

TRAINING NOTES



RSOI At the National Training Center

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Reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) adds a new dimension to rotations at the National Training Center (NTC). An outgrowth of the post-Cold War era, RSOI is designed to exercise force projection doctrine, encompassing a rotational unit's first week of training.

The title RSOI is relatively new and in line with U.S. doctrine, but it is still in its evolutionary stages. RSOI is based on an analysis of the specific elements of the deployment process:

Reception. Unit arrival in theater.

Staging. Building combat power; integration of combat-ready equipment and personnel; marshalling area activities.

Onward Movement. Unit deployment from the staging area to its gaining command in the field.

Integration. Unit arrival at the tactical assembly area of the gaining command and integration into its command and control structure.

The NTC scenario for the exercise centers on a fictitious community of Third World nations inhabiting the Caribbean island of Tierra del Diablo. One of the nations, the Republic of Mojave, is a U.S. ally faced with increasing hostility from neighboring Krasnovia. Unable to defend itself against

Krasnovia, Mojave has requested substantial military assistance from the United Nations. Rotational units therefore deploy to the island as part of Joint Task Force (JTF) Mojave, within the area of responsibility of the United States Irwin Command. Upon arrival in theater, they are placed under the operational control of the 52d Infantry Division. Their mission is to deter or counter Krasnovian aggression.

RSOI has five objectives:

- Place immediate tactical requirements on the brigade combat team when it arrives in theater.
- Replicate the draw of prepositioned equipment.
- Interface with the theater logistics base.
- Replace what was previously an administrative draw week with a tactical RSOI scenario leading to conventional operations.
- Provide observer-controller (OC) observations of the unit's effort to build combat power.

An associated RSOI objective is to familiarize the rotational unit with the complexity of tactical operations under the constraints of peacetime rules of engagement (ROEs).

The research and planning that went into the creation of RSOI were based on

various documents, notably Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*; FM 100-17, *Mobilization, Deployment, Redeployment and Demobilization*; FM 100-17-1, *Army Prepositioned Afloat*; and FM 100-23, *Peace Operations*.

As outlined in FM 100-5, the stages of force projection are mobilization, deployment, entry operations, operations, post-conflict or post-crisis operations, redeployment, and demobilization. RSOI focuses on the deployment and entry operations stages. Only the rotational unit is in a position to assess its proficiency at mobilizing and demobilizing. The operations stage consists of conventional training in the NTC's live-fire and maneuver areas and therefore does not pertain to RSOI. Neither is the post-conflict or post-crisis stage currently addressed in RSOI.

The unit examines aspects of its own deployment, including predeployment activities, movement to ports of embarkation, and strategic airlift. On arriving in theater, the unit is observed by logisticians, technicians, and trainers at the NTC as it enters the RSOI phase of its training and conducts entry operations.

In replicating Irwin Military City and the theater logistics base in the Republic

of Mojave, the NTC represents a semi-mature theater. Accordingly, the rotational unit conducts unopposed entry operations as soon as it arrives. Unit requirements in this regard include:

Protect the force. Protecting the force includes such unit actions as the operation of a checkpoint, reconnaissance and security of routes, fratricide prevention, enforcement of safety standards, conduct of preventive medicine, activation of air defense measures, conduct of liaison with local authorities, and exercise of sound operations security (OPSEC).

Assist Forward-Presence or Host Nation Forces. This involves many potential missions. Among them are relief in place, clearing obstacles and mines, delivering supplies, securing borders, routes, and lodgments, and conducting show-of-force operations.

Build combat capability. Building combat capability includes coordinating with the theater logistics base, conducting large-unit supply operations, constituting CSS units rapidly to support the overall effort, drawing equipment, training personnel, and conducting marshalling activities to integrate combat-ready personnel and equipment. The preferred method is to approach this task by building combat-capable units over time with standards and goals specified and tracked by the brigade chain-of-command. The average length of time consumed by rotational units in building the entire brigade combat team at the NTC is six days (D-7 to D-2, Sunday to Friday, the day before move-out).

Reconfigure. Reconfiguring encompasses tailoring the force to the mission, task organizing, prioritizing the effort to build combat-capable units, and establishing command, control, communications, and intelligence as rapidly as possible. Both the plan and the method of task organization in relation to the equipment draw are vital issues for the unit to resolve before its arrival at the NTC.

Acclimatize. Acclimatization is a complex process. To operate effectively in a foreign theater, troops must adjust to the physical environment (climate,

weather, and terrain). They must also be sensitive to the cultural environment, understanding social, political, economic, and religious factors that characterize the geographical area in which they are operating.

Train. Training entails all of the actions that make a unit combat ready. In the context of force projection, some of the more important topics include actions on contact, ROEs, Status of Forces Agreement provisions and stipulations, OPSEC, noncombatant evacuation operations, crowd or riot control, and reaction to the news media. Conventional combat training must also continue as the unit conducts marshalling activities. As always, safety remains a top training priority.

From the moment a unit arrives at the aerial port of debarkation until redeployment, it engages in force protection and acclimatization. These are processes that never stop. Building combat power, reconfiguration, and training occur once the unit enters its staging area. Soon afterward, the brigade combat team must be prepared to assist forward-presence or host nation forces. This means the unit must be able to provide tactical support before it has completed staging operations at the brigade level. It also explains why combat organizations are built incrementally, so as to make available some combat capability (a certain number of companies or teams) for rapid deployment as quickly as possible.

