

OCCUPY, DEFEND, AND SUPPORT FROM THE BRIGADE SUPPORT AREA

(GOLDEN NUGGET #1)

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Purpose and Disclaimer: The overall objective of this document is to present proven sustainment Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs), and sustainment best practices as observed by the Observers, Coaches, and Trainers (OC/T's) of the Goldminer Team. This document is not intended to be used as an authoritative source or as an alternative for sustainment "doctrine". This document is in no way near all inclusive, and it is only loosely tied to sustainment unit METL tasks as outlined in the Combined Arms Training Strategy (CATS).

Associated CATS TASKS: 71-8-5137, 07-2-9003, 07-3-9016, 19-3-2406, 19-4-2406, 43-2-4522, 55-9-4801, 63-2-4012, 63-2-4016, 63-2-4306, 63-6-2036, 63-6-4018, 63-6-4021, 63-6-4057, 63-9-4013, 63-9-4055, 05-2-3092, 05-3-3091, 05-5-3009, 05-6-1006, 07-2-9009, 71-8-6111, 63-2-4007, 63-2-4008, 63-6-2038, 63-9-4014

BSA OPERATIONS – THE DECISIVE ACTION BALANCE OF SUPPORT VS DEFEND

One of the challenges faced by Brigade Support Battalions (BSBs) and Regimental Support Squadrons (RSSs) at the National Training Center is establishing a Brigade Support Area (BSA) able to sustain a BCT's tactical operations. With limited BSA field training at home station and



years of conducting operations from Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and Combat Outposts (COPs), the required skill set and institutional knowledge have atrophied. Successful BSA operations develop during the planning process where rehearsed operations set conditions that lead to structured occupation of a BSA site after a tactical road march. After occupation the BSB must develop a base defense plan that will secure and protect the BSA support

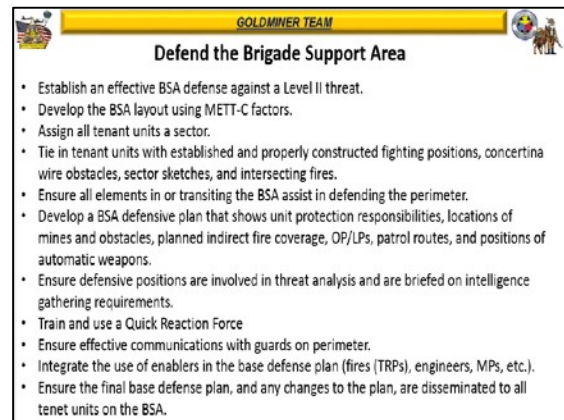
activities during Decisive Action operations. You cannot support if you cannot defend and thus both BSA operations and defense must be taken into consideration from the beginning of the BSA site selection process, through occupation execution, and then refined as conditions change.

PLANNING – SETTING THE CONDITIONS

During occupation planning, the staff must consider the proposed BSA sites in relation to METT-TC factors in order to recommend a defensible location to the battalion commander while ensuring the BSA footprint enables support operations. For example, while the size of a BSA may prevent it from being completely hidden from observation, the IPB (intelligence preparation of the battlefield) can find areas that may conceal the BSA location from possible enemy avenues of approach and population centers. IPB can assist in identifying field of view and possible locations for use of OPs. Defense is only half the equation for the BSB staff to consider in site selection for the BSA. While sustainment operations must be protected the BSA must be established to support the activities as well.

While it can be more difficult to defend a large BSA, some of the largest convoys on the main supply routes (MSRs) and alternate supply routes (ASRs) are sustainment convoys.

Identification of road networks to, from, and inside the BSA will promote ease of maneuver of the tenant units inside the BSA and units moving to and from the BSA. During planning and site selection staff must look to establish a BSA that has sufficient area to conduct ATHP operations, fueling missions, SSA operations, staging areas for convoys, and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) to the Role II medical facility. These areas should be large enough to support operations on the BSA that are conducted by the BSB units as well as both supported Forward Support Companies (FSCs) and the supporting Combat Sustainment Support



Battalion (CSSB). In addition to calculating space for vehicle operations, the staff must consider space required for the incorporation of aviation assets and the required helicopter landing zones (HLZs) to facilitate aerial resupply and air MEDEVAC operations. Proper planning and staff work can minimize congestion on the BSA as occupation take place and thus prevent increases in time on station, negative impacts to the defense execution, and increases in safety risks. Once a site is determined the next step building the BSA takes place during occupation of the BSA.

