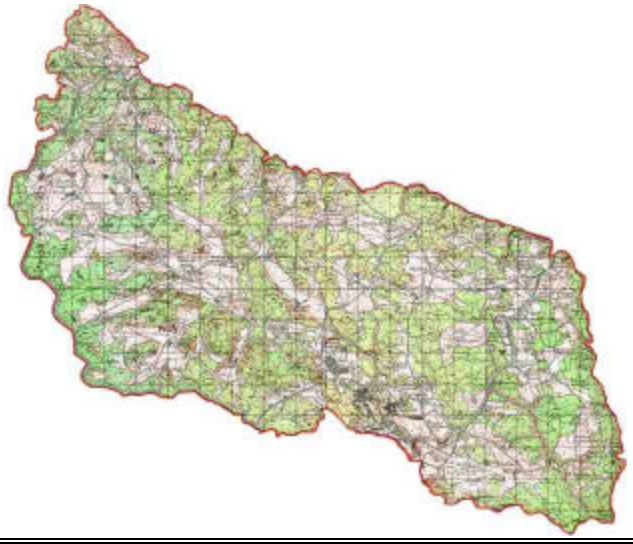
Combat Maneuver Training Center

News from the "Box"



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This CMTC publication is not a doctrinal product and is not intended to serve as a program to guide the conduct of operations and training. The information and lessons herein are the perceptions of those individuals involved in military exercises, activities, and real-world events. Our intent is to share knowledge, support discussion and impart lessons and information in an expeditious manner.

"News From The Box" is prepared by the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), CMTC Detachment. For additional information contact CPT Mike Sennett or Mr. Dan Reinick, DSN 466-2323, or email: michael.sennett@cmtc.7atc.army.mil; danny.reinick@cmtc.7atc.army.mil.

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FOREWORD

The Combat Maneuver Training Center's "News from the Box" is designed as a direct communications channel between CMTC and our USAREUR based commanders and warfighters.

My intent is for this document to provide a candid and open forum that provides our USAREUR training audience ground-truth observations from our CMTC Observer Controllers. Service as an OC is arguably one of the most professionally rewarding jobs any of us will ever have. OCs are provided the opportunity to build upon their operational experience by observing our Army's best and brightest during numerous rotations, executing repetitive missions, throughout the training year. Their firsthand experience, privileged observation of training units, and understanding of doctrine combine to make our OCs one of the best sources of information on TTPs that work and insights into potential solutions to reverse negative training trends. The following articles were written with that goal in mind.

<u>Making the Brigade Reconnaissance Troop Work.</u> The brigade reconnaissance troop (BRT) was created in response to a need for more observers and greater operational flexibility in the maneuver brigade fight. The BRT can enhance the brigade (BDE) commander's ability to maneuver and concentrate firepower, applying it more quickly at the decisive point and time.

<u>Counterreconnaissance in the 21st Century.</u> This article describes some techniques that will assist the staff and troops conducting the counterrecon mission. The preventive measures taken to streamline planning and prevent last minute coordination will pay big dividends on the ground for the lookers and killers trying to protect our battlespace as we prepare for defensive operations. Understanding that counterreconnaissance is a phase of the battle is critical. It is not a battle captain, scout, and the unlucky company commander's mission. It is everybody's responsibility ? from the soldier patrolling around the TOC perimeter to the field trains command post gate guard. Security forces in depth are not intended solely for the cavalrymen; it is for everyone in the TF.

I strongly urge leaders to take a few minutes to read these articles and relate the lessons in them to your soldiers. Use the knowledge and experience of others to concentrate your limited training resources on unit weaknesses you recognize from these articles. Your goal is combat readiness. CMTC's mission is to help you attain that goal.

Train to win!

H. Mike Davis
COL, AR
Commanding

MAKING THE BRIGADE RECONNAISSANCE TROOP WORK

By LTC (Ret.) Arnold H. Geisler and 1SG Myron J. Dubose
CMTC

The brigade reconnaissance troop (BRT) was created in response to a need for more observers and greater operational flexibility in the maneuver brigade fight. The BRT can enhance the brigade (BDE) commander's ability to maneuver and concentrate firepower, applying it more quickly at the decisive point and time.

Mission. The mission of the BRT is to provide intelligence directly to the BDE commander. The BRT does this by performing reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S). It can also provide limited security for the brigade in close and deep operations. When reinforced, the BRT can also conduct economy of force missions for the brigade, although such missions are not ideal for this lightly armed unit.

The BRT seldom receives an economy of force mission at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC). The preferred role for the BRT is as a source of intelligence. However, a variety of challenges prevent the troop from effectively fulfilling its original mission. These problems are both systemic and non-systemic and are present at the brigade and troop-level. The difficulties are in the planning, preparation, and execution of any BRT mission. They affect both the tactical and service support execution. For the most part, the solutions are relatively easy and can have a positive impact on brigade operations beyond the BRT's contributions. Meeting the challenges, though, will incur costs by brigades and their battalions, which can be more than recouped through the added intelligence a BRT can provide.

Combat Service Support Issues. Systemic problems are the most difficult to fix. The most significant of these are the lack of an organic combat service support (CSS) element in the troop. The BRT has no organic troop maintenance. The first sergeant's vehicle is too small and soft to conduct resupply in the troop's forward positions. A support slice for the BRT does exist, though, within the brigade's headquarters company. The question is how to effectively organize that slice in support of a light reconnaissance troop forward in the brigade sector. Assigning the troop an organic CSS element would ease its support difficulties, particularly with respect to casualty evacuation. Increasing the size of the BRT, however, limits its flexibility and mobility.

Another solution is to tailor service support packages for the brigade reconnaissance troop for each specific mission. This approach would be particularly effective when the troop is task organized with air defense, combat observation and lasing teams (COLT), or engineer reconnaissance teams (ERT). Instead of pushing a BRT CSS package forward with the troop, it can be collocated with the combat trains of one of the forward company/teams. This solution would be particularly effective in the defense and only slightly less so in the offense.

R&S Planning. While the systemic difficulty of combat service support for the BRT is best resolved by BDE headquarters and higher, the difficulties in the areas of planning, preparation, and execution can be solved at the brigade and troop-levels. These challenges begin with the brigade's R&S plan. Brigade R&S planning is generally weak. The most common problem is the designation of too many named areas of interest (NAI) with no clearly articulated task, purpose, and time associated with each one. Often, no priority is assigned to an NAI. Consequently, neither priority nor commander's critical intelligence requirements (PIR, CCIR) are plainly stated. The result is that the BRT doesn't know what information is needed, how it is needed, and when it is needed.

One of the reasons for inferior R&S planning is the failure of brigade intelligence officers to template possible enemy courses of action during the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). It is not unusual for an S2 to begin to template after the BRT bumps into something during the counterreconnaissance fight. By then, it is already too late. On the defense, beginning to template at the first "bump" gives enemy reconnaissance an early

picture of the friendly forces defensive set. In the offense, the lack of a viable enemy situation template results in uncontrolled troop movement. When the BRT does not have probable lines of enemy contact, it causes scouts to dismount too soon and walk too far, making the troop too slow for the needs of a brigade attack.

