



INFILTRATION ATTACKS: PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARTIN N. STANTON

The light infantry has wrestled with the conduct of infiltration attacks ever since the 10,000-man light division was established in the mid-1980s. In a doctrinal environment that included such things as the “expanding torrent attack” and the “inverted web defense,” the concept of infiltration attacks seemed to fit quite well.

We have tried an array of techniques—infiltration lanes, rally points, assembly points, hide positions, squad-platoon-company, and so on. The whole concept took on an aspect of “attack by escape-and-evasion.” The results were often frustrating and

sometimes downright disappointing. Leaders would survey the wreckage of their best-laid plans and wonder what had gone wrong; some were professionally shaken by their inability to conduct infiltration attacks.

The concept of an infiltration attack involves formations of troops bypassing enemy formations by stealth, either to attack those formations from an unexpected direction or to attack other enemy formations and installations behind them. The attack usually—but not always—involves breaking a unit down into smaller subordinate groups (squads or platoons) to avoid de-

tection by the enemy. This, in turn, requires reassembly at a designated place, orientation on the objective, and a coordinated attack at the designated time.

What we are doing, then, is breaking down units into numerous elements, making command and control more difficult from the outset. It is unrealistic to put those elements into a clandestine movement to sneak past the enemy and expect everyone to be at the appointed place, in the middle of the night, in time to reorganize and orient for the attack.

These facts sum up the problem with infiltration attacks. Although they depend upon stealth, it's hard to sneak a large unit through an enemy's security zone or positions. If a unit disperses and infiltrates in smaller groups, it faces the twin problems of reassembly and orientation onto the objective (can it be done in time?) and having enough combat power to react to chance contacts (a battalion broken down into squads can be destroyed piecemeal if its infiltration lanes are compromised).

Therefore, the key consideration is how far to break down the battalion. Some of the considerations are shown in Table 1. Each level of organization has its advantages and its risks.

Although this is not addressed in current doctrine, I believe infiltration attacks can further be broken down into the two sub-categories of close and deep infiltration attacks.

Close infiltration attacks are those whose purpose is to bypass the enemy security zone and conduct surprise attacks on the enemy's first or second echelon defensive belts. The attacks are conducted within range of supporting friendly artillery and, once initiated, are supported with fires in the manner of normal deliberate attacks. They usually take only one night's movement and do not require a unit to carry large amounts of Class I supplies (subsistence items) or any resupply before linkup with converging forces.

Deep infiltration attacks, on the other hand, are those whose objectives are beyond artillery range and whose infiltration phase may take several days, or even weeks. These attacks are

A good example of a deep infiltration attack is the attack of the 5307th Composite Regiment (otherwise known as "Galahad" or "Merrill's Marauders") on Myitkyina in Burma during World War II.

normally intended to achieve a larger tactical or operational objective and are part of a scheme of maneuver at division level (or higher). A good example of a deep infiltration attack is the attack of the 5307th Composite Regiment (otherwise known as "Galahad" or "Merrill's Marauders") on Myitkyina in Burma during World War II.

Deep infiltration attacks are hampered by logistical requirements. Units normally have to carry large amounts of Class I or rely on aerial resupply with the corresponding risk of compromise. Casualty evacuation is also more complex. The unit conducting deep infiltrations needs to be issued special communications and mobility equipment because of the distances

	MASS		DISPERSION	
Ease of enemy acquisition	More	Less	Less	More
Vulnerability to chance contact	Less	More	More	Less
Difficulty of reassembly	Less	More	More	Less

Table 1. Deciding how far to break down the battalion.

	SQD	PLT	CO	BN
Communications (PRC-77 or SINGARS)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
FO/FIST Team	No	Maybe	Yes	Yes
Multiple maneuver elements	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Medic	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Antiarmor capability	AT-4	AT-4 Dragon	AT-4 Dragon	Dragon TOW
Organic indirect fire capability	No	No	Yes	Yes

Table 2. Analyzing capabilities of the infiltrating unit by size.

involved and the limitations of the unit's own equipment.

