

The Battalion TACSOP

A New Approach

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When I assumed command of an infantry battalion, I faced a situation common to many new commanders. The battalion tactical standing operating procedure (TACSOP) volume was more than ten years old. To complicate matters, the version the battalion was using (1986) did not have a supersession statement or a letter of promulgation. Therefore, many in the battalion were still using the even older 1983 version. Clearly, the time had come to republish the TACSOP. As we began to rewrite the TACSOP, the staff came to the conc-

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fusion that most TACSOPs followed basically the same standard format. This format usually involved going into successive tabs, appendices, annexes, to extract the needed information or report,

which seemed both time-consuming and difficult. I therefore charged my staff to develop a TACSOP format that was easy to use while still containing all the items we needed to accomplish our combat

mission. What we developed is, I believe, a unique way to structure the standard TACSOP.

Our TACSOP is divided into three major sections: the TACSOP it-

self, reports, and checklists. Each major section is subdivided into nine sections based on what we call the BOS (battlefield operating systems) Plus: Command and control, Maneuver, Fire Support, Intelligence, NBC, Engineer, Air Defense, Logistics, and Personnel and Administration. These sub-sections appear in the same order in each of the three major areas. The sub-sections are structured roughly in the order of importance required for combat operations.

Examples of the table of contents for each major section are shown here. This TACSOP allows a user to go to the sections needed immediately without having to read through text to find the needed information, reports, or checklists. For example, a commander who wanted to know how the battalion uses

engineer assets would turn to Section I F. If that same commander needed to know the engineer reports required, he would go to Section II-F, and checklists for engineer operations would be found in Section III-F.

Each section has its own, more detailed, table of contents with bullet comments that correspond to paragraphs in the sub-sections. The pages for each BOS sub-section are numbered sequentially. New or updated reports and checklists can easily be inserted without disturbing the rest of the TACSOP.

With this format, a new company commander who receives a change of mission in the middle of the night can go quickly to the applicable checklist, begin the troop leading procedures required for that mission, render any report necessary, and then go to the text

for more detailed information on that operation.

The battalion TACSOP is so central to all operations that the ease of use can partly determine the success of a mission. What is presented here for consideration by commanders is another way to structure the battalion TACSOP to make it a more accessible combat reference.

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