

REFORGER 87

—testing chemical doctrine and organization

After deploying his III (US) Corps to reinforce NATO's Northern Army Group, the corps commander faces a problem. The two divisions he brought fight hard and successfully for a week; but both have a task force in need of reconstitution—especially difficult because both task forces need chemical decontamination. Fortunately, planning that began more than a year before enables the Corps to turn its chemical decontamination missions over to the 2d Chemical Battalion for planning and execution.

Members of the 2d Chemical Battalion board aircraft for REFORGER 87 exercises.

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This scenario was part of REFORGER 87, 19th in the Autumn Forge series of NATO exercises. This REFORGER (return of forces to Germany) differs significantly from previous exer-

cises and is filled with firsts.

For the first time a CONUS-based corps deployed to Europe for a REFORGER exercise. In previous exercises, CONUS divisions, combat support units deployed to reinforce the LOC (lines of communication) and a European-based US corps. In REFORGER 87, the III corps with two combat divisions (1st Cavalry and 2d Armored), combat support, and combat service support deployed to the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) area.

This deployment, the largest to Europe since World War II, included 20,000 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, and approximately



5,000 soldiers from other parts of the United States.

Another first was the deployment of the 2d Chemical Battalion. This was the first deployment of the battalion in support of a corps-level field training exercise (FTX) since its reactivation in 1981.

REFORGER and its associated FTX, Certain Strike, proved an excellent opportunity to test both new chemical doctrine and organization in an actual deployment and corps-level FTX. Although chemical companies routinely participate in REFORGER exercises, National Training Center rotations, and other FTXs as part of a division-size force, the 2d Chemical Battalion had never deployed with the corps in an FTX.

Command post exercises (CPXs), while valuable, can never replace the actual employment of units in a large field exercise. Accordingly, the III Corps chemical officer and the 2d Chemical Company commander agreed that the battalion should participate in REFORGER 87.

The battalion was ordered to deploy with 110 personnel (slightly less than half its peacetime strength), and necessary equipment to support the corps with decon and smoke.

Environmental considerations in Germany restrict actual smoke and decon operations. For that reason, as well as limits on personnel strength and shipping space for equipment, the battalion commander decided to deploy with only one smoke and one decon platoon.

The two platoons were placed under the 181st Chemical Company (Decon) headquarters. The headquarters and headquarters detachment deployed at 100-percent strength. The battalion deployed with 5% vehicles and three storage containers. The table on this page shows the equipment distribution.

Table 1. Equipment Distribution			
Type Vehicle/Trailer	HHD	181st Chem	1Pit/46 Chem
M1008/Trailer	3/1	1/0	
M1009	8	2	
M151 1/4T Trailer			9/9
2 1/2T Trailer	5/3	3/2	
5T Cgo w/TPU Trailer		4/3	
5T Cgo w/M12 Trailer		3/2	
5T Wrecker		1	

As planning progressed, three issues arose that would later prove key to the battalion's success on REFORGER: command and control, including support relationships; communications; and logistical support. Any one issue could be a show-stopper. The challenge for the command group and staff was to plan these areas in great detail.

The first issue was command and control. FC 3-101, Chemical Staffs and Units, addresses differing support and command relationships for chemical units. A support relationship often used in CPXs is general support (GS) to the corps. In this case, the battalion is positioned in the corps area, usually behind the division making the main effort. Missions then come from the corps chemical section.

Another form of employment is attachment. This is a command relationship in which the battalion is usually attached to a division. Here, the battalion works directly for and is assigned missions by the division. The division may also further attach or place subordinate companies/platoons in other support roles.

The last command and control relationship is direct support (DS). In this instance, missions come from the supported division. The battalion operates on a mission basis and determines the number of subordinate units to commit to an assigned task.

