

Chapter 15: Special-Forces and Commandos

This page is a section of TC 7-100.2 Opposing Force Tactics.

The OPFOR includes both special-purpose forces (SPF) and commandos, each of which are discussed in their respective sections in this chapter. The chapter also clarifies the relationships between the two types of units in terms of command and control (C2), organization for combat, and tactical capabilities.

Section I. Special-Purpose Forces

The OPFOR maintains a broad array of SPF as means to carry the battle to the enemyâin depth. SPF missions may support national-, theater-, operational-, or tactical-level objectives. They are conducted across the spectrum of military operations either independently or in coordination with regular and/or irregular forces. This section describes the nature of SPF, the roles they can play at various levels of command, and how they reach the tactical level via task-organizing.

Command and Control

SPF structure and C2 relationships are significantly different than those normally associated with regular maneuver units. The SPF structure depends primarily on the posture and missions of the OPFOR at any given time.

Administrative Force Structure

In the OPFORâin peacetime administrative force structure (AFS), some SPF are national-level forces controlled by the General Staff. Under the General Staff, SPF are subordinate either to the SPF Command or to the service headquarters of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Internal Security Forces, which have their own SPF. The General Staff can use them against strategic objectives or for power projection in the region. However, some SPF are intended for use at the operational level and thus can be subordinate to operational-level administrative commands even in the AFS. For additional information on SPF organizations at operational and strategic level in the AFS, see FM 7-100.4.

In peacetime and in garrisons, all SPF are organized administratively into SPF companies, battalions, and brigades. These organizations facilitate peacetime administrative control and training. However, even these administrative groupings do not have a fixed structure in the AFS, and the AFS structure normally differs from the OPFORâin go-to-war (fighting) force structure.

Fighting Force Structure

In wartime or in transition to war, some SPF units from the SPF Command or from the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Internal Security Forces SPF may remain under the C2 of their respective service headquarters. However, some SPF units also might be suballocated to operational- or tactical-level commands during the task-organizing process, in order to perform designated missions. Depending on the situation, command and support relationships may be constituent, dedicated, supporting, or affiliated. (See chapter 2 for a full discussion of these relationships.)

SPF units generally reach the tactical battlefield via an operational-strategic command (OSC). The OSC is a task organization and, as such, receives SPF and other units from higher headquarters. The SPF units of the Army are more likely to appear in the task organization of an OSC than any of the SPF organizations of the SPF Command or other services.

In some cases, SPF units may be allocated to an OSC in a supporting relationship, while remaining under the command of their parent SPF organization. Even in a supporting

relationship, the commander of the OSC receiving the SPF unit(s) establishes those units' objectives, priorities, and time of deployment.

In other cases, the OSC commander may receive SPF in a constituent or dedicated status. In that case, he may employ the SPF assets allocated to him as part of his integrated fires command (IFC). However, he may choose to suballocate some or all of them to the task organization of his tactical-level subordinates. The tactical commander may receive these SPF assets in a constituent, dedicated, or supporting relationship. The supporting relationship allows the OSC commander to use the SPF as part of the tactical battle scheme but retain control over these units to ensure that SPF objectives support the overall mission of the OSC.

No SPF assets are permanently subordinate to tactical-level units at division and below either in the AFS or during war. Therefore, it is necessary to understand their command and support relationships when they arrive at, and support the tactical fight. Depending on the situation, various relationships may exist when SPF detachments or teams operate within a tactical commander's area of responsibility (AOR):

- An SPF unit may operate in that AOR without the approval or even knowledge of the tactical commander. When this occurs, each SPF team or detachment remains in direct communication with a higher headquarters. The controlling headquarters may be an SPF detachment, SPF company, SPF battalion, SPF brigade, or a higher operational or tactical headquarters.
- The SPF may be allocated to the maneuver commander in a constituent, dedicated, or supporting relationship.
- The local maneuver commanders may find themselves in a supporting role to the SPF unit.

However, there are no firm rules governing the C2 of SPF assets. These relationships are determined solely by the situation and mission and what best serves OPFOR interests. See chapter 2 for more detail on command and support relationships. For additional information on the SPF structure and command relationships see FMs 7-100.1 and 7-100.4.

Affiliations With Paramilitary or Nonmilitary Actors

Due primarily to the nature of SPF missions, the relationships between SPF and other paramilitary or nonmilitary personnel or groups are not as quite as firm as SPF relationships with the more regular maneuver units. Any relationship of the SPF unit may be one of affiliation rather than a command relationship. This affiliation may be dependent upon only a single shared or similar goal. These relationships are generally fluctuating and may be fleeting, mission-dependent, or event- or agenda- oriented.

The nature of the shared goal or interest determines the tenure and type of relationship and the degree of affiliation. For example, the affiliation of an SPF detachment with criminal (or guerrilla) organizations is dependent only on the needs of the criminal (or guerrilla) organization or on the needs of the SPF at a particular time. The relational dynamics of SPF units are very fluid and apt to change from one day to the next. Shifts in affiliations may in turn cause adjustments in the SPF task organization to accommodate these changes. (See chapter 2 for additional information on command and support relationships, including affiliation.)

Missions

SPF play an important role in support of both the offense and defense. They may perform their missions separately, in support of strategic objectives, or in support of a theater-level campaign, an OSC-level operation, or any tactical-level action. Regardless of the level of command for which they perform the missions, the SPF always conduct these missions as small SPF teams or detachments. They perform the same basic forms of tactical action at any level, although the purpose of the action may be dissimilar at different echelons. This chapter focuses on SPF missions at the tactical level. (See FM 7-100.1 for information on strategic- and operational-level

missions.)

Not all specific missions of the SPF can be forecast. Their missions, like their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and activities, are adaptable and unpredictable, and lend themselves to improvisation. The SPF do whatever they feel will work.

SPF allocated to an OSC or division tactical group (DTG) often become part of the disruption force, frequently operating in enemy-held territory before the beginning of an operation or battle. At OSC level and sometimes at DTG level, they may become part of an IFC, to assist in locating and destroying key enemy formations or systems (see chapter 2 and chapter 9).

SPF are not always employed against military targets for purely military objectives. They will also be used against political, economic, or population centers or tangible targets whose destruction affects intangible centers of gravity. These efforts often place noncombatants at risk and aim to apply diplomatic- political, economic, and psychological pressure. Tactical targets include not only enemy military forces and equipment, but also government agency heads, contractors, private firms, and nongovernmental organizations, and/or personnel involved in transporting troops and materiel into the region or supporting enemy forces in any manner. The goal is to present the enemy with a nonlinear, simultaneous battlefield. Striking such targets will not only deny the enemy sanctuary, but also weaken his national will, particularly if the SPF or affiliated forces can strike targets in the enemy's homeland.

Depending on the circumstances the OPFOR will completely deny any relationship or affiliation with SPF assets deployed outside the State. This plausible deniability greatly extends the employment options available to the OPFOR and its use of SPF.

Basic Missions

SPF actions increase the depth of the battle area. The SPF's simultaneous attack of both forward and rear areas to disrupt or destroy enemy forces includes the following basic missions:

- Conduct strategic and operational reconnaissance.
- Conduct actions in the enemy's tactical, operational, and strategic depth to undermine his morale and to spread panic among the civilian population and the political leadership.
- Conduct surgical strikes and raids.
- Neutralize weapons of mass destruction and precision weapons.
- Attack air defense facilities and airfields. Destroy critical air defense systems and associated radars (especially early warning radars).
- Disrupt lines of communications (LOCs).
- Attack C2 and reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) facilities.
- Exploit surprise to disrupt defensive actions.
- Influence the population.
- Support follow-on conventional military actions.
- Support the information warfare (INFOWAR) plan.
- Conduct actions that will cause a flow of refugees, which can hamper enemy deployment, defensive maneuver, and logistics.
- Disrupt enemy power supplies and transportation networks (power utilities, POL transfer and storage sites, and internal transportation).
- Sabotage enemy mobilization and deployment.
- Train agents (affiliated forces or civilians) to operate as political agitators, human intelligence (HUMINT) collectors, and saboteurs.
- Organize local irregular forces (insurgents or guerrillas) or sympathizers.
- Provide communications, liaison, training, and support to stay-behind activities in the defense.
- Serve as part of the disruption force. SPF allocated to an OSC or a tactical-level command often become part of the disruption force, frequently operating in enemy-held territory before

the beginning of an operation or battle.