To better understand the full complexity of an infiltration attack, let's look at some of the specific considerations that face unit commanders and planners in preparing for one. These considerations, discussed by battlefield operating system (BOS), reflect my own personal observation and study. Although they are by no means a final solution, they may serve as a departure point for further study.

Intelligence

Like any other operation, an infiltration attack is apt to be more successful if it is based on accurate intelligence. Unfortunately, this information is not always available, especially for deep infiltration missions. Accurate templating of the enemy situation is key, because this may be all an infiltrating unit has to go on.

The template should include enemy dispositions and likely courses of action; for example, a forward slope defense or a reverse slope defense. The unit S-2 will use this template to build his reconnaissance and security plan on the objective. Key indicators as to the enemy course of action should be first on the S-2's reconnaissance and security plan tasks, because they will drive modifications to the basic scheme of maneuver that is briefed before line of departure (LD) time.

Scouts and designated reconnaissance personnel should begin infiltration at least one day ahead of the main body. Time can be well spent in a detailed surveillance of the objective if the scouts and other designated reconnaissance personnel can get there early. These soldiers can "proof" the infiltration lane and then call in updates to the infiltrating unit while it is moving to its attack or assault position.

The S-2 must travel with the command group on the deep infiltration. Unlike the deliberate attack or the close infiltration where the S-2 stays in the battalion main command post (CP), the S-2 and an assistant from the S-2 section must travel with the command group to provide his analysis during the orders process. Continuous intelligence updates from the scouts and higher sources will probably generate the requirement to do an update fragmentary order (FRAGO) upon reaching the objective area.

The scouts cannot get so close to the objective that they risk compromise. This is not the kind of situation that requires people sneaking in to read bumper numbers. Scouts must make maxi-

mum use of their telescopes and other stand-off acquisition devices. If adequate surveillance can be maintained from two kilometers away, so much the better.

Maneuver

In considering how far to divide a unit for infiltration, a key consideration is the capability of the individual units. For example, squads have the advantage of being small, but they have only limited ability to communicate and react to chance contact. Some of the key capabilities that could be required of infiltration units are listed in Table 2.

Squad infiltration offers stealth and survivability from indirect fires, but it has almost no other advantages in terms of reassembly and individual unit capabilities. Battalions are the most capable, of course, but also the easiest for the enemy to detect, acquire, and engage. The two organizations that are the most useful in infiltration attacks are therefore platoons and companies. Both have the advantage of a TOE (tables of organization and equipment) that allows for communications over extended distances. Both have the ability to call for and direct indirect fires, and both have multiple maneuver elements. The difference is in the amount of risk a planner is willing to accept in deciding whether to infiltrate by platoons or companies.

Regardless of the level of threat, the smallest organization that should be used for infiltration is a platoon. Platoons offer key advantages over squads in terms of command and control and ease of reassembly combined with survivability. Platoons are more capable of defending themselves in a chance contact and are only marginally easier to detect and engage than squads.

In organizing for movement, infiltrating units have to balance the amount of equipment to be carried against security. The sheer load to be carried drives the infiltrating units to designate point, flank, and rear security elements that are lightly loaded, and main body elements that are heavily loaded and moving in modified traveling (column) formation. This is more true of deep infiltrations than close ones, but even in close in-

Accurate templating of the enemy situation is key, because this may be all an infiltrating unit has to go on.

filtrations the problems of moving with heavily loaded troops should not be down-played. An attempt to keep perfect formations only slows the movement and causes confusion. The main body of each infiltrating unit must be almost in a linear column formation to facilitate movement and command and control. It is up to the security elements to keep the columns of heavily loaded men from being surprised and ambushed.

The infiltration of ground-mounted TOW antiarmor systems with a limited number of missiles can give an attacker a priceless advantage. This is especially true if the attacker can set up a support-by-fire position that has a vantage point over the objective area and into vehicle fighting positions. TOWs firing from

steep hillsides that vehicles cannot climb can achieve a devastating surprise effect.

Unfortunately, most infantry units consider carrying TOWs too hard, especially now that the TOW crew in a HMMWV (high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) has three members instead of four. But TOWs are still man-portable; it's just that the necessary resources must be provided.

