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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry
APO San Francisco 96477

LESSON PLAN

INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT: Battle Drill

TYPE: Conference and practical application

TIME ALLOTTED: Two hours

CLASS PRESENTED TO: Platoons of 3-5 Cav

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS: Organic equipment

PERSONNEL: Platoon leaders and key NCO's.

TRAINING AIDS: None.

REFERENCES: Armor Leader's Guide; Special Text 17-1-3.

STUDY ASSIGNMENTS: None.

TROOP REQUIREMENTS: None.

TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS: None.

1. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

a. Objective. To provide the Troops with information and practical exercise necessary to enable them to react efficiently and immediately to any hostile situation encountered by a platoon on the move.

b. Reasons. To enable the troops to overcome the enemy or to react to a dangerous situation with a minimum loss of life and equipment.

2. EXPLANATION (10 minutes)

a. Platoon leader will move his platoon through various selected areas, presenting the platoon with different dry run emergency situations. Platoon leaders will observe the platoon's actions and make corrections when necessary.

b. All situations should be dry fire exercises unless terrain and friendly positions allow for live fire. Before the platoon leader orders his group to engage in live fire exercises, he should consult a higher command. Extreme caution should be the rule at all times.

c. Situations.

(1) Vehicle hitting a mine.

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- (2) Platoon leader's vehicle detonating a mine.
- (3) Sporadic incoming mortar and artillery fire.
- (4) Heavy incoming mortar and artillery fire.
- (5) Incoming RPG fire from either side of a moving column.
- (6) Incoming RPG fire from the front or rear of a moving column.
- (7) Incoming small arms fire from the flanks and/or the front and rear of a moving column.
- (8) Sniper fire.
- (9) Ambush of dismounted patrol.
- (10) Small arms fire taken by dismounted sweep line when vehicles are supporting on line.
- (11) Other situations at the discretion of the platoon leader.

NOTE. Above situations and possible solutions are described in detail in Annex A.

3. APPLICATION (100 minutes): See Annex A.

4. REVIEW: No formal review need be given. However, after each situation is presented, a critique should be made by the platoon leader. Battle drill should be reviewed on a daily basis whenever time and prevailing circumstances permit

ANNEXES: Annex A (Applications)

Annex A (Applications) to Lesson Plan (Battle Drill) HQ, 3d Sqdn, 5th Cav

1. Vehicle hitting a mine.

a. All other vehicles immediately go into a herring-bone or modified herring-bone as terrain dictates. If the surrounding terrain is heavily vegetated, or if there is a reasonable possibility that the enemy is present, a quick recon by fire of the flanks should be made.

b. Ordinarily, the only vehicles changing positions after the detonation of a mine should be the track carrying the medic and the platoon leader's or platoon sergeant's track moving to assess the situation. The medic should dismount a reasonable distance from the injured personnel. If no further enemy activity is forthcoming, the platoon leader or platoon sergeant should dismount, preferably with a radio, in order to obtain an accurate assessment of the injuries, equipment damage, required assistance, and the causes of the incident.

c. Security must be established for the disabled vehicle and crew as well as for the LZ if a MEDEVAC is necessary. This security can be either dismounted or mounted, depending upon the terrain and the possibility of more mines in the vicinity. If the immediate area has grass over knee high, or if crater analysis indicated command detonation of the mine, a mounted sweep of the surrounding area should be initiated immediately to insure the security of the LZ and preclude any subsequent enemy attack. In addition, the area within 150 meters of the disabled vehicle must be swept by the platoon's personnel skilled in mine detection before vehicle recovery or platoon movement not vital to the initial reaction is undertaken.

d. Careful coordination of these various tasks must be made by the platoon leader to avoid crossfires or confusion on the part of track commanders. All personnel must be extremely attentive to the immediate situation; only those individuals needed to handle the MEDEVAC and fulfill the security requirements should dismount. Priority should be given to the security of the whole unit, while second concern should be the care of injured personnel, vehicle recovery, and analysis of the mining incident.

2. Platoon leader's vehicle hitting a mine.

a. Although this situation is similar to the previous one, loss of either the platoon leader's or the platoon sergeant's track and crew necessitates the assumption of responsibility by the next ranking or most capable non-commissioned officer who has become practiced in dealing with such a situation. Therefore, all individuals must be made aware of the exact chain of command within the platoon.

b. Communication must be maintained with the higher net, and responsibility with the platoon must be shifted smoothly to insure its proper functioning.

3. Sporadic incoming mortar or artillery fire.

a. When incoming mortar or artillery fire does not appear to be of sufficient intensity to warrant preparation for imminent ground attack, the platoon on the move, if not under other specific orders, should move immediately out of the impact area. Proper interval should be maintained between all vehicles which should have every hatch open. Controlled recon by fire with designated weapons may be initiated at the discretion of the platoon leader.

b. If the platoon's route appears to become channelized, and if the element is not moving to contact, consideration should be given to movement back through the area recently cleared. If the mission requirements necessitate movement forward through increasingly rough terrain, controlled speed, recon by fire, and constant observation are of the utmost importance. Attempts should also be made to determine the location(s) of enemy indirect fire weapons in order that artillery or organic mortar fire may be directed upon these areas.

4. Heavy incoming mortar or artillery fire.

a. Intense indirect fire indicates that the platoon on the move has been and is under close observation, and that in all probability a ground attack is imminent. Recon by fire with all organic weapons, after the safety of all friendly units in the immediate area is insured, should be initiated as soon as possible. Concentrated fires should be brought to bear on likely avenues of enemy approach.

b. If all vehicles are operational, an attempt should be made to clear the area under fire; but a heavy volume of incoming fire probably means that the enemy has already begun a coordinated plan of attack. In this situation planning counter-offensive moves, vehicle positions, and sectors of fire becomes as important as devising a way out of the killing zone. If a vehicle has been immobilized by indirect fire, quick transferral of wounded personnel to operational vehicles, followed by movement to a safer area for MEDEVAC is the only feasible way to minimize casualties. Of course, if a ground attack should occur, movement to clear and medical evacuation become secondary to the problems of defensive action.

