

In our units at the JRTC, leaving only two men to secure a platoon's casualties proved ineffective, because the OPFOR usually detected the casualty collection point (CCP) and harassed it. Units that do not secure their CCPs often sustain even more casualties before the actual evacuation takes place. We found that it took at least three men to secure a squad CCP and at least a squad to secure a platoon CCP.

Our units found poleless litters effective for transporting casualties to

the CCP, both in ease of movement and in the survivability of wounded soldiers. We recommend that each platoon have at least three of these poleless litters.

Units such as ours learn many lessons at the JRTC as their standing operating procedures and systems are tested. We have discussed and amplified our own mistakes to highlight some of the more important subjects that are keys to success at the platoon and squad levels.

If you are a platoon or squad leader, you may want to consider these subjects

in all of your training. Your unit's performance at the JRTC, or in any realistic training environment, will reflect your personal efforts in these areas.

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# Zone Reconnaissance

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One of the biggest problems with scout platoon operations at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) is the failure to use the zone reconnaissance techniques found in ARTEP 7-92-MTP and elsewhere—the *fan*, *converging routes*, and *successive sector techniques*. Instead, the platoons usually disperse immediately into squad size elements that operate almost independently.

The usual scenario begins with a scout platoon being airlanded by C-130 aircraft, along with the task force quartering party, into an assault landing zone. The platoon has a little over 24 hours to gather its initial information about the zone before the battalion's main body arrives. The platoon's scheme of maneuver in most cases is to send the three squads in three different directions to observe named areas of interest (NAIs) previously identified by the S-2 while the platoon headquarters moves to some central location to set up a command post (CP). Its primary duty is usually to provide a radio link between the squads and the battalion.

The squads move to their NAIs using the modified wedge formation. Unless they have been given specific guidance to the contrary, their actions at the NAI are usually just to look left and right as they continue moving through it. Their reconnaissance, therefore, will be limited to the width of the formation (about two meters) and the distance the soldiers can see to their flanks (about five to 30 meters). *This simply is not a zone reconnaissance.*

## DISPERSED

From the platoon perspective, the end result is that three squads are now in three widely dispersed areas. If one of these areas proves to contain enemy activity that warrants further investigation, the platoon leader cannot reposition his forces to influence the situation. The distance is too great to move a squad quickly enough from one zone to another.

This plan is like putting all your eggs in one basket, which is risky business at

this early stage of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). If the S-2's initial IPB is correct, the scouts have a chance of finding something. If it is not correct, the scouts have no realistic ability to regroup and focus their efforts in another direction. And the platoon leader has no command and control over the platoon as a whole, because his squads cannot be responsive to his orders as a unit.

This type of scheme of maneuver also fails to provide for future resupply operations, link-ups, and communication contingencies. Since the squads, for all practical purposes, are operating independently, they must be treated accordingly. Instead of delivering a resupply to one location, from which it can then be distributed, the S-4 must now execute three separate resupplies (four, counting the headquarters element). Resupplying the scouts, who are usually beyond the reach of main supply routes, is difficult enough without compounding the requirements.

If the platoon leader wants to

## The Fan Method: Combining Reconnaissance and Sustainment

When given a mission to conduct a zone reconnaissance or a screen, scout platoon leaders often struggle with developing a scheme of maneuver that can be supported by a workable resupply plan. In fact, in many cases the reverse actually occurs—the resupply plan determines the tactical plan.

Experience at the JRTC indicates that in very hot weather, scout squads can consume up to half of the resupply of water they receive in the process of moving to the resupply point and back to their observation post. That is to say, a soldier who walks from his OP to a resupply point to pick up four quarts of water and then back to his OP may drink up to two quarts of water during his travels. In addition to placing a great burden on the resupply system, this also detracts from the squad's mission of conducting reconnaissance and observation.

One solution to this problem is to use an adaptation of the fan technique of zone reconnaissance identified in ARTEP 7-92-MTP. The platoon moves as a whole or by squad infiltration into its zone and establishes an ORP. The ORP serves as a resupply point, a CP for the headquarters, and a patrol base for one of the squads. The ORP is in the center and slightly to the rear in the platoon zone. From the ORP, two squads move forward to OPs on either flank, while the other squad and the headquarters remain in the ORP. Each squad leaves the ORP with 24 hours worth of supplies. This amount, of course, can be increased or decreased as warranted.

