

audience reads the aid, but a more confident speaker knows that all he has to do is introduce the material or address the highlights. *Do not* read your slides to the audience.

Control the briefing. If you want the audience to hold questions until the end of your presentation, say so in the beginning. Then when someone interrupts, ask him to bring his question up again if you fail to address it before the conclusion. Use good judgment here. Some commanders like to insert comments during their staffs' briefings to make sure critical points are emphasized and the intent is clear. Since it is the commander's briefing, check with him if you are not familiar with his style.

Answer questions forthrightly. Staff members or unit leaders who have a good working relationship will support

each other by stepping forward, if it is appropriate, when they think you can use some help. If no such help is available, take a note and tell the questioner you will get back to him later. Better still, have someone else take notes for you. Taking your own notes is likely to disrupt your presentation, and you may find those notes unclear afterwards.

If a staff or unit is briefing a senior officer, capturing all guidance and queries is especially important. At least one, often two or three, should take notes at such a briefing to reduce the chances of missing a senior commander's key comments.

Brief with confidence. You are the expert; the audience is there to learn from you. Your job is to inform or train them. There is no reason to be nervous if you know your material well.

Finish your briefing cleanly. A definitive conclusion, such as "Sir, pending any questions, I will be followed by Sergeant Jones." Or, "That's it, men. Any questions?" Such a device keeps you in control.

The result of a well planned and prepared briefing—by a single speaker or several—is an informed audience that has more confidence in its leaders.

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Infiltration

A Form of Maneuver

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Infiltration has long been considered a preferred form of maneuver. As a *technique* it has been used in guerrilla operations, in rear area harassment operations, as a reconnaissance tool, and in support of units in the attack. As a result, it is often regarded as a small-unit activity and one that requires a small group of men—a squad or platoon, for example. But history has proved that infiltration can also be used effectively as a form of maneuver—as a *tactic*.

The purpose of infiltration is to move by stealth to place a maneuver force in a more favorable position from which

to accomplish the mission. It is a preferred form of maneuver because it permits a smaller force to use its stealth and surprise to attack a larger or fortified force.

During infiltration, the attacking force passes through the enemy's primary defensive area, avoiding major engagement, and disposes itself in the rear for decisive action. Movement is traditionally on foot or by air, but it can also be by vehicle or watercraft.

An infiltrating force accomplishes its mission in conjunction with other units by attacking the rear and flanks of forward enemy positions to support a pen-

etration of a larger or heavier force. It can also attack communication lines, headquarters, command posts, key combat support and combat service support activities and facilities, and hinder the deployment of enemy reserves.

Finally, infiltrating forces can perform forward observer and reconnaissance missions for larger units in the attack or defense.

Field Manual 7-20 defines several phases:

Patrol. A unit conducts aggressive reconnaissance patrols to determine the extent of enemy positions and to locate gaps in enemy positions that will be

used to infiltrate through.

Prepare. The commander must conduct thorough execution of troop leading procedures.

Infiltrate. Units must infiltrate through gaps by units and sub-units, avoiding detection, and, if possible, engagement. The infiltrating unit also ignores ineffective enemy fire during this phase.

Consolidate. After infiltration, the friendly unit reassembles in the enemy's rear using one or more link-up and objective rally points (ORPs). The unit conducts final preparation for execution of the mission in the ORP.

Attack. The unit completes its mission from its position of advantage to the enemy's rear.

In some respects, an infiltration can be compared to a penetration, since both move through an enemy position. The major difference is that in a penetration maximum combat firepower is committed in the passage through the enemy line. In an infiltration, maximum firepower is committed only after passage through the enemy line and subsequent reassembly, penetration, and initiation of the attack.

A number of factors are required for successful infiltrations:

Weather and Terrain. Infiltration is best carried out under conditions of reduced or limited visibility. Fog, rain, snow, darkness, jungle, and rough terrain make infiltration operations more feasible and reduce the possibility of enemy detection. Easy, predictable avenues of approach are to be avoided.

Planning. A commander's planning, on the basis of a mission analysis and an estimate of the situation (METT-T), will best determine whether or not infiltration is the form of maneuver that offers the best chance for success. A well-prepared, mutually supported defense in depth by a determined enemy may prevent any successful attempt at infiltration. But when an enemy's defenses are over-extended, or when his front has not been stabilized and is constantly fluid, infiltration has the best chance of succeeding.

The decentralized nature of this type of operation demands detailed recon-



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naissance, detailed briefing of personnel, detailed coordination—and more time for execution than normal operations.

Objectives and routes are selected on the basis of a terrain analysis, enemy dispositions, and the desire to avoid engagement before reaching the areas from which the decisive attack is to be launched.

The attack may consist of two parts—one an attack by the infiltrating force and the other an attack by forces in contact with the forward enemy elements. Either may constitute the main attack force or the secondary attack force. The best results are achieved when the attack is fully coordinated and when the infiltrating force attacks at the same time as the frontal attack force, or soon after it. Well-coordinated plans for reinforcement, fire support, and deception can greatly reduce the risk of failure.