A good rule-of-thumb is that it takes a full-strength infantry platoon to carry a TOW system and four missiles. The TOW system itself can be carried on two stretchers; four missiles

A good rule-of-thumb is that it takes a full-strength infantry platoon to carry a TOW system and four missiles.

can be carried on four more stretchers. The infantry can still carry enough munitions for the assault in terms of small-arms grenades and AT-4 antiarmor weapons. For a battalion to carry four TOW systems would take four platoons.

The positions for the TOWs should be reconnoitered by the scouts before the TOWs arrive at the support-by-fire position. The systems and their crews and missiles would be dropped off by the infantrymen, who would then go on to their other tasks. This technique for TOW systems could also be used for .50-caliber machineguns or MK-19 40mm grenade machineguns in an environment in which there is little or no armor threat.

The global positioning system (GPS), in the form of small lightweight GPS receivers (SLGRs), represents a revolution in a unit's ability to infiltrate in that it significantly reduces the chance of gross land navigation error. The SLGRs can also assist in linkup and therefore reduce linkup time. Units designated to conduct an infiltration should have their GPS TOE temporarily augmented to provide at least one system per platoon, one per scout squad, and one for the battalion command group and S-3. If more GPS units are available, they should go to the battalion medical and support platoons. The cross-leveling of GPS should be done early enough to enable the using units to test GPS and become familiar with it. Commanders must also ensure that the cross-attached GPSs are returned promptly to their parent units once the infiltration is finished.

Fire Support

In a close infiltration, the key to a successful movement to the objective area and the assault position could be counterbattery radar coverage. That is to say, the infiltrating unit may risk early discovery as long as it is covered by counterbattery radar and artillery units to respond against enemy indirect fires.

Although stealth is preserved as long as possible, the unit can infiltrate in larger groups to facilitate reassembly and orientation on the objective so it can respond to any chance contact. The infiltrating unit depends upon the radar-artillery team to destroy

the enemy indirect fire systems that are threatening them. Therefore, a key consideration is the dedication of radar assets to the infiltration effort and the positioning of radars to provide consistent coverage to the entire movement of the infiltrating unit.

Battalions and companies face hard choices when it comes to infiltrating their mortar platoons and sections. Neither the 81mm mortar platoon at battalion nor the 60mm mortar section at company has enough personnel to carry all of its TOE

The global positioning system represents a revolution in a unit's ability to infiltrate in that it significantly reduces the chance of gross land navigation error.

equipment for an extended distance. Commanders at both levels must therefore decide what to do: Leave half of the tubes behind (two 81mm mortars and one 60mm) so the platoon or section can carry some complete weapons, or detail additional infantry from the rifle platoons to carry the equipment that the mortar platoon and section personnel cannot.

If the answer is the second choice, then the commander has another choice to make: What other capability am I sacrificing (number of Dragon rounds carried) in order to carry all my mortars?

There is also the consideration of mortar ammunition. Which troops carry 81mm ammunition and which carry 60mm? How many rounds per man? One mortar round per man is no solution. Troops are heavily loaded with all sorts of equipment as it is. Automatically handing an 81mm round to a man already carrying 50 pounds of batteries and ammunition is not the answer. Load considerations are especially critical on deep infiltrations where troops must carry large amounts of Class I supplies and assorted personal survival gear.

Another issue that must be resolved is the effect desired on the objective. Will the mortars be used mainly for obscuration or illumination because artillery is in range, or are they going to be the only ground indirect fire system available? The answers to these questions will affect the mortar shell/fuse requirements and thus the ammunition load.

Deep infiltrations will take the units beyond the range of field artillery behind the FLOT (forward line of own troops). Fire support of infiltrating units, in this case, consists initially of organically carried assets and attack helicopters or close air support (CAS). The problem with this is that the CAS must be kept either in an on-station orbit behind the FLOT with a short time of flight to support the infiltrating unit or on strip alert with a correspondingly longer response time. The question is: How many air assets does a commander want to dedicate to this? Like anything else, it's a trade-off. Keeping a continuous CAS orbit on-station is costly in terms of dedicated aircraft that could be flying other missions. Keeping a strip alert package dedicated to the infiltrating unit frees aircraft to perform other missions but may lose critical minutes in supporting an infiltrating unit in a chance contact.