- Serve as part of an IFC at OSC level and sometimes at DTG level.
- Provide terminal guidance for attacks by aircraft, missiles, and precision weapons.

Note. SPF can recruit, organize, train, advise, and support local irregular forces (insurgents or guerrillas) and possibly even criminal organizations and conduct (or lead) operations in conjunction with them. SPF personnel may fight alongside such affiliates or assist them to prepare for offensive actions, diversionary measures, or other missions. In some cases, the SPF will not only advise and assist but actually control (command) the irregular forces as a surrogate force. SPF missions (and those of their affiliates or surrogates) can include the use of terror tactics.

Special Missions

In addition to the basic missions expected of the SPF, there are several requiring specific skills unique to these missions. These missions not fitting under the basic missions are the special missions. While there may be a number of special missions conducted by the SPF, the most common special missions are special reconnaissance and direct action.

Special Reconnaissance

SPF conducting special reconnaissance operate deep behind enemy lines. While many of these activities are operational level and above, a large portion is conducted on behalf of the OSC and below. SPF can conduct reconnaissance for future ground force operations or for airborne and/or amphibious landings. SPF are a major source of HUMINT, placing "eyes on target" in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive territory. They can operate in small teams beyond the battle lines of the AOR, conducting long-range reconnaissance. Their reconnaissance priorities include:

- Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) delivery systems.
- Precision weapons.
- Headquarters and other C2 installations and centers.
- RISTA systems and centers.
- Rail, road, and air movement routes.
- Airfields and ports.
- Logistics facilities.
- Air defense systems.

Once SPF teams locate such targets, they may simply monitor and report on activity there, or they may conduct direct action or diversionary measures.

The SPF can train and employ affiliated forces and civilians to perform HUMINT activities. They may also operate in conjunction with HUMINT agents controlled by elements of the General Staff and may or may not operate with the local maneuver commander's knowledge.

Direct Action

Direct action involves an overt, covert, or clandestine attack by armed individuals or groups to damage or destroy high-value targets or to kill or seize a person or persons. Examples of direct-action missions for SPF units are:

- Assassinations of key military and other leaders.
- Abduction and hostage taking.
- Sabotage.
- Capture.
- Ambushes.
- Raids.
- Rescue of hostages (civilian and military).

- Rescue and recovery of downed pilots or aircrews.

Implementation of direct-action missions depends on:

- The size of the enemy's defenses.
- The element of surprise.
- The specific impact and cascading effects of the events.
- The assets available to the SPF unit commander.

The term diversionary measures refers to direct actions of groups or individuals operating in the enemy's rear area. Such measures include the destruction or degradation of key military objectives and the disruption of C2, communications, junctions, transport, and LOCs. Specific measures could include:

- Misdirecting military road movement by moving road markers.
- Jamming or disrupting communications and GPS, and generating false communications.
- Killing personnel.
- Destroying military hardware.
- Spreading disinformation.
- Undermining the morale and will of the enemy by creating confusion and panic.

Other diversionary measures may be part of a larger INFOWAR campaign.

The OPFOR has trained SPF as an alternate means of delivering CBRN munitions packages it may develop for them. This provides a worldwide strategic means of CBRN delivery that is not limited to the range of the missiles of the Strategic Forces.

Organization for Combat

No SPF assets are subordinate to tactical level units at division and below in the AFS. All SPF assets employed at the tactical level will have been allocated from higher levels. Therefore, it is important to understand where those SPF teams, companies, battalions, and brigades come from, how they get to the tactical level, and how they are employed to support the tactical fight.

SPF units reach the tactical level through allocation to an OSC. SPF units from the SPF Command or other services can be allocated in a constituent or dedicated status to an OSC. The OSC commander may then choose to further allocate them to the task organization of a tactical group, again in either a constituent or dedicated relationship. In other cases, SPF units may be allocated in a supporting relationship, while remaining under the command of their parent SPF organization. SPF units, especially at the tactical level, are task-organized to provide the best possible chance of mission success. Regardless of the level from which they come or the level at which they are employed, units at SPF brigade level and lower have similar capabilities, equipment, and manning.

SPF organizational structures, like the TTP they use and teach, are adaptive, dynamic, and malleable. The malleable structure of SPF units from team to brigade provides the ability to continually adapt and to allow continuous improvisation. Units will be added, deleted, or modified, as the mission and conditions dictate. Every SPF mission is unique and unlike any other, and thus requires forces organized not in a standard fashion but rather adapted into a task organization based on the mission. All of these SPF organizations provide a flexible and capable means of supporting all OPFOR operations.

Regardless of the parent organization in the AFS or their deployment location, the SPF normally infiltrate and operate as small SPF teams. When deployed, these teams may operate individually, or they may be task-organized into SPF detachments. The terms team and detachment indicate the temporary nature of the groupings. In the course of an operation, teams can leave a detachment and join it again. Each team may in turn break up into smaller teams (of as few as two men) or, conversely, come together with other teams to form a larger team, depending on the mission. At a designated time, teams can join up and form a detachment (for example, to

conduct a raid), which can at any moment split up again. This process can be planned before the operation begins, or it can evolve during the course of an operation, often at differing levels.

Note. In most OPFOR organizations, a detachment is a battalion or company designated to perform a specific mission and allocated the forces necessary to do so. However, SPF are organized into companies and battalions for administrative purposes only, not for performing missions. Therefore, a detachment in SPF terms is a temporary grouping of SPF teams that is task-organized for a particular mission but is not necessarily linked to a company or battalion organization.

For a very small SPF detachment, the senior team leader may act as the detachment commander. When a number of SPF teams from an SPF company join efforts for a particular mission, the original SPF company headquarters may act as the temporary detachment headquarters. Alternatively, the SPF company commander may designate his deputy commander or another individual as the detachment commander and provide him assets to form the temporary detachment headquarters. When a large number of teams join to form a larger detachment (especially if the detachment includes teams from more than one SPF company), the SPF battalion headquarters may temporarily serve as the detachment headquarters or provide personnel and equipment to form that headquarters.

SPF Assets

SPF assets allocated to a DTG or brigade tactical group (BTG) are drawn from an SPF brigade, normally one belonging to the Army SPF. However, SPF units generally reach the tactical level via the OSC. SPF units in an OSC may come from Army SPF, but can also come from the national-level SPF Command or from Air Force or Navy SPF, since an OSC is the lowest level of joint command. If an OSC has received SPF units, it may further allocate some of these units to supplement the long-range reconnaissance assets of a subordinate DTG or division (which would thus become a DTG).

Other Organizations and Assets

Based on the mission, SPF units can be task-organized into any maneuver unit. Likewise, any type of other unit (maneuver or otherwise) can be task-organized as part of an SPF detachment.

The mission and available resources drive the task-organizing of the SPF unit. For example, if the mission requires an affiliation with irregular forces, those units can be included in the task organization with the appropriate command and support relationships. This may also apply to mechanized infantry, air defense, or chemical defense units; elements providing air support and/or transport; or any other type of military or nonmilitary organization. All of these malleable SPF organizations (task-organized or otherwise) provide the OPFOR a flexible and capable means of attaining its military goals. If specific units or organizations are not available at the next higher level, the OPFOR commander requests up the chain that they be provided.

SPF Brigades, Battalions, Companies, and Teams

SPF brigades, battalions, companies, and teams exist in the AFS, but are not organized as uniformly as regular ground forces. Although FM 7-100.4 provides basic structures for such organizations, there is actually no fixed structure. Examples in figures 15-1 through 15-4 (drawn from FM 7-100.4) indicate this by depicting some subordinates in dashed boxes, indicating optional structures. The size and composition of SPF organizations at each level in the AFS can vary greatly, depending on the situation and the assets available. When actually employed, the units will be further task-organized to fit specific missions.

SPF Brigade

The majority of SPF assets reside originally in SPF brigades. This is true whether they are in the national-level SPF Command or in Army, Air Force, and Navy SPF. An SPF brigade can also be part of an operational-level command (such as a corps, army, or army group) in the AFS. SPF units from the SPF brigade can be allocated in a constituent or dedicated status to be task-organized as part of an OSC or a tactical group or to another SPF unit. In other cases, SPF units may be allocated in a supporting relationship, while remaining under the command of the parent SPF brigade.

