

Engineer platoon leaders serving in divisional engineer line companies have to perform one of the most demanding junior officer roles on the entire battlefield. While leading their platoon, they also normally serve as task force engineers. Because of this, engineer battalion and company commanders, as well as task force commanders, must place significant emphasis on training, monitoring, and supporting the platoon leader/task force engineer.

The engineer company commander trains the task force engineers subordinate to him. With his battalion and task force commanders, the company commander develops the training program to meet the needs of the task force. When developing the task force engineer training program, the company commander should consider at least the following:

- Understanding the task force commander.
- Getting into the decision flow.
- Conducting staff coordination.
- Building confidence and mutual respect.

- Briefing the task force commander.

Understanding the Task Force Commander

The task force engineer must begin to think like the task force commander. Remember that the task force commander has at least 15 years of military experience. Specifically, the task force engineer must learn the doctrine. There is no substitute for studying FMs 71-1 and 71-2J, *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force and Task Force Operations*, and the task force field standing operating procedures (FSOP). Along with this, he must know the task force equipment and its capabilities, the number of tanks or IFVs it has, the maximum effective range of its weapon systems, and the capabilities of its vehicles.

The task force engineer must also understand detailed operational graphics and keep his own overlay current with the task force commander's. FM 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, is the reference. Using good graphics to discuss operations overlook-

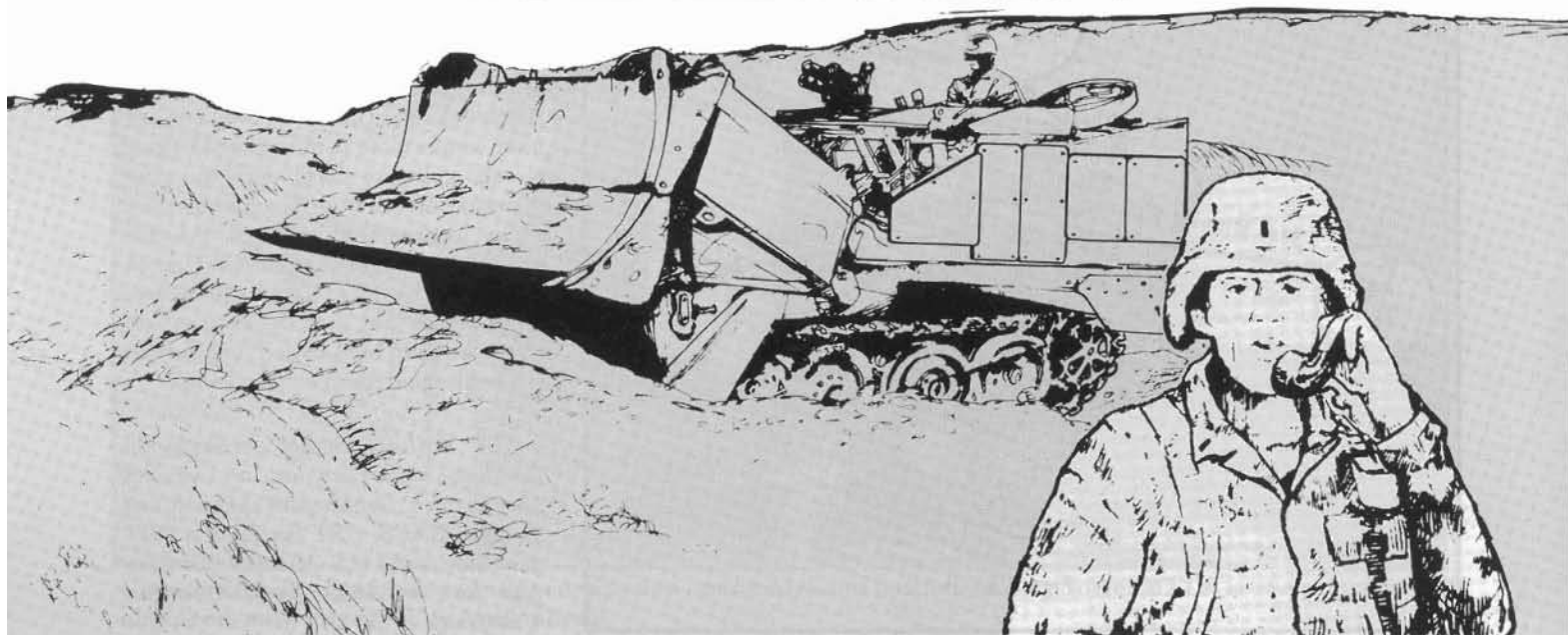
ing the terrain and asking questions based on METTT, OKOCA, and the five-paragraph field order will result in the task force engineer's better understanding the task force commander's intent.