For attack helicopters, the consideration is more of a strip-alert one. How many will be dedicated to supporting the mission? Mass is a key consideration in attack helicopter operations. Because of the nature of these aircraft, at least an aviation company would be required to provide short-notice support to an infiltrating unit in contact; a battalion would be better.

In the case of both CAS and attack helicopters, other planning factors—such as coordinating suppression of enemy air defense and electronic warfare suppression to facilitate penetration of the FLOT by the aircraft—further complicate the overall scheme of maneuver and plan of operations and must be coordinated at senior tactical and even operational levels.

Finally, in missions in which the scheme of maneuver calls for linkup with ground maneuver forces, the infiltrating force can be supported by the artillery of the converging linkup force. This will require well-coordinated control measures as well as a clear delineation of the hand-off of priority of fires and the control of fires when both the infiltrating force and the converging force are in contact with the same enemy.

In actions on the objective, the infiltration attack is similar to any deliberate attack in its use of control measures. The control measures used during linkup between the infiltrating unit and the main attack are the same as those used between any two converging units. The big difference in fire control measures between deliberate attacks and infiltration attacks is in the infiltration phase.

The infiltration phase is when chance contact with the enemy is most likely. It is also the time when a unit is least likely to have full control of its subordinate infiltrating elements or accurate, up-to-the-minute positions on subordinate elements. In addition, chance contact in the infiltration phase is most likely at night. In short, we have a high potential for artillery fratricide and a fires clearance nightmare.

A solution to this would be to make the infiltration lane a restricted fire area (RFA) from LD to the assault position. This would require that all fires within the infiltration lane be cleared by the infiltrating unit's fire support element. It would not

Fire support of infiltrating units, in this case, consists initially of organically carried assets and attack helicopters or close air support.

impede engagement outside the infiltration lane but would add another check before an indirect fire engagement. The entire infiltration lane would not have to be an RFA all at once; it could be activated by phase line, with the RFA one phase line ahead of the lead element of the infiltration. A good rule-of-thumb is the more subordinate units in an infiltration lane, the harder it is to clear fires for a chance contact.

In an infiltration, air defense is limited to man-carried Stinger missiles and small arms air defense (SAAD). The number of Stingers carried normally depends on the length of the mission. On a close infiltration, two per team is usually enough.

This would give a battalion with an attached Stinger section 10 missiles with which to defend their force. If a linkup is to be effected shortly after the infiltration objective is seized, ten missiles would probably be enough.

The more complex question of carrying Stinger missiles occurs in deep infiltration missions. This is especially true in scenarios in which the enemy can employ fixed-wing and rotary aircraft to search for infiltrating units. In these situations, loads of three or four Stingers per team may be desir-

Light engineers on infiltration attacks are faced with the same weight issues as their infantry and air defense counterparts.

able. Again, it boils down to a decision based on METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time). The decision must be based on the weight of the Stinger missiles, the threat, the other requirements to carry munitions, and classes of supply. Carrying large numbers of Stingers can seriously overburden an infantry unit already trying to infiltrate with a heavy load. At the same time, enemy attack helicopters are a grave threat to an infiltrating unit; they can pin an infiltrating unit in place until forces can be massed to eliminate it. This is especially true in terrain that does not offer the infiltrating force continuous cover.

The air defense status for an infiltrating unit is basically one of "weapons hold." Units would not be cleared to engage air threats until they were under attack. A critical decision would be whether to engage aircraft that were attacking the infiltrating units with air defense assets that were in range but had not yet been discovered. In the assault phase and the consolidation on the objective phase when the clandestine nature of infiltration was no longer a factor, weapons control could be made more flexible to support the operation.