Figure 15-1 shows a typical example of an SPF brigade. The structure of individual SPF brigades will vary depending on mission requirements and conditions. Had the mission or the environment dictated, the organizational example in figure 15-1 could easily have included an engineer battalion (for civil affairs), an INFOWAR company, affiliated local insurgents or guerrilla unit(s), or even a helicopter company. The structure of each SPF brigade is situational, adapted to the specific conditions.

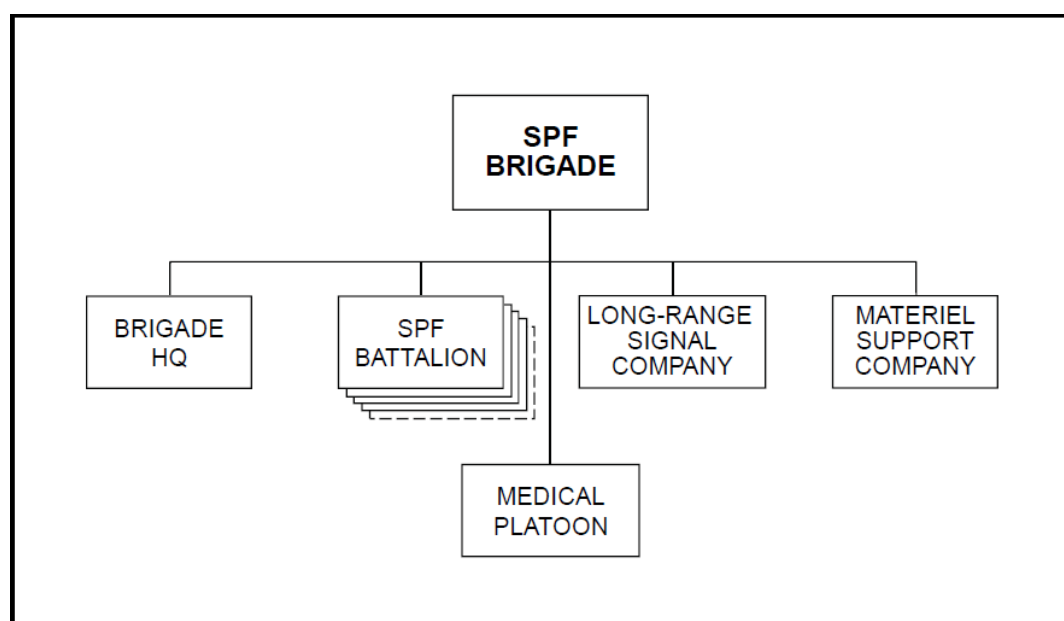


Figure 15-1. SPF brigade (example)

The SPF battalions and their companies are addressed in some detail below. The long-range signal company, materiel support company, and medical platoon provide typical support functions that are not unique to the SPF. For further information on these organizations, see FM 7-100.4.

SPF Battalion

In the AFS, an SPF battalion may be part of an SPF brigade or directly subordinate to an operational-level command (a corps, army, or perhaps an army group). SPF battalions are generally assigned a geographic AOR. This AOR may be quite large depending on the terrain, population, and other factors. The battalion is likely to be allocated to the task organization of an OSC operating in a fairly large geographic area. However, an SPF battalion might also be allocated to a tactical group. Individual SPF companies can be further suballocated depending on the circumstances.

The SPF battalion organization shown in figure 15-2 is an example only. It provides a typical example of the capabilities associated with an SPF battalion. The structure of SPF battalions can vary to meet mission requirements.

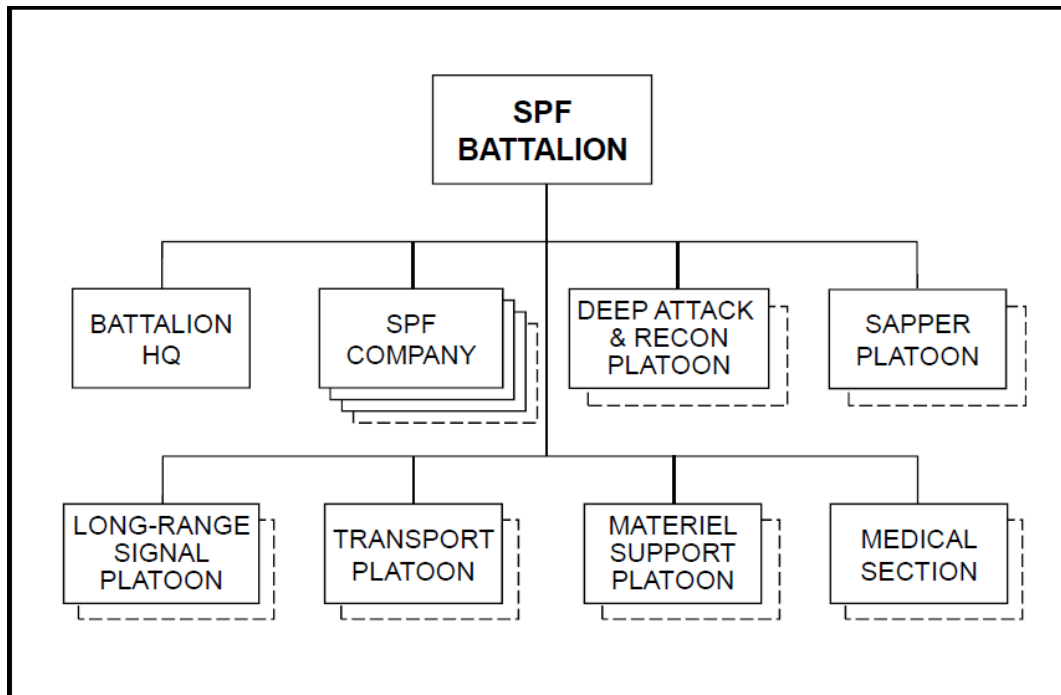


Figure 15-2. SPF battalion (example)

All SPF battalions have a battalion headquarters that may vary in size depending on any number of factors. The primary mission of the battalion headquarters is to direct, support, and sustain its deployed SPF companies. The required degree of each function is influenced by numerous variables. The capabilities and functions of some of the more unique SPF battalion assets are explained in detail below. For simplicity, SPF company functions and capabilities are addressed separately below, under SPF Company.

Deep Attack and Reconnaissance Platoon

The SPF deep attack and reconnaissance (DAR) platoon of an SPF battalion provides a unique deep, fast, attack (or reconnaissance) capability to the SPF battalion. The platoon is extremely versatile and is used in many different roles, either behind enemy lines or in the first line of combat. Although it is small (less than 40 personnel and 14 vehicles), it is extremely mobile and lethal. In order to provide the appropriate lethality, mobility, and also the stealth required for mission success, the equipment and weapons mix typically includesâ

- Fast attack vehicles or light strike vehicles.
- Tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- Air defense and antiarmor systems.

The name of the DAR platoon is indicative of the type of missions it is designed to accomplish. Missions include (but are not limited to)â

- Conduct deep (strategic and operational) reconnaissance.
- Conduct operations along tactical, operational, or strategic axes, including deep attack raids and sophisticated ambushes.
- Destroy critical air defense systems and associated radars, and communications and intelligence systems.
- Disrupt and/or destroy enemy rear area operations.
- Assist local guerrillas or insurgents in offensive operations.
- Provide communications, liaison, and support to stay-behind and guerrilla activities in the defense.
- In the strategic and operational depth, undermine the enemyâ morale and spread panic among the civilian population and the political leadership (This may cause a flow of refugees which will hamper enemy employment, defensive maneuver, and logistics.)

- Serve as part of a disruption force operating in enemy-held territory prior to the beginning of an operation.
- Serve as an alternate means of delivering CBRN munitions.
- Serve as target designation and forward observer teams.
- Establish and resupply or restock caches and mission support sites (MSSs).

All members of the SPF DAR platoon are cross-trained in the use of all equipment, weapons, and vehicles assigned to the platoon. The equipment and weapons mix is determined by the mission. Some may be left in the vehicles until required or not carried on the mission at all. For example, if the mission is target designation, the laser target designator will be carried and employed. If not it may be either left in the vehicle or left behind at an MSS, cache, or at battalion.

The ease of operation, size, and simple design of tactical UAV used by the SPF DAR platoon lends itself to field expedient modification. Converting this UAV into a munitions delivery system (improvised attack UAV) is not difficult and offers several tactical advantages and extends the attack range of the platoon.

