

CHAPTER 9

RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE
IN OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Planning R&S missions in offensive operations requires close coordination between the S2, S3, FSO, and ALO. The chance of fratricide multiplies during these operations. The reason is R&S assets are usually conducting missions as the friendly units maneuver through these areas and engage possible enemy targets with direct or indirect fires.

Detailed reconnaissance is the initial requirement for offensive operations. Due to the limited time available to conduct detailed reconnaissance, it is imperative you use, with augmentation, all available reconnaissance assets. Recent training exercises reveal that many times S2s do not construct complete R&S plans for offensive operations. To make sure you construct complete R&S plans, consider three general areas when planning for offensive operations:

- o Detailed reconnaissance.
- o Surveillance of the objective.
- o Ongoing R&S planning.

DETAILED RECONNAISSANCE

The first area of planning consideration stresses a

detailed reconnaissance from the LD/LC to beyond the objective. During this phase you need to plan missions which answer the PIR and provide the commander and S3 with detailed information about the terrain and enemy that lie between them and the objective.

You should have assets first complete those missions designed to provide specific information that will answer PIR, so gathered information can reach the TOC in time for the commander and the S3 to make any changes to COAs or to finalize the OPORD. There are basically two areas in which to conduct this detailed reconnaissance: along the friendly AAs and at the objective.

RECONNAISSANCE ALONG THE
AVENUES OF APPROACH

Typical reconnaissance missions along the AA are to--

- o Detect, pinpoint, classify, and report location, dimension, and type of all obstacles (constructed or natural).

- o Detect gaps or bypasses of obstacles.

- o Provide surveillance and security of marks, gaps, breaches, and bypasses of obstacles.

- o Report trafficability along AA.
- o Establish OPs overlooking AA.
- o Reconnoiter terrain and suspected enemy locations capable of overmatching and placing effective fire on the AA.
- o Detect locations and strength of enemy R&S assets along the AA.

RECONNAISSANCE OF THE OBJECTIVE

Typical reconnaissance missions in the area of the objective are--

- o Pinpoint fighting positions. Provide strength, weapon orientations, and description of fighting positions.
- o Detect obstacles and prepare to mark. Detect breaches, gaps, and bypasses.
- o Reconnoiter area around the objective (area depends on METT-T) to detect possible reinforcements or counterattack elements.
- o Establish OPs to maintain surveillance of the objective.

As reconnaissance assets conduct these missions, you must ensure security, surveillance, and CR assets

are providing coverage to the maneuver elements while they are preparing for this offensive operation. It appears to be two distinct R&S missions taking place at the same time. The first mission is providing support to the units that are preparing for the offensive OPORD. The second mission conducts R&S to answer PIR concerning the actual offensive operation.

SURVEILLANCE OF THE OBJECTIVE

Now it is time to focus on the second area of planning consideration which stresses surveillance. Surveillance focuses on--

- o The objective.
- o Terrain along the friendly avenue of approach (AA).
- o Possible enemy reinforcement routes.

During this phase, you must make sure the S3 and all maneuver elements know the locations of surveillance assets.

Surveillance of the objective should detect any changes while the friendly elements are maneuvering forward. The surveillance assets report any enemy leaving or entering the objective area.

Any terrain that can control the friendly AA should be covered with surveillance or controlled by one of the seven BOS listed at the bottom of the DST.

Any routes leading into the friendly AA or the objective should be covered with surveillance to provide early warning of an enemy counterattack or reinforcements approaching. Again, these surveillance operations occur while the friendly elements are maneuvering toward the objective.

ONGOING RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE PLANNING

The third area of planning consideration focuses on both R&S missions. This area concerns planning R&S missions once your unit takes the objective. The S3 can now task subsequent R&S missions to those assets which provided surveillance to the maneuver elements. These R&S missions depend on the type of follow-on missions planned.

If the unit's mission is to reconsolidate and prepare to continue the attack to a subsequent objective, you should have a plan to continue R&S activities forward to the next objective. Remember, planning is continuous. After you accomplish this, your unit can implement missions discussed in supporting the

second and third areas of planning considerations. A key scout mission is maintaining visual contact with the enemy.

If the unit's mission is to occupy and defend the objective, you should recommend an R&S plan stressing early warning and CR operations.

If the unit's mission is to pursue the fleeing enemy, you could recommend that scout elements provide flank security as other maneuver elements conduct guard operations.

The most important aspect of the final planning consideration is that it be planned out well in advance. This ensures the assets are prepared to execute the mission, not reorganizing the objective.

The three areas of planning considerations previously stated work particularly well in a deliberate attack. You can apply these same principles for a movement to contact.

Do not be misled into thinking these three areas of planning considerations take place independent of each other at different times. On the contrary, many times these missions overlap.

We have shown you a technique for constructing complete R&S plans in offensive operations. Refer to Chapter 12 for examples.