Mental Attitude. An offensive frame of mind is necessary to an infiltration mission. Infiltration is not just a defensive tactic used to slow or harass an advancing enemy; it has an offensive role and that role should not be neglected. Furthermore, an infiltrating force that is surrounded by the enemy

requires aggressive, confidence-inspiring leadership.

Alternative Course. As a major form of maneuver, infiltration should be considered an alternative course of action rather than solely an aid to a direct attack using another form of maneuver such as a penetration. Infiltration also provides the opportunity to wreak havoc on the enemy.

Initiative. Successful infiltrations by sizable forces have been characterized by boldness, audacity, and the exercise of initiative by all commanders. Infiltrators are not reckless; they do not flaunt their maneuver in the face of the enemy. Individual resourcefulness and ingenuity are required to avoid enemy detection. Although infiltration entails great risk, the audacity and element of surprise of the plan itself compensate for the gamble involved.

Patrolling Proficiency. The key to successful infiltration is the patrols' ability to find gaps and weak points in enemy defenses. It is a unit's ability to use stealth, avoid enemy observation posts, and select the best route (for avoiding enemy contact or for the ability to deviate from the original route) to execute the mission. A minor breach of noise and light discipline can compro-

mise the entire force.

Conditioning. Passage through difficult terrain such as swamps, mountains, jungles, and enemy lines requires a high state of physical conditioning. Due to the difficulty of support and resupply missions, the infiltrating force must be prepared to endure the hardship of carrying several days of supplies and equipment over difficult terrain. Soldiers must be able to move long distances with extra heavy loads and still make a determined attack. Soldiers must also be prepared both mentally and physically to transport and care for casualties that cannot be immediately evacuated back to friendly lines. The ability to forage and live off the land may also be required if the situation deteriorates. The U.S. infantryman operates best when he knows the risks and understands the situation ahead of time.

Surprise. Surprise may be the most important aspect of a successful infiltration operation. Every effort must be made to avoid enemy surveillance or detection. Extra caution must be exercised against an enemy believed to be operating with night vision goggles (NVGs), thermal imagery devices, or electromagnetic sensors.

Control and Security. Security during infiltration can be provided by friendly patrols and artillery fire to prevent enemy reconnaissance patrols from determining the size and objective of the infiltrating force. Control measures must be used during movement into enemy territory. Trails and roads should be avoided, if possible. If they cannot be avoided, however, point, flank, and rear security must be maintained. During the infiltration, radio should be used only with great caution. The use of thermal imagery devices helps the infiltrating force avoid detection and contact. Rally points (RPs) are also key to successful control during infiltration. These are easily identifiable places where units can reassemble or reorganize if they disperse. RPs that provide cover and concealment are chosen along each route or lane. An ORP that does not compromise security is selected near the objective. Before it is

occupied, however, it must be reconnoitered. Assembly areas, linkup points, release points, and attack positions are other control measures.

Lane Selection. A commander must decide whether to use single or multiple routes or lanes.

Infiltration lanes are chosen on the basis of terrain analysis, gaps in the enemy's defensive security system, and locations of the enemy security elements. Lanes should offer cover and concealment and help soldiers avoid detection by radar, sensors, NVGs, and the like. If enemy target acquisition assets are unavoidable, heavy patrolling should precede an infiltration. Active deception measures such as artillery fire, diversionary attacks, feints and



ruses can also be used.

An infiltration route is assigned if precise information is known about enemy defenses. If detailed intelligence is not available, an infiltration lane should be used instead.

The number of routes or lanes used depends on the size of the infiltrating force, the amount of intelligence available on the enemy and the terrain, the time available, and the number of possible routes or lanes. The force uses a single route or lane with ease of navigation, control, and reassembly in mind. Or it can use multiple routes or lanes to reduce the risk of detection of the entire force and to allow faster movement.

Size. The largest force possible should be infiltrated without sacrificing stealth. The size of an infiltrating force depends on its mission. A squad may be enough for an area reconnaissance. A squad or a platoon may be necessary to destroy a command post. But an infiltration in support of a frontal attack may require a company, a battalion, or even a brigade.

Infiltration should be thought of as a primary course of action or *form of maneuver*, as opposed to just a *technique*. The latest edition of FM 7-20, *The Infantry Battalion*, reflects this notion. While a name in itself is not important, the lack of clear terminology contributes to misunderstanding and confusion regarding the role of infiltration. Furthermore, the inherent risks of infiltration operations tend to discourage most commanders from practicing and using them. It cannot be denied that infiltration is a gamble. But audacity, if properly applied, will provide its own security. Proper planning for fire support, reinforcement, and deception will greatly reduce the risk of failure. Success depends on proper planning, highly trained troops in excellent physical condition, and aggressive but competent small unit leaders who can execute the mission with minimal supervision.

History has shown us many examples of the devastating effects of infiltration. Quite often we have been the ones who were surprised when an enemy used it against us. Yet even commanders who have been schooled the hard way are still hesitant to adopt the tactics of the enemy. Present and future infantry commanders must, therefore, overcome their historical reluctance to adopt infiltration tactics.

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