



A look into the future of 20th Chemical Company as it becomes mechanized reveals an M1059.

Shared Training

—provides insight, advancement

The night chill was still in the air when the first sergeant began the early morning wake-up. He knew his company needed the extra half-hour of sleep. But, he also knew that it was very important for the company to finish its preventive maintenance checks and services, since this was its first mission, and only 12 hours since the formation of the company.

The commander blinks his eyes to refocus on his company. He could not help but notice that out of 150 personnel he knew only his three platoon leaders, and that the whole company, to include the noncommissioned officer chain of command, was new.

At 0230 hours, the 1st and 2nd smoke platoon sergeants and the fuel supply platoon sergeant assembled their squad leaders, section leaders, and smoke noncomis-

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sioned officers to hear a fragmentary order on their mission.

The mission of the newly organized 20th Chemical Company (smoke generator) was to create a smoke haze along the Cane River to allow the 1/69 Infantry Battalion (Light) to make an undetected river crossing. The infantry battalion had chosen five crossing points spread out along 8 kilometers of the river and was to begin crossing at 0630. The last element was to cross at 1000 hours.

At 0430 hours the last element reported reaching its Romeo Papa (release point). The first platoon was in the process of shifting to its

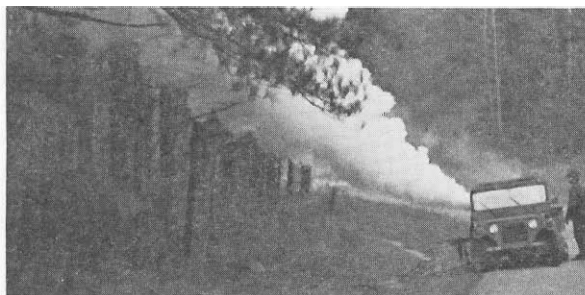
alternate positions because of a change in wind direction, and the second platoon was busy dropping drums of fog oil in preparation for the three and one-half-hour smoke mission.

Calculations made by the new fuel supply platoon sergeant told him to drop each generator two drums and return to the storage site to pick up more fog oil to sustain the mission.

The platoon sergeants were keeping a watchful eye on winds, while the squad leaders and smoke NCOs were making their last minute checks of their personnel.

After ensuring their generators were going to operate, the generator operators were preparing defensive positions in case the enemy counterattacked along the river.

From a position above the river, the commander and platoon leaders



20th Chemical Company sets up a smoke generator position and establishes a smoke line.



looked on. All were wondering if they were needed. These new leaders and soldiers had everything under control.

Generators were running and squad leaders, smoke NCOs, and platoon sergeants were checking and rechecking to make sure that the generator operators were running the generators and that a smoke haze was running down the river.

From the viewpoint of the commander, he could see smoke over an area 1 X 10 kilometers, which has more than enough to cover the objective. At 1100 hours the mission was over, the platoons had reconsolidated, and an after-action review had been conducted. The mission was a tremendous success.

At 1200 hours the commander looks out at his company and he recognizes some of the individuals. Platoon sergeants, squad leaders, section NCOs, smoke NCOs, and generator operators have all been replaced; not because they haven't done their job, nor were they battlefield casualties. They have all been replaced because it is now time to share the leadership and company positions with their fellow soldiers. For you see, the 20th Chemical Company is a "shared training" company currently located at the US Army Chemical School.

Shared training combines different level classes in a training situation which builds on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes

(KSAs) of all students involved.

In the Chemical School's Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Proponency Training Department (NBCPTD), the Smoke Division has taken a giant step ahead to introduce shared training during its field training exercise (FTX).

This exercise involves the basic noncommissioned officer course (BNCOC) and the advanced individual training (AIT) 54B10 students. These two classes are organized into the 20th Chemical Company (smoke generator) Motorized.

The 54B10s (AIT students) are the generator operators, drivers, and the fuel handlers. The BNCOC students occupy leadership positions through platoon sergeant. The drill sergeant of the AIT students serves as the company first sergeant. Senior cadre from the Smoke Division fill the remaining leadership positions. The organization is structured as closely as possible to an actual chemical (smoke) unit.

Shared training, or horizontal/vertical integrated training as it is called by Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), is the result of a directive. Since both the BNCOC and 54B10 classes are scheduled for separate FTXs, NBCPTD decided to merge the two FTXs to satisfy the shared training requirement.

Initially, the two classes train separately for one and one-half days. They are then briefed on the

shared training requirements and expectations, linked-up, and organized into the company.

What is a day of shared training like? A day of shared training is a day that is made as realistic as possible for the students. They will participate as a combat support motorized smoke generator company supporting a combat battalion during battle.

They get up way before first light and automatically start performing the necessary pre-operations checks needed to begin the mission.

The noncommissioned officers are gathered into the command post and given the current operations order, and a separate frag order telling them their mission, location, start/stop time. They are also told to prepare to conduct a recon of the selected area.

Platoon sergeant and squad leaders perform a recon with the help of the cadre platoon leaders while the smoke NCOs prepare their squads to move out.

After the recon, the platoon sergeant leads his platoon into position—normally it is still dark, traveling is slow, and only certain designated routes may be used. Once at the location, he gives control to the squad leaders who move their individual squads into the predesignated positions located during the recon.

The generator operators find and take advantage of the natural camouflage, and ensure their



The 20th Chemical Company screens a main supply route (MSR), as well as the sun.



generators are sited as level as possible. After rechecking their equipment, they begin to prepare defensive positions and wait for the word to make smoke.

Once the order is given, generators begin belching out great quantities of billowing white smoke, NCOs are running up and down the smoke line helping, assisting, and checking on the generator operators.

After two hours and a move by one platoon into its alternate position, the smoke control officer issues the order to ENDEX (end of mission) or stop smoke. The fuel supply teams pick up fog oil drums from the smoke lines and the company assembles at a predesignated area to ensure accountability and receive the movement order.

The movement order takes the company back to the fog oil storage area where the company consolidates partial drums, and replaces empty drums in anticipation for the next mission.

An after-action review is conducted and all personnel are briefed on how they performed. Before leaving the fog oil storage area, new leaders are designated for the next mission. Upon return to the bivouac site, the new leaders will report to the briefing room for the next mission. The missions will continue back to back for one and one-half days, for a total of four missions lasting about 30 hours out of 36 available.

The benefits of shared training

are many. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of all soldiers are measured, as they are put into a situation that allows them to perform duties normally associated with company assignments involved with a combat mission.

The NCOs finally reach some of those higher leadership positions that they have been groomed for since entry into the army.

The field environment provides real insight into a smoke unit's mission. The privates are exposed to the professionalism of the NCO corps and get to act as valuable members of a team working toward a common goal.

A look at the future shows the smoke control officer flying high above the battlefield and directing

the shared training companies for a smoke mission in support of a division operation. His mechanized smoke vehicles, M1059s, are moving forward in a wedge formation to support the lead battalion, while his mobile smoke vehicles, HMMWVs with 157 sets, are screening the exposed flank of the maneuver brigade.

He flies back to the line of departure in time not to see the company of M3A4s mounted HMMWVs screening the assembly area and the line of departure from stationary positions. He reports back to the Smoke Division that the basic noncommissioned officer chain of command, and the 54B10 soldiers, are doing the job as well as our best-trained smoke units. 

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