With each of these C²/support relationships come differing problems in communication—the se-

cond issue. In general support, the corps signal brigade provides communication support to the battalion. To obtain this support, the battalion headquarters locates near a signal node supporting other corps units. Possibilities are: near a forward support group headquarters, corps artillery headquarters, corps artillery brigade headquarters, or other large corps unit.

Subordinate companies locate in FM radio range or in the vicinity of another corps signal node. Under C²/support relationship of attachment, the battalion depends on the division for signal support. Most likely, battalion headquarters will locate at the division support area (DSA), division artillery headquarters, or division main command post to tie into the signal system.

Subordinate companies will use FM or locate in a brigade support area where multi-channel communication is available. Under

The battalion prepares to convoy to staging area in northern Germany.



C²/support relationship of direct support, the corps signal brigade provides signal support to the battalion, even if the battalion operates in a division area. Due to the limited corps signal assets, subordinate units will continue to

rely on FM radio to communicate with the battalion.

The final critical issue was logistical support. In general support, the corps support command has responsibility to provide logistical support through one of its

area support groups. The problem proves minimal as long as the battalion operates in the corps rear area or near the divisional rear boundary. If attached, support becomes the responsibility of the division support command (DISCOM). This proves to be a difficult task for the DISCOM, since it is organized to support divisional units only.

In direct support, the support command retains the responsibility of supporting the battalion in the forward areas. This places a burden on the battalion due to a supply line which could extend from a brigade area to a forward support group located behind the division rear.

As planning continued, the decision on how to employ the battalion

ALOC, collocated in the 2d Armored Division Support Area, prepares for operations during FTX Certain Strike. MAJ Frank Cantu, S2/3, briefs tactical situation to commanders and staff.



had to be made. The corps chemical officer, coordinating with the 2d Armored Division chemical officer and the 2d Chemical Battalion commander, decides to place the battalion in direct support of the 2d Armored Division. The battalion headquarters had recently reorganized under the J-series MTOE, and the battalion commander wanted to test the headquarters' ability to command, control, communicate, and logistically support itself and its subordinate units under this new structure.

Also, the decision was made to attach the 44th Chemical Company (-), 2d Armored Division's Chemical Company, to the battalion. The ability to attach and detach subordinate units is a critical task in war,

and REFORGER 87 provided an excellent opportunity to practice this task.

During III Corps CPX Golden Saber XIV, the battalion worked on critical coordination in preparation for Certain Strike. During this exercise, the 2d Chemical Battalion was placed in direct support of the 2d Armored Division. The battalion staff got face-to-face with their division counterparts, identified potential problems, and found solutions. As expected, communications and logistical support were high on the list. Final solutions to both problems will be discussed later.

The division was pleased to find the only support 2d Chemical Battalion expected was a piece of terrain in the DSA to use as a logistical base, and an area near the brigade rear boundaries to set up

the tactical operations center (TOC). Otherwise, the battalion intended to support itself and attached chemical companies (including the 44th when it was attached to the battalion).

The question of communications and logistical support remained. For communications, the challenge was to communicate with the division and corps headquarters. Internal to the battalion, the plan was to control the subordinate units with secure FM. Experiences at Fort Hood and the National Training Center indicated this would work without significant problems.

As a corps unit, 3d Signal Brigade's doctrinal mission is to support the battalion for access to the multi-channel system. The signal brigade was heavily taxed; so, the battalion TOC was located

Decon squad prepares PDDA to depart for decon mission in support of 2d Armor.



with a field artillery brigade headquarters. The artillery brigade was also a corps unit located forward, supporting 2d Armored Division. By collocating with them, access to communications was assured.

They, in turn, had a high priority on communications support and were in contact both with the division and corps. Since the corps chemical section is located in the Fire Support Module of the III Corps main command post, locating with a corps artillery headquarters made sense. As a result, the communications plan worked well.

By locating in the same area as the artillery brigade, the battalion

was able to communicate both with the division and corps chemical sections, and other units as necessary. When the command posts were moving, the liaison officers kept the battalion in touch with the chemical war, providing an alternate means of receiving missions and passing information.