Sapper Platoon

The mission of the sappers (raiders) is to serve as the lead or primary (assault) element in an assault on fixed installations or military field positions. Sappers are SPF (or infantry or guerrillas) trained to perform some typically raider, engineer, and ranger functions. Sappers are not engineers. The SPF also train local civilians and affiliated forces to be sappers.

A sapper platoon in an SPF battalion may consist ofâ€ ˆ

- A platoon headquarters.
- An infiltration and scout squad.
- A mine warfare and demolition squad.
- An improvised explosive/booby traps squad.
- A general support squad.

However, all squads are cross-trained to perform all functions. (See Sapper Team, under SPF Company for more detail on the nature of sappers and the types of functions they can perform.) Sapper squads can be task-organized into teams.

SPF battalions using sappers in an assault and/or demolition role may form several sapper platoons. Most if not all of the additional sapper platoons will be manned by affiliated guerrillas or insurgents. A sapper platoon may also be a mixture of SPF and locals.

The sappers may or may not be in a uniform. The affiliated forces or civilians (probably trained and lead by the SPF) may be men, women, and children. Women and children may be used as runners, messengers, scouts, guides, drivers, porters, fighters, suicide bombers, lookouts, or in several other roles. They may also emplace and/or detonate improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and mines.

The SPF sapper platoon not only emplaces and detonates IEDs and booby traps. It also manufactures them and teaches others how to manufacture, emplace, and detonate them. (Booby traps are actually a subcategory of IEDs.)

Sappers accompany and/or augment standard SPF teams, direct action teams, and guerrillas. They may also work completely independent of other operations. The platoon may also serve as a stay-behind or independent unit to conduct disruption operations. The sapper platoon also provides general engineer support to the SPF battalion.

Long-Range Signal Platoon

The long-range signal platoon of an SPF battalion is responsible for all communications (satellite and non-satellite) in the SPF battalion. It also performs unit-level maintenance on

communications and electronic equipment. It also coordinates retransmission requirements when necessary. All SPF communications are encrypted.

This platoon can be augmented with personnel and equipment from the long-range signal company of the parent SPF brigade. The platoon can be employed together or broken up to support subordinate SPF companies and activities. This platoon also assists in the training of affiliated irregular forces and civilians on how to set up, operate, maintain, and transport communications equipment.

SPF Company

The AOR for SPF companies may be quite large. The SPF company headquarters serves as the lifeline for the SPF teams. The teams are designed to operate independently (if necessary) throughout the company's AOR, or to support regular military, irregular forces, or other SPF units and/or activities. The company headquarters and staff provide C2 and coordinate activities of individual teams and their mission support requirements. Examples of types of support span the spectrum from logistics, to intelligence, to coordinating external fire support, to acquiring additional medical attention for locals. The company's primary task is to facilitate the success of individual teams.

The SPF company does not have a fixed structure. The structure, and the equipment and weapons mix, all depend on specific mission requirements and conditions. The SPF company, therefore, can have any number of teams. However, it typically has 10 to 12 teams (as shown in the example in figure 15-3). The number of teams deployed generally depends on the team size required for specific missions. The mission, environment, geographic factors, and other conditions determine the configuration and composition of each company and team.

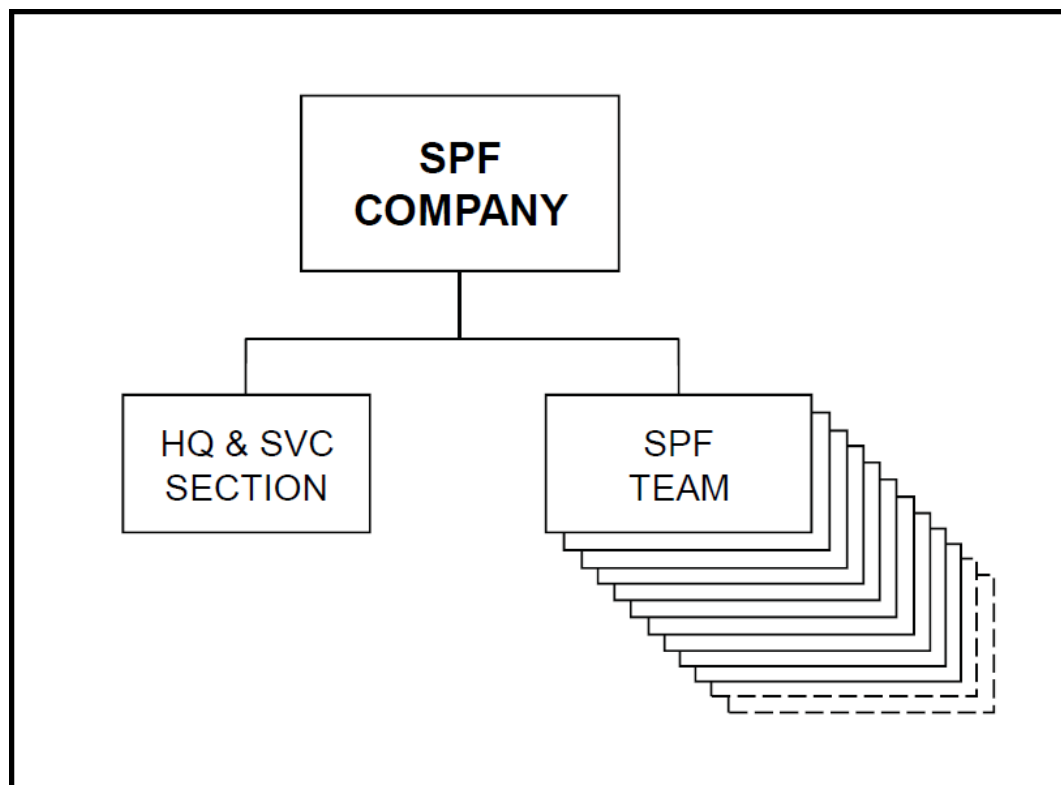


Figure 15-3. SPF company (example)

The company may be composed of several different teams, each with a different focus, or it may be composed of teams with a single focus. The single focus may be air infiltration (all teams of air infiltration), or divers (all teams of divers), or medical, or sniper, or any of the other types of teams listed below. More often, however, the company will be composed of a mix of teams with specialized capabilities and several multifunction (standard SPF) teams, or all teams will be the

standard SPF team structure. Figure 15-4 shows an example of a company that has at least one of each of the types of specialized teams. Another example might be four standard SPF teams, one direct action team, one air infiltration team, one sniper team, one medical team, one signal team, and one sapper team. Each SPF company normally has a full range of these specialty capabilities, whether in standard teams or specialized teams. See SFP Teams below.

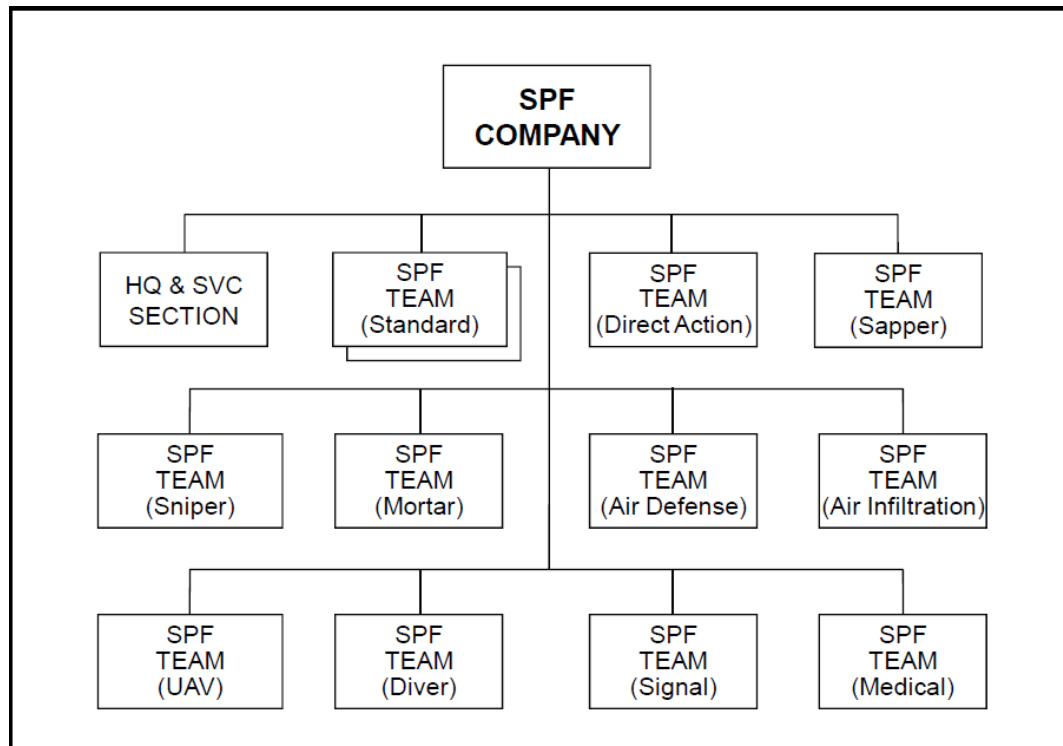


Figure 15-4. SPF company with specialized teams (example)

The SPF company has sufficient assets to transport munitions and materiel for the immediate fight. It is dependent upon support from higher (transport platoon at SPF battalion, or materiel support company at SPF brigade) or external sources (caches or civilian augmentation) to transport materiel for a sustained fight. The organic vehicles provide the company a degree of operational autonomy and may be employed separately from a battalion.