Keeping communications with the task force commander is essential. This may be by radio, telephone, messenger, or any means available. The essential thing is to KEEP COMMO. The task force engineer should also frequent the same places as the task force commander and update him on the engineer operations in sector.

The task force engineer must know engineer doctrine and capabilities as well. The FM 5-100 series is now available and must be studied. A thorough knowledge of mobility/counter-mobility/survivability is vital. The task force engineer must learn about his organic equipment as well as that which may be attached to him. He also needs to know the threat equipment and capabilities. Then, with the help of his battalion and company commanders, he must work with the task

TRAINING TASK FORCE ENGINEERS

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force commander on employing engineers to maximize their combat multiplying effect.

Using all of this knowledge, the task force engineer must understand the commander's intent, translate it into specified and implied tasks, and develop the engineer plan. Becoming proficient in these tasks will help develop credibility with the task force commander. This is necessary so that the task force engineer can be the expert on engineer activities in the task force sector.

Getting Into the Decision Flow

The next area of importance in training the task force engineer is teaching him how to get into the decision flow. FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, explains how staffs function and includes the engineer officer. Detailed study of this manual is important. Concentrate on chapters 4 through 7.

Being included in the orders group is also important. When the orders group meets, the task force engineer should be there. This includes warning orders, terrain walks, staff planning sessions, decision briefings, OPODS, and AARs. The task force engineer must be confident and *assertive* to be an effective member of the orders group. He can be this way only if he is properly trained and well organized.

Conducting Staff Coordination

The task force engineer must execute numerous staff responsibilities to properly support the task force. As a staff officer, he must interface regularly with the S-2, S-3, S-4, scouts, fire support officer (FSO), and Air Force liaison officer (ALO). Let's consider the task force engineer's coordination with each.

S-2: The task force S-2 supervises the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). He analyzes the enemy, terrain, and weather. All of these areas are critical to the task force engineer. Based on the S-2 analysis of the enemy that the task force will encounter, the task force engineer must determine with the S-2 the expected engineer capability of the enemy force. FMs 100-2-1 and 100-2-3, *The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics* and *The Soviet Army: Equipment*, provide useful information on threat tactics and organization.

From the terrain and weather estimates, the task force engineer recommends how to best provide mobility sup-

port or reinforce the terrain with available or projected assets. He also provides mobility/countermobility advice on route selection. The task force engineer and the S-2 establish the priority intelligence requirements (PIR) of engineer significance to be directed to the scout platoon leader. The task force engineer must also report the results of any engineer reconnaissance in sector to the S-2.

S-3: The task force engineer must translate all of the information resulting from the S-2 coordination into an engineer plan that supports the concept of the operation. He should be a key link between terrain analysis and battle planning by reinforcing to the task force commander the significance of choke points and terrain and water obstacles in both the offense and the defense.

The task force engineer recommends task organization inputs to the S-3 on paragraphs 3a, mobility/countermobility/survivability; 3b, subunit missions; and 3c, coordination instructions, and helps develop the obstacle plan for the operations order. He ensures the inclusion of priority of work, link ups, rally points, logistic release points, locations of primary and fallback positions, follow-on missions, and evacuation times. He must also continually stress that obstacles in the attack or defense are covered by direct and indirect fire. In addition, he advises the S-3 on deception and FASCAM missions.

Before attacks, the task force engineer must learn from the S-3 of intended battle positions or defense sectors on the objective in order to preplan the logistics needed for a hasty defense. Those supplies and equipment will then be ordered and may be moved forward in conjunction with the attack so that they will not delay preparation of defensive positions once they are selected. He must also coordinate hasty and deliberate marking and reporting of breach or bypass lanes through enemy obstacles.

In the defense, the task force engineer must coordinate obstacle turn-over procedures, safe lanes through obstacles, and obstacle marking techniques. He must ensure that the obstacle plan is integrated into the task force surveillance and patrol plan to guard against breaching by the enemy during darkness. He must also coordinate for work-site security to be provided by the maneuver unit. Security elements *must*

be positioned between the work parties and the enemy to prevent enemy weapons systems from engaging the critical and vulnerable engineer assets at maximum effective range. Just overwatch is not sufficient.

