SUSTAINING THE LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE COMMAND POST

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In a brigade command post (CP), the headquarters commandant has both tactical and sustainment responsibilities. His tactical responsibilities consist primarily of CP security and the reconnaissance and selection of, movement to, and occupation of new CP sites. The sustainment portion consists of practically everything else, and this is the part to be addressed here. Most of these procedures and ideas were developed and tested when the 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), assisted in the certification of the light infantry division concept at Fort Hunter Liggett, California, during Celtic Cross IV in August 1986.

To facilitate command, control, and support in the field, the brigade headquarters is split primarily into two sections: the CP and the brigade support area (BSA). The CP, which consists of the operations portion of the brigade, includes the tactical operations center (TOC), with the S-2 section, the S-3 section, the fire support element, and the liaison officers. The brigade commander, the executive officer, the command sergeant major, the communications section, and the headquarters and headquarters company (HHC) section round out the CP, which also includes the various vehicles shown in the table. The BSA supports the brigade and consists of the S-1 section (including the chaplain and the judge advocate general) and the S-4, maintenance, dining facility, and transportation sections.

To meet its sustainment responsibilities, the company headquarters element of the brigade headquarters company consists of two sections. The support section, which includes the supply sergeant and his assistant, sets up in the BSA with its five-ton truck and company supplies. The command section—consisting of the HHC commander, the company executive officer, the First Sergeant, the training NCO/driver, and the armorer/assistant driver—sets up in the CP. A camouflage net-covered arctic tent may be set up as the HHC CP (HCP), and that, with the vehicle camouflage net, provides the base for CP sustainment operations.

Food is a major part of the sustainment operations. When it is supported by the brigade mess section serving traypacks, the HCP element picks up meals and brings them to the CP. Tactical feeding is conducted from a designated dining area. Mealtimes are established on the basis of input from the S-3 sergeant major as to projected operations or displacements. If MREs (meals, ready-to-eat) are to be used for one or more meals, they are distributed at the last hot meal served. (If traypacks are not being served, the issue of meals will duplicate the issue of supplies, to be discussed later.) Handwashing facilities are always provided as an integral part of field hygiene, and the area is policed during and following each meal.

Water is also a big concern. Each company vehicle is issued two 5-gallon water cans and one insulated plastic jug, and these containers are filled by the owning section before deployment. Once in the field, empty water cans are dropped off at a designated location in the HCP. When the next supply run is made, the empty cans are filled and returned to the designated location at the HCP for pickup by the appropriate section.

Four other services are provided to the BSA—the pickup and delivery of supplies (including ammunition), laundry and mail, and the collection of garbage. Because of its responsibility for CP security, the HCP initiates all requests for ammunition resupply to make sure the basic load is maintained. Other supply requests can be received by any member of the HCP and consolidated with other section requests. Routine requests are handled with the next scheduled run while emergency requests are taken care of immediately. All supply requests are taken to the HHC section in the BSA, where they are filled or the supplies requisitioned. Supplies brought back to the CP are given to the requesting section.

BRIGADE VEHICLES IN THE CP

S-2:	2 HMMWVs
S-3:	2 HMMWVs
	1 CUCV (Pickup)
FSE:	1 HMMWV
COMMUNICATIONS:	1 HMMWV
	2 CUCVs (1 Blazer, 1 Pickup)
BDE CDR/CSM:	1 HMMWV
BDE XO:	1 HMMWV
HHC CDR:	1 HMMWV

Laundry forms are available at the HCP, and bagged laundry is dropped there at a specific location. Laundry is taken on a routine run to the supply section in the BSA for further processing. Clean laundry is returned to the CP on another routine run and placed in its designated location. Section sergeants are then notified so that the laundry can be picked up. A good tracking system must be used to ensure that all laundry bags and clothes are properly accounted for.

Keeping track of mail is important. Outgoing mail is dropped off at the HCP for delivery to the S-1 at the BSA. Incoming mail and messages sent through distribution are then picked up and brought back to the CP where they are delivered to the appropriate sections.

Garbage pickup is also handled on routine runs: It is dropped off at a specified HCP location and then hauled back to the BSA for disposal.

The HCP serves as a link between the CP and the other support assets. If medical support is required for a routine sick call, the HHC CP element, because it has no organic medical support, coordinates with the supporting medical element. More serious and emergency cases are evacuated to the supporting hospital in the field by the HCP as any wartime casualties would be. Any dead would be evacuated, again by the HCP element, to the BSA for further processing.