SPF Teams

Regardless of the parent administrative organization, SPF normally infiltrate and operate as small SPF teams. Each team may break up into smaller teams (of as few as two men) or temporarily join with other teams to form a larger team or an SPF detachment, depending on the mission. These teams contain the majority of actual fighters and shooters in all SPF organizations. They perform the sabotage, assassinations, IED (and suicide bomber) emplacement and detonation, extortion, kidnapping, taking of hostages, ambushes, sniping, firing of mortars, and other SPF functions. The SPF teams also provide instruction to guerrillas, insurgents, or other indigenous personnel. In some cases, the SPF team also serves as the planning and command element for these forces.

SPF team composition is not fixed and varies from team to team, mission to mission, and environment to environment. This includes the personnel, equipment, weapons mixes, and language abilities. Within a given SPF company, SPF teams can be

- All multifunctional.
- Each with a different focus.
- All teams composed of a single focus or specialty.
- Any mix of these.

The single focus may be a multifunction direct action mission, or any of the other functions

represented by specialized teams in figure 15-4. Each of these may also be the focus of one or two teams (possibly more). Specific composition of each type of SPF team can be found in FM 7-100.4.

The mix of weapons and equipment varies with the mission. Each SPF team can be equipped withâ€

- State-of-the-art communications gear including satellite telephones and satellite communications transceivers.
- Man-portable GPS jammers.
- Handheld thermal viewers.
- Communications intercept and direction finding sets.
- Sensor sets.
- Automatic grenade launchers (AGLs).
- Sniper and antimateriel rifles.
- General purpose machineguns.
- Antitank guided missiles (ATGMs), antitank grenade launchers (ATGLs), and/or antitank disposable launchers (ATDLs).
- Assorted remotely detonated mines, side-attack mines, and/or IEDs.

For additional information on personnel, weapons, and equipment, see FM 7-100.4.

Standard SPF Team

The standard SPF teams are the default for all SPF organizations not requiring unique specialties. For additional detail see FM 7-100.4. All SPF teams are based on this standard structure. SPF commanders begin with the standard team and tailor (task-organize) it to provide a high degree of success for specialized functions. Standard teams possess all of the specialized capabilities to a lesser degree and are more multifunctional. Any specialized team can serve as a standard SPF team when not engaged in specialized missions. SPF team members are cross-trained in the use of all equipment, weapons, and vehicles assigned to the SPF company.

Direct Action SPF Team

The structure and weapons mix of the direct action teams provides extreme lethality and is ideal for dispersed combat such as fighting in built-up areas, especially urban combat. The teams specialize in infantry antiarmor style attacks; antiarmor ambushes; and hit-and-run attacks against armored and/or hardened or rear area targets.

SPF direct action teams can work completely independently. However, several direct action teams (typically 12-men each) usually work together, with each team breaking down into smaller teams. For example, 3 or 4 direct action teams, each broken into 3 smaller teams, might act togetherâ€ for a total of 9 to 12 smaller teams, with perhaps 4 persons each. The teams will probably be supported or augmented by different types of SPF specialty teams such as sniper teams or sapper teams. They may also be supported by guerrillas or other local affiliated forces. One or more SPF UAV teams may be used to acquire reconnaissance information on targets or facilities.

When fighting in close terrain, SPF direct action teams are also the masters of the â€ defenseless defenseâ€ in which no defense or opposition is observed or suspected. Therefore, the enemy enters into the kill zone completely unaware. If teams are not in fixed defensive positions, they can remain totally mobile and hard to find. The teams prefer to trap vehicle columns in city streets where destruction of the first and last vehicles will trap the column and allow its total destruction. Normally, several direct action teams (often broken into several smaller teams) simultaneously attack a single armored vehicle. Kill shots are generally made against the top, rear, and sides of vehicles. Targets are engaged simultaneously to

maximize effectiveness and confusion. Once isolated, single vehicles are easily defeated.

While the direct action teams may fight from ground level, they prefer a three-dimensional attack. That means that they also attack from basements or sewers (spider holes) and from trees or the upper stories and tops of buildings. The elevation and depression angles of gun barrels on many armored vehicles are incapable of engaging the teams fighting from basements and second- or third-story positions. Multiple antiarmor rounds fired from different heights and directions limit a vehicle commander's ability to respond. The SPF predetermine (and target) enemy escape routes. SPF can use thermobaric flame weapons as "pocket artillery" to provide the firepower equal to that of a 122-mm artillery shell or 120-mm mortar shell, both of which are especially lethal in the close environment.

Direct action teams are generally equipped with a mix of infantry-type weapons (including man-portable antiarmor weapons); sniper and antimateriel rifles; and an assortment of sensors, designators, and other gear. The teams use command-detonated, controllable, and side-attack mines (antitank [AT], anti-vehicle, and antipersonnel). Side-attack (off-route) mines may be placed out of sight, such as inside windows and alleys. Tripwires for claymore-type antipersonnel mines can be strung at antenna height to destroy troops riding on the top of armored vehicles. The OPFOR also uses AT grenades and will attempt to drop bottles filled with gasoline or jellied fuel and other improvised flammables or demolitions on top of vehicles. See the Worldwide Equipment Guide for specific information and detail on equipment and weapons.

Sapper Team

Sappers are SPF (or infantry or guerrillas) trained to perform some typically raider and engineer functions. The SPF sappers also train local irregular forces and civilians to be sappers. Sappers are not engineers. An SPF sapper team can

- Infiltrate enemy installations and areas.
- Scout (making accurate diagrams for future attacks).
- Guide other sappers, guerrillas, or SPF through enemy lines and obstacles to perform their missions.
- Conduct route reconnaissance.
- Conduct and/or assist in raids, assaults, and ambushes.
- Breach obstacles.
- Facilitate water obstacle crossing.
- Conduct assault breaching.
- Emplace field expedient fortifications and obstacles (such as cratering).
- Lay mines (especially nuisance minefield, IEDs, and booby traps).
- Lay controlled minefields.
- Emplace obstacles (including anti-vehicle wire obstacles).
- Set side-attack mines.
- Deliver mines using man-portable mine-scattering systems.
- Support AT and countermobility operations.
- Conduct general demolition.
- Provide general engineer support (including minor construction).
- Provide water purification.
- Employ limited smoke or expedient obscurants.

The sapper team may use an SPF UAV team to acquire reconnaissance information on targets, geography, or facilities.

In the raider role, sapper teams may serve as the lead or primary (assault) element in an assault on fixed installations or military field positions. Armed primarily with explosives charges, the sapper attempts to breach the defensive perimeter and neutralize tactical and strategic positions in advance of the main body or behind enemy lines. The sapper (raiders) can serve as an independent combat force making deep thrusts from different directions simultaneously, or they

can support guerrilla or infantry operations.

The sapper team may be broken into three, four, or six smaller teams, which may work in concert or may each be employed individually. Sappers may accompany and/or augment standard SPF teams, direct action teams, and guerrillas. They may also work completely independent of other operations. The team may serve as a stay-behind element to conduct disruption operations. This team may serve with and train local irregular forces and civilians how to infiltrate, set demolitions, and assault enemy installations.

The sapper team manufactures IEDs and booby traps (booby traps are actually a subcategory of IEDs). The team may also emplace and/or detonate the IEDs (booby traps are triggered by the unsuspecting) or they may give them to other trained sappers, SPF, or guerrillas to emplace and/or detonate. The OPFOR commonly uses IEDs as "secondary devices" to detonate on the arrival of responding personnel. IEDs can be detonated by a variety of means, including remote, command, electrical, tripwire, pressure, time, and others. The sapper team trains local irregular forces and civilians in the manufacture and employment of improvised munitions and booby traps.

