



Saddle Up... Tonight We Ride

"Red one-one, White two-one, this is Blue three-one, Execute Sierra Delta, Time Now!"

A very long time ago, this cryptic radio message sent three platoon leaders to a specified frequency known only to them (or so they thought). Once they had made the switch to their "bandit frequency," Radio Free Company Commander, the three platoon leaders were able to converse freely. The subject was usually the same: "Do any of you guys know what the heck is going on?"

Unfortunately, it was seldom any of the three did, so without a clue and with the small amount of information gleaned from a company commander notorious for keeping important information to himself, the three platoon leaders worked out courses of actions and a tentative plan.

Eventually, sister companies were invited into the bandit frequency net, in the hope that perhaps *their* company commanders had passed along the information ours had neglected to convey. All went well, the net proved useful, and the lieutenants discovered secrets they had only dreamed about in the past...their company's mission, the enemy situation, stuff like that. The station's popularity began to grow, and our heroes soon got overconfident. Too many people knew about the bandit frequency, and we should have expected trouble.

All good things must come to an end, and Sierra Delta's end came when a carefree conversation questioning the mental ability of our company commander was interrupted by a less-than-ecstatic Black six. Talk Radio, Sierra Delta was off the air.

Bandit frequencies are not new; they exist all over today's Army. "Execute Sierra Delta" grew out of frustration from poor leadership — a company commander who would neither communicate with nor train his platoon leaders. 1LT Clark describes a similar frustration in his piece, "A Lieutenant's Plea to Company Commanders." Clark details the necessity of communicating with and training platoon leaders. The arti-

cle is a wake-up call for company commanders who either fail to engage or do so haphazardly (Note: One should include habitually attached platoon leaders in the training and communicating). Neglecting this mission-essential task will sooner or later return to haunt company commanders and may manifest itself through a bandit frequency, confusion at an obstacle site during a CTC rotation, or worse yet, a disaster during a real-world mission in some exotic location.

I'm told that *ARMOR* was prohibited some time ago from publishing obituaries, promotion notices, etc., but I would be remiss if I failed to note the passing of COL Orville "Sonny" Martin, a WWII veteran whose service of 31 years included a stint as the 29th Editor of *ARMOR*. COL Martin titled his column "*reconnoitering*" and a look back at his January-February column in 1970 provides a pretty good account of what we seek to accomplish with *ARMOR* today: "A journal records deeds, and probably even more important, it puts forth words which are the communication symbols of men's thoughts. In a truly professional journal, this is done not to propagandize nor to grind someone's axe but to stimulate honest and sincere thought leading to forthright discussion which will indeed result in professional thought." We thank COL Martin for all his words.

The holidays are fast becoming near targets and for most of us this means many of the usual drills: half day schedules that don't work or are not followed, frantic shopping on the 24th, and creative financial planning to survive the season. However, to a great many cavalymen and tankers, it means separation from loved ones. We've all missed our share of holidays, birthdays, school plays, first communions, etc.; it goes with wearing the tree suit. Still, it isn't easy. Before I get caught up in the madness that marks the holiday season, I'd like to offer my thanks to all those separated by duty from loved ones and a wish for their speedy and safe return.

And to the usual suspects — Tim, Bob, Phil, and a few others — execute Sierra Delta.

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