Considering possible enemy courses of action should begin well before the BRT's first contact with the enemy, early during the IPB process. The template is refined continually throughout the orders development process and as reports of enemy contact begin to flow during the counterreconnaissance fight.

No brigade R&S plan results in no BRT plan. Detailed and accurate battle tracking is difficult without an enemy situation template, overwhelming a small, light troop tactical operations center. The BRT leadership becomes frustrated tracking everything on the battlefield because it does not understand the commander's priorities. Too many NAIs make observation redundancy impossible for an organization with two platoons. The unit cannot plan for contingencies. The troop commander cannot establish a reasonable timetable to plan periods of active and passive reconnaissance.

An effective R&S plan will inform the BRT of several things. It will tell the troop commander when active reconnaissance can be done and on which NAI(s) it should be focused. Likewise, it will tell the commander when passive reconnaissance can be conducted. The BRT will know what it can expect to see, where it can expect to see it, why it is looking for it, and when to expect it at each NAI. Finally, the R&S plan will tell the BRT commander what priority each NAI will have.

Inadequate R&S plans affect troop mission preparation in other areas as well. Repeated unplanned movement takes away one of the brigade reconnaissance troop's most important weapons: stealth. Moreover, the unit's subordinate elements have no time or opportunity to rest and refit during the mission. Successive brigade fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) resulting from changing R&S plans and requirements force the BRT to change its mission and locations. Not only does this confuse the unit, but also the changes may result in assigned tasks for which the BRT is neither equipped nor organized.

Planning and Preparation. Troop leading procedures suffer as well. Frequently, the unit's terrain analysis is neither thorough nor continuous. The BRT has no time to understand how the enemy will move or how it should move to observe and stop him. It is imperative for the brigade reconnaissance troop, of all units in a brigade, to see itself, see the enemy, and see the terrain.

Planning and preparation must be continuous, and a FRAGO is the medium to communicate refinements to subordinate units. Nevertheless, some way must be found to minimize the impact of change on the BRT. There are two possible solutions. Give the troop a more detailed initial warning or fragmentary order. Naturally, this would require more complete initial planning than for other units. A second way out is to delay the movement of the troop until a detailed FRAGO is complete, giving the troop commander more of the detailed information he needs earlier.

One of the most important tasks for which the BRT needs to plan and execute is adjacent unit coordination. Again, the lack of specificity in the order results in coordination being an afterthought for the troop, its adjacent units, and the brigade. If coordination is done at all, it is usually after the troop is set on its screen line. This requires observation posts (OPs) to collapse and move to a coordination point, leaving a gap in the screen line.

Deficient graphics and the command relationship usually assigned a BRT and the task forces behind it are additional reasons for the lack of adjacent unit coordination. Poor graphics need no explanation. The command relationship does.

Normally, the brigade reconnaissance troop or portions of it are under the operational control of the task force scout platoon behind it. The consequence is that the BRT commander reports to a platoon leader. This command relationship leads task force commanders and their subordinates to believe that any necessary

coordination can be done on the battalion command or operations radio nets. The end result splits the reconnaissance between two or among three different task forces. It also creates irrational lines of communications. The troop reports to a scout platoon that reports to a battalion that reports to brigade while at the same time trying to hand over the target to the killers.

The solution to the problem of adjacent unit coordination is to designate the troop commander as the commander of reconnaissance for a given operation. He could then layer his reconnaissance to match the lines of communication: Brigade—BRT—BN/TF scouts—Killers. Aside from rationalizing the chain of command and lines of communication, such an organization would make the enemy fight through successively coordinated layers of reconnaissance, deceiving him as to the location of the main reconnaissance effort.

The problems above notwithstanding, insufficient preparation for a mission is largely a challenge for the brigade reconnaissance troop leadership to correct. It is a matter of non-commissioned officers meeting the standard and then checking. A lack of time is a hurdle all units have to overcome and should be no excuse for ensuring a sufficient number of charged batteries are available for missions, for example. Nor should it be an excuse for not thinking creatively about resupply.

For every mission, a balance has to be found among the classes of supply. If sufficient water and Class I rations cannot be carried for the length of a given mission, the BRT leadership, in coordination with the brigade S4, has to find ways to conduct resupply. One example would be a series of false air insertions in which a helicopter crew chief drops supplies at predetermined cache sites, using camouflage provided by the brigade reconnaissance troop to hide them.

Positioning BRT Assets. Insertions are another area requiring more attention from troop leadership. Generally, insertion rehearsals only cover the safety aspects of an air insertion. Actions on the landing zone are almost never rehearsed. No planning is done for the consolidation/organization/continue mission sequence of events at a landing zone (LZ). Contingency plans for the possibility that the aircraft may not land at the designated LZ are seldom considered. Nor are contingency plans made among the teams of a task organized BRT when air defense, COLT, or engineer reconnaissance teams are attached.

Ground insertions require just as much detailed planning and rehearsing as air insertions. Too often, too much time is spent at the drop-off site looking for a soldier's rucksack in the vehicle. Mission specific load plans are not used or considered. Load plans must account for how equipment and people are loaded on a vehicle for each mission.

Although influenced by orders from the brigade, the execution is left to the BRT commander. In the case of a ground insertion, the troop commander has to decide how to hide and protect troop vehicles. There is simply no good rule of thumb as to whether single or multiple garage sites (consolidated vehicle hide positions established once the troop begins dismounted operations) should be used. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Single garage sites require fewer soldiers for security and make it possible for the troop to consolidate command and control at its level. On the other hand, more vehicles result in a larger signature and the potential to lose all vehicles in a single incident. Also, some dismounted patrols might be forced to walk farther to the OPs. Multiple sites, by contrast, present a smaller signature and reduce the possibility that all vehicles might be lost at once. They also allow the BRT more freedom of maneuver. The major disadvantages are a greater security requirement and a higher unit profile on the battlefield.

Troop commanders, when choosing between the two garage site techniques, should remember the principle of maximum reconnaissance forward. After that consideration, the elements of METT-TC (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time available, civilians) should serve as a guide when selecting the method and site. Other factors include the location of the troop tactical operations center (TOC), the use of deep sites to facilitate troop command and control, and the location of logistics release points and rally points.

Failures in garage site selection often result from deficient map reconnaissance. Troops do not look for the natural enemy lines of drift for dismounted movement. They tend to park their vehicles where the enemy will find them. Also, troops seldom use organic radio retransmission capability, often forcing platoon sergeants to act as radio operators. This results in less leadership being on the ground where it belongs and reduces the amount of reconnaissance forward.

Observation Post Challenges. Inferior map reconnaissance also plagues the OP procedures of most brigade reconnaissance troops. Troops pick sites that do not have good covered and concealed routes of ingress and egress. It is not unusual for scouts to have to reposition their OPs in order to be able to observe their assigned NAIs.

Changing the location of an observation post leads to other problems. Battle tracking in the troop TOC, already difficult and confusing for other reasons, becomes more so when OPs are moved to new locations. More serious is the increased chance of fratricide. Most fratricide incidents involving BRT soldiers occur through indirect and not direct fire. This is because friendly forces call for fire against previously unreported troop observation post locations, or task force scouts do not fully understand the brigade plan. Better troop battle tracking is one solution to this particular problem. Improved initial site selection would all but eliminate it.

