

choices in the commander's absence.

An excellent method of establishing control as the commander, and of testing the rear detachment chain of command, is to begin operations at least three days before a deployment. With the battalion still around, the RDC can begin implementing his system and adjusting it so the transition will be smooth when the unit departs. Problems that arise during this period can be discussed and resolved with the deploying chains of command. Any attempts to test the resolve of the new chain of command can then be stopped

before they start.

But there are other actions the RDC can take during the execution phase of the deployment to stay ahead of the game. The accompanying checklist, which was developed within a forward-deployed mechanized brigade, has proved useful in organizing a detachment commander's actions during a deployment. The checklist contains some regulatory and local policies, but it offers some helpful hints for making future RDCs' jobs easier. Some of these jobs are done only once, others recur, and additional items may come up that are not listed.

Some officers may think this list overstates the obvious, but it will at least serve as an internal check of commonsense items. Hopefully, a rear detachment commander will take the list and add or delete items as they apply to his specific unit.

Major Timothy J. Leyes, now Deputy G-1, 3d Infantry Division, was previously Inspector General of the 1st Infantry Division (Forward). He is a 1977 ROTC graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and holds a master's degree from Webster University.

Smoke Integration On the JRTC Battlefield

MAJOR PAUL B. SHORT
CAPTAIN DAVID G. SHOFFNER

As observer-controllers at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), we have noticed that too few battalions use the advantages smoke can offer. Accordingly, an opposing force (OPFOR) observation team can easily plot and record a unit's defensive preparations from a safe distance. The smoke platoon attached to a brigade task force can help a great deal, and it should be integrated into all unit defensive mission plans.

Generally, the failure to use smoke can be attributed to inexperience with smoke planning and integration. But a battalion commander and his staff can achieve successful smoke integration if they understand the three basic smoke platoon missions—*screening*, *deceiving*, and *obscuring*.

Screening. Screening missions are used to reduce or defeat the enemy's observation and targeting capabilities. For example, a commander can screen

his movement, breaching, or recovery operations by using various concentrations of smoke.

The battalion chemical officer plays an important role in advising the commander on how a screening mission can be accomplished. In addition to an analysis of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time), his advice should include a consideration of the unit's proficiency in operating under limited visibility conditions. Then, on the basis of this analysis and the commander's intent, the chemical officer should recommend either a smoke *blanket* or a *haze*. A smoke blanket is dense with visibility limited to less than 50 meters, while a haze allows visibility at 50 to 100 meters.

Depending on METT-T and weather conditions, the chemical officer may recommend a smoke curtain rather than a blanket or haze. A *curtain* is a vertical smoke screen that is placed

between the observer and the area observed to reduce observation.

Smoke can be used to screen support operations, lodgements, passage points, breaching, river crossings, and defensive preparations. In all of these examples, the use of a smoke screen increases the survivability of the friendly unit and reduces the enemy's performance. Unfortunately, smoke also attracts attention, and planning must include security and, if possible, deception as well.

Deception. Commanders often overlook smoke as a means of deception. They think that once the generators crank up, the enemy will know something is going on in an area. To mislead the enemy, though, smoke must be created in several different locations, and smoke generators can be supplemented by smoke pots and artillery delivered smoke. The objective is to force the enemy to thin out his

intelligence effort to determine what, if anything, is happening in those various locations.

Once again, the commander's intent and a METT-T analysis are essential to the planning process. Observations at the JRTC support the idea that smoke does indeed draw the attention of the opposing force (OPFOR). The smoke platoon must therefore be prepared to react to OPFOR contact during all missions.

Smoke alone is not enough to deceive the OPFOR. Psychological operations, aviation, artillery, and infantry—all conducted under the limited visibility afforded by a good smoke plan—can help create deception with false insertions, H-hours, and troop movements.

Obscuration. Obscuration may be the most difficult smoke mission and, contrary to popular belief, not all smoke obscures. Obscuring smoke is the smoke employed directly on the enemy. Artillery delivered munitions can provide short periods of coverage for

H-hour missions and smoke grenades can be used for close combat. But extended obscuration of enemy positions requires a great deal of logistical support.

In theory, smoke platoons, given the appropriate terrain and weather, can smoke an objective from the line of departure (LD). But those conditions are rarely reliable, and smoke platoons on or across the LD are usually dead smoke platoons (unless they are mechanized).

If a commander does decide to smoke the objective using generated smoke, a detailed plan must be developed. Unless conditions are perfect, the best results are obtained from using HC (hexachloroethane) and WP (white phosphorus) artillery munitions and smoke grenades on the objective. Commanders can still use smoke generators to screen movement to and across the LD and to deceive the enemy.

On the JRTC battlefield, these three types of smoke missions can be used

effectively, and any mission is improved by the integration of a smoke plan. Brigade and battalion staff chemical personnel can provide their commanders with such a plan, but it is up to the unit commander to request it.

A well-thought-out plan that is integrated into a unit's mission will improve the unit's ability to accomplish its mission. More important, it will improve the unit's training. And any unit that leaves the JRTC with better trained soldiers can say that it has "won" on the JRTC battlefield.

Major Paul B. Short is senior chemical observer-controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center. He was previously chemical officer of the 18th Field Artillery Brigade and NBC element director, XVIII Airborne Corps. He is a 1978 ROTC graduate of Old Dominion University.

Captain David G. Shoffner is smoke/decontamination platoon observer-controller at the JRTC. He was previously battalion chemical officer in the 1st Battalion, 39th Field Artillery and the 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry. He is a 1985 ROTC graduate of Centenary College of Louisiana.

Equipment Deployment Boxes

CAPTAIN ROBERT E. MILANI

Deploying a company to the field for training exercises or during no-notice readiness alerts can be a stressful task for the chain of command, particularly the company commander. Companies that do not have good deployment practices and SOPs (standing operating procedures) usually run short of time in readying their equipment and personnel.

One way to make the most of the time available, particularly during no-notice readiness alerts, is to prepare equipment deployment boxes ahead of time. Company commanders who use

deployment boxes gain several advantages: The boxes save time in preparing equipment; expedite and improve hand receipting and accountability of equipment; eliminate the worry that the company has forgotten something; and allow the commanders to use only fragmentary orders concerning required equipment during their warning orders or operations orders.

The following are examples of deployment boxes that can be used by companies organized and equipped

under either light, air assault, or heavy tables of organization and equipment (TOEs). (Few light companies have the capacity to transport these boxes as listed. They are normally drawn from the commodity areas and the equipment distributed down to the soldier level in the platoon areas.) One of each type of box is prepared for each rifle and mortar platoon. There should be at least a three-day supply of all expendable items.

Supply Box:

- Chemical lights (one box infrared,