The platoon then begins a rotation based on the time and event diagram shown here. Two

squads always man OPs (initially 1st and 2d squads in the diagram) and one (initially 3d in the diagram) and the headquarters is always in the ORP.

**First Event**—the platoon moves to the ORP. The headquarters and 3d Squad occupy it.

**Second Event**—1st and 2d Squads move to their respective OPs with supplies for 24 hours.

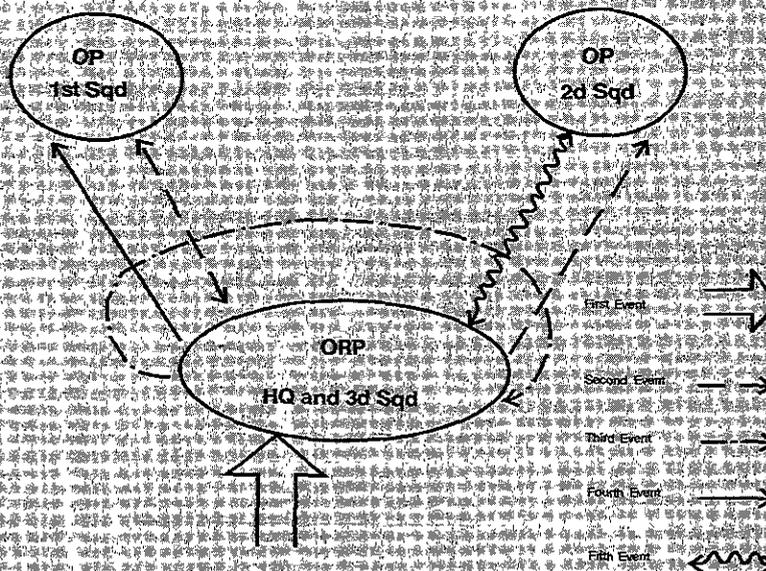
**Third Event**—3d Squad spends four hours patrolling gaps, two hours conducting priorities of work, and six hours sleeping. (Times can vary depending upon MIETT.)

**Fourth Event**—After 12 hours, 3d and 1st Squads switch places. 3d Squad mans the OP for the next 24 hours, and 1st Squad conducts the activities 3d Squad conducted in the third event.

**Fifth Event**—After 12 more hours, 1st and 2d Squads switch places. 1st Squad mans the OP for the next 24 hours and 2d Squad conducts

the activities indicated in the third event.

The squads receive their resupply in the ORP and conduct the other activities indicated. No squad goes without a resupply for more than 24 hours. The platoon sergeant can easily coordinate for logistical packages on the basis of this time period, and supplies can be centrally received and distributed from the ORP or nearby. More important, no time or energy is wasted on purely resupply activities. The squads rotate back to the ORP as part of the planned scheme of maneuver, and getting their resupply is just a fringe benefit of the normal rotation. Additionally, as supplies are pushed forward from the support platoon to the ORP, the scout platoon can put its disabled equipment, trash, and casualties on the vehicles that are headed back to the trains.



concentrate his reconnaissance effort on an updated IPB, he must first get his dispersed elements together and issue the necessary fragmentary order. That process requires an extraordinary amount of effort and the loss of as much as a day of execution time. By then, the original need for reconnoitering the area may have passed. The platoon may also

want to link up for many other reasons—such as mutual security, planning, debriefing, and resupply.

In addition, the concept of individual squad reconnaissance operations also does not facilitate contingency planning. Since there is no planned link-up, there is no physical contact. The only link is by radio, and radio

communication is subject to both equipment and operator malfunctions. If the headquarters loses communication with a squad, the platoon leader has no way of knowing whether the squad has been destroyed.

Using a standard technique for zone reconnaissance helps alleviate all of these problems. For example, using the

## TRAINING NOTES

converging routes technique in a JRTC scenario, the scouts are inserted at Cole LZ (Figure 1), and this serves as the initial objective rally point (ORP). From this ORP, the squads move on their assigned routes to a reference point (RP) that becomes a second ORP once it has been occupied. The platoon leader moves with one of the squads or separately, depending on where he thinks he can best control the platoon. In addition to specifying the reference point, the platoon leader also specifies an exact date and time for link-up. Thus, if he loses communication with a squad, and that squad also fails to appear for the link-up, he can safely assume something has gone wrong. And he knows that squad's route and can go look for it.