Once in position, the scouts at the OP have to paint a good picture of what can be seen and not seen. The troop leadership has to know if the observation post can overwatch its assigned NAI and support the R&S plan. Decisions about the organization of the OP also have to be made. For example, a secure sleeping area has to be established so the observation post can conduct 24-hour operations.

Perhaps the biggest problem the brigade reconnaissance troop faces in the establishment of its observation posts is supply. Hard decisions are not made about what equipment an OP team requires for an extended mission and how resupply will be done. It is not unusual for teams to carry as much water and Class I as possible, but not carry camouflage nets, for example.

The problem of resupply also has a big impact on dismounted operations in general. Brigades resist forward resupply; consequently, the troops do not plan for it. Brigades will accept the loss of the BRT due to a lack of adequate water supplies rather than risk sending vehicles or helicopters forward.

NCO leadership, however, can solve other problems with dismounted operations. Taking the path of least resistance because of the time/weight/distance equation, dismounted soldiers frequently move down the middle of tank trails or on the shoulders. Troop leadership should make use of detailed back briefs to ensure the use of covered and concealed routes, NAI coverage, effective command and control, and ease of casualty evacuation. Back briefs are also good opportunities to stress the importance of noise and light discipline, as well as the use of rally points.

Reporting. Accurate, detailed, and timely reporting is the primary weapon of the brigade reconnaissance troop. Failure to provide the brigade commander with complete, quick, and precise reports can contribute to the brigade's failure to accomplish its mission. The brigade and its reconnaissance troop, again, share the cause and solution to the problem.

The brigade must focus the BRT's effort by assigning a priority, task, purpose, and time to every NAI. A standard reporting format is also important. Using either the SALT or SALUTE format gives scouts an easy way to provide information the S2 needs to confirm or deny the template. Standardized formats are an absolute requirement for full, exact, and rapid reporting—and not only for the brigade reconnaissance troop.

On the other hand, the BRT has to ensure that the information it reports reflects what it observes. Redundancy of observation is useful because multiple observers can confirm spot reports. Troop leadership has to ensure

that confirmation is detailed and accurate. As a rule, scout platoons do not use intersection and resection to confirm locations. Nor is confirmation done with a grid, direction, or distance. The confirmation has to be more detailed than, "Yeah, I can see it, too!"

Focusing the BRT. After reporting, most brigade reconnaissance troops see artillery as their principal weapon. If it can be seen, killing it is the rule. Most brigade commanders agree. Every tank or BMP or BRDM destroyed during the counterreconnaissance fight does not have to be killed during the main battle. The problem with this approach is the that enemy soon figures out that something out there can see him and kill him and he needs to destroy it soon.

Brigade commanders and their BRT commanders have to understand what happens when artillery is fired. Regardless of whether the fire mission is successful or not, artillery alerts the enemy to the fact that he is under observation. In the best case, the enemy will move away. In the worst case, he will come looking for the observer and kill him.

When planning the employment of the brigade reconnaissance troop, the brigade commander has to determine what the focus of this intelligence asset will be. Should it be reconnaissance or killing targets? Most brigade commanders tell the BRT its focus is reconnaissance but actively encourage it to kill the enemy. The result is that the brigade loses its reconnaissance troop too early in too many battles.

That is not to say the BRT should not use artillery. It can and should. The question is, under what circumstances? If the troop has the mission to strip away the enemy's reconnaissance, then artillery will be its main weapon.

Even if the brigade reconnaissance troop's mission is not to destroy enemy reconnaissance, artillery can still be employed, but the troop must do so judiciously. Artillery can be used to cover the troop's movement by destroying an enemy observation post and then moving through the gap. Or, if the BRT was able to maneuver behind the enemy screen line, it can call for fire from behind it. Not only will the screen line be punctured, but also the enemy must look for observers to its front and its rear.

If the BRT is used as a killer on the battlefield, then planning should resemble fire support planning for any other unit, with a few additional considerations. The brigade fire support coordinator (FSCOORD) should consider how BRT-directed fires could best support the commander's intent for fires. The BRT should be assigned priority targets. For example, during the reconnaissance phase of an offensive operation, enemy engineers should be the troop's priority. Then, as the line of departure or no-later-than (LD/NLT) time approaches, the troop receives priority of fires and shifts to tank and armored infantry fighting vehicles. In any event, indirect fires should be used to increase the survivability of the BRT.

Casualty Evacuation. Some of the problems with combat service support were discussed earlier. Casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) is one area that has not yet been discussed and is one in which brigades fail their reconnaissance troops. Detailed planning is done. The plans, however, are not executed.

Almost every brigade that comes to the CMTC has a rotary wing task force attached to it. That task force includes air ambulances. Every brigade commander plans at least one air insertion for his brigade reconnaissance team. Brigade commanders are not willing, however, to use air ambulances to evacuate their BRT casualties. In other words, the brigade commander is willing to employ the reconnaissance troop as a long-range reconnaissance and surveillance detachment, but is not willing to extract it like one.

Of course, the major concern is protection for casualty evacuation aircraft and ground vehicles. One reconnaissance troop used an M113 armored personnel carrier to evacuate its casualties. The greatest problem this particular unit had was maintaining the vehicle, since it had no organic maintenance section or prescribed load list. This should not, though, be the last attempt to find a solution to the BRT CASEVAC challenge.

There are two possible solutions to casualty evacuation. The first is to assign the task forces the CASEVAC mission for the BRT. Task forces will already have casualty evacuation planned for their forward scout platoons. Coordination among the brigade and task forces should make it possible to extend the latter's reach to the BRT. A second option is to have the reconnaissance troop's support slice (formed out of the brigade HHC) positioned with the combat trains of a forward company/team. This solution would not tax the task force's CASEVAC assets and afford protection to the BRT trains.

Neither of these solutions will, however, solve the troop-level problems with CASEVAC. Within the troop, planning is not detailed enough and battle tracking is weak. There are generally not enough control measures along evacuation routes to facilitate CASEVAC. It is not uncommon for a first sergeant to pass within two hundred meters of a casualty while evacuating another because he cannot be quickly and easily directed to the second casualty. And, while casualties are reported to the troop TOC, they frequently are not reported to the first sergeant.

There are solutions for the challenges associated with the brigade reconnaissance troop. There are no permanent solutions at this time to the systemic problem of no organic BRT CSS. There are, however, viable alternatives that can be tried and tested.

Improving Planning, Preparation, and Execution. During the troop's preparation for a given mission, correcting deficiencies is as easy as it is permanent. The unit's leadership must check the checker, pay attention to detail, and remember basic troop leading procedures. Troop commanders must conduct rehearsals that consider things like mission specific load plans and contingencies upon insertion. Along with the brigade commander and command sergeant major, the troop commander and first sergeant have to ensure that a proper balance among all classes of supply is reached for each BRT mission. All four leaders have to be creative in finding ways to conduct resupply and casualty evacuation for the brigade's scouts. This is a basic soldier care issue.

