

TRAINING NOTES



We Need a Peacekeeping MTP

CAPTAIN BLAISE CORNELL-D'ECHERT, JR.

As the sole remaining superpower in a new world order, the United States can expect increasing demands for its help in resolving conflicts and facilitating stability. The U.S. Army expects greater involvement in operations other than war, as reflected by its inclusion of such operations in the latest edition of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. Among these, peace operations may be the most difficult. Although the Army has some experience and some current training doctrine for other missions in this category—foreign internal development, security assistance, humanitarian assistance, and support of insurgency or counterinsurgency operations—it has not practiced peacekeeping and peace enforcement to a major degree since the 19th century, and the rules have changed significantly since then.

Since the Army can expect to perform peace operations for some years to come, we must prepare for them. Unit mission essential task lists (METLs), do not routinely include missions and tasks that support operations other than war, although that may change as units develop contingency plans. Whether these missions are conducted unilaterally, under an existing treaty organization, or with the United Nations, infantrymen must have doctrinal literature to support their unit training. Peace operations

require a high density of infantrymen. We must ensure that our infantry battalions can rapidly deploy to a conflict and execute peacekeeping tasks with the same proficiency as a combat operation.

The Army's primary mission is to prepare to fight and win on the modern battlefield. But we must be just as well prepared to conduct operations at the other end of the spectrum. The problem is that our training managers at battalion level and below do not have the doctri-

“Peacekeeping is not a soldier’s job, but only a soldier can do it.”

Dag Hammarskjold

nal support materials they need to assure an adequate level of preparedness for conducting peace operations. What, other than field manuals (FMs), would give our training managers an appropriate training tool?

The accepted norm in establishing a unit training program is the mission training plan (MTP). An MTP is a descriptive, mission-oriented program that helps a unit train on its critical wartime missions. An MTP establishes minimum acceptable standards that apply to all like units in the execution of

tasks associated with missions appropriate to those units. Further, the MTP format is familiar to trainers at all levels, and it aligns the training of the unit with the Army's training and tactical doctrine.

Unit types and tables of organization and equipment, as well as organizational echelons, differentiate most MTPs. In many cases, the tasks associated with particular missions are the same, with sub-task standards that differ only as a function of unit capabilities. In other words, the task *Perform Reconnaissance* in ARTEP 7-10-MTP, *Mission Training Plan for the Infantry Rifle Company*, is very similar to the task of the same name in ARTEP 71-1-MTP, *Mission Training Plan for the Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*. The question we must answer is: If we need a peace operations MTP, do we need one for every echelon and every type of organization? Before answering that question, it may be helpful to describe the need for a peacekeeping or peace operations MTP in general.

First, let's examine the operational environment. At the most basic level, an infantry battalion might serve as a contingent element of a UN peacekeeping force. It might serve in a multinational force, possibly under a foreign commander, depending upon an uncer-

tain logistic system and coordinating with numerous governmental and civilian agencies. Additionally, this unit would operate under restrictive rules of engagement (ROEs), while the peacekeeping mandate, the terms of reference (TORs), and the status of forces agreement (SOFA) might severely limit its options.

At a more complex level, a battalion might be part of a U.S.-led joint task force operating with another multinational or UN effort in the same theater. Issues of authority, threat, chain of command, coordination requirements, and force protection would all serve to increase the complexity of the operating environment.

The missions and tasks associated with peace operations do not greatly differ from other, more traditional, tactical missions. Peacekeepers conduct patrols, perform reconnaissance, employ obstacles, secure routes, and defend urban areas. But many of their tasks are not usually associated with infantry operations, and the performance of familiar tasks is often different because of the conditions. Therefore, we cannot expect to depend on current MTPs to adequately prepare our units to perform peacekeeping missions.

As an example, the standards for the *React to Ambush* battle drill require a unit to return fire, use fragmentation or smoke grenades, employ suppressive fire, and assault the ambushing force to destroy it. For a unit in a peacekeeping operation, the principle of use of force in self-defense is implicit, but fragmentation grenades may not be issued because of the ROEs. Suppressive fire or a high volume of return fire may not be appropriate because of a requirement to identify a specific military target—a gunman in a crowd of civilians, for example—before firing, even in self-defense. Given these staggering changes, the quick-reaction drills we have practiced may no longer be valid.

We need to establish a standard of performance that will allow units to perform this and similar tasks without a degree of collateral damage that will impair our mission. Civilian casualties caused by a dependence on the current

training programs may prove fatal, not only for small units but also for the entire peacekeeping operation.

What are some other tasks a unit may face in a peace operation that are not in current MTPs? The following list is a small sample of the many tasks a battalion may perform:

- Disarm belligerents.
- React to news media.
- Evaluate civilian infrastructure.
- Negotiate a belligerent checkpoint.
- Supervise minefield clearance.
- Establish a checkpoint.
- Employ psychological operations (PSYOPs).
- Move dislocated civilians.
- Conduct liaison with local authorities.
- Negotiate.
- Defend a convoy.
- Cordon and search.
- Enforce movement restrictions.
- Identify and process detainees.
- Supervise prisoner exchange.

The performance measures for some of these tasks can be discerned through a review of currently published doctrine. Specifically, FM 7-98, *Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict*, 19 October 1992—available only from the Infantry School—addresses some of these tasks. Branch specific FMs (PSYOPs, Civil Affairs, Public Affairs) are also helpful. Other peacekeeping tasks, however, are completely different from anything we currently do. In almost all cases, it takes a great deal of imagination and extrapolation to come up with an adequate set of performance standards for the tasks on this list. Trainers have neither the time nor the energy to do this, and there is no guarantee that two different units would develop the same standards. Before these units can plan and execute training, the necessary training tool must be available, and the MTP is that tool.

Getting back to the question of whether we need a peace operations MTP for every echelon and type of organization, a battalion is the basic unit used to define commitments for contingent units for UN missions, and is also the most appropriate size to perform many of the anticipated missions in

peace operations or to operate in a particular sector. Similarly, company-sized units will perform most of the tasks in support of those missions. If our primary focus is on preparing for and training to win on the battlefield, we do not want to diffuse that focus with multiple METLs and MTPs for each echelon. An additional consideration is that we want the battalion, as the basic level unit, to have an established standard that is learned, practiced, and applied by all its units.

Ultimately, then, the answer is that we do need an MTP, or MTPs, for peace operations for battalion-sized units, differentiated by the conditions of the operational environment. In other words, we need a peacekeeping MTP and a peace enforcement operations MTP for the infantry battalion. One MTP may suffice because of commonality of tasks and the tendency for each type of operation to include characteristics of the other.

Several positive results would accrue: Infantry battalions would have a mission-based training standard to which they can train. Training plans and evaluations to determine readiness could include missions incorporated into unit METLs for both domestic and overseas contingencies. Units alerted for peace operations would have a readily available reference for conducting realistic and effective training. The staff and training managers of units alerted for movement could then devote their energies to pre-deployment planning instead of exhausting themselves trying to develop an ad hoc training program at the same time. Finally, commanders at higher echelons would not hesitate to recommend the employment of infantry battalions out of a concern about their ability to perform the mission.

Captain Blaise Cornell-d'Echert, Jr., is an infantry officer assigned as a scout observer-controller at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Germany. He previously served in enlisted and officer assignments in the 82d Airborne Division and commanded a company in the 2d Battalion, 6th Infantry in Europe. He was commissioned through the Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning in 1985.