The squad routes are assigned on the basis of the IPB. They lead the squads through areas the S-2 has identified as having intelligence potential. For example, one squad route may focus on the Vache Grasse Creek; the second may work the key terrain and trails around Carnis Village; and the third may concentrate on Little White Oak Ridge.

Along these general routes, the S-2 has also identified specific NAIs and other areas that require detailed area reconnaissance or observation. The S-2 must give specific guidance. If he wants an NAI observed for a certain time period, he must specify that period. For example, if he thinks the enemy is moving only at night, he may want the NAI along the suspected infiltration lane observed from sunset to sunrise. Knowing this, the scouts can do other things the rest of the time. If the S-2 does not specify that NAIs are to be observed for a specific period, an area reconnaissance of the same area will provide only a snapshot view of a given instant in time. An NAI where nothing is happening at 1200 may be a whirlwind of activity an hour later. The S-2 must specify what he wants in his reconnaissance and security matrix. On the basis of this guidance, the scouts will pause several times along their route to reconnoiter or observe locations in the zone.

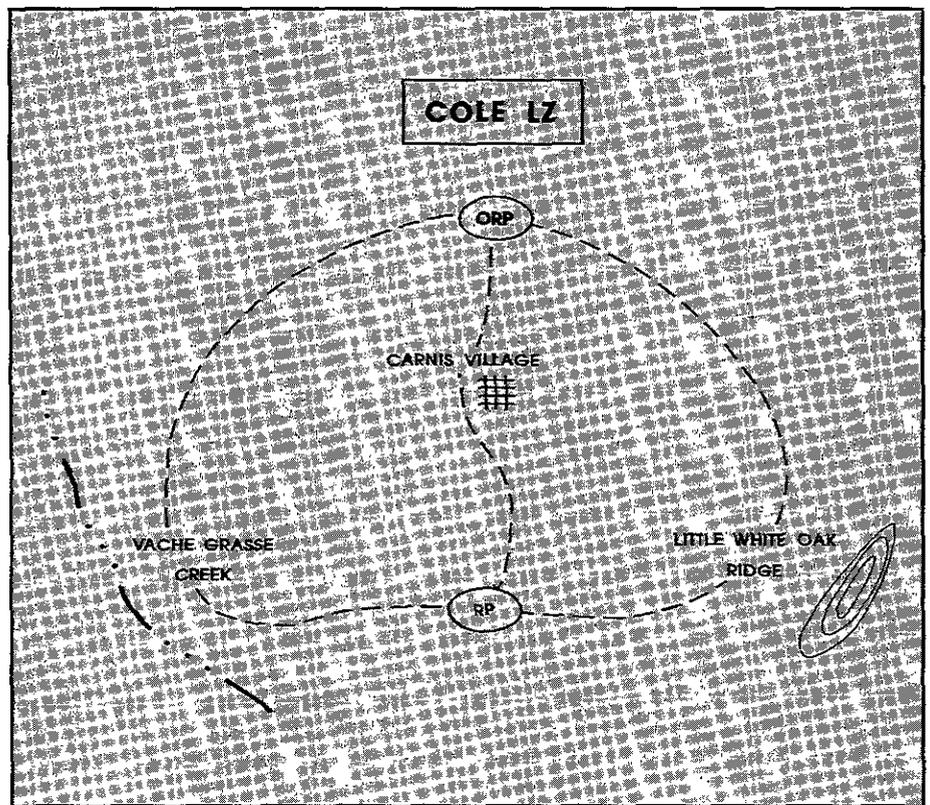


Figure 1

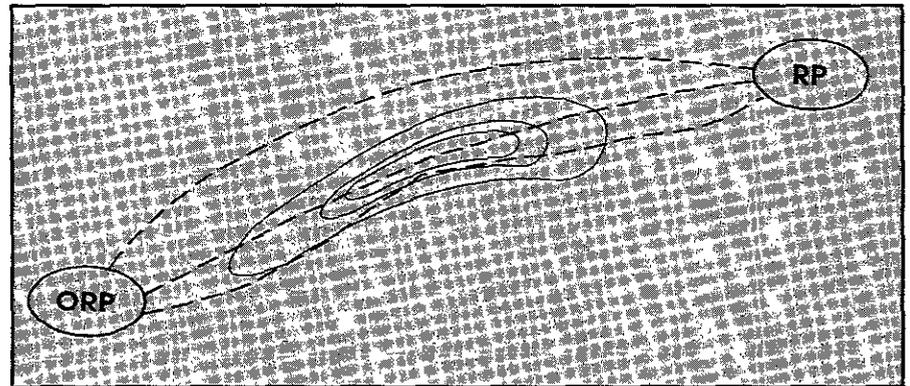


Figure 2

The platoon leader decides how long the squads need to perform their reconnaissance tasks along their designated routes. At the appointed time, all the elements will link up at the RP. Then, the RP becomes an ORP. In the ORP, the platoon leader can plan future operations. For example, the squad operating around Little White Oak Ridge has observed enemy activity such as SA-14 positions, troop movements, and caches. The other squads have found nothing. The

platoon leader may decide to conduct another zone reconnaissance that focuses all his efforts around the ridge (Figure 2). One squad route may go along the topographical crest, one on the reverse slope, and one in the valley forward of the ridge. The RP may be at the northeast end of the ridge.

In issuing this fragmentary order, the platoon leader has advanced to the successive sector technique, which is merely two or more iterations of the converging routes technique. Because

the platoon leader designates a time and place for the platoon to link up, he can coordinate with the S-4 for a pre-planned aerial resupply near the ORP. The squads can pick up their share of the resupply before leaving the ORP.

Using this technique, the scout platoon can honestly report that it has reconnoitered its zone, not that it has looked at a few specific NAIs in passing. If a zone reconnaissance turns

up enemy activity in one area, the platoon leader can increase his coverage there by introducing more troops to that area and by fine-tuning his operation to include area reconnaissance and observation points.

The scenario and the terrain described here are not the "approved solution" for scout platoon operations or IPBs at the JRTC. But using the proper techniques for zone reconnaissance as cited in

