

Training Basecamp Security Operations

Role Playing and Imagination

Prepare Brigade Combat Team

For Peace Support Role in Bosnia

by Captain Michael D. Henderson

“There is no approved solution to any tactical situation.”

General George S. Patton Jr.’s statement, from *War As I Knew It*, had the ring of truth, even though we were preparing a unit for Peace Support Operations (PSO). As a heavy tank battalion HHC, we had the mission of assisting in the train-up of 2nd BCT, First Cavalry Division, for an upcoming Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center and ultimately for SFOR 5 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We had little to no experience in this mission.

Plan

We began our ramp-up for the 2nd BCT STX after the 3rd Brigade’s battalion commanders and senior staff officers returned from a leader’s recon in the former Yugoslavia. They brought back input from the SFOR 4 units and from USAREUR, allowing us to begin developing training evaluations and outlines (TE&Os) for scenarios that SFOR 5 might likely encounter while executing its mission. Once mission analysis was complete on the TE&Os, resourcing was the next issue. Faction uniforms, entity identification cards, still cameras, video cameras, civilian vehicles and pyrotechnics were some of the resources required. If they were not available at Fort Hood, they had to be fabricated by 3rd BCT units or contracted from local agencies.

Prep

Upon receipt of the battalion OPORD, we conducted mission analysis for our lane, which was base camp security. After identifying the resource requirements from the TE&Os, we began to fill role player and OC requirements by name. Our OC package consisted of one company commander, two platoon leaders, and two platoon sergeants. We divided the duties into a day and night shift. The night shift primarily focused on security

and observed night infiltrations into the camp. Next, once we identified the role players by name, we appointed “lead” role players and briefed the TE&Os. Once briefed, the “leads” accompanied the OCs on a recon of the base camp.

During this recon, we identified locations for the various events and tried to make logical decisions where the events should take place. After the recon, the lead role players assembled their assigned “civilians on the battlefield” and rehearsed their events. Once small group rehearsals were conducted, the role players performed a full dress rehearsal for the OCs. At this rehearsal, we made our final adjustments.

One key to the role players’ performance was the use of Spanish-speaking soldiers, which enabled the player unit to incorporate the use of interpreters in their training. The bilingual soldiers also added confusion to crowd situations. Soldiers already stressed by large crowds of demonstrators were also challenged with controlling the “civilians” who spoke a foreign language.

The preparation went smoothly, but during the first week of training we identified some shortcomings with our role players. These shortcomings were lack of knowledge on the daily, real-world sitrep in MND-North, key role players not being totally familiar with their duties, and role players recognizing when the player units “do it right.” My concern was that we wanted to reinforce proper responses by the unit. By nature, the role players wanted to be “hostile,” therefore, I constantly emphasized to my OCs to look hard for the desired end-state to each event, to better direct the actions of the role players. Besides being intimately familiar with the TE&Os, the lead role players must be familiar with the *Joint Military Commission Handbook*, or “Blue Book,” which essentially lays out the standards of conduct for SFOR. Finally, once these shortcomings were recognized, we conducted daily intel updates to the role players and conducted back

briefs of the desired end-state to each event.

Execute

When the time of execution came, we approached the training with a gradual escalation of tensions in the region, peaking at about the mid-point of the exercise. My OCs and I tried to logically connect the scenarios with the unit’s phase of integration. For example, during the first couple of days the civilian activity at the front gate was light and the scenarios involved farmers with monetary claims, our logic being that the population was possibly trying to take advantage of the new unit’s arrival and the soldiers’ inexperience. As the days progressed, we steadily increased the stress level, implementing night infiltration, with contractors attempting to smuggle weapons and controlled substances into the camp. We compounded these minor events with other challenges: farmers trying to drop off unexploded ordinance (UXOs) at the camp, individuals taking photos of the camp, injured civilians being brought to the camp for treatment, and drunk farmers assaulting Brown and Root contractors outside the camp.