The notional command structure that drives RSOI parallels that of a unified and specified command and is therefore joint in nature. The commanding general of the NTC serves as commander-in-chief of the U.S. Irwin Command. The commander of the operations group assumes the role of commander of JTF Mojave and U.S. Army forces. There are also Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Special Operations commands.

RSOI allows the rotational brigade to exercise a "road to war" timeline. While attending the Leader's Training Program at the NTC, the unit's command and staff element receives an RSOI orientation briefing. After returning to

home station, the unit begins to get into the RSOI scenario for planning purposes.

Using a "D-Day" vernacular to standardize the overall training timetable (D-Day is Training Day One—the first conventional battle against hostile forces), the scenario begins to develop as follows:

D-100. The final NTC scenario is approved by the appropriate division chain-of-command in coordination with the Operations Group planning staff.

D-90. The unit receives from the NTC a Joint Chiefs of Staff alert order signaling possible deployment to Mojave to deter or counter aggression from Krasnovia.

D-45. The unit receives a JCS deployment order directing its operational control relationship with the 52d Infantry Division and deployment to the host nation.

D-7. The unit's advance party begins to arrive in theater. The JCS alert order includes an island study of Tierra del Diablo and a news network video tape providing extensive background information. The JCS deployment order contains another news update and an intelligence estimate.

The RSOI week timeline is a new feature of NTC rotations. Beginning on D-9, the unit receives a warning order for a specific mission to be executed before move-out. On D-6 the unit chain of command meets the U.S. Ambassador to Mojave and receives an RSOI fragmentary order in the JTF headquarters located in Irwin Military City. That same day, the unit backbriefs the JTF commander on its concept of operation pertaining to the RSOI mission and its method and plan for building and tracking combat power. From D-7 to D-2, the unit receives strategic updates from the 52d Infantry Division staff and briefs the JTF commander daily on progress in building combat power.

The 52d Division issues the first operations order for the rotation on D-3. On D-2, a tactical mission is executed. Also, OC teams conduct RSOI after-action reviews (AARs) at

the battalion, task force, and separate company levels, and the unit receives its last strategic update before deployment. On D-1, a brigade-level RSOI AAR is conducted by the operations group commander. Attendees include the brigade commander, executive officer, S-1, S-3, S-4, task force and battalion commanders, and separate company commanders.

Observer controllers assigned to NTC observe the unit during RSOI and provide feedback to unit leaders through the AAR process. To gain a comprehensive view of unit activities during RSOI, the OCs use the following frame of reference:

Intelligence. Strategic and tactical information processing.

Building Logistics Power. Large-unit supply actions, such as breaking down and issuing supply commodity items; theater logistics base interface, including the opening of theater accounts.

Training. ROEs, safety, environment, and other critical subjects.

Building Combat Power. Marshalling activities, equipment-personnel integration, staging area operations.

Force Protection. OPSEC, sensitive item and ammunition security, and movement control in staging area.

Battle Command. "See Yourself" issues (nature, condition, status).

Keys to success during RSOI include developing and implementing a plan for building combat power and a system for tracking such an effort. Intermediate goals, established by the chain of command, help measure progress and facilitate the adjustment of priorities during RSOI. Additionally, it is important to brief soldiers on the in-country political and tactical situations so they know the larger themes that drive the scenario; that is, the reason for deployment and the names of the countries involved, as well as friendly and potential enemy forces. The degree to which the

unit has been briefed becomes apparent when news media representatives from the fictitious network interview soldiers and their leaders at all levels and ask questions pertaining to these very issues.

RSOI is the primary vehicle through which force projection doctrine is trained at the NTC. In time, it will have a decisive effect on the Army's ability to conduct unopposed theater entry operations around the world. As more units experience RSOI as a standard feature of NTC rotations, it will also become an integral part of their home-station training. Along with other adjustments made to address a changing world situation, RSOI training at the NTC is a stepping stone to a new era in the combat readiness of the force.

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OPFOR Tactical Reconnaissance

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Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the threat once posed by those entities no longer exists in the form we can recall from a decade ago. Many vestiges of both systems remain, however, in the doctrine and equipment of today's potential threats to world stability. For that reason, the National Training Center (NTC) is patterning its opposing force (OPFOR) on the doctrine and organizations of foreign armies and not just one particular nation, to prepare units undergoing training at the NTC to deal with future adversaries.

Units conducting operations at the NTC soon learn that advancing without

the intelligence provided by reconnaissance means taking unnecessary chances—often with catastrophic results. They also learn that the OPFOR itself places extensive emphasis on reconnaissance. This article will briefly discuss one divisional reconnaissance variant, although OPFOR deployed assets may vary based upon the tactical situation.

Tactical Reconnaissance

The purpose of tactical reconnaissance is to support the operations of units at division level and below. These operations are limited to the tactical depth of the battlefield (50-100

kilometers). At the tactical level, OPFOR ground forces employ a variety of small reconnaissance and security groupings that are tasked and tailored to meet the specific needs of the tactical commander.

The OPFOR uses the principles of *focus, continuity, aggressiveness, reliability, accuracy, timeliness, secrecy,* and *reserves* to guide its reconnaissance activities. It strives to achieve these both simultaneously and continuously on the NTC battlefield.

The NTC OPFOR doctrinally employs four methods of reconnaissance: *observation, raids, ambush,* and *reconnaissance by combat.* In the