Members of the sapper team do not serve as suicide bombers. However, they do recruit suicide bomber prospects, and plan and coordinate such bombings. They may also control the bombers.

Sniper Team

The primary mission of the SPF sniper team is to serve in the conventional offensive sniper-countersniper role and to extend the lethal range of the team or the supported organization. Other missions include assassination, attrition, interdiction and disruption, providing covering fires, and supporting the INFOWAR plan. Depending on mission requirements, however, the SPF sniper team may also serve as a reconnaissance element, a stay-behind element, or part of a hunter-killer (HK) team. Sniper teams may also serve as laser designators for indirect fire or air-delivered ordnance.

These teams may also work completely independent of other operations. Several SPF sniper teams may saturate an area with snipers to serve in an INFOWAR role, or stay behind to conduct disruption or direct action operations.

The composition of the sniper team fluctuates with the mission, conditions, and available resources. However, the SPF sniper team typically consists of 12 members and can break down into four smaller sniper teams, each with three people. In this case, the original SPF team leader serves as the leader of one small sniper team. Each small sniper team generally consists of a team leader/observer (spotter), sniper (shooter)/target designator, and a driver/assistant sniper/gunner.

Each small team may have its own vehicle (possibly amphibious). This may be a tactical utility vehicle, all-terrain vehicle, or light strike vehicle. However, the mission may dictate that no vehicles be used. In such cases, even teams with vehicles would leave their vehicle behind and carry only mission-critical equipment. Teams with no vehicles would depend completely on caches, porters, or other transportation and supply means.

The sniper carries either a sniper rifle or an antimateriel rifle, depending on the mission. The other rifle may remain behind with the vehicle, at an MSS or cache, or at company. On some occasions (when the vehicle is left behind), the driver/assistant sniper may carry the other rifle.

The sniper in each small team provides covering fires. The other team members may use AGLs or machineguns to engage enemy personnel when they exit the armored vehicles, and pin down the supporting infantry, allowing an ATGM or ATGL gunner to engage the armored vehicle. If the sniper uses the antimateriel rifle, it can provide accurate fires 1,800 meters or more. The infantry ATGM or ATGL can engage and penetrate armor from 600 meters or more, depending on the

weapons used.

SPF snipers may accompany and/or augment other SPF teams, direct action teams and guerrillas. They may also work completely independent of other operations. The SPF sniper team can also train and equip local irregular forces and civilians to serve as snipers or marksmen. See chapter 16 for more detail on sniper teams and their employment.

Mortar Team

The SPF mortar teams normally use the light, mobile 60-mm commando-style mortar. More lethal 81- or 82-mm mortars are used when the mission dictates.

SPF mortar teams may accompany and/or augment other (standard) SPF teams, direct action teams, or affiliated irregular forces. They may be employed as a whole team (typically 12-men) or smaller individual mortar teams. The small teams may be employed in concert or may be broken up and assigned to support other SPF teams. SPF mortar teams may also work completely independent of other operations. Several teams may saturate an area with mortars to serve in an INFOWAR role, or stay behind to conduct disruption operations.

The SPF mortar team can train and equip local irregular forces and civilians in the proper use, logistics, and employment of mortars. It will also provide mortar support to these forces whenever necessary.

Weapons and ammunition may be cached. Local sympathizers may volunteer to serve as ammunition bearers. Others may be forced to serve as ammunition bearers or porters. Local burden animals such as donkeys, mules, or camels may also be used to transport ammunition and materiel. See Logistics later in this section.

Air Defense Team

The primary mission of the SPF air defense team is to provide security from air attack. Other missions include:

- Air ambushes.
- Disruption of enemy air operations.
- Destruction of key aircraft.
- Support the INFOWAR plan (denial of airspace and enemy claims of air supremacy and/or superiority).

SPF air defense teams may accompany and/or augment other SPF teams, direct action teams, and affiliated irregular forces. The team may be employed as a whole team (typically 12 men) or as smaller air defense teams with individual air defense weapons. These smaller teams may be employed in concert or broken up either to support other SPF teams or to work completely independent of other operations. Several SPF air defense teams may saturate an area with air defense weapons to serve in an INFOWAR role, or stay behind to conduct disruption operations. The team is extremely effective in conducting air defense ambushes. The mobility and low signature of the team enhances its lethality and overall effect in disruption of enemy air operations and planning.

The SPF air defense teams are usually equipped with state-of-the-art air defense equipment, such as the air defense/antiarmor systems (ADAAS) or man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS). Aside from the ADAAS or MANPADS, equipment usually includes a mix of machineguns and air defense acquisition and warning receivers.

Note. An ADAAS can also be used against ground targets such as light armored vehicles, and snipers in bunkers or buildings. When dismounted, each ADAAS or MANPADS gunner carries a shoulder-fired launcher with one missile. The ADAAS or MANPADS assistant gunner carries one additional missile and can bring more from the vehicle, as required. The SPF air defense team

vehicles carry extra missiles for each ADAAS or MANPADS launcher. The assistant gunner also carries the electronic plotting board and enters location and direction data of approaching targets.

The SPF air defense team machinegunner remains with the heavy machinegun (HMG), mounted or dismounted. Typically the ADAAS or MANPADS gunner and assistant gunner dismount and prepare launch positions. The HMG gunner dismounts and prepares an air defense firing position (assisted by the driver). The driver then hides the vehicle and either stays with the vehicle (ready to pick up the others) or assists the HMG gunner with the electronic plotting board. The HMG gunner and/or the ADAAS or MANPADS gunner may stay with the vehicle if the terrain and situation allow.

The SPF air defense team can train and equip local irregular forces and civilians in the proper use, logistics, and employment of air defense weapons. It will also provide air defense support to these forces whenever necessary. See chapter 11 for more information on ADAAS and MANPADS employment.

Air Infiltration Team

The SPF air infiltration team either infiltrates by air and/or assists other SPF teams in infiltrating by air and in conducting other air operations. It is responsible for all insertion, supply, and planning and coordination of other air operations for the SPF company. The team also performs tests, diagnostic checks, repairs, and maintenance on all parachutes, ultralight aircraft, support systems, and related equipment. All team members are qualified riggers and provide individual and cargo parachute packing and rigging, unit maintenance of air delivery items, and individual rigger support for the SPF company.

The ultralight aircraft may, or may not, be equipped with light and general-purpose machineguns; AGLs, ATDLs, or other weapons systems. They may also be fitted with radios, cameras, sensor sets, or laser target designators. The ultralights are dismantled for trailer transport, two aircraft per trailer. All team members are qualified to operate the ultralight aircraft (single- or two-seaters) or to serve as gunners/equipment operators.

Note. Armed ultralight aircraft can also be used in attack, reconnaissance, or multimission roles, not just in infiltration. The air infiltration team also has powered parachutes available. These are extremely effective for surreptitious infiltration and exfiltration. Once successfully infiltrated, the team hides the parachutes in a cache. Upon successful completion of the mission, the parachutes are retrieved and the team exfiltrates to a more secure location, possibly for further transport out of the area. For additional information on the SFP air-infiltration team, see FM 7-100.4.

UAV Team

The primary mission of tactical UAVs is reconnaissance. However, the ease of operation, size, and simple design of some tactical UAVs lend themselves to field expedient modification. Converting a UAV into a munitions delivery system (improvised attack UAV) is not difficult and offers several tactical advantages. Off-the-shelf remote-controlled aircraft can also provide this capability (remote-controlled IEDs).

SPF UAV teams may accompany and/or augment other SPF teams (especially sapper and direct action teams) or affiliated irregular forces. The UAV team may be employed as a whole or may break down into smaller teams. For example, a 12-man team could break into 4 smaller (3-man) teams. Either the large team or individual smaller teams can be assigned to support other SPF teams. They may also work completely independent of other operations.

When the SPF UAV team breaks into four small teams, each small team would generally carry two UAVs on each mission; one is used as a backup. In dismounted operations, the driver carries

the appropriate radio and the UAV maintenance and repair kit. The UAV operator carries one UAV while the UAV assistant operator carries the extra UAV, batteries, and the computer-laptop UAV ground station. Almost any laptop computer can serve as a ground station coupled with the proper software and flight controls. Specialized training is not required for this system. Range, reconnaissance capability, and flight time vary depending on the type of tactical UAV used.