There are a number of actions that both the brigade and troop commanders can take to improve overall planning and execution of each reconnaissance troop mission. Among them, the S2 has to strengthen R&S planning and be detailed in specifying what the brigade commander wants his reconnaissance to accomplish. Similarly, the S3 should work to lengthen the normally short timelines for his commander's reconnaissance troop. Brigade reconnaissance troop commanders must learn to be aggressive in obtaining the information they need for mission success from the brigade staff. Without it, the BRT's soldiers are needlessly at risk.

It may seem that the concept of the brigade reconnaissance troop has failed badly, but it has not, due largely to the dedication and enthusiasm of its soldiers, non-commissioned officers and the young commissioned officers leading them. The BRT as a concept has had successes. The solutions proposed in this article are an attempt to give it more.

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COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

Developing and Defending the Security Zone in the Current Limited Conversion Division (LCD XXI) Configuration

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"Counterreconnaissance is an inherent task in all security operations. Counterreconnaissance is the sum of all actions taken at all echelons to counter enemy reconnaissance and surveillance efforts through the depth of the area of operations. Counterreconnaissance denies the enemy information about friendly units. It is both active and passive and includes combat action to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance elements."

FM 17-97, Cavalry Troop (FM 3-20.97)

The time is 1900 hours, and the task force (TF) has just culminated in its movement to contact. The TF has sustained heavy combat losses, is currently at 30% strength, and will be conducting a defense in sector in the next 36-48 hours. The TF scout platoon leader is moving to the TF tactical operations center (TOC) to receive guidance on the upcoming mission. The company team (CO/TM) commander is coordinating his task as the counterrecon commander with the assistant S2 and S3 Air. The brigade reconnaissance troop (BRT) is conducting a zone reconnaissance to establish a screen forward of the brigade. The opposing force infantry recon patrols and engineer recon patrols are moving unopposed in sector through the security zone. By morning, the TF will begin engagement area (EA) development under enemy observation, having to react to enemy artillery for the next 24-48 hours. In the meantime, the enemy will gain critical intelligence in preparation for their impending attack.

Unfortunately, this short vignette occurs all too frequently at the Army's combat training centers (CTCs). The leaders in this scenario ? the TF XO, the TF scout platoon leader, the counterrecon CO/TM commander, the BRT commander, the battalion intelligence and collection coordinator (BICC), and staff officers at various levels ? all want to do the right thing. There are two major problems in the security zone fight. The first is getting the aforementioned team together at the right time and location on the battlefield. The second is focusing the security zone planners and executors on identifying, and more importantly, destroying the enemy reconnaissance as the enemy attempts to penetrate into the BLUEFOR sector. This article outlines some systemic problems with counterreconnaissance in today's LCD configuration, such as how to streamline planning cycles to allow for synchronization at the brigade combat team (BCT), TF, and CO/TM-levels; and how to prepare, synchronize, rehearse and execute this critical mission to achieve the end state of enabling the lookers and killers that are in position to observe, report, and destroy enemy reconnaissance.

Despite the emphasized importance of winning the security zone fight, TFs often fail to plan and provide an adequate product to the counterrecon commander. History at the CTCs clearly shows that TFs that are successful in destroying enemy recon elements are also successful in defending 85 to 90 percent of the time. With that stated, TFs generally do not focus enough on security zone planning, preparing, and synchronizing the fight. Additionally, the current modified tables of organization and equipment (MTOE) omits the fourth maneuver element, and the TF has the added challenge of developing a viable plan that provides enough combat power in the counterrecon force to destroy the enemy recon when the scouts identify the enemy in sector.

Doctrinal Foundation. There is still no stand-alone US Army field manual (FM) that provides commanders direction for planning, preparing and executing. The 17-series manuals (**FM 3-20** series) cover screening tasks for scouts. **FM 71-1**, ***Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*** (**FM 3-90.1**) discusses defense in sector, defending a battle position, and hasty defense missions. With respect to the brigade's (BDE) portion of the security zone, **FM 3.90.3**, ***Mounted Brigade Combat Team***, chapter 4, (**FM 71-3**), discusses capabilities and mission profiles in security operations. **FM 3.90.3** fails to address the actual command and control (C^2) architecture with BRT integration into TFs. This is the significant negative trend observed with the observation plan at both BDE and TF-levels at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC). The two separate reconnaissance fights creates a gap of intelligence, thus violating the continuous observation of enemy recon elements. Additionally, there is **FM 34-2-1,** ***Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Reconnaissance and Surveillance and Intelligence Support to Counterreconnaissance***, which is very helpful to S2s. **FM 34-2-1** identifies what determines good priority intelligence requirements (PIR) and the development of reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) operations. **FM 34-2-1** specifically states the following:

> "This is a 'how to' manual. It describes how to—
>
> - Plan R&S operations.
> - Task R&S assets.
> - Graphically depict R&S operations.
> - Execute R&S operations.
> - Save time in the planning process.
> - Plan for intelligence support to counterreconnaissance missions.
> - Plan for division-level assets, such as signals intelligence (SIGINT) collectors.
>
> This manual will show you how to succeed in your reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance effort…."

Despite what **FM 34-2-1** states, it is not a how to manual for counterrecon operations. It lacks the detail required to assist the ground maneuver commander in managing the collection assets in concert with his killers. It is also outdated and does not identify the proper equipment or systems that are present in the current legacy force.

Time Sensitive Planning. The limited time factor in the planning process for the security zone fight is a key consideration. The BRT is moving to reestablish the BDE forward line of own troops (FLOT) and prepare for the deep fight. Available TF scouts are moving to the TF TOC with their platoon leader to receive guidance and resupply prior to their movement to the screen. The TF may be displacing the TOC. The company is executing consolidation and reorganization. The TF sends out a fragmentary order (FRAGO) assigning a company to establish a hasty defense along phase line (PL) Silver. One problem ? the company has not generated adequate combat power to repel an enemy recon force in a TF-sized sector, and the designated counterrecon CO/TM is still conducting consolidation and reorganization and has not yet accounted for everyone.

Task Organization and Constraints. Unlike the old Division 86 MTOE, the LCD has added challenges. First and foremost, the TF has three CO/TMs, not four. In some divisions, the forward support company (FSC) is not organic, but attached to the TF. By adding the BRT, TFs now have to deconflict the R&S plan. Commanders in the LCD configuration must address various challenges:

- How to task organize for the counterrecon fight, while maintaining significant combat power for the main battle area (MBA).
- Deciding what time in the planning process to task organize the counterrecon force.
- Providing the counterrecon commander enough time to start movement prior to the arrival of the enemy recon.
- Ensuring the C^2 architecture supports the mission in terms of both battle command and communication.
- Ensuring unity of command in both tactical and logistics tasks.
- How to transition from the previous mission to establishing a security zone.
- How to transition out of the security zone fight and reintegrate the counterrecon forces into the main defensive belt.
- Ensuring the BRT and TF scouts can provide enough reaction time to displace the counterrecon company back into either a supporting effort role or a reserve position.

Once you begin to wargame how you will develop this, you now have to weigh in the additional variables, such as the BRT's scheme of maneuver, the adjacent TF's scout plans, ground surveillance radar (GSR), and any divisional assets that will be operating in your battlespace.

