

along with approximate grid coordinates to the company commander. Once the squad leader gets his vehicle under cover, he can then call a SALT (size, activity, location, type) report back to the platoon leader and turn control of the battle over to him.

The lead vehicle in a movement to con-

tact calls for a squad leader who is smart, resourceful, and daring. The decisions he makes and the information he sends could affect the entire course of the battle. Unit leaders should ensure that the best squad leaders are at the point; and those squad leaders should ensure that they know their jobs well enough to be able

to direct the lead vehicle in a movement to contact.

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# The Foot March

## A Tactical Maneuver

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROLAND J. TISO, JR.

The U.S. Army's concern for battlefield mobility, along with the formation of our light divisions, has fostered a renewed interest in foot marching. An article in the May 1989 issue of *ARMY Magazine* ("Hitchhiking into Battle: The Lost Art of Marching," by James A. Huston) discusses the importance of being able to move on foot when the situation dictates and implies that all units, both light and heavy, should train to execute foot marches. (See also "Roadmarching and Performance," by Lieutenant Colonel John S. O'Connor, Michael S. Bahrke, Captain Joseph Knapik, and James A. Vogel, *INFANTRY*, May-June 1990, pages 31-33.)

Infantry leaders must understand, however, that foot marches are not merely physical training exercises, athletic events, or qualification races for the Expert Infantryman's Badge (EIB). In fact, the speed-at-all-costs mind set has severely reduced the value of unit foot marches, because the soldiers are often too exhausted when they reach their final destination to accomplish anything else.

The essence of effective foot marching is discipline. Unlike the "every man for himself" attitude that prevails during the

individual-oriented EIB speed march (12 miles in 3 hours), leaders must establish a realistic objective that most of their soldiers can meet. They should conduct a unit march like a tactical maneuver that will allow their unit to reach an objective area in the proper physical and mental condition to fight. The concept of a tactical maneuver also tends to focus the soldiers' attention on the mission that awaits them at the end of the march rather than on the march itself.

### OPERATIONS ORDER

An effective foot march requires an operations order. It should be a simple one and should contain an overlay that addresses the march route and the control measures. The order should accomplish the following:

- **Orient the unit on a specific tactical mission.** The purpose of the march is to move the unit into a position from which it can either accomplish that mission or prepare for another one.

- **Sequence all subordinate units and establish tactical integrity.** Units should not be allowed to pass each other or com-

pete for the fastest time, but should complete the march as a cohesive, disciplined force ready to spring into action. Subordinate units should be assigned a start point and a start time. These, coupled with an order of march and the march speed, should ensure that the units will not bunch up and present a lucrative target for enemy air attacks or indirect fires.

- **Designate a march speed.** The march speed chosen should be a factor of the unit's physical conditioning as well as the time the unit expects to arrive in the objective area. Leaders must determine how fast their unit can realistically move over the distance to be covered and still be fit to fight. This decision must be reassessed throughout the march, however, and the march speed adjusted as necessary.

- **Direct a 10- or 15-minute break for every 45-50 minutes of marching.** During breaks, foot checks should be made and other medical concerns addressed. These breaks should not be opportunities for the soldiers to socialize; security must be maintained and noise and light discipline enforced.

- **Establish a combat load, the special equipment to be carried, and a uni-**



form that is common to all. Units should march with what they must have to fight and survive. Leaders should specify rations, ammunition, clothing, fire control, and NBC equipment and then check their personnel and equipment before the march. In training, weights or partially filled sand bags can be used to simulate a basic load of ammunition.

- **Provide instructions for any personnel who do not complete the march with the unit.** This includes "fallouts" and other soldiers who, for any variety of reasons, may be left behind or transported to the final destination by other means.

A foot march is best when it can be integrated into tactical training that focuses on the events following the march, al-

though it may not be possible or desirable to schedule a foot march preceding every field problem.

Units frequently conduct foot marches for physical conditioning during the physical training period of a scheduled day in garrison. To keep the soldiers interested and to build morale and march discipline, the route of march should not just take the unit in a circle back to the cantonment area. Conditioning marches of this type lack imagination and are boring. Leaders might consider coordinating a truck linkup or an airmobile extraction. The movement to the pickup zone can serve as the purpose of the march and can facilitate other training tasks for the soldiers before they return to the barracks.

There is nothing wrong with pure con-

ditioning marches that focus on individual or unit competition; these marches can build esprit de corps, and the physical conditioning itself is invaluable. But the focus of our leadership must be on our units' ability to execute tactical foot marches—foot marches that will place on the battlefield a fighting force capable of accomplishing its combat mission.

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