S-4: The task force engineer coordinates with the S-4 to ensure that logistics are projected, requisitioned, and acquired in a timely manner. Together they must ensure that logistics release points and Class IV and V prestock points (task force run) are established and SOPs are developed to ensure the proper functioning of these systems. The S-4 must also be made aware of the Class III requirements for supporting engineers.

Scouts: The scout platoon leader and the task force engineer must coordinate to ensure that PIR concerning engineer matters are met. The task force engineer will normally send an engineer representative with the scout platoon reconnaissance effort to assist in collecting and reporting intelligence. Important are:

- Trafficability.
- Existing natural, cultural, and man-made obstacles.
- Routes, roads, fords, AVLB sites, and bridges.
- The locations of stockpiles of engineer assets.

FSO: The task force engineer and the FSO coordinate to determine the availability of Class V to support engineer operations. Obstacles should appear on the fire support overlay to ensure that indirect fire is plotted to cover them. RAAM and ADAM missions must be carefully analyzed and planned and must be included on both the fire support plan and the obstacle overlay.

S-3 (Air) or ALO: Obstacles must appear on overlays given to supporting aviation so that gunship and close air support (CAS) pilots will know where to expect clusters of targets. Air-delivered FASCAM must be planned and coordinated.

Building Confidence and Mutual Respect

Company commanders can help to develop confidence and credibility in the task force engineers they train. Through officer professional development (OPD) classes, task force engineers can become more proficient in doctrine and staff functions. There are at least a few ideas for OPD classes contained in this article.

Becoming an active participant in task force regular staff, training meetings, and OPDs will help to develop a solid relationship. Get task force engineers involved in the task force training management cycle. Monitor this closely to ensure that brigade, task force, and engineer battalion and company training cycles mesh. Train together whenever possible. The more the task force and the task force engineer see of each other, the better.

Task force CPXs, TEWTs, and MAPEXs are other good sources of education. Training his own platoon will also give the task force engineer a realistic picture of the time and effort expended in tasks that provide mobility/counter-mobility/survivability support to the task force.

Briefing the Task Force Commander

The only way to become proficient at briefing is to brief, brief, and brief. Use FM 101-5 and the five-paragraph field order as guides. Establish an SOP with the task force commander on what he wants in a briefing. Always include a

mission statement (Sir, my mission is . . .). Also consider the following:

- Priority of work (mobility/counter-mobility/survivability).
- Obstacle overlays including FASCAM for both offensive and defensive operations.
- The execution matrix (time vs task).
- The survivability plan for each company/team and weapon system (don't forget ADA, FA, and engineer assets).
- The engineer equipment, weapons, and personnel status.

Obstacle delay times are of interest as well. While the task force engineer will quality-control the construction of obstacles, the key to long delays at good obstacles is effective direct and indirect fire. Great obstacles not covered by fire can be rapidly breached. FM 5-102, *Counter-mobility*; FM 20-32, *Mine/Counter-mine Operations at the Company Level*; and FM 71-2J, *Task Force Operations*, are the references for obstacles.

The Engineer School is doing its part to improve task force engineer training. A field circular on the duties of the brigade task force engineer is sche-

duled to be published in the fourth quarter of FY 85. The program of instruction for the Engineer Office Basic Course is also being analyzed to determine what else potential task force engineers should be taught.

The task force engineer has finally gained the full attention that the position deserves. Through proper training and emphasis on the part of engineer platoon leaders, company and battalion commanders, and maneuver commanders, the task force engineer will soon truly be the task force commander's engineer expert on the battlefield.

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Engineer Matrix



Obstacle control and security must be coordinated in addition to a matrix. Experience has shown that obstacle handover and position security, while being the most critical, are habitually mismanaged. A matrix, by itself, will not suffice.

by 1LT Charles A. Radke

It is 0100 hours, and moonrise is still two hours away. You've been driving through blackness for over an hour with no lights and few terrain features to guide on. Soon you'll be at the task force TOC (tactical operations center), and the time to switch from engineer platoon leader to TOC staff officer will be at hand.

Although you are the junior officer at the TOC, the knowledge you have as a task force engineer is vital to the success of the operation. The task force commander expects you to be the expert on all engineer aspects of the operation. He also expects you to prepare the obstacle plan and to write the engineer annex to the operations order. Even so,

the subdued castle you wear on your shirt collar does not guarantee that you can meet his expectations.

In most cases, you will have the largest platoon in the task force. Often the assets you control will outnumber the personnel in one of the maneuver company teams. You will have control over your platoon and the additional heavy