PLANNING

Intelligence. The most challenging task in the LCD configuration is the management of additional collection assets. With the integration of the BRT, the TF S2s not only manage TF scouts, GSR and additional forward observers (FOs) internal to the TF, but have the added responsibility of deconflicting cross-FLOT assets of the BRT. TF scouts no longer have to escort BDE-level assets. So, how does the BRT counterrecon CO/TM synchronize their movement to screen positions and refine their observation plan at the initial stages of the security zone development? There are many points to consider, including who is out there from the BRT; how did they move through the TF sector; what is their observation plan, dead space; and how much reaction time is there from BRT to TF scout elements? These questions, if not answered, will hinder the counterrecon CO/TM's ability to position tanks and Bradleys in key positions. This seems to be the major problem with the observation plan in the security zone fight. Scout platoons establishing reconnaissance handover lines (RHO) with BRT platoons and building in sufficient reaction time to allow the killers to actually achieve their tactical tasks seems to be tough nuts to crack. Many brigades attempt to plan after the security zone is set. Developing the BDE R&S plan late has a major impact on the BRT, and a compounding impact on the TF scouts. By not synchronizing the initial observation plan at the BDE-level, TFs are developing independent security zone plans that are not congruent with the BDE commander's intent. Figure 1 describes the critical planning times for transitioning offensive operations to defensive operations. The key task is using the TF liaison officer (LNO) to pull the essential information from BDE and push that key information to the TF. Developing the BDE R&S plan, and constant updates by the TF LNO will assist the TF commander and S2 in refining PIR. The LNO can also assist the TF S2 in updating BRT locations throughout the early phase of the counterrecon battle. The BRT locations will help the scouts and counterrecon CO/TMs conduct their intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).

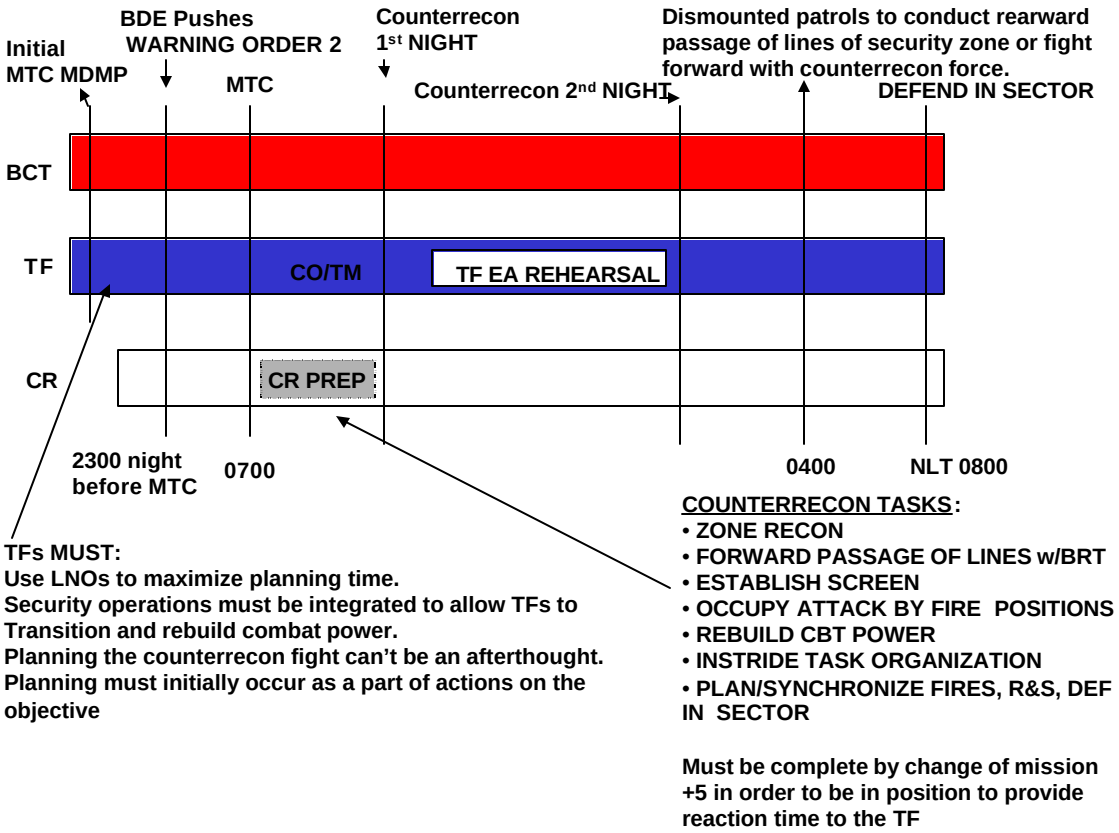

Figure 1. Parallel planning in the security zone fight

Maneuver. The critical task for any military decision-making process (MDMP) is time management. It is no different from developing the security zone. The trend observed here at CMTC is failing to integrate the TF LNO. The LNO can greatly enhance the speed at which the TF receives the information from BDE. TFs generally wait for the issuance of the BDE operations order (OPORD), which is too late. Using multiple warning orders allows the TF to begin the parallel planning necessary to establish the front, rear and flank boundaries for the counterrecon commander. Therefore, analysis of the enemy's disruption zone must begin immediately. This is where both the brigade and battalion must be well rehearsed on the LNO's role. From a personnel perspective, this is where TFs must assign a very competent lieutenant or captain. All too often, the TF LNO is usually a young second lieutenant waiting for a tank or infantry platoon leader position. This officer would like to do well, but is just too young and does not yet know what there is to know.

The second trend observed is failing to plan on the objective area. Failure to identify the decision point to transition from offensive operations to establishing the security zone is the genesis of the security zone dilemma. **FM 5-0**, ***Army Planning and Orders Production*** **(FM 101-5)**, states, "To develop a [course of action] COA, the leader focuses on the actions on the objective and works backward to his start point". It is the detail in analyzing the objective where TFs miss the opportunity to integrate their reconnaissance back into the fight. Other concerns are:

- Ensuring the counterrecon commander has enough combat power to initiate movement into the security zone at the prescribed time.

- Knowing where the BRT elements are located. For example, are they already in sector; and when will the BDE or TF staff brief the counterrecon team?

- Ensuring the situation template is updated; to include determining when the observation plans and company graphics are due to the TF TOC.

- Knowing when the counterrecon commander will receive the refined graphics from the adjacent units and the BRT.

Fire Support. A consistent point of friction is getting the TF fire support officer (FSO) to submit input into the security zone development at a time when the counterrecon team needs it. The FSO is usually in the middle of mission analysis or COA development for the main defensive fight. Using the fire support noncommissioned officer (FSNCO) is rarely observed, and as a result, the counterrecon commander and TF scout platoon leader do not receive the necessary support from the fire support element (FSE). The FSE, along with many other battlefield operating systems elements, must first articulate which tasks the entire staff, not just the primary staff officers, must do. The TF XO and the rest of the primary staff must delegate who conducts which tasks. This allows for parallel planning, and by empowering the TF TOC personnel, will help educate the privates first class and other TOC members when they are up at 0200 hours talking and eavesdropping with the counterrecon CO/TM. If the FSO has briefed the fire support portion (TOC OPORD), guidance can then be issued to the FSNCO to assist the counterrecon commander, and the mortar and scout platoons in planning and developing the technical and tactical triggers for using both mortars and artillery. This also ensures identifying both mounted and dismounted avenues of approach.