A key TTP for us was the daily “real world” update from the Former Yugoslavia. This enabled us to keep the battlefield fluid. We used the TE&Os as a baseline, but put real-world twists on them. For instance, when accused war criminal General Krstic was arrested in early December, we used that real-world event to initiate a demonstration by the Bosnian population in support of the arrest, which proved a great success. Also, depending on the reaction of the player unit to different scenarios, we could continue one event over several days. For example, the “Farmer With a Claim” event took four days to reach the desired end-state. Let me paint the picture of the “Farmer With a Claim”: The scenario is that a new SFOR unit has just occupied a base camp and, as with any military operation, the first few days are hectic and

confusing. Consequently, after four years of PSO, the civilians know how to take advantage of new units in theater.

The scenario starts with a farmer approaching the base camp and claiming that an SFOR convoy struck and killed one of his livestock with a HMMWV. The farmer is very upset because his only means of transporting his produce to market is dead and he is unable to make a living. Initially, the sergeant of the guard had no idea in what direction to point the farmer, so on day one little was accomplished. Finally, on day four, the farmer was linked up with civil affairs and JAG and was allowed to file a monetary claim, similar to those filed by soldiers who lost baggage in transit on a PCS move. Filing the claim was the desired end-state for this scenario. Although, the unit reached the desired end-state, the amount of time it took to file the farmer's claim caused agitation among the farmers and a perception that SFOR might be anti-Bosnian, which caused some minor demonstrations at the front gate. Such responses are very realistic in such an ethnically divided region. Because of this dynamic, observing this training was very exciting, due to the fact that no two days were the same.

When developing the TE&Os, our staff developed desired end-states for each scenario, however, these end-states were not carved in stone. Common sense played a large role in the decision-making cycle of the player units. For example, we tried to create a pattern of events in hopes that the player unit would form a pattern analysis of people and events in order to adjust their force protection level, or as a preventive measure to avoid any confrontations with the local populace. On a daily basis, our role players made themselves visible to the base camp, by farming the nearby land, fishing at a nearby pond, and just loitering around the camp perimeter. Sometimes the civilians would be friendly and harmless — at other times they were hostile, drunk, and anti-SFOR.

During the evening battle update briefs of the player units, my OCs keyed in on any local intelligence that the guard force provided to the rest of the task force. Things that we keyed on were who are the leaders of the civilians, their ages, their activities, and the times that these activities occurred, so that if the civilians deviated from their "routine," this became a PIR to the task force.

Also, when General Krstic was arrested, we initiated a scenario with the Bosnian role players being concerned that Serbs were arming in negative response to the

arrest of General Krstic. Consequently, the Bosnians, happy that the arrest took place, insisted that SFOR arrest all of the criminals, but if SFOR could or would not do this, the Bosnians would take the law into their own hands. Once making that statement, we as OCs, began to create scenarios in which the Bosnian Army was training local militias in preparation for a continuation of fighting with the Serbs. This obviously, a very real concern to SFOR, therefore justifying a possible increase of the force protection levels.

Overall, the training went very well, but it was not without difficulties. Our two biggest shortcomings were communication between OCs and control of the role players. During most of the events our OC team was dismounted. The lack of PRC-127s made communication slow, which hindered us in controlling simultaneous events.

We wanted to have OCs at the location of the scenario and in the task force TOC for all events. This enabled us to watch the event unfold and monitor the accuracy of the spot reports to the task force. Aware of both situations, we could make in-stride adjustments to the scenario in order to "reward" the proper response. Due to insufficient comms, at times we lost control of the role players and failed to tailor the event to the response of the unit quickly enough.

In closing, there is no greater training challenge than to train a unit for a mission when little to no doctrine exists. It compounds the challenge when the trainer, in this case me, has no practical experience in performing the mission other than reading some "home made" TE&Os. However, in conducting this mission, I can honestly say that my unit has gained valuable training in regards to the SFOR mission and is much more prepared for Peace Support Operations than had we not worked with 2nd BCT.

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