While not authorized by TOE, 2d Chemical took three extra lieutenants to use as liaison officers. The original intent was to give these officers, who would not have ordinarily been deployed, an opportunity to participate in REFORGER. The LNO concept worked so well that the battalion TAC SOP was changed, requiring each attached company to send a liaison officer to battalion. Additionally, the bat-

talion monitored the 2d Armored Division FM command net during the FTX. Throughout, the battalion was able to stay abreast of the tactical situation and to rapidly respond to mission requests.

To solve the logistical support problem, the commander decided to divide the battalion headquarters into two parts—the tactical operations center (TOC) and the administrative/logistics operations center (ALOC). The TOC was kept with the FA brigade and the ALOC was located in the 2d Armored Division support area (DSA). The ALOC was formed from the S1 and S4 sections of the battalion headquarters, as well as the maintenance sections and most of the supply sections from the subordinate companies. By

Soldiers load baggage in preparation for trip back home.



consolidating maintenance and supply at the battalion level, company commanders were freed from maintenance and logistical support worries. This allowed them to concentrate on planning and executing their missions.

The battalion commander prioritized support based on mission requirements, thereby having the capability to provide above normal support when necessary in a company. For example, all of the battalion's five-ton trucks could be used either to haul fog oil if a heavy smoke mission was in progress, or used to haul decontaminants and water if decon were the priority.

Consolidating maintenance resulted in similar flexibility. Tailored maintenance contact teams were used when a unit was assigned a mission in the forward combat zone. However, since only minor maintenance problems were encountered, the maintenance section was never fully taxed.

During the planning phase for REFORGER, the battalion S4 worked extensively with the forward support group to ensure they understood the battalion's support requirements. The support plan was practiced during corps' Golden Saber CPX and looked workable.

The S4 and the support group worked out a series of standard push packages to be delivered to the ALOC at the DSA. The plan called for the S4 to contact the support group and ask for a standard package to be delivered the following day. Items not in the package were requested as needed. While this was a good concept, the support group was unable to deliver the packages due to its heavy workload; so, the ALOC was forced to use supply points to pick up needed items—rations and fuel. Since neither fog oil nor decontaminants were actually used, this was possible during the exercise.

In war, the ALOC would have

used its transportation assets to deliver support forward to committed companies rather than hauling support from the rear. Clearly, the area support group needed a more robust organization for REFORGER and this observation was passed to the logistics community for their analysis.

The ALOC concept within the battalion proved to be viable and allowed the flexibility to make up for the area support group's shortfall. At one point during the exercise when the 2d Armored's DISCOM was moving, the 2d Chemical's ALOC was the only unit in the new DSA with diesel fuel, and the ALOC fueled 2d Armored Division DISCOM units until their tankers arrived. This demonstrated the viability of the ALOC concept.*

When the 44th Chemical Company was attached to the battalion, the ALOC immediately fueled them (following a long convoy), and fed them their first hot meal in two days. Minor maintenance quickly completed, the company was ready for missions. The 44th also quickly grew to like the ALOC concept. They were able to submit estimated support requirements for the next day and have those supplies delivered forward to the company. Maintenance support was obtained by calling on the radio and reporting the location and problem. Rather than worrying about recovery, parts, and mechanics to fix broken equipment, the support came to them.

After almost two weeks of providing chemical support to III Corps units, a tired but happy battalion cleaned vehicles, rail-loaded them for shipment, then boarded a C-141 at Hanover for home and family.

The battalion solved the problems of communications and logistical support in the most difficult of all command and support roles—that of direct support to a

division. The 2d Chemical Battalion had validated the J-series organization and developed a new concept for consideration by the doctrine writers on employment of the chemical battalion in support of a corps.

**Readers interested in other logistical issues of REFORGER 87 should read "Phantom Warriors of Certain Strike" by LTC Kenneth L. Privatsky, Army, March 88.*

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