Of course, the best air defense during infiltration is still a passive one. Units conducting deep infiltrations in an air threat environment should take a page from a former enemy's book and have all soldiers carry camouflage matting on their backs so they can lie down and blend in almost instantly. Marine Corps General Louis B. "Chesty" Puller said of the Chinese communists in the Korean war: *They had a square of dirty white cloth and a straw mat they carried with them....They cover themselves with the cloth when there's snow, and a plane comes over. They can hide a whole division from us, right along this road. They use the straw on open ground.*

Mobility, Countermobility, Survivability

Light engineers on infiltration attacks are faced with the same weight issues as their infantry and air defense counterparts. This limitation is felt in all three aspects of engineer operations.

Some of the best engineer breaching equipment (bangalore torpedoes, mine detectors) is too heavy to carry for extended distances without the dedication of extra soldiers from the infantry. In these cases, breaching must be done by hand with limited

equipment. Antitank ditches have to be breached manually by digging down the sides with shovels. Unimpeded, an engineer squad can render an antitank ditch trafficable to armored vehicles in 10 to 15 minutes. Mines have to be cleared by probing and by individual demolition emplacement. Wire has to be breached by wire cutters and rope. All of these methods are high risk and manpower intensive. In addition, both engineers and infantrymen can use their carry stretchers as assault ladders to breach wire and cross trenches.

For mobility during infiltration, a unit relies largely on ropes for bridges and portage up steep hills. Depending on the number and the width of water obstacles to be encountered, the engineer unit may be tasked to carry a few small rubber boats (three-man) to expedite river crossings. These boats can be used to send out far-side security parties at water obstacles and then, once several one-rope bridges have been established, to ferry heavy equipment. Engineers might also be required to fill in holes along trails or to corduroy roads with trees as other mobility tasks. A deep infiltration may require the engineers to carry more *mobility* equipment (ropes, block and tackle, shovels, rubber boats, and saws) than actual breaching equipment (demolitions).

Units involved in an infiltration most need countermobility support in the consolidation on the objective phase. Few countermobility materials can be carried on an infiltration attack. Mines weigh a lot and, unless there is a very important avenue of approach that can be closed with less than a dozen, an infiltrating unit cannot carry enough to make a difference. The only realistic option for a hasty minefield to support an infiltrating unit's countermobility requirements is either artillery or air-delivered minefields. These, of course, come with danger-close and circular error probable restrictions that preclude their use as hasty protective minefields.

The infiltrating unit engineers can be used to reposition some of the previous defender's wire barriers. In addition, any enemy mines still stockpiled and not laid can be hastily integrated into the defense. Even surface-laid without fuses, they would have some deterrent effect. Units conducting consolidation on

The infiltrating unit is largely limited to what it can scavenge to improve its survivability status.

the objective should also look at making barriers out of captured vehicles and equipment.

These stop-gap measures are about the best an infiltrating unit can do until resupplied on the objective by either ground or air. From a countermobility standpoint, the most important thing to remember is that an infiltrating unit is largely dependent upon what is captured from the enemy or what can be delivered by indirect means to improve its defenses.

Survivability tasks are limited mainly to those that manpower can accomplish. Engineers and other units can break down enemy positions and use their building materials. In addition,

engineers can strip derelict vehicles and structures of materials to improve hasty defensive positions and use their saws to cut trees. Once again, the infiltrating unit is largely limited to what it can scavenge to improve its survivability status.

Nuclear, Biological, Chemical

A light infantry unit has only a limited ability to survive in an NBC environment. An infiltrating unit probably cannot afford to carry all of its NBC defense equipment because of weight. It is therefore best for the unit to avoid fighting in an NBC environment, if at all possible, even to the point of radically altering the infiltration scheme of maneuver to avoid contaminated areas.

Persistent chemical contamination is the greatest NBC threat to an infiltrating unit, because it has both an area hazard and a downwind hazard. An infiltrating unit can avoid actual contact with a persistent agent and still take casualties from its vapors. A persistent agent placed along likely routes of infiltration could significantly disrupt an infiltration attack.

To combat this, in an NBC threat environment the lead elements on each infiltration lane should carry M-8 alarms and wear NBC suits if at all possible. Except for the M-8 and NBC test kits, this element should be as lightly loaded as possible. The lead element should be far enough in front of the other infiltrating units that adequate warning can be provided if a contaminated area is encountered. The actual distance would, of course, depend on terrain and weather.