OCCUPATION AND PRIORITIES OF WORK

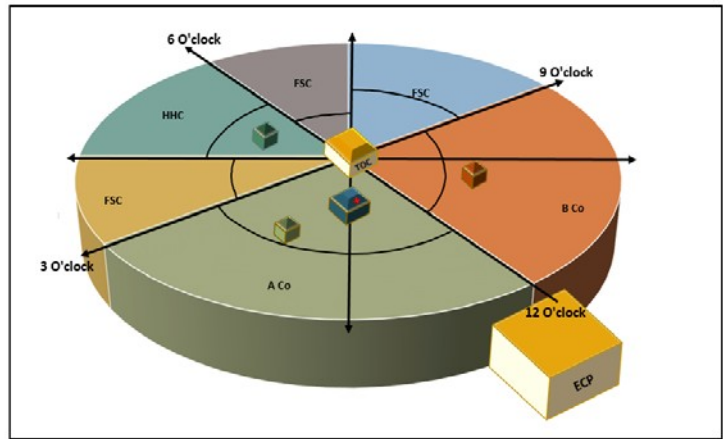
Occupation of the BSA is an organized and thoroughly planned action. This process begins with the occupation of the quartering party. The purpose of the quartering party is to verify site selection of the BSA and make limited preparations for receiving the rest of the organization. The quartering party does initial CBRNE and security sweeps of the BSA. Initial communications can be established by the quartering party to begin the transfer of mission command from the TAA /ISB to the new BSA. The quartering party then establishes tenant areas of responsibility on the BSA and makes changes in the defense concept as needed. The quartering party is key to the initial execution. This is also the first opportunity to have all eyes on the terrain and make adjustments to the BSA and defense as needed.

After the quartering party, the other elements of the BSA are tactically divided into serials to conduct the Tactical Road March (TRM). These movements are normally divided into the ADVON, Main Body (number of main body movements can differ by organizational planning), and finally a Trail Party. Staff planning must determine through MDMP when elements of the organization will move to occupy the BSA. For example, through planning and coordination of the Support Operations Officer (SPO) and Operations Officer (S3) it must be determined when essential logistical platforms must move and occupy to enable support operations to begin at the BSA. These movements must all translate into support of the maneuver plan and support the BDE mission. Determining when the BSA will achieve initial operational capacity versus full

operational capacity (IOC vs. FOC) is essential in planning the concept of support and must be communicated across the BCT.

A technique that has been successful at the National Training Center to occupy the BSA is the clock methodology. Using this method the directed point where all elements enter the BSA or, entry control point (ECP), becomes the first point of reference. Drawing a straight line from the ECP through the BN TOC and out the perimeter of the BSA creates a 12 O'clock at the ECP, a center of the clock at the BN TOC, and a 6 O'clock at the opposite side of the BSA perimeter. From this point the perimeter of the BSA can be divided according to relative combat strength of the tenet units.

The BSA defense plan is takes fruition during all phases of occupation of the BSA site. One of the most important pieces of the initial base defense plan is the emplacement of the BSA ECP. The ECP maintains positive communications with the mission command element at the BSA and provides early warning of possible enemy threats traveling along high speed avenues of approach. The ECP should be well fortified against



**Example BSA occupation reference diagram*

possible attack. Soldiers occupying the ECP should be trained in ECP operations and areas such as searching of vehicles, detaining individuals, intelligence gathering, etc. Many times the ECP is the first element to come in contact with enemy and is the first in the line of defense.

The BSA occupation must be a well-rehearsed operation and all Soldiers arriving at the BSA

Priorities of Work	Time (NLT)
Security (minimum of 25%)	Immediate
Position LPs/OPs	+2 hours
Establish communications (higher/lower)	+2 hours
Emplace crew served weapons	+2 hours
complete range cards/sector sketches	+6 hours
Prepare defensive positions	+8 hours
Camouflage positions and equipment	+10 hours
Construct TOC wire	+10 hours
Select and prepare alternate and supplementary fighting positions	+14 hours
Establish unit operations	+15 hours
Establish sleep areas	+15 hours
Conduct maintenance operations	+16 hours
Conduct personal hygiene	+18 hours
Chow	+19 hours
Rest	+20 hours

** Example list of Priorities of Work when occupying the BSA*

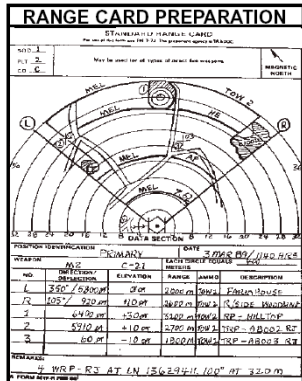
should have an understood task and purpose. Unit Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should establish the priorities of work for all Soldiers during the occupation and establishment of the BSA. As with establishing any assembly area, the first priority of work is security. Some of the tasks associated with security establishment are emplacing of weapon systems, establishing communications, designation of final protective fires and final protective lines, emplacement of obstacles and mines, and building fighting positions. For sustainers on the BSA additional considerations must be incorporated into the

priorities of work such as burmming-in of fuel assets and the ammo in the Ammunition Transfer and Holding Point (ATHP), identification of supply evacuation routes, and establishment of decontamination sites. Once the perimeter defense is established, supplies have been received and are ready for distribution; rest and chow plans can be prepared. Without published,

enforced, and rehearsed priorities of work, occupation will be frustrated and will require unnecessary time before full operations can begin.

INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER SKILLS BUILDING COLLECTIVE TASKS

As an initial security posture is established and fighting positions are developed, companies are given areas of responsibility that can be divided into platoon areas, squad/section areas, and



finally assigned to assigned fighting positions. In this phase of building the defense individual Soldier skills are used. Construct fighting positions to the standard established in the unit SOP. Ensure fighting positions are mutually supportive with interlocking fields of fire. Emplace obstacles to create engagement areas (EAs) where the unit desires to engage the enemy with their most casualty producing weapon systems. The seven steps of engagement area development found in Field Manual 3-21.10 Chapter 5 are: identify all likely enemy avenues of approach, determine likely enemy schemes of maneuver, determine where to kill the enemy, emplace weapons systems, plan

and integrate obstacles, plan and integrate indirect fires, rehearse the execution of operations in the EA. Developing the initial security posture should be the first effort of all units on the BSA. Only when fighting positions and security have been inspected and approved should units move on to other priorities of work.

Leaders must be involved in this process and ensure that all actions are being conducted to standard. Fighting positions (crew served weapons, and individual weapon positions) develop range cards, to standard, which in turn aid in developing situational understanding of the terrain the BSA occupies at all levels. Range cards from fighting positions are compiled to build sector sketches up to a complete company sector sketch. All companies proved their sector sketches to the BSB S3. These sector sketches are compiled to give an overall picture of the BSA perimeter defense and create BSA sector sketch that can be used in directing efforts during battle drill execution.

INTEGRATION AND SYNCHRONIZATION OF DEFENSE ENABLERS

With a complete picture of the initial defense perimeter, the BN S3 can further develop the base defense plan with coordination with the BN, the staff, and other supporting units. A quick reaction force (QRF) should be established and fall under the command and control of the S3 battle captain. The QRF is used to provide reinforcing fire support and capability to the base defense plan during battle drill execution at any location where the S3/battle captain sees it is needed. It is imperative that the mission authority of the QRF is established and clear and that any battle drill rehearsals conducted include participation from the QRF.



Target Reference Points (TRPs) are easily recognizable points on the ground, either natural or manmade, used to control direct or indirect fires. The TRPs should be placed where fighting positions or the BSB S3 anticipate enemy contact and can thus call for fire to suppress the enemy. Once identified, the TRPs are then confirmed coordinated with the BCT Fires Cell and FA BN for support.

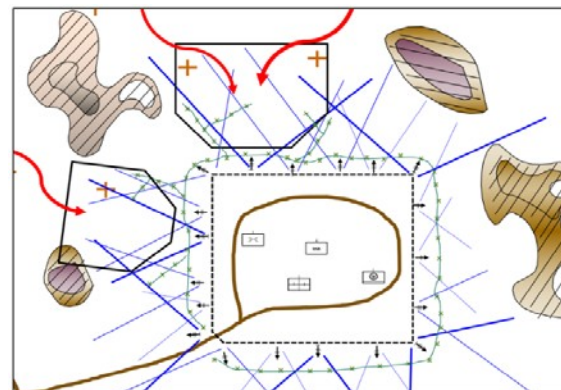
Observation posts (OPs) locations can be identified and manned with intelligence reporting requirements that have been developed through synchronization with the BN S2. These priority intelligence requirements (PIRs) are distributed to all defensive positions as well. Debriefs should be conducted at the end of guard shifts to provide intelligence feedback to the S2. Other options that can be leveraged to provide intelligence and build defense capabilities are ISR assets in the form of RAVEN operations or coordination with aviation assets to gather intelligence. All these things allow the BN CDR to see the base defense and make adjustments to the plan as required.



A FLUID PLAN IN A CHANGING OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Support activities conducted in the BSA can either be the force behind the brigade that extends operational reach or it can be the anchor that holds the brigade back in creating forward momentum in their operations. BSAs must maintain the agility to respond to the needs of the formation and must be mobile and flexible in order to move as required by the tempo of the brigade.

As conditions change in the Area of Operations and on the BSA, the shape and perimeter as well as the base defense plan must be flexible and adjust. When the number and composition of tenet units on the BSA change, the BSA defense plan changes. The adjustments must be communicated throughout the formation to ensure shared understanding is accomplished and all units know and can execute in their respective areas responsibility.



Defense of the BSA must be rehearsed just as any battle drill. It is the responsibility of leaders to ensure that Soldiers know and understand how individual efforts support the defense plan in whole. All application of a unit's defense plan must be captured and continuously refined in a SOP. As units become more proficient in defense of the BSA and its internal operations, BSBs and their subordinate units will be better prepared to extend operational reach of the BCT by providing coordinated and synchronized sustainment.