

INFANTRY LETTERS



FIRE SUPPORT

I am an instructor for the Fire Support Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course at Fort Sill. After reading "Understanding Fire Support," by Captain Jonathan D. Thompson (INFANTRY, May-June 1991, pages 38-41), I have some comments.

On page 39 the article mentions a maneuver company commander *writing* an operations order (OPORD). Since when does a company commander *write* an OPORD? The armor company and the two infantry companies I have supported did not have their company commanders write OPORDs.

On page 40 the article mentions company commanders approving the establishment of coordinated fire lines (CFLs), restrictive fire lines (RFLs), and airspace coordination areas (ACAs). Field Manual 6-20-30, page F-2, clearly states that CFLs are normally established by a brigade or a division but, under certain circumstances, can be established by a battalion. The same manual, page F-5, states that an informal ACA is normally established by a task force or higher and a formal ACA is normally established by a separate brigade or higher.

A restrictive fire line is established by the commander common to both forces. Normally this will be battalion or higher. Under certain circumstances, a company commander may find himself the common commander.

This whole article leads one to believe a maneuver company has a field artillery battery supporting it. By field artillery doctrine, minimum adequate support is one field artillery battalion for one maneuver brigade. This allows the brigade commander to have one battery of artillery support one of his battalions, if he so chooses. Normally, a maneuver company will not have an

artillery battery supporting just it. The battery will actually be supporting the battalion as a whole.

The Field Artillery Officers Advanced Course teaches captains to function as battalion and brigade fire support officers. The Fire Support Advanced NCO Course teaches NCOs to work at battalion, brigade, division, and corps levels. The Fire Support Basic NCO Course teaches sergeants and staff sergeants to be company fire support NCOs. Since the company fire support officer is normally a second lieutenant with very little experience, it might be better for a company commander to have the fire support sergeant come along with the fire support officer whenever fire planning is being done. After all, this NCO has been doing the job longer than the new lieutenant.

Overall, this article may lead some maneuver company commanders to expect more than they will actually get, especially in the area of establishing fire support coordination measures.

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AUTHOR'S REBUTTAL

Reference the letter from SFC Stevan Connors in response to my article, first of all, Sergeant Connors questions whether company commanders write operations orders. He states that in the three maneuver companies he has worked with, the commanders never wrote OPORDs. Granted, they do not issue written OPORDs, but they do take the battalion or task force order, do their own estimates, then issue oral orders. I know of few commanders who can issue oral orders without writing them down first. I would bet that the

commanders he worked with not only wrote orders but wrote them in the familiar five-paragraph format. This format includes a Fires paragraph, whether the order is from the battalion or the company.

In regard to his comment about fire support coordination measures (FSCMs), perhaps I was unclear. He is correct in saying that company commanders rarely, if ever, establish CFLs or ACAs. But my intent was to explain what these are, because a company commander may find them on his graphics and must know their purpose. Furthermore, regardless of the level at which any FSCM is approved, it is the maneuver commander, not the FSO, who must approve it.

While a company commander may not approve CFLs or ACAs, he *can* establish an RFL if he requires it. One example could be a clearing operation in which two platoons are moving toward each other. The RFL is necessary in that situation to prevent fratricide. As a light infantry platoon leader, I did several similar missions.

Finally, nowhere in my article do I allude to a company having a firing battery in direct support. Every student in the Infantry Officer Advanced Course learns that one maneuver brigade has one artillery battalion in direct support. In that brigade, however, one maneuver battalion will have priority of fires and, more than likely, one company or team in that battalion will receive the same. Thus, a company commander could have an artillery battalion firing on one of his targets.

Sergeant Connors says, "Normally a maneuver company will not have a battery supporting just it. The battery will actually be supporting the battalion as a whole." Artillery fires are most effective when massed. Thus, an artillery battalion's three batteries firing one

round simultaneously at one target are more effective than one battery firing three rounds in a row, even though the overall number of rounds is the same. That is why a brigade receives an artillery battalion in direct support.

I do agree with Sergeant Connors that the company commander should include his fire support NCO in fire planning. His experience is invaluable. Still, the commander needs to hold the fire support officer responsible.

This type of dialogue between the two branches is exactly what the cross-over program between the Infantry School and the Field Artillery School is intended to do.

Furthermore, because my article is based on lessons I learned from the two schools, I am interested in hearing from veterans of the Persian Gulf War to find out how combined arms worked in that conflict. We can all learn much from each other.

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NIGHT SIGHT BRACKET SOUNDED FAMILIAR

According to an item in the News section of *INFANTRY's* May-June 1991 issue (pages 6-7), the Armament Research, Development, and Engineering Center at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, had developed a night sight bracket that clamps onto the tube of the AT4 antiarmor rocket.

This design sounded all too familiar to me, because several years ago one of my former soldiers, Specialist Michael Samuelson, designed a night sight bracket that clamped around the AT4 tube, had it manufactured, and tested it (using the AT4 subcaliber device). This was done in 1989-90 under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Larry White, commander of the 4th Battalion, 502d Infantry, Berlin Brigade at the time (now Colonel White, commander of the 11th Infantry at Fort Benning), who saw

the need for a night firing capability for the AT4.