Upon encountering a persistent agent contaminated area, the lead element should immediately begin to reconnoiter the area to determine its extent. Bypasses must be out of enemy observation and out of the downwind hazard as well. What might otherwise seem like the best bypass route may not be practical if it exposes the infiltrating unit to downwind contamination.

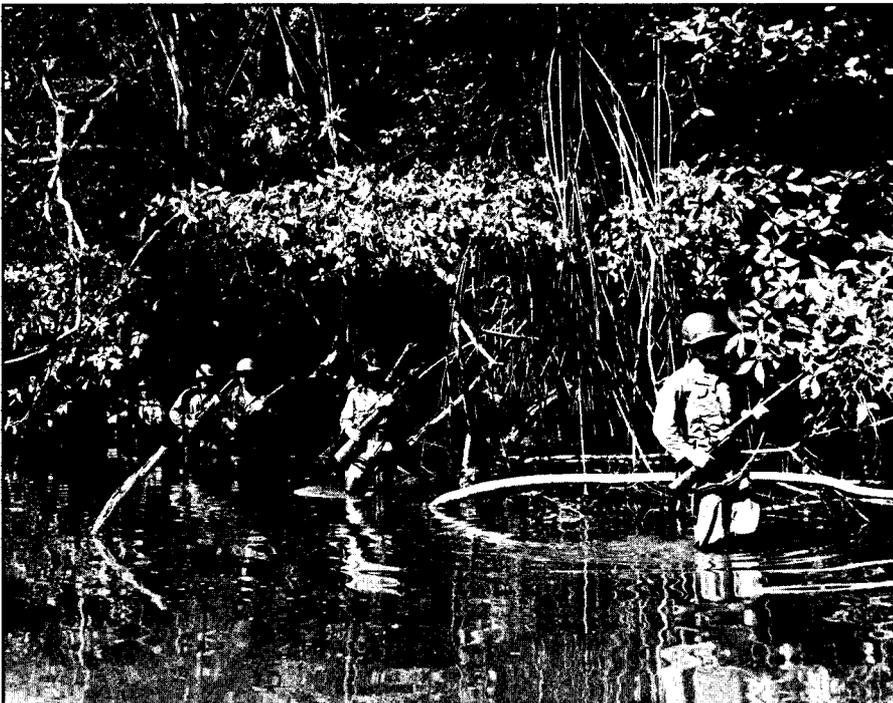
The decision on whether or not to carry or wear NBC suits is critical in an NBC environment. It is not too far-fetched to say that a *deep* infiltration attack may not be possible in terrain riddled with multiple persistent contaminated areas. The weight of the additional NBC equipment, combined with the difficulty of decontaminating while in the infiltration lane and handling contaminated casualties, just makes the entire effort too difficult and risky. In an environment of heavy NBC use, *close* infiltrations are still possible. This is especially true in a moderate-to-cool temperature that allows troops to wear their NBC suits for the short-duration movement.

Decontamination during the movement must be limited to the individual decontamination of personnel and equipment. Personnel have to be careful not to use areas for decontamination that other infiltrating units will be passing through, or use water sources that other units will pass through or use. NBC contaminated casualties must be consolidated and their location passed on to either the converging units or to higher headquarters to arrange for helicopter extraction if possible.

Combat Service Support

Combat service support (CSS) assets in infiltration attacks are divided into two groups—what the infiltrating unit brings with it and what is provided to it enroute and on the objective—because the infiltrating unit can only carry so much. At the same time, CSS assets (such as the battalion aid station) that cannot be infiltrated may be badly needed and not immediately available. The decision on what the unit should bring along is very much dependent upon METT-T. The thought processes for a close infiltration attack are very different from those for a deep one.

A close infiltration's limited duration normally means that Class I is not a problem, but water can continue to be a critical



Soldiers trained to conduct infiltration attacks must be able to move undetected in small groups and across difficult terrain. These soldiers, operating in the Pacific Theater of World War II, demonstrate the stealth and alertness that such operations demand.

factor, particularly in hot weather. The emphasis in load can be on weapons and ammunition and special equipment to support the assault. Resupply and casualty evacuation can be done by the converging forces or by the infiltrating unit's combat trains following the leading elements of the converging forces.

Some of the major considerations are medical and classes of supply and maintenance.

In close infiltration, casualties incurred in movement are consolidated at casualty collection points (CCPs) along the infiltration route. These casualties are normally evacuated by elements of the battalion medical platoon or, for litter-urgent

Combat service support assets in infiltration attacks are divided into two groups—what the infiltrating unit brings with it and what is provided to it enroute and on the objective.

cases, by air evacuation. The problem is that, to preserve the clandestine nature of the movement, this evacuation cannot normally take place before the attack is initiated. Elements of the battalion medical platoon should follow the lead battalion in the converging forces so as to reach the CCPs along the infiltration route as soon as possible.

In actions on the objective, casualties should be consolidated as close as possible to the objective but far enough away from any breaches or lanes in obstacles on the objective to avoid any enemy indirect fires that might be called onto these locations. This positioning is intended to facilitate treatment by both the infiltrating aid station and the converging unit combat trains that will displace forward to the vicinity of the breach. Every effort should be made to coordinate the treatment of the infiltrating unit's wounded with the converging forces' aid facilities. Infiltrating unit commanders and subordinates must fully understand the converging unit's casualty evacuation plan they can take full advantage of it.

The replenishment of classes of supply and maintenance of equipment generally occurs after the mission is complete and the combat trains of the infiltrating unit move forward (or the unit is transported from the objective to link up with the combat trains in an assembly area). Emergency resupply of items such as ammunition and water can be coordinated with the converging units if the possibility exists that both the infiltrating and the converging units will end up fighting side by side on the same objective.

In deep infiltrations, CSS is more complex because of the larger sustainment load that must be carried—not only Class I but also expendable supply items that add significant weight (radio and night-vision-device batteries). Units conducting deep infiltrations must balance the sustainment load against the fighting load. A unit carrying insufficient Class I will have to be resupplied by helicopter or parachute drop, with all the possible compromises in security that such actions entail. On the other hand, it will do little good to infiltrate for 10 days without enough weapons and ammunition to fight. Ideally, the infiltrating unit reduces its sustainment load, going short

on food (one or two MREs per day for up to two weeks) in order to carry enough munitions. Leaders have to watch their troops to see that they do not eat all their rations days before resupply. Once the attack is initiated, resupply can be effected by parachute or helicopter or by the converging unit.

The most critical single item is water. If no potable water source is found along the route and an infiltrating unit must depend upon the water it carries, resupply will be essential after only a few days. The weight of the water required will probably exceed anything else the unit might carry. Long-range infiltrations such as the assault on Myitkyina were possible because water was available along the route. Without it, an unresupplied deep infiltration is impractical.

Casualties incurred on a deep infiltration should be carried to the objective with the unit if at all possible. If not, they should be consolidated at CCPs designated along the route. (This is assuming, of course, that the infiltration effort continues. If it is aborted due to contact or other difficulties, casualties should either be carried out with the unit or by medical evacuation personnel.) These casualties should be evacuated by either air or ground elements of the converging attack. If air evacuation is used, the infiltrating unit should be as far from the landing site as possible. Ideally, the CCP should wait at least a day after the infiltrating unit has passed before evacuating the casualties.

CCPs used along the route of march must have adequate communications left with them to coordinate evacuations. Because it is hard for the medical and security teams to catch up to the infiltrating unit, which has up to a day's head start, they should be extracted with the casualties. Those evacuated with the casualties should be reinserted on the objective in the first aerial resupply during the consolidation phase.

Currently, the main approach to the man-portage of equipment is to break the equipment down and carry it in individual loads. This is difficult, especially for items that weigh a lot and are awkward to carry, such as missiles, weapons, and supplies. Each of these loads broken down to an individual must be loaded into an individual soldier's pack along with his equipment. This requires a great deal of attention to who has what, along with continual reshuffling of loads from one rucksack to

In actions on the objective, the infiltration attack is similar to any deliberate attack in its use of control measures.

the next if the infiltrating unit takes casualties enroute.

One way to simplify the portage of supplies and equipment is to carry them on stretchers. A TOW missile strapped to a stretcher is 26 pounds for two men or 13 pounds for four. This method has the added advantage of allowing troops to drop their burden and react faster to tactical emergencies. It also makes it easier for leaders to redistribute loads in the event of casualties. The trade-offs are, of course, poor security in move-

ment and the need for increased emphasis on point, flank, and rear security to keep the column from being caught in close formation.

Individual stretcher loads should be limited to 120 pounds per stretcher, and every effort should be made to make each stretcher a four-man carry. A yoke system could be devised to allow the weight of the stretcher to be carried on the shoulders of the soldiers instead of their arms. The soldiers could also trade off sides of the stretcher to give their arms a rest. The equipment or supplies would be attached to the stretchers with general-purpose straps. Depending on the duration of the mission and the equipment required, a battalion conducting an infiltration could carry equipment on 40 to 60 stretchers. A company could carry 10 to 15 and a platoon from three to six. In addition to their use as portage, the stretchers could be used as assault ladders to breach wire in the assault phase and to assist in consolidation and care of casualties in the consolidation phase of actions on the objective.

Command and Control

Command and control (C2) operations for infiltration attacks are similar to those for any other tactical operation. But organization for command and control is different because of the separation of vehicle and man-portable radio assets and the distances involved. This organization is different for close and deep operations.

Close infiltration operations are normally controlled by FM radio, both within the infiltrating unit and externally with higher headquarters and converging units. No special augmentation to the infiltrating unit's TOE is normally necessary. An infiltrating unit can reduce its radio-electronic signature by using directional antennas (vertical half rhombic, erected with camouflage screen poles and green tape) and extend its range by using relay or retransmission.

The command group is normally split, with the commander and fire support representatives moving with one unit and the S-3 traveling in a vehicle at least one terrain feature back. The rationale for this is that man-portable radios may not always be able to reach everyone necessary. It is important to put at least one soldier who is fully read into the plan in a position to talk to everyone and coordinate. The battalion main CP remains behind in the LD to coordinate activities between the infiltrating unit and the other elements of friendly maneuver and fire support. The main CP normally displaces to link up with the battalion in the consolidation phase on the objective.

In deep infiltrations, the battalion command group is to be augmented with personnel from the main CP to facilitate C2 operations over extended time periods. The battalion XO travels with the infiltrating unit, leaving the HHC commander with the main CP and the combat trains behind the LD. The command group consists of the S-3 and S-2, along with the FSO, their NCOs, and enlisted assistants. The command group carries enough supplies and equipment to conduct planning and C2 operations. The XO travels separately from the command group with a smaller C-2 cell and acts as a redundant C2 node.

The infiltrating unit would use FM to communicate internally but would employ long-range communications such as tactical satellites (TACSATs) to communicate with higher headquarters. An infiltrating unit should have at least one TACSAT link per company and two per command group. The loss of long-range communications must be avoided at all costs. Lost contact drills and procedures must be established and practiced between the infiltrating unit and its higher headquarters well before LD time. Designated areas must be set up for panel signals to cover activities and intentions in the event communications are lost. Also, designated times should be set up for FM communications with aircraft sent over to reestablish contact.

Infiltration attacks are difficult, highly complex operations that require extensive planning and coordination. Their high-risk nature makes them relatively rare forms of maneuver, especially deep infiltration attacks. Units that are serious about conducting them should consider devoting large amounts of training time to develop and sustain proficiency. In actual combat, a unit designated to conduct an infiltration attack should be identified as early as possible and pulled off the line to practice.

In attempting to make the infiltration attack just one of many mission essential tasks over the years, we have overlooked its complexity. An infiltration attack is not something that can be attempted on the spur of the moment. Only through careful planning and meticulous preparation can it hope to succeed.

Lieutenant Colonel Martin N. Stanton served in the 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, in Somalia. He previously served in the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry, at Fort Lewis, and is now assistant J-5, U.S. Central Command. He is a 1978 ROTC graduate of Florida Technological University.

