

Training in a Multi-Intensity Environment

An Approach To Training the Company/Troop

by Captain Charles T. Lombardo and First Lieutenant Max Clegg

Today, and in the future, American soldiers will conduct a more diverse spectrum of missions than their predecessors. However, given limited operations budgets, units must plan and execute productive, METL-focused training that maximizes time and available assets. This article discusses how 1st (Tiger) Squadron, 3rd ACR developed a Mission Training Plan that both met these conditions and challenged subordinate units with a realistic, multi-intensity scenario.

The annual mission training plan for heavy, CONUS-based units typically consists of gunnery tables twice a year and lane training that focuses on conducting mission essential tasks in a high-intensity environment. Other training events, such as live-fire exercises (CALFEX) or computer simulation (Janus or SIMNET) complement this training and exercise the staff. This model is limited in scope and fails to prepare units for many of the challenges they might face in a lower-intensity environment, or as they deploy, prepare, and stage for high-intensity conflict.

The Tiger Squadron commander wanted to break the mold of past lane training plans that focused only on the standard METL tasks: Zone Recon, MTC, and Defend. First, he shortened the duration of the exercise to 96 hours per troop, opting for continuous operations with no administrative periods. This timeline helped curb OPTEMPO expenditure, increased the pressure on troop-level leadership, and tested the time management skills of staff and commanders alike. In addition to the high-intensity tasks, the unit integrated multiple BOS elements that are not standard in the task organization of the cavalry troop. His mission statement follows:

1/3 ACR conducts METL-focused training in a continuous robust environment focused on high-intensity combat with multiple distracters.

The battle flow focused on one troop at a time, except for the last iteration, when Dragon Company (Tank) accompanied

Crazyhorse Troop. Over the four-day period, each troop would conduct three standard tactical missions: Zone Recon, Movement to Contact, and Defense, but not before undergoing a reception phase involving low- and mid-intensity conflict. Initially, troops operated in a low-intensity environment designed to simulate RSOI into a country troubled first by ethnic unrest, displacement, guerrilla activity, and eventually all-out conflict. A troop's performance in this reception phase dictated the tempo at which they progressed through the next two phases. For example, every troop conducted a route reconnaissance while faced with the challenges of maintaining contact with a simulated Russian unit, hostile civilian refugees, and coordination with a Russian linguist. All tasks had to be accomplished in accordance with a strict set of "United Nations-imposed" rules of engagement. Violations of ROE typically resulted in

an "international incident," accelerating hostilities and subsequently shortening a commander's preparation time for high-intensity operations. Additionally, units had to handle, coordinate, or negotiate with UN liaisons, news media, uncooperative civilians, female refugees, and kidnapping of friendly soldiers and equipment. Simulated combat stress casualties required troops to coordinate for chaplain support. MIAs forced troop commanders to refine personnel tracking and solve diverse medical evacuation situations in a simulated combat environment.

Units were also required to coordinate with and utilize combat service support units. Air CASEVAC exercises, coordination with MP units for processing EPWs, and investigation of ROE violations were two such examples. The troop/company commanders were given

Day 3/4	Troop Mission: <i>Defense In Sector</i>
1400	DISMOUNTS FOR THE PREVIOUS MISSION ARE CALLING ARTY ON CAV TROOP WHILE TROOP IS IN DEFENSIVE PREPARATION
1700	INITIAL LOGPAC IS DESTROYED AND TROOP MUST REQUEST ADDITIONAL LOGPAC
1900	TROOP MUST ESCORT ATTACHED SMOKE PLATOON BACK TO SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS.
0030	SCOUT FROM THE CAV TROOP ON A SCREEN LINE DISPLAYS SYMPTOMS OF COMBAT STRESS CASUALTY. TROOP MUST THEN COORDINATE FOR CHAPLAIN SUPPORT TO ASSIST THE CASUALTY.
0100	TROOP MUST CONDUCT A PATROL TO LINK UP WITH WOUNDED PRISONER AND ESCORT HIM BACK TO SQUADRON HQs
0500	OC 1 MEETS CIVILIAN BROADCAST TEAM & TAKES TO TRP CDR'S BATTLE POSITION. SIMULTANEOUS WITH ARTILLERY LANDING ON THE VEHICLE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS
0600	OC 2 EMPLACE FASCAM MINEFIELD
0630	MAKE CONTACT WITH MEDEVAC HELICOPTER AT SQUADRON TOC
0645	LD THE OPFOR

Figure 1

control of elements that are usually regimental and squadron assets, such as chemical smoke and recon assets, GSR, and interrogation and translation support elements from the 66th MI Company.

In addition to the maneuver training plan, C Troop and D Company conducted a “*No-Notice Gunnery*.” The intent for the no-notice gunnery was to determine the proficiency of gunnery skills at the section level without placing the unit in a standard gunnery scenario.

All of these challenges faced troop commanders as the scenario evolved into the standard high-intensity conflict mission plan. However, intentional distracters and complications were also planned into high-intensity operations. Figure 1 is an example of the Mission Event List for a cavalry troop for the second high-intensity mission, Defend in Sector. Careful planning and synchronization is key for the staff in ensuring that events are properly executed.

The timeline presented many problems for the troop leadership. Along with the standard EA development, the troop was expected to manage its resources to satisfy the demanding task list. The troop’s ability to implement the available resources was key in progressing through this tough scenario.

Neither administrative halts nor AARs were conducted during the four-day period. A cumulative AAR was conducted at the end of the exercise, and it was clear that the units had met the intent. Commanders noted the benefits of condensing the field problem and eliminating administrative halts. Not only did this method add realism to the training, but it success-

fully tested their platoon leaders’ ability to plan rapidly and efficiently. Rapidly-evolving scenarios tested their ability to react and take control of unexpected situations within the ROE and their commanders’ intent. Soldiers, too, enjoyed the continuous pace; they didn’t miss the boring downtime between missions. With respect to operating within a limited budget of resources and OPTEMPO miles, the operation was also a success. OPTEMPO was reduced from 150 miles for the troop in past operations to 73 miles for tanks and 91 for Bradleys. The PERSTEMPO was reduced from 11 days to 4 days (no-notice gunnery added 6 days to the total), allowing the squadron to retain the flexibility to retrain those units failing to meet the commander’s intent.

Overall, the result of the mixed levels of intensity was evident in the execution of the high-intensity tasks, where published standards were applied, but the conditions made more challenging. During the Defend in Sector lane, troop commanders could not focus solely on EA development; they were also expected to execute a variety of tasks like conducting civilian escort on the battlefield, reacting to media on the battlefield, and recovering a downed pilot. These additional tasks took away from the planning and preparation of our standard EA development and troop-leading procedures. Because of the rapid battle rhythm, the troop leadership had to pass responsibilities down to the NCOs of the troop/company. Additionally, troop/company leadership learned that a clear understanding of ROE and unit SOPs was paramount. The troop TOCs also faced the challenge of proc-

essing large volumes of information and reporting in a timely and accurate manner to both the squadron and scout and tank platoons on the ground.

In these ways, Tiger Squadron’s model incorporated low-, middle-, and high-intensity scenarios into a challenging, cost-effective, and rigorous training event. Most importantly, the model is one step in preparing soldiers to conduct a world of diverse missions in a time of limited resources.

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