Integrating GSR, scouts, FO teams, and sniper teams can provide depth and redundancy to the observation plan. Integrating TF mortars requires additional planning considerations such as the command relationship between the mortars and the counterrecon team to determine if they are attached or under TF control. In the cavalry community, the answer would be troop/company control, such as ground cavalry troop configuration.

Attaching mortars, as well as scouts, prescribes a clearer unity of command. In the fires role, this unity of command will reduce the clearance of fires and mission processing times. With that said, the observed trend in the BCTs is to keep the mortars at TF-level. If the mortars remain under TF control, then each member of the TOC shifts and the staff must understand their role in the security zone effort, not just the TF FSO.

Positioning mortars is another issue. Positioning them forward to allow the guns to range the scout's named area of interest (NAI) coverage and disrupt enemy recon movement is one option. The other option is to focus the mortar fire in the depth of the security zone. This can create confusion among the multiple elements in the counterrecon force, and it may be too late to use mortars in a security zone saturated with BRT elements, TF scouts, GSRs, engineer recon teams, and infantry squads. Whatever method is used to support the counterrecon team, the cross talk with the S2, the FSO and the battle captain/TF XO must occur to ensure clearance of fires in advance of contact.

Mobility/Counter Mobility/Survivability. During the initial planning phase of the security zone, the task organization of the engineers is critical. Attaching engineer squads to the counterrecon company provides assistance with emplacing hasty obstacles for the scout and tank sections to disrupt the

enemy recon element or turn it toward the counterrecon unit's EA. Additionally, the engineers can provide analysis with *TerraBase* or *Falcon View* visual products, which can be used at every level. The TF TOC can use the blowups to identify platoon-level graphics to understand tank platoon hide locations, routes to the attack by fire (ABF) positions, observation post (OP) locations, and routes where dismounted patrols are conducted. Terrain analysis products can also visualize dead space in the observation plan and assist in target refinement for using indirect fires.

Combat Service Support. The unit conducting the counterrecon must be the main effort. It follows then, that the S4 and TF XO need to assist the unit commander in his execution. This involves pushing the company/troop trains, to include the forward aid station (FAS), and class V munitions packages that consist of M2/3, M1, and mortar ammunition. This also involves designating the main supply routes (MSRs) and the routes to and from each OP, mortar firing points (MFP), and tank and Bradley positions. Consolidated reporting should fall under the CO/TM. The scout platoon sergeant should be supported by the company first sergeant, so that the scout platoon sergeant should not have to worry about moving back to the TOC or the logistics release point (LRP) to get supplies. Consolidating the support effort also reduces unnecessary movement in the security zone.

Battle Command. Establishing the communication architecture is a sensitive topic. With the development of the BRT, the TF scout is often unable to regain contact with enemy reconnaissance elements that the BRT identifies in the BCT sector. Figures 2 and 3 depict the new information flow dilemma facing our security zone fight with the LCD.