ARTEP 7-92-MTP will greatly improve the performance of scout platoons at the JRTC and elsewhere.

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# Long Range Planning A Different Perspective

CAPTAIN PAUL C. ZIMMERMAN

One of the most difficult tasks leaders at company and battalion level must perform is developing coherent long range plans. I would like to offer a somewhat different view of this planning process.

My suggestions are focused on the company level for two reasons—this is the lowest level at which anyone really worries (or ought to worry) about long range planning, and it is also the first level at which a leader has command responsibility. But these ideas could easily be adapted to units at higher levels.

First, intuition tells us that to be successful we must establish priorities, but this is easier said than done. Our priorities come from many different sources, and we have to make a logical effort to sort them out and apply them to specific units and circumstances. The cumulative priorities approach will not work—a company commander cannot simply add his own priorities to those established by all the commanders above him.

Several years ago, for example, while working in a battalion operations shop,

we attempted to map out all the requirements imposed upon us by headquarters at brigade level and higher. We found that in a year's time, we were required to accomplish tasks totaling 53.5 weeks worth of work. This did not include anything that the commanders or staffs at battalion or company level wanted to do.

Plain and simple, there are some tasks that we cannot and should not do. The question then becomes, "How does a company commander determine his priorities?"

## PRIORITIES

First, I recommend that commanders at all levels adopt a set of universal priorities that transcend all others. I call them the "Big Three"—readiness, training, and taking care of soldiers. Taking care of soldiers is something we do all the time. Readiness and training are closely interrelated yet distinct portions of the Army's mission. Readiness relates to the ability to deploy a combat effective force rapidly;

training relates to the ability to win the fight once we get there.

Admittedly, these are broad categories that encompass numerous tasks, but they do provide a suitable framework upon which a commander can base his own long range planning process. Units can refine the Big Three to fit their particular situations, but the key is universality.

Using this simple model, a commander can think of many tasks that fall within the Big Three, and these should be unit priorities. He can also think of many tasks that fall outside the bounds of the Big Three, and these are the "nice-to-haves," which should be done only after the Big Three tasks and should in no way detract from the true priorities.

The first step in achieving a consensus on priorities is to establish communications between the various levels of the chain of command. Some units do this better than others. Often there is good communication one level up (from company commander to battalion commander), but there are often insurmountable barriers to