Specialist Samuelson's design was a hinged bracket that clamped around the AT4 tube between the two front sight post housings. It had a hinged thumb screw for quick mounting and removing and had a mount that accepted the AN/PVS-4 night sight.

Specialist Samuelson was also responsible for modifying the weapons rack used in most arms rooms to store the M249 squad automatic weapon. Before his modification, the M249 could not be locked securely in the weapons rack.

If the AT4 night sight bracket being tested was based on his design, I believe he should receive credit for its invention. Many good ideas come from soldiers in the field, but all too often these soldiers don't get the recognition they deserve.

BRENT HOLMAN
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AUFTRAGSTAKTIK

Let me say how much I enjoyed the article "*Auftragstaktik*" by Lieutenant Colonel Knut Czelik of the German Army. It confirmed my belief that *Auftragstaktik* is the equivalent of our mission type order.

Obviously, the senior commander who uses mission type orders must consider the experience and ability of his subordinates. He must also be ready to accept responsibility for the mistakes of his subordinates. But if he has a budding Nathan Bedford Forrest or Erwin Rommel serving under him, he will usually be successful using mission type orders or *Auftragstaktik*.

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LRS UNITS

The mission of long range surveillance (LRS) units is to conduct surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition, and

battle damage assessment. The teams of a division LRS detachment operate in the battle zone; the teams of a corps LRS company operate in the detection zone.

My specific interest is the organization, equipment, and methods of operation of the corps LRS companies. I believe that their MTOEs (modified tables of organization and equipment) prepare them only to conduct surveillance and that they have little ability to conduct reconnaissance, target acquisition, and battle damage assessment missions in the detection zone.

The following anecdote illustrates the ability of corps LRS companies to conduct surveillance in the detection zone. Note how corps LRS companies, as human intelligence (HUMINT) collection assets, complemented sensor intelligence collection systems in this case to satisfy the corps commander's priority intelligence requirements (PIRs).

During REFORGER 88, VII Corps' OV-ID aircraft detected a large number of moving target indicators moving southeast along the line of communication (LOC) in the detection zone. Side-looking airborne radar (SLAR) could not differentiate between wheeled and tracked vehicles. The VII Corps LRS teams operating in the detection zone reported that only light wheeled vehicles were moving along that LOC. They also reported that many M60s and M113s with 8th Infantry Division bumper markings were deploying south on another LOC on the western flank. The VII Corps LRS company revealed the V Corps deception operation and quickly determined where V Corps was committing its reserve.

Because corps LRS teams are made up of airborne infantrymen, their range of movement on the ground is restricted to the distance they can walk each night. Consequently, their ability to conduct reconnaissance missions in the enemy's rear area is minimal. Likewise, the duration of their missions is limited by their ability to carry rations, water, and batteries, in addition to NBC gear, night observation devices, and HF communications equipment. (As each liter of water weighs a kilogram, a summer

day's water in the desert adds considerable weight to their rucksacks!) If they cannot also carry thermal imaging devices, laser target designators, and secure FM communications equipment, their ability to conduct target acquisition/designation and battle damage assessment missions in support of MLRS/AH-64/A-10 deep strike missions in the detection zone is, consequently, also minimal.

Because the corps LRS teams' range of movement on the ground is so limited, they often require aviation support for infiltration and exfiltration to within a few kilometers of their objectives. The corps combat aviation brigade's ability to provide such support in a high air defense threat environment is minimal.

Although a solution to these two problems may not have been possible on a highly structured, high density European battlefield, an "elegant solution" might be feasible on the less structured, non-linear battlefields of joint-combined contingency operations. Corps LRS teams, if they were equipped with HMMWVs (high mobility, multipurpose wheeled vehicles), could carry enough equipment and supplies to conduct extended reconnaissance, target acquisition/designation, and battle damage assessment missions in the detection zone. Their HMMWVs could be sling-loaded below UH-60 or CH-47 aircraft for insertion to and extraction from remote sites on the periphery of the detection zone, avoiding concentrations of enemy air defense assets. Although this technique would require (temporary) extension of friendly air superiority across the FLOT (forward line of own troops), few nations can match our air power.

With the low level night flight capability, extended range, and lift capacity of UH-60 and CH-47 aircraft, air assault insertion of corps LRS teams offer advantages over airborne infiltration: Aircraft are not required to ascend into the enemy's radar envelope to attain jump altitude; the likelihood of personnel injury and equipment damage during infiltration is reduced; and problems regarding the disposition of parachutes

after landing are alleviated. Airborne qualification for the corps LRS companies therefore represents an unnecessary, complex, expensive training distractor.

During Operation DESERT STORM, VII Corps relied heavily upon national and theater-level sensor intelligence collection systems. As deployment of such systems is dependent upon their capacity to be diverted from other major competing priorities, we cannot afford to assume that such assets would always be available to support the corps commander during future contingency operations. Therefore, we should continue to develop our capacity to conduct surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition/designation, and battle damage assessment missions at the operational level.