Diver Team

The primary missions of the SPF diver team are water infiltration, reconnaissance, and demolition. All members of the SPF diver team are qualified special-purpose combat divers. The teams specialize in operating in a riverine, swamp, wetland, or coastal environment. The team is responsible for all waterborne insertion, infiltration, supply, attack, beach, river crossing, and surf/tide studies. It is also responsible for other waterborne operations, planning, and coordination for the SPF company. It maintains a sufficient amount of equipment to support the SPF company's diving and waterborne infiltration requirements.

The size and number of diver teams employed depends on the mission and geographic AOR of the SPF company. For example, companies and/or teams operating in a coastal or river environment perform more diving missions. SPF diver teams may accompany and/or augment other SPF teams (especially sappers and direct action teams) or affiliated irregular forces. They may be employed as a whole team (typically 12-men) or individual smaller diving teams and suballocated to supported units. They may also work completely independent of other operations and serve in various roles.

The SPF diver team either infiltrates by water and/or assists other SPF teams in infiltrating and exfiltrating by water and in conducting other waterborne operations. The team also performs tests, diagnostic checks, repairs, and maintenance on all diving gear, diving support equipment, and water craft. Surface craft and other specialized craft and equipment such as rigid inflatable boats, light patrol boats, submersibles, semi-submersible infiltration landing craft, and specialized open water craft will be provided by the supporting naval organization depending on mission requirements.

Signal Team

The SPF signal team provides state-of-the-art secure long- and short-range communications for the SPF company and its deployed teams. This team can also train local guerrilla or insurgent forces and civilians on how to set up, operate, maintain, and transport communications equipment.

SPF signal teams may accompany and/or augment other SPF teams, insurgents, or guerrillas. They may be employed as a whole team (typically 12-men) or individual small signal teams and suballocated to supported units. They may also work completely independent of other operations and serve in roles such as retransmission sites.

A single small SPF signal team can provide long-range communications support for guerrilla units up to battalion size. A full SPF signal team can do the same for a brigade-size unit. Teams can also support insurgent operations. This team may also serve in a signals reconnaissance collection role. In the collection role, the signal equipment is exchanged one-for-one with communications intercept and direction finding equipment. Each team then becomes a communications intercept and direction finding unit.

Medical Team

All personnel in the SPF medical team are qualified medics. (All other types of SPF team also have a dedicated medic assigned.) SPF medical teams may accompany and/or augment other SPF teams or affiliated irregular forces. They may be employed as a whole team (typically 12-

men) or broken down into small medical teams or individual personnel and suballocated to supported units, villages, or sectors.

Each SPF medical team is designed to provide medical support to the SPF company and for guerrilla units up to brigade size. A small medical team can support a battalion-size force. SPF medical teams can also support insurgent operations.

This team also trains local irregular forces and civilians on how to perform emergency medicine, battlefield medical procedures, and evacuation. The SPF medical team members provide limited medical intervention, minor surgery, and treatment of most common illnesses. Supported irregular force units receive litters and medical supplies from the medical section to transport and treat wounded. The supported unit provides its own litter bearers. The SPF teams in the field have a very limited and very temporary inpatient capability. Severe and longer-term care relies on evacuation to civilian, military, or other medical facilities. More routine and excess ill and wounded are backhauled in general-purpose cargo and civilian vehicles.

Some local medical support may be available. SPF medical support is coupled with local sympathizers and/or irregular forces' medical assets in the area. Irregular forces may mobilize local medical personnel to assist in treating and evacuating ill and wounded. Maximum use is made of local medical assistance and facilities regardless of capability. Local civilian sympathizers may volunteer their homes, equipment, vehicles, and services. They may also assist in the evacuation of wounded to civilian, irregular force, or military facilities. Whenever possible, medical functions are performed in tents, tunnels, caves, or local accommodations. In some instances, the SPF medical teams will attempt to colocate with a village clinic.

Cargo trailers transport medical equipment and supplies. In emergencies they may transport wounded. These trailers may be dropped at the aid station when the team's light trucks serve as ambulances. Vehicles may be a mix of military and civilian, or all civilian. Carts may also be used to transport wounded. Depending on the situation, the trailer transporting equipment and supplies may be cached or dropped to be recovered later. It may also be abandoned (concealed) when no longer needed.

SPF medical personnel are combatants. When necessary, they fight. A medical aid station is usually set up at base camp while other medics accompany other SPF teams or affiliated irregular forces in the fight. Medical team personnel may be a mixture of men and women. Local civilian augmentation, including women, may make up a large percentage of the total strength of people serving as assistant medics, litter bearers, and in other roles.

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

The point of the SPF spearhead is the SPF team, which is malleable and extremely lethal. The teams lend themselves to adapting to the situation and will adopt any TTP, weapons, or equipment that may prove successful or place them at advantage.

There are no standard prescribed TTP used or taught by the SPF. Once on the ground, the SPF are amorphous. Their ability to continually adapt to all aspects of their environment is directly relational not only to mission success but also to their survivability and lethality. These lethal organizations, and their TTP and actions, manifest themselves primarily by their

- Unpredictability.
- Sharp learning curve.
- Continuous improvisation.
- Adaptive and unpredictable TTP.
- Mobility.
- Ability to influence and to blend in with the population.
- Ability to use local culture and agendas to their advantage.
- Ability to shape local perceptions and alliances.

- Shifting architectures, affiliations, alliances, behaviors, and players.
- Spectrum of lethalityâ ranging from a single precise rifle shot to IEDs to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

SPF missions may support national-, theater-, operational-, or tactical-level objectives. They are conducted across the spectrum of military operations independently or in coordination with regular and/or irregular forces. However, the TTP used by all SPF units are similar and are actually performed at a tactical level, as small teams or detachments. Therefore, SPF would use the same types of tactical action (such as raids and ambushes) regardless of the level of command from which they come or the level at which they perform the missions. The basic TTP used by SPF to conduct these missions are not unique to the SPF, nor are the SPF limited to those basic TTP. Special missions may require specialized skills and TTP that are unique to those missions. For either basic or special missions, the TTP the SPF select for a particular mission or purpose may be unexpected.

One mission of SPF is to advise, train, and assist irregular forces. Therefore, the SPF must be able to use the same types of TTP as the irregular forces they train, support, or fight alongside. As SPF train and work with affiliated irregular forces, they may also learn some effective TTP (such as terror tactics) from those forces. If, on the other hand, the SPF teach terror tactics to the irregular forces, they must have the expertise and capability to use terror tactics themselves.

Infiltration

The success of SPF land, air, and amphibious operations in support of regular military and/or irregular forces or independent SPF missions is primarily dependent upon detailed planning and preparation. Infiltration techniques includeâ

- Air infiltration.
- Water infiltration.
- Land infiltration.
- Stay-behind forces.

Land

Land infiltration involves the use of various modes of transportation or techniques such as commercial vehicles, railway trains, or infiltration on foot, possibly along with refugees. It is conducted in a manner similar to that of a long-range reconnaissance patrol infiltrating into enemy territory. Generally, guides are required. If guides are not available, the SPF team or detachment must have detailed intelligence of the route, particularly if it is to cross borders. Routes are selected to take maximum advantage of cover and concealment and to avoid enemy outposts, patrols, and installations.

Before the mission, the team or detachment is briefed on the known locations of selected individuals who will furnish assistance and on the established means of contacting them. These individuals may be used as local guides and sources of information, food, and shelter. Since there are local sources for survival items, the SPF team or detachment can restrict the equipment and supplies to be carried to mission-essential items (individual arms, equipment, and communications gear).

A very successful infiltration method used by the SPF is to infiltrate under the guise of reconnaissance probes. This is especially successful when the SPF is either guiding or using affiliated irregular forces, from a team of 3 to 4 men to a squad, or a platoon, or even a company of approximately 200 men. The SPF and/or irregular forces conduct small probes along the enemy defensive positions. If the enemy does not respond to these probes, the SPF and/or irregular forces infiltrate in small numbers and spread out. This permits larger numbers to penetrate. Once behind enemy lines, one team may cut off the escape route of the enemy, while the other teams conduct a coordinated assault on both the front and flanks. The attacks will

continue on all sides until the defenders are destroyed or forced to withdraw. The SPF and/or irregular forces will then move stealthily forward to the open flank of the next enemy position and repeat the tactics.

