactical operations center and briefs them in detail to each patrol leader.

But rules that can seem clear when stated in the comfort of a headquarters or tactical operations center may prove difficult to interpret in the midst of a confusing firefight. An effective means of clarifying the rules of engagement is to conduct sandtable exercises with the patrol and squad leaders and to wargame various situations.

Commanders must play an active role in such exercises and must be prepared to seek guidance from the controlling headquarters when their questions remain unanswered. Small unit leaders, in turn, must conduct similar exercises with their soldiers, because those soldiers must also be prepared to assume command and act independently. Additionally, to reinforce the importance of the rules of engagement as a criterion for mission accomplishment, external evaluations of the patrols preparing for deterrent operations should emphasize adherence to them.

Excellent communications are critical to the success of deterrent operations, but they are often hard to achieve. A unit must operate over considerable distances and maintain channels with various combinations of host nation, combined, joint, and U.S. Army headquarters.

AUGMENT FORCES

To accomplish its mission, the 3d Battalion, 325th Infantry augments its deterrent operation forces with most of the battalion's communications personnel and equipment. The battalion signal officer is actively involved in all operational planning and participates in area reconnaissances to determine the number of radio retransmission and relay sites needed to support the patrols and where they should be located.

Initiative and flexibility are important in building a reliable communications network with a prudent amount of redundancy. For example, during a recent NATO exercise, the 3d Battalion deterrent operations TOC (tactical operations center) was equipped with an AMF(L) tactical radio rig, host nation army and commercial telephones, a tactical satellite radio, and the battalion's own internal FM radios. Each of these means of communication proved vital at one time or another.

(In fact, patrol leaders are issued commercial telephone cards that they can use to call the TOC if their FM radios fail. Scheduled courier runs using helicopters and vehicles also help guarantee reliable communications.)

The patrol force commander must also carefully analyze his communication requirements. If possible, all of his vehicles should be equipped with radios, the patrol leader's radio telephone operator should carry an AN/PRC-77 radio, and the patrol itself should be issued several AN/PRC-126s. Again, if these requirements exceed what a non-mechanized infantry company or battalion can meet, outside support should be requested.

Since an enemy will often be able to strike first, contingency planning assumes a prominent position in conducting deterrent operations, and reaction forces must be established to respond to the threat. If an area of operations is large, helicopters should be prepositioned at the patrol base to transport the reaction force, and the reaction force leader and the aviators should attend patrol briefings and rehearsals. Even when helicopters are available, however, ground transportation must still be considered for use in moving the reaction force during inclement weather conditions.

When considering reaction forces, planners should look at the availability of allied or host nation resources. One technique the 3d Battalion has used is to establish contact points with adjacent allied patrols. The meeting of patrols does increase an awareness on both sides of the presence of friendly forces while perhaps discouraging enemy efforts to operate along unit boundaries.

A patrolling force commander must also plan for medical evacuation, maintenance contact teams, vehicle recovery, and ammunition resupply. The 3d Battalion's support platoon leader has organized a team to provide on-call logistic support. As in the case of the reaction force, logistic response team chiefs must attend the patrol briefings and rehearsals. They must be skilled in navigation and competent at talking on a radio and responding to a patrol leader's instructions.

Finally, the logistics support team must have protection so that it does not find itself the object of an ambush. Additional Military Police or components of the reaction force can be assigned to perform this mission.

During patrolling operations, thorough debriefs and periodic after action reviews can help identify deficiencies in preparatory training, tactics, and resources. The many observations the leaders of the 3d Battalion made during a review of AMF(L) exercises include the following:

- A non-mechanized infantry unit can conduct deterrent patrolling effectively only when it is properly task organized. This entails personnel and equipment augmentations. Appropriate task organizations, in turn, must be reflected in rele-

vant contingency plans and readiness standing operating procedures.

- Once deterrent patrolling begins, habitual relationships should be established at the lowest possible level. For example, the same mortar squads, medics, drivers, military police, engineers, snipers, and host nation personnel should patrol with a particular squad or platoon. The resulting improvement in operational efficiency more than compensates for the hardship suffered by the units that must provide the attachments.

- Patrols must vary their operating procedures to avoid establishing easily discernible patterns. Random dismounting, changes in vehicle march orders and intervals, and imaginative route selection are among the techniques they can use.

- All participants should attend the after action reviews—not only the key patrol leaders but also logistic team chiefs, TOC officers and NCOs, host nation liaison officers, and reaction force leaders.

- The patrol leaders need to concentrate on navigation and command and control; they should make their radio telephone operators (RTOs) responsible for receiving and transmitting routine reports during motorized operations. (Mounted navigation skills are usually weak among junior non-mechanized infantry leaders who are accustomed to moving at two or three kilometers an hour instead of 20 to 30.)

- Leaders must always think in terms of host nation (and possibly allied) resources in the particular area. As an example, an efficient staff may arrange for expeditious casualty evacuation through U.S. Army channels while overlooking the fact that the patrolling area of operations is dotted with sophisticated host nation hospitals.

The most important lesson the 3d Battalion has learned through its participation in NATO AMF(L) missions may be that deterrent patrolling is a unique military operation and deserves a separate entry on the battalion's mission essential task list. Units whose contingency plans may require them to participate in deterrent operations should carefully consider this mission and its implications when developing their own task lists.

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