During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 1992, Company F, 51st Infantry (ABN)(LRS) will be deactivated. It should be reorganized and reassigned to the 525th Military Intelligence Brigade (ABN)(CEWD), XVIII Airborne Corps, which is our most deployable (and most often deployed) corps for contingency operations.

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MARKSMANSHIP TASK-CONDITION-STANDARD

In much of our Army's history, our soldiers have been noted for their marksmanship. Their skills were usually tied directly to their personal backgrounds and the fact that many of them grew up hunting, with firearms in their hands from an early age. Almost every well known story of great shooting in combat has behind it someone who was shooting well before he entered the service (Alvin York, for example). These people knew what the task-condition-standard was, and for them, time on a rifle range was largely familiarization with a new weapon, not learning how

to use it and employ it against live targets.

Unfortunately, we have fewer and fewer of these people today, and it has become more important than ever to have efficient and realistic training programs to teach combat shooting (using task-condition-standard). Our current marksmanship programs, unfortunately, don't fill the bill. We need a program that will get our soldiers' minds off the range and into what they need when their shooting has to count.

One of the major problems with the current program/qualification course is that it is so broad that the soldiers can't focus on specific skills. The qualification course tries to hit almost everything a soldier would have to do — stand, kneel, lie, move, shoot at single or multiple targets and at various ranges. Although this may be a good summary of combat shooting skills, as a training program it does not let a soldier get good at any one skill. We therefore have generalists instead of good marksmen. The qualification course becomes something to survive, and the number of rounds spent doing this prevents any real training.

What should we be doing? The most important thing is to think about combat and in so doing limit the tasks to a manageable level and still provide a focus for training. In standard Army training language, this can be defined in terms of two task-condition-standard statements:

TASK 1: Engage a silhouette target at 250 meters.

CONDITION: In daytime, wearing LBE, protective mask (in its case), and helmet from the prone unsupported position.

STANDARD: Firing one round, hit the target within five seconds. (Qualification standard is seven hits out of ten iterations.)

TASK 2. Engage a silhouette target at 50 meters.

CONDITION: In daytime, wearing LBE, protective mask (in its case), helmet, and rucksack containing 40 pounds, standing, holding the rifle at the waist with a round chambered and on safe.

STANDARD: Firing one round, hit the target within two seconds. (Qual-

ification standard is seven hits out of ten iterations.)

The specifics of these tasks can be debated, but the idea is there. A soldier has to do two things well with his weapon — shoot at long distance (given a bit of time) and kill an enemy up close before he can shoot first. All other “skills” are modifications of these two basic needs. With marksmanship defined this way, it is easier to focus training and teach specific skills. Ammunition can also be applied to getting good at these skills, with enough left over for familiarization incorporating the many variables that can occur in combat. (These modifications might include wearing the protective mask, night firing, using different positions, engaging multiple targets, changing magazines, firing from the opposite side of the body from normal, immediate action drills, and shooting from vehicles.)

It goes without saying that a soldier, and especially one who carries a rifle as a *principal requirement* of his MOS, should be the best marksman the system can make him. To do this, though, a marksmanship program has to have defined goals. During current standard Army training, the only goal ever really heard is to pass the qualification course. That does not make for a good program, and it is the root cause of mediocre

training. We can do better for our soldiers, and we have the tools easily available for a truly effective and realistic program.

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MILITARY HISTORY WRITING CONTEST

The Army's 1991 Military History Writing Contest is open to students attending officer advanced courses and the Sergeants Major Academy during calendar year 1991.

Entries must be previously unpublished manuscripts of 2,000 to 3,000 words (approximately 7 to 10 pages, typed and double spaced). Each essay should develop a limited historical theme related to the Army. Documentation is required but footnotes and endnotes do not count as part of the length requirement.

Some suggested topic areas are:

- Analysis of World War II or Korean War battles and campaigns. (Note that this is the period of the 40th anniversary of the Korean War and the 50th anniversary of World War II.)

- The Black experience during the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War II, or the Korean war.

- A historical perspective on a leader, leaders, or leadership, training, logistics, desert operations, or chemical warfare.

- Fighting outnumbered and winning — the Ardennes or Korea, for example.

- Desert operations.

To enter, an author must send two copies of his manuscript, along with any accompanying graphics, illustrations, or photographs, to the Center of Military History, ATTN: DAMH-FI (Writing Contest), Bldg. 159, SEFC/WNY, Washington, DC 20374-5088. He must include his Social Security number, the title of the course he attended, the course number, and a current address. His entry must be postmarked by midnight 31 December 1991.

Papers will be judged by a panel of military historians, using the following criteria: usefulness to today's Army leaders, originality, historical accuracy, sources and documentation, style, and rhetoric. Contest winners should be announced by the end of April 1992. The prizes will range from \$500 to \$100, or as the judges direct.

For additional information, anyone who is interested may write to me at the above address or call me at DSN 335-2905/2955; commercial (202) 475-2905/2955.

BILLY A. ARTHUR