The OPFOR also conducts another very successful variation of this infiltration and subsequent action. In this variant, the SPF and/or irregular forces do not immediately attack as soon as they are successfully behind enemy lines. Once behind the enemy, they may wait a few hours or up to 3 days or more and may number as much as a full irregular company or even a battalion, depending on the circumstances. Once emplaced either behind the enemy or more likely behind and on both flanks of the enemy, the infiltrated force then waits for the main OPFOR attack. If the main OPFOR attack is successful, the enemy will either retreat or fall back. At that time, the infiltrated SPF and/or irregular forces will ambush and destroy the remaining enemy forces. If the OPFOR main attack is faltering or appears as if it may fail, the infiltrated SPF and/or irregular forces simultaneously attack from both the rear and flanks, ensuring victory.

Air

Air delivery by parachute is one of the principal means available for the infiltration of SPF personnel. However, they can also use ultralight aircraft as well as powered parachutes. In preparing a team for air infiltration, the team leader or detachment commander considers the following:

- Aircraft capabilities.
- Timing (day/night).
- Weather and geographic effects.
- Detection by enemy personnel, which may compromise the mission.
- Equipment and supplies.
- C2.
- Reception personnel in the drop zone (DZ).
- Ground assembly.
- Emergency plans.
- Exfiltration.

The Air Force fields light transport aircraft for insertion of its own SPF or those belonging to other service components. The SPF Command also has some tactical transport for use in inserting SPF units. Commercial aircraft may also be used to support high-altitude air drops.

All OPFOR SPF companies normally contain at least one air infiltration team equipped with six ultralight aircraft as well as an assorted number of powered parachutes.

High-Altitude Air Drop

When enemy air defense discourages normal infiltration by air, parachute entry from very high altitudes may be necessary. This may involve either high-altitude low-opening (HALO) or high-altitude high-opening (HAHO) techniques. Whenever this type of drop is planned in denied areas protected by enemy radar and other detection devices, a system of jamming or disruption of these systems should be established.

An important consideration is the availability of aircrews trained in operating under arduous conditions in depressurized aircraft at high jump altitudes. The team leader or detachment commander must devise a system for freefall assembly of personnel after they have exited the aircraft, but before opening the parachutes. This is particularly important at night or when conditions preclude visual contact with DZ markings. Assembly aids include special marking devices and materials, visible at night, applied to pack trays, backpacks, and other designated equipment.

Blind Drop

Selected SPF personnel may be air-dropped during the initial infiltration phase on DZs devoid of reception personnel. This technique is referred to as a "blind drop" and may be employed when an area is known to contain a local irregular force of sufficient size and nature to warrant cultivating as an affiliated force. In all probability, the irregular force will be receptive to outside support. Other SPF, regular OPFOR, or interested interagency partners were either unable or did not have time and means to train the irregular force as DZ reception personnel. Additionally, the enemy situation might preclude normal DZ markings and recognition signals.

Once on the ground, SPF personnel move to the selected assembly area and establish security. The SPF team or detachment attempts to make contact with the local irregular forces.

Water

Water offers another practical means for infiltration into areas having exposed coastlines or riverbanks. Water infiltration normally terminates in a land movement phase. Considerations for water infiltration include the following:

- Watercraft capabilities.
- Detection by enemy personnel, which may compromise the mission.
- Reception personnel.
- Equipment and supplies.
- C2.
- Ship-to-shore movement.
- Land assembly and movement.
- Emergency plans.
- Exfiltration.

SPF companies normally contain at least one SPF diver team equipped with Zodiac-type inflatable boats with motors, and assorted scuba and rebreathing gear. The SPF diver team either infiltrates by water and/or assists other SPF teams in infiltrating and/or exfiltrating by water. This team is responsible for all waterborne insertion, infiltration, and supply. For additional information on this team, see Diver Team, above, or FM 7-100.4.

Depending on mission requirements, SPF units may require surface craft and other specialized craft and equipment to be provided by a supporting naval organization. This can include rigid inflatable boats, light patrol boats, mini-submarines, submersibles, semi-submersible infiltration landing craft, and specialized open water craft.

Infiltration by means of amphibious aircraft landing on large lakes, rivers, or coastal waters may be possible. In such a case, infiltration planning by the team or detachment considers the ship-to-shore and subsequent land movement characteristics of water infiltration.

Swarming

Swarming is a tactic that results in the convergent attack(s), from multiple directions, and possibly multiple dimensions, by numerous elements on a single target(s). The SPF generally use this type of attack when accompanied by affiliated irregular forces. SPF teams plan or otherwise facilitate the attack and may or may not accompany their surrogate forces conducting the swarming attack.

There are two basic types of swarming: the massed swarm and the dispersed swarm. In the massed swarm, the elements begin as a massed (assembled) unit. On command, the elements then disassemble and conduct a convergent attack(s) to swarm the enemy from numerous directions. In the dispersed swarm, the elements are geographically dispersed from the beginning. On command, the elements infiltrate. Once prepared, they attack (from their respective directions), converging on the enemy without forming a single massed unit. Swarms are equally effective in both the offense and the defense.

Of the two types of swarming, the dispersed swarm is the most difficult to defend against because the attacking elements never present a massed target. The OPFOR prefers to use the dispersed swarm attack where the attackers are initially dispersed, then converge on the target(s). It is more appropriate to the dispersed fight the OPFOR, and especially the SPF, prefers. Once the attack is complete, the attacking elements can either dissipate into the local population, exfiltrate back to where they came from, or move to hide positions or sanctuary (possibly cross-border).

Stay-Behind

SPF teams may be pre-positioned in proposed AORs or may remain in areas formerly under OPFOR control, before the enemy occupies these areas. This provides them the opportunity to organize the nucleus of an affiliated irregular force, conduct surveillance, or conduct direct action. Stringent precautions are taken to preserve security, particularly that of the refuge areas or other safe sites to be used during the initial period of enemy occupation. Information concerning locations and identities within the indigenous organization is kept on a need-to-know basis. Contacts among various elements use clandestine communications.

Dispersed caches, to include radio equipment, are pre-positioned when possible. SPF personnel have a better chance of survival in small towns, villages, and rural areas. However, when stay-behind operations are attempted in heavily populated urban areas, the SPF team or detachment is completely dependent upon the indigenous organization for security, the contacts required for expansion, and the buildup effort.

Equipment

SPF personnel generally use the best equipment and weapons available to accomplish their missions, typically high-end tier 1 systems. (See FM 7-100.4 for additional information on the tier system of OPFOR weapons and equipment and specific information on SPF equipment and its allocation.) The OPFOR routinely uses the SPF as an avenue for introducing new or improved weapons and equipment technology onto the battlefield. This often includes advanced weaponry such as MANPADS and ATGMs, extremely lethal warhead updates for older AT weapons, and communications, targeting, and reconnaissance systems. At the tactical level, this often provides asymmetric advantage out of proportion to the capabilities of the individual piece of equipment. Depending on the type of equipment or weapon introduced, it may carry a significant psychological impact at the strategic level. In some instances, the OPFOR uses the SPF to train both regular and irregular troops in the use of new or high-technology niche weapons and equipment.

SPF team members are cross-trained in the use of all equipment, weapons, and vehicles assigned to the team or company. Some weapons and/or equipment may be left in the vehicles until required or not carried on the mission at all. These may be left behind at an MSS, in a cache, or left at the company. In this case, the SPF teams carry only mission-critical equipment and weapons.

The environment and the mission determine the categories and types of equipment and weapons mix used by the SPF battalion and below. For example, in a swamp, wetland area, or other difficult and marginal terrain, the SPF may use all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), amphibious ATVs, and/or similar amphibious vehicles in lieu of tactical utility vehicles or light strike vehicles. In short, all vehicles and weapons are interchangeable and/or tailored to fit the specific mission and conditions.

Vehicles used by the SPF are a mix of military and civilian. An SPF brigade, battalion, company, or team may be augmented by military and/or civilian vehicles. Depending on the mission, civilian vehicles may includeâ€

- Motorcycles.

- Agricultural trucks.
- Commercial trucks.
- Liquid cargo carriers (for POL or water).
- Flat beds.
- Busses.
- Farm trailers.
- Tractors.
- Cars.
- Half-ton civilian trucks.
- Bicycles.
- Carts.
- High-mobility vehicles.
- ATVs.

Local sympathizers may volunteