

TRAINING NOTES



Situational Training Exercises In Stability and Support Operations

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Now, more than ever, infantry units are deployed to stability and support operations in which the goal is peacekeeping, peacemaking, or peace enforcement.

Recent operations in Somalia and Haiti, and now Bosnia, show that such operations are the future of the Army's force projection. The problem is that the Army has never given these missions the training time they deserve. And the primary reason for this is that these missions do not appear on the unit mission essential task list (METL). Just because they are not on the METL, however, is no reason that units should not train and prepare for them.

The best way to solve this problem would be to publish a standard mission training plan (MTP) that addresses the requirements of stability and support operations. Until then, commanders must provide their soldiers with training and knowledge that will prepare them for these nontraditional missions. The infantry company commander can develop sound training from the conventional principles he already uses.

One of the most profitable ways to train is through situational training exercises (STXs). These exercises are critical to training for today's new missions, and many units are developing STXs for such

possible situations. This article will discuss methods for practicing and developing appropriate training techniques at the tactical level.

The commander must include training for stability and support operations as part of the company's METL, describing it as a broad task so that it includes all of the possible missions. It is his responsibility to determine the battle tasks that should fall under the mission essential task. The next critical step is to lock-in time on the training calendar. At this point, these contingencies have become a "real" mission for the company and can be trained on accordingly. Following this, the commander reviews the battle tasks and determines the conditions and standards for each. Associated with each of these tasks should also be a checklist of subtasks and standards. The significant difference here is that there are no field manuals or published list of subtasks to study. One way to develop the list of subtasks may be from studying the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) reports on Haiti and Somalia. This organization publishes some tactical tips on dealing with stability and support operational missions.

When it is finally time to start training on these tasks, the commander must clarify one very important point: that

these operations are absolutely different from any other kind of warfare an infantryman has ever experienced, and that the rules of engagement (ROEs) drive everything. They protect the soldier from the citizen by means of self defense, and protect the citizen from possible unwarranted aggressive actions by the soldier. The rules must be reinforced throughout the entire training process.

The significance of the ROEs cannot be stressed enough. They are the guide for executing any stability and support mission. They are so important that it may become necessary to have someone from the Judge Advocate General (JAG) corps come and explain the ROE process to the company. And when it comes time to conduct training, it will be helpful to have a JAG representative present to assist in ROE development and ensure ROE compliance. He may prove invaluable in the after-action review process and in Law of Land Warfare training. In any event, every tactic the platoons develop must stay within the boundaries of the ROEs. It is the commander's responsibility to see that it does.

In starting off, it may be helpful for the company to divide the work, while building company cohesion and expertise. In other words, assign each platoon a type

of task that supports a possible mission of stability and support operations, and let them develop tactics and training for that task. Once a platoon has become the subject-matter expert for that task, they can begin training the other platoons by means of situational training exercises (STXs). For instance, 1st Platoon can study checkpoint operations, 2d Platoon can develop patrolling techniques, and 3d Platoon can concentrate on convoy security. Other areas to be studied should be evenly divided throughout the unit.

Where do we find these situations? If there is someone in the unit who has experience with operations of this nature, find out who they are. If not, CALL continually publishes reports on missions involving stability and support operations; for instance, CALL Publication No. 93-1, Somalia, contains a section on STX training. Here is a list of situations our soldiers have encountered in Somalia and Haiti:

- Refugee relocation.
- Drive-by shooting.
- Finding a dead body.
- Civilian casualty.
- Projectiles thrown.
- Belligerent roadblock demanding tolls.
- Appeal for medical assistance.
- Civilian criminal apprehended.
- Land mine discovered.
- Weapons discovered at checkpoint.

Someone must respond to each of these situations, but the platoon leader or commander may not be present to direct the response. The individual soldier must therefore be trained to respond in a manner consistent with the ROEs and the commander's intent.

In a way, this training is already conducted in the Army. For example, when the commander becomes a casualty, the executive officer (XO) has to take over. This situational training gives the XO an opportunity to deal with an ever-changing situation. He learns from it and will be more confident in his response if placed in that situation again. Squad leaders and individual soldiers need to have the same experience to develop confidence. Today's infantry soldier is smart and resourceful. He needs opportunities to use his own initiative in furthering the

commander's intent, within the ROE. And this is an important goal of STXs.

The following patrolling scenario may serve as a test case for the way the ROEs will control a soldier's menu of responses:

A squad is responsible for patrolling a four-square-block area in a city. There are two primary routes into the area; the rest are alleyways and dead ends. The squad's mission is to remove belligerent roadblocks and checkpoints from the area and maintain a force to deter future placement of them. During one of the dismounted patrols, the squad runs into a roadblock. The four civilians have placed a car across the road and are inspecting all vehicles that come into the area. Specifically, they are looking for weapons or contraband and occasionally stealing money from the detainees. They are all armed with AK47 and M16 rifles. They have one rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

What does the squad leader do?

Any reaction must meet the requirements of the ROE and the mission, and soldiers can develop this skill through STX training. For instance, if the response is to set up a base of fire and assault across the road block, then the commander does not intend to find a peaceful resolution and improved relations. The following reaction, on the other hand, reflects the commander's real intent of maintaining peace and sustaining the force:

- Report the situation.
- Request an interpreter to support the action.
- Set up the support team in a position to provide fire support.
- The search team approaches the road block in a non-hostile manner (smiling, not pointing weapon).
- The squad leader and interpreter approach the civilians; the search team stands off and observes. They are looking for an intent to move to hostilities.
- Ask why they have set up a road block.
- Listen to what they say. Find out their reason for doing it; it may be that peacekeeping forces could take on this mission.
- Inform the civilians of the rules (that road blocks are not authorized under the

present agreement between forces). Attempt to reach a peaceful resolution (it may include a guns-for-money swap).

The point is that the squad leader needs to know what measures the commander has authorized for dealing with the civilian population.

This last scenario, while exhaustive, will occur in some form during stability and support operations. And it incorporates many other issues of operations other than war—negotiations, patience, and understanding of how to operate under the ROEs. It is important for soldiers to see how the "approved solution" demonstrates the commander's interpretation of the ROEs. Again, the overall intent of the STX is to allow the squads to train as squads, while allowing the commander the opportunity to trouble-shoot the soldiers' responses to the ROE and the operational environment.

In conducting this kind of training, MILES equipment is invaluable. The company will also need volunteers to serve as the opposing force and appropriate equipment and dress (civilian attire, foreign weapons, and an automobile). One asset that is found on every post is military police support. Military policemen have received extensive training, through STXs, on disarming hostile suspects, negotiations, self defense, and the use of force. Their support and guidance will prove very useful to the training.

Another asset may be found within the company: soldiers who have foreign language skills. An interpreter may not always be available. From time to time, include soldiers from other branches and specialties to assist in the training. These might include civil affairs, psychological operations, or engineers. When possible, recruit support from the families in the company to act as civilian bystanders. Not only will this improve the reality of the training, but it will give the families an appreciation for what their soldiers are doing.

For this training to be effective, the members of each platoon do not need to see their comrades' performance initially; but the time will come when they need to learn from the others' successes and mistakes. To support this idea, the opposing force should present the same

situation and planned responses to each squad. While a squad is going through, the other squads are often left out of the training and therefore miss an opportunity to learn. The negotiations should be videotaped for the benefit of later review. After each squad has moved through the STX, immediately move to a classroom where the squads can watch and critique their own performance and that of the other squads. It is critical at this time that the leader explain how certain responses either supported or violated the commander's intent and the ROEs. A violation of the ROEs should be taken extremely seriously. Another approach might be to stop the scenario as an ROE violation occurs and address it immediately.

There are several ways to "spice up" the scenario. First, change the initial response the civilians give—have them disband peacefully or open fire. Then add a nosy civilian crowd that keeps wanting to see what is going on, children running around the area, dogs, and other things that will tend to distract the soldiers. The

closer the situation is to real life, the better prepared the soldiers will be. Remember to make it easy at first and then gradually more difficult. Once the desired response from your subordinates has been achieved, it must be rehearsed as a battle drill.

Another way to reinforce this training is to publish short summaries of the situation and the response. Before a deployment, the squads and platoons can pull out these sheets and refresh their memories on the appropriate responses and how the ROEs were reflected. Here also the platoons can share information on their specific areas of expertise (cordon and search, convoys, checkpoints, and the like).

Training to successfully execute stability and support operations requires a certain mindset. As soon as a unit finds out it will be involved in such a mission, the leaders must begin developing that mental readiness. The more time a unit can spend going over ROEs and conducting STXs, the better.

Commanders and leaders will recog-

nize the training principles of this kind of training from traditional METL training. The ideas and characteristics are similar, but the situations are quite different. Trainers must always go back to the goal of STX training, which is empowering our individual soldiers with the ability to think under the stresses of stability and support operations, the tenacity to react to the difficult situations it presents, and the initiative to meet mission requirements while sustaining the force.

The missions of the future may well be more diverse and demanding than ever before, but—with the training that situational training exercises can provide—the U.S. Army will be ready to deploy, do the job right the first time, and return home.

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Field Trains and the BSA

What Each Should Expect from the Other

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Most battalion task forces operate their field trains out of the brigade support area (BSA). The BSA, which is the base of operations for the forward support battalion (FSB), is designed to afford the best mix of rear area defense and brigade maneuver task force sustainment. Although some field trains commanders see problems with this arrangement, I believe that view is based on a misunderstanding of what the field trains owe the BSA and

what they are entitled to expect in return.

Pushing critical support from the BSA forward to a maneuver task force is demanding, even under the best of circumstances; it is further complicated by terrain, weather, enemy attacks, or nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) operations. In the middle of this tough situation is a maneuver battalion headquarters and headquarters company (HHC) commander who is often being pulled in sev-

eral different directions at once.

His task force commander and staff expect him to push combat service support (CSS) forward quickly. The FSB commander, being responsible for BSA security and staff, also expects the field trains commander to participate fully in rear area defense. The HHC's own task force commander may or may not fully support the field trains' participation in rear defense operations.