5, 6, and 7. Incoming RPG and small arms fire from the flanks and/or the front and/or rear of a moving column.

a. This situation is a many sided problem with only a single guiding rule: return fire and maneuver according to the situation. Whether the enemy is on a hit-and-run mission or is planning a full scale ambush, a heavy volume of fire and well-practiced movement will put many enemy personnel out of action quickly and probably cause further incoming to be inaccurate

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b. Fire from one flank should be countered by at least half the platoon turning out to that flank and reacting with maximum and, hopefully, overwhelming fire. Designated vehicles must be oriented with their fire directed upon the opposite flank, front, and rear unless terrain is too open to allow a two- or three-dimensional attack. If enemy locations are known, the fired-on flank should sweep over these positions, but care must be taken to avoid overshooting them. This situation would force vehicles to turn around and fire back in the direction of friendly elements.

c. In the case of attack from both sides or where terrain prohibits movement off the trail, a herring-bone-and-fire formation should be employed automatically, with the vehicles constantly moving backwards and forwards to provide a more difficult target for enemy gunners.

d. Where fire comes from the front or rear of the column, the platoon should come on line with designated security elements to the flanks and rear and then proceed to sweep slowly with a heavy volume of fire being directed towards the source of the incoming.

e. When a vehicle has been hit or personnel wounded, primary consideration must be given to neutralizing the enemy positions, while emergency treatment of the wounded and the security of the downed vehicle(s) become of secondary importance. Under such circumstances, however, it may be necessary to forego extensive counter-offensive operations in favor of remaining wholly or partly in the area of the wounded.

f. As in all such contacts, ARA and artillery should be called in at the first opportunity, though they cannot be counted on until they have actually fired some rounds.

8. Sniper fire.

a. When it can be determined that incoming small arms fire is being directed from one or two isolated areas and that such fire is not the prelude to impending contact, there is not a very wide range of alternatives. Recon by fire of the surrounding area, coupled with movement to a more concealed position is about all that can be done. If the source of the fire can be determined, automatic weapons fire, organic mortar fire, and/or ARA and artillery fire can be directed into the area. In addition, a mounted sweep through suspected enemy positions, making full use of sporadic recon by fire, may force the enemy to reveal his hiding places.

9. Ambush of dismounted patrol.

a. Initially, contact with the enemy must be handled along infantry lines: The patrol must react as a squad of two fire teams capable of supporting by fire and maneuvering either to overcome the enemy or

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to break contact while waiting for mounted reinforcement or close air support. These actions presuppose an eight to ten man dismounted patrol led by a capable non-commissioned officer and organized into teams equipped with radio, smoke, frags, and other standard combat gear.

b. If vehicular movement is possible, the platoon should rapidly, but carefully, deploy into close support or physical contact with ground elements who should be using smoke to mark the limits of their position. Fast reaction time can be achieved only when individual tracks maintain a posture of readiness whenever dismounted RIF's are employed. Again, it should be remembered that the concentrated fire available to an armored platoon is far superior to that carried by any ground patrol and, in most cases, superior to anything the enemy can offer.

c. If the terrain restricts track movement, the patrol, unless defiladed from friendly fire, must rely on its own reactions and the platoon's organic 81mm mortars. Artillery fire and friendly 4.2mm will usually be too slow and difficult to adjust, though they cannot be ruled out. The actions of the patrol become dependent on the patrol leader's estimate of the situation. Small enemy elements may be disposed of with infantry tactics, but when large forces are present, it is advisable to break contact. When contact has been broken and the patrol has returned to its vehicles, or when the patrol has become pinned down, ARA and artillery should be used. Again, friendly positions should be marked with smoke. As a last resort, a second dismounted patrol may have to be used as relief or for evacuation of the wounded.

d. As a general rule, patrols should not extend themselves beyond the platoon's range or capability to react.

10. Small arms fire taken by dismounted sweep line when vehicles are supporting on line.

a. This is a relatively easy situation to handle if proper control is being exercised over dismounted elements. Normally positioned, and walking between vehicles on line, personnel need only return fire and then move to the tracks under cover of automatic weapons from the vehicles. All vehicle commanders must insure that they have visual contact with ground forces, while flanking vehicles must be prepared to turn their heaviest armament towards their respective flanks.

b. In case dismounted elements are forward of the tracks on line because of terrain or other factors, automatic weapons fire must be withheld until a proper tactical assessment can be made. The responsible non-commissioned officer on the ground must control the return fire and direct his element, depending on a quick estimate of enemy size and disposition and of the terrain, either to dispose of the enemy or to drop back to the sweep line. The platoon on line should be moving forward in support, but care must be taken to avoid overrunning ground personnel. Once the dismounted personnel have returned to the vehicles, or when the platoon on

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line has swept through its ground personnel, standard tactics may be employed to neutralize the enemy. These tactics include continuation of the sweep, flanking movements, and various forms of cordon and search operations.

c. It should be remembered that in this type of operation cavalry is far better equipped to counter the enemy threat than are friendly ground elements whose main function is to conduct a thorough search of the area. A dismount to the front of platoon vehicles must be well controlled and equipped with a dismounted radio and smoke grenades for further coordination with supporting tracks. The area to the rear of the sweep may or may not be considered secure, depending on the platoon leader's estimate of the thoroughness of his sweep. Extreme caution must be exercised to avoid the possibility of an enemy flanking movement. In heavy terrain, a rear security element may be advisable, if not necessary.