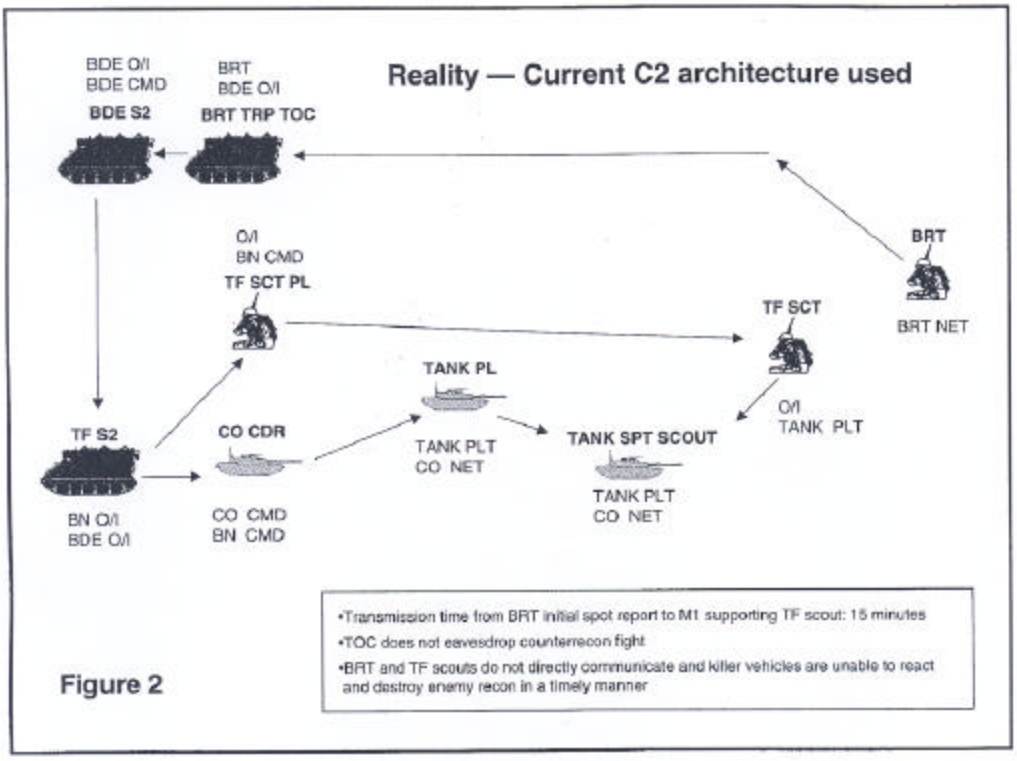

Figure 2

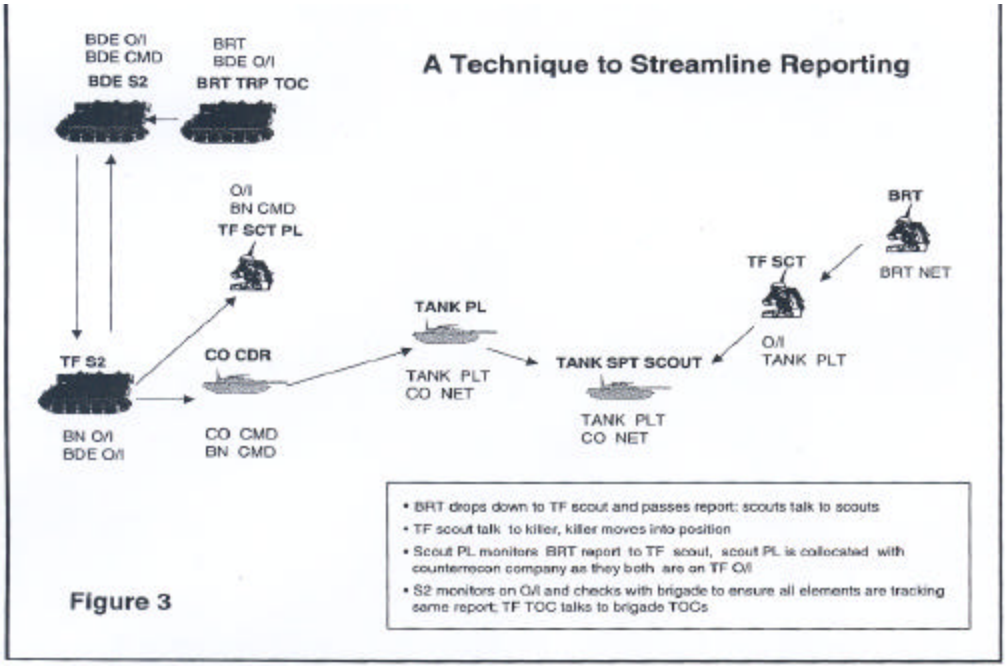

Figure 3

The lookers, BRT and TF scouts, often cross the line of departure without basic security information? what are the NAIs, their start and stop times, and who is at the front, rear, and flanks? The result is an observation plan with major gaps from the BCT to the TF that violates multiple security fundamentals ? you must provide continuous reconnaissance, reaction time, and maneuver space, and maintain contact with the enemy. Due to the nature of the security zone development, the lookers and killers do not meet prior to planning or preparation. Brigades are trying to synchronize the R&S effort with consolidated brigade-level planning sessions. The problem is timing the R&S meeting. The time that they want to pull the security zone leaders from the entire BCT is the same time that the counterrecon team is doing their company-level troop leading procedures (TLPs). Most coordination is conducted via frequency modulation (FM) by junior leaders with the initiative to figure out who is actually in their battlespace.

An additional trend observed is that TF scouts or BRT scouts are reluctant to go to each other's nets and cross talk, or to go to the company net and give the spot report to the killers. The reluctance of lookers at all levels to go to each other's respective net is the main reason for the current C^2 configuration.

Another hot C^2 topic is the commander of the recon fight. This unity of command affects all decisions in the security zone fight. At the executor level, can the CO/TM commander handle the mortars, scouts, CO/TM elements, and coordination with the BRT? With support from the TOC and the TF XO, he can. At CMTC, this is a point of friction that is occurring. Does the TF XO or S3 assist the counterrecon commander during the night, or is it delegated to the battle captain? The function is not so difficult that the battle captain cannot coordinate with BDE on the status of the BRT and adjacent unit information. He can: however, there are certain situations that require the emphasis of the TF XO/S3 or commander. A technique is for the commander to establish events or criteria, commander's critical information requirements (CCIR), which the command group can use as "wake up the boss or XO" items.

PREPARATION

Intelligence: Updating the situation template with the order of battle is critical in this phase. Identifying the effects of weather on terrain is also beneficial for the security zone fight.

Understanding what is a viable mounted route changes within the matter of hours when heavy precipitation occurs at the CMTC. Cloud cover affects the use of enemy air. Knowing that will also determine the composition of additional mounted and dismounted recon patrols.

Refining the observation plan is another critical tracking task in the preparation phase. The observation plans include the TF and BRT scouts, GSR, infantry squads, and any additional electronic assets that are integrated into the fight. The TF S2 can assist the counterrecon commander in clarifying BRT routes. By understanding the routes that the BRT used in their reconnaissance, the counterrecon commander can determine potential routes that the enemy recon may use to move into the security zone. This will also assist the counterrecon commander in determining the areas within the security zone that still need to be cleared. A common trend is for the BLUEFOR to move to a screen line, set OPs without fully clearing templated enemy OPs, then calling the designated counterrecon CO/TM forward to occupy blocking positions without properly clearing the area. Owning the security zone entails zone, area and route reconnaissance. This is especially true if the counterrecon force is going to displace and conduct a rearward passage of lines (RPOL) into its supporting effort role, or act as a reserve force.

Maneuver: Using a preparation checklist, such as in figure 4, will assist the counterrecon commander to "see himself".

The TF TOC should use the same checklist for the main defense belt as for the security zone. The TF TOC should link the observation plan with this checklist to ensure that vehicle grids, OP locations, and routes are updated. This will allow the development of a common operational picture to be seen by all members of the security zone fight, as well as the TF.

The counterreconnaissance commander initiates movement of available combat power upon receipt of the TF FRAGO. The commander receives minimum initial guidance from the TF, to include task organization; locations of the BRT, TF scouts, and any other units operating in sector; graphics that depict sector boundaries; templated mounted and dismounted avenues of approach; no-movement time; friendly/enemy reconnaissance timelines, and civilian considerations. Preferably, the BRT commander, scout platoon leader, and counterrecon company commander link up with the S2 and S3 to identify and prioritize enemy avenues of approach. Scouts conduct a zone reconnaissance to establish an early screen in depth to assist in the security of the counterreconnaissance unit as it pushes forward with available combat power. Prioritized avenues of approach, both mounted and dismounted, are immediately covered with direct fire from available systems. Limited infantry assets are consolidated into focused patrols to key areas. As the unit builds combat power, they position and reinforce forces, and expand their overwatch with the goal of covering all expected enemy routes with direct fire and simple situational obstacles.

Generally, enemy reconnaissance is limited during the first 24 hours. Therefore, the initial counterrecon effort goes to initial positioning, and rehearsals. Ensure that rehearsals ? sand table, mounted, and FM ? are completed with all leaders, including lookers and killers, present during the initial 18 hours. Section-size engagement areas are identified and tied into direct and indirect fires, and obstacles are emplaced and documented on increasingly detailed graphics. Routes within the security zone and along displacement routes are reconnoitered and timed.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST / COUNTERRECON

TASK	CO/TM	BRT	TF SCTS	FIRES	ENG	C2
What is my sector of responsibility?						
Location and activities of BRT and TF scouts.						
Task organization. What does the Co/TM commander control?						
Enemy recon routes mounted/dismounted?						
Enemy expected timeline and composition?						
IPB complete, recon complete, FRAGO issued.						
Initial movement with available combat systems.						
Are expected avenues of approach covered by direct fire?						
Rearm and refit; LOGPAC prioritized.						
Direct fire plan developed, sector sketch at TOC complete.						
Common and detailed graphics for BRT, TF scouts, CO/TM, TOC.						
Does each crew have FASCAM/obstacle overlay?						
FM rehearsal; sand table rehearsal? BRT, scouts, CO/TM, S2, chief of recon.						
PCIs complete?						
Coordination between lookers and killers complete.						
Rehearsed and timed routes?						
Responsibilities assigned to lookers and killers.						
MEDEVAC plan; how do we extract BRT/scout casualties?						
Integration of responsive fires - mortars.						
Are hasty obstacles emplaced and sited in with direct and indirect fires.						
Scout and CO/TM withdrawal plan, RPOL – timing, triggers.						
Follow-on mission – main defense, TF/BDE Reserve?						
Do crews know counterrecon plan? Do all units understand sector architecture and task organization?						
Can CO/TM commander command and control from his position?						
Rehearsed closure of obstacles and rearward passage of lines?						
Rehearsed air/ground VOLCANO and MOPMS emplacement?						
Do crews know no-move time?						
Rest plan implemented?						
Timeline disseminated and enforced.						
Did the Co/Tm Cdr provide refined graphics including obstacles, vehicle positions and EAs, TRPs, and indirect fire targets to the TF TOC?						

Figure 4

Depth is established throughout the sector and specific areas of responsibilities are identified. Units preparing positions and operating in the main defensive area are continually updated of friendly and enemy activities in the counterrecon sector that may affect their activities. The counterrecon company is now prepared to destroy or repel all enemy reconnaissance in sector.

