

CLOSING the GAP

By BGen R. E. Cushman, Jr.



• NO FINER DEVELOPMENT TOWARD achieving greater combat capability has come about than the recent directives from the Commandant which are designed to revive and revitalize the art of intelligence within the Marine Corps. BGen Masters amplified these orders and described CMC's desired goals in his GAZETTE article of last year. I would like to tie in to his down to earth thoughts by concentrating on just one of the objectives he outlined—development of an intelligence doctrine.

Everyone is a tactician—ask him! We have all read, or should have read, Sun Tzu—Clausewitz—Patton—Marine Corps Schools pubs—Mao Tse Tung. Countless Marines have contributed to our new operational concepts and doctrine: unit separation and vertical envelopment. But have you ever tried to find an officer who boasts of being an operational intelligence expert? Perhaps this is why our intelligence doctrine has not kept pace with our operational doctrine and it makes me say again that this new emphasis is much needed. We must close the gap!

Battlefield intelligence for Marine infantry units wasn't much in WWII. You hacked through the weeds 'til you collided with the enemy, or you stuck your head up and looked him in the eye anywhere from 50 feet to 50 yards away. On Iwo a patrol would sometimes get all the way from the rear to the front of its foxholes before being pinned down! In short, WWI intelligence methods applied to WWII and were sufficient.

It seems to me our first clue that something new was needed came out of frozen Chosin. Here we had unit separation, large distances and an enemy attack which was a surprise in many ways—although suspected and prepared against by CG, 1st MarDiv and subordinate commanders.

The years since then have seen the new tactics and new organization developed, refined and practiced—but no real enemy to penalize poor intelligence procedure! The question now is—what do we have to do to close the gap between intelligence and operational doctrine?

First—what causes the gap? Aside from the greater interest in tactics of many commanders (now being corrected by CMC and HQ G-2) and the personnel problem of stabil-



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izing enough good officers within a unit so the CO can get a good S-2 in addition to a good XO, S-3, S-4 etc. (now being corrected by HQ G-1), there are, I think, four principal factors:

- 1) Increased distances between units and, initially, between Marines and enemy forces.
- 2) Replacement of linear battle formations with perimeter type.
- 3) Rapidity of movement of modern forces.
- 4) Requirement for spotting nuclear weapons targets at a distance from friendly forces.

Next, let's think about the way these factors influence the intelligence problem and what we can do about them. Not that any one of us has all the answers, but rather that all of us should start working on them in our own sphere.

Increased distances between our own units increase the need for surveillance and patrol contact, and make it harder to get information promptly to higher, lower and adjacent commanders. The greater distance to the enemy makes finding

him more difficult and a primary intelligence objective.

Linear battle formations made patrolling easy — straight forward on a front of fairly uniform width, with some increase of frontage in a beachhead situation. Patrols could come from front line units or the reserve. On the other hand, a perimeter formation presents us with an ever increasing patrol frontage and often no reserve from which to augment or replace front line troops for the task.

Rapidity of movement by helicopter, aircraft and vehicles drastically cuts down intelligence gathering, evaluation and dissemination time. This compounds the problem posed by the great initial distance which the enemy will place between his forces and the areas of probable nuclear preparation in which our troops will land and operate initially. Conversely, once he has located us, he will move quickly into contact to avoid nuclear attack, or will seek to drop one on us should we fail to keep on the move—a problem, if we don't know where the

enemy is! Thus intelligence is more than ever a grim race to locate the enemy before he finds us.

Finally, if nuclear weapons are used, it is evident we must locate our targets, fast moving targets no doubt, while at great distances from friendly forces so that at time of attack our men will not be endangered.

In my opinion, all of this says that no longer can we make do with front line foot patrols, small numbers of observation aircraft reporting only to higher headquarters, intelligence circuits crowded with other traffic and begrimed by all but the "2", and a minimum of special reconnaissance units.

While we're waiting for some electronic marvels (which take time and money and will never give us a guarantee a tube won't blow at the critical time) I suggest those concerned (all of us!) kick these and similar ideas around.

First, really make use of Marine aircraft at all levels of command. Intelligence gathering should be an air support function of equal or greater importance than attack missions. It's the only way we can cover these distances.

Second, employ motorized patrols to the greatest possible extent, tied in to the air reconnaissance system.

Third, make maximum use of specialized units, as described by BGen Nickerson in his article on the ForceReconCo, for continuous deep reconnaissance — again tied in to air reconnaissance. Perhaps we need others, at lower echelons, in addition to those we have.

Fourth, establish as SOP the areas and sectors to be covered by foot, motor, air, and deep patrols so that complete coverage is automatic.

Fifth, tie it all together with a "sacred" communications system — flash type.

Sixth, and last, work at it in the field. Hold intelligence exercises for the system components. Insure that every field exercise is opposed—not by canned messages but by thinking aggressors.

I realize this only scratches the surface, but at least it shows there's an itch! We have to close the gap described but there is no doubt Marines can do it just as we have for 183 years.

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