The HCP element also coordinates support for maintenance and petroleum, oils, and lubricants. All problems with vehicle engines and with generators are routed through the HCP. In this case, the HCP coordinates directly with the company's maintenance section for a contact team or other support. The BSA's POL support is arranged through the S-4, who coordinates it with the forward support battalion. Once coordinated, fueling times and locations are passed to the CP's section sergeants so they can take care of their vehicles. (In the future, the brigade will have its own fueling capability.)

In addition to these routine administrative support tasks, there are other checks and inspections that the HHC commander, the

company XO, and the First Sergeant must make, although the responsibility for seeing that most of these items are taken care of falls to the section sergeants. The standards for these items should be established before a unit goes to the field, ideally with input from the sections. If the standards have become a part of the standing operating procedures (SOPs), that is even better. Daily meetings with the section sergeants (either one-on-one or in a group) will help identify problems, changes, or new solutions.

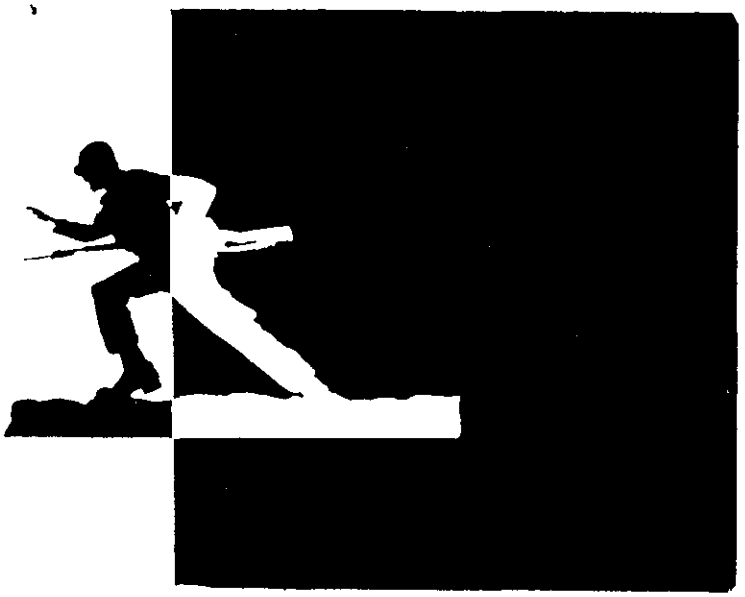
One primary area that needs a standard is field sanitation. Good habits and standardized procedures in field sanitation will go a long way toward keeping all soldiers fit for sustained field duty. Failing to establish them may result in the gradual attrition of the unit. The HCP element will know how many soldiers are deployed with the CP and from that can arrive at the number of latrines required, as well as specific latrine locations. The digging should be tasked out to the sections (ideally in an SOP) so that section sergeants can program it as an occupation activity. For fluid situations, however, individual catholes may be the answer. In any case, the leaders must see that the latrines are then used and maintained properly.

Other sanitation measures include daily shaving and washing. Because of a light brigade's mobility, portable or jury-rigged showers can be carried on vehicles and, when the water supply permits, can be used as appropriate. A lack of showers, however, does not excuse soldiers from keeping clean.

Physical conditioning is also a part of staying fit in the field. Physical conditioning in the form of pushups, situps, and manual or partner resistance exercises should be continued in the field to maintain the achieved fitness level.

The soldiers' equipment must be cared for. These checks can be accomplished easily if the operators' manuals for the equipment are used. Although all equipment is important, particular emphasis should be placed on vehicles, weapons, and communications equipment. If these are not functional, all other efforts will be wasted.

As activity increases, the tendency to neglect these routine sustainment matters also increases. All leaders must therefore be vigilant and tough in enforcing the standards and the SOPs, and this becomes even harder to do when the tactical tasks are incorporated. That is why the HCP is staffed as it is. The company leaders are able to spell each other and have someone available 24 hours a day. Whenever a sustainment problem develops, a member of the HCP element must be readily available to help solve it. Both the HCP and the rest of the CP must know this, or resources will not be used efficiently and this may adversely affect the brigade's mission.

While the ideas presented here do not provide all the solutions, they do cover some often-ignored areas of CP operation. Other people who have had experiences in sustaining a brigade CP in a low- to mid-intensity environment should bring out their ideas as well. Sustaining our forces is a key issue, and the next war will be too late to establish such standing operating procedures.

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