Fire Support. The TF FSO and counterrecon company FSO must articulate the intent for indirect fires in support of both direct fire and the countermobility plan. The actual counterrecon battle is not the most ideal situation for using indirect fires. Firing missions on a moving light-skinned armored vehicle is difficult. However, if the enemy is fixed or slowed at a hasty obstacle, mortars are the best choice, based on their responsiveness. The counterrecon team duties in the preparation phase consist of technical and tactical trigger refinement. The company FSO can assist the counterrecon commander in refining the observation plan. The company FSO can work with the TF scouts and BRT on observer positions, and refining left and right limits and dead space. By doing this early in the preparation phase, the counterrecon CO/TM can better realize where they can and cannot identify the enemy. A mounted rehearsal will validate the observation plan and allow observers or killers to adjust their respective positions, and validate their triggers. Additionally, the mortar platoon can adjust their class V munitions stock, using more illumination and high explosive (HE) versus smoke. The illumination can facilitate rapid acquisition of both mounted and dismounted enemy recon elements. TF responsibilities include compiling the counterrecon plan and disseminating that information across the TF. Also, the TF must coordinate with BDE on priority targets and no-fire areas (NFAs) on all observers, killers, and C^2 nodes. Finally, emplacing critical friendly zones (CFZs) on potential passage points will allow the TF to reintegrate that valuable third CO/TM back into the main defense.

Mobility/Countermobility/Survivability. In the preparation phase of the security zone, accounting for the obstacle effort in both the security zone and main defense is critical. It is crucial that the CO/TMs in the main defensive area know the composition and location of the obstacle plan in the security zone.

The counterrecon team must know of the countermobility plan in the MBA. This is especially true if the counterrecon team is conducting the RPOL. Marking the passage point and route to their subsequent position is critical. Not only marking the route, but also ensuring the counterrecon team understands the visual signal is very important. In the preparation phase, the engineer commander and the TF FSO, along with the counterrecon team commander, must refine any situational obstacles. The obstacle refinement is addressed initially in the planning phase, when the TF commander decides if the security zone forces will displace or fight in place. The actual refinement must be a part of the counterrecon mounted rehearsal. On completion of the counterrecon rehearsal, the counterrecon team commander, the S2, and the FSO must all annotate the precise grids of all obstacles, and the intent of situational obstacles to be implemented in the security zone fight. The S2, the engineer, the TF FSO and the commander must be on the ground together at the passage point and other critical areas of the security zone to confirm these critical points. On the completion of the ground coordination with the command and staff, the engineer cell can also update the terrain analysis products for the TF TOC and provide BDE a copy so that all TOCs continue to share a common operational picture.

Combat Service Support. As the counterrecon commander is integrating and refining the lookers and killers in the security zone, the TF staff is working with the XO/1SG to ensure the counterrecon fight is receiving the proper support. In the security zone fight, the counterrecon company 1SG is managing his company, plus the TF scouts and possibly the mortars. It is not feasible to develop four

breaks of class I/III/V munitions, which causes too much movement in the security zone and degrades the number of eyes focused on the enemy. Allowing the 1SG/XO to execute this challenging CSS mission gives the counterrecon commander the flexibility to refit by sections. Consolidating the task organization under one CO/TM reduces the multiple moving of units throughout the security zone. Eliminating the moving CSS operators will enhance the overall situational awareness for the counterrecon team. The TF XO ensures that the TF supports the counterrecon team. The TF S4 establishes a class III/V push in the MBA for the counterrecon company if they are to displace back and fight. The TF S4 will also decide whether to push the FAS forward or collocate a definitive care provider with the company medics. The choice to commit the physician's assistant or surgeon forward reduces the died-of-wounds rate. Bottom-line ? it is the TF's responsibility to ensure that the assets are there for the CO/TM.

Battle Command. The most important thing the TF TOC can do for the counterrecon commander is to assist him in battlespace management. There are many leaders moving around in the EA. TFs must take the approach that they use during a live-fire exercise. Nobody moves unless the TF TOC knows about it. The counterrecon company must know about all personnel moving in the security zone. The lack of personnel accountability is a great contributor to fratricide and desensitizing the lookers. When the counterrecon force observes multiple soft-top HMMWVs driving around without any knowledge from the TF TOC, that degrades the lookers' ability to observe the important stuff ? the enemy. The best thing the TF TOC can do for the counterrecon team is to maintain tight communication with BDE and adjacent TFs. It can also eavesdrop on the BDE and TF operations and intelligence (O/I) nets to process information.

EXECUTION

Counterrecon Company and Attachments. The counterrecon team continues to focus on templated mounted and dismounted avenues of approach to destroy the enemy. Destruction of enemy reconnaissance assets must be the primary goal of security zone and counterreconnaissance operations. This implies aggressive execution of the counterrecon mission. Too often, unit leaders do not emphasize this basic imperative to subordinates. There is always the tradeoff between stealth, such as hiding in the woods, and the ability to react quickly enough to destroy the enemy before he moves and is lost in the main defensive area. Normally, there is very limited threat to combat systems such as the M1/M2 from enemy reconnaissance assets ? hiding in the woods will not accomplish the task. Stealth is only effective as it pertains to the ability of the counterreconnaissance unit to destroy the enemy. Massing direct fires with responsive mortar fires and integrating simple obstacles, such as wire and abitis, are essential.

The relationship between the lookers and killers is critical to accomplish this mission. The lookers must identify, and then pass off the target to the killers. They must direct the killer to the enemy. Once the target is transferred to the killers, they have the responsibility to maintain contact, adjust their position as necessary, and aggressively pursue and destroy the enemy reconnaissance. All activities are continually monitored and updated by a decision maker at the TF TOC.

Vigilance on the part of the counterreconnaissance unit is key to mission success. Therefore, a workable rest plan must be established within the CO/TM. If the unit initially maintains 100 per cent vigilance, then effectiveness will degrade over time. The result is enemy recon elements passing by

sleeping soldiers at 0300 hours. We recommend 50 per cent vigilance within crew or section, to ensure that there is always a combat system in each sector ready to react to scout reports.

TF Support Assets. A critical task in the initial development of the security zone is friendly force accountability. The counterrecon commander can manage the security zone; it is the TF external elements that are difficult to manage.

This article describes some techniques that will assist the staff and troops conducting the counterrecon mission. The preventive measures taken to streamline planning and prevent last minute coordination will pay big dividends on the ground for the lookers and killers trying to protect our battlespace as we prepare for defensive operations. Understanding that counterreconnaissance is a phase of the battle is critical. It is not a battle captain, scout, and the unlucky company commander's mission. It is everybody's responsibility ? from the soldier patrolling around the TOC perimeter to the field trains command post gate guard. Security forces in depth are not intended solely for the cavalrymen; it is for everyone in the TF.

This article also focuses on the security zone fight as it applies to the LCD in the current configuration. That current form is BCTs in the correct size, without the advantages of the latest technology in the M1, M2, and M3 series, as well as the Force XXI battle command brigade and below (FBCB2) complement of equipment. Once digitization is integrated into the remaining LCD units, their overall performance will obviously increase in the ability to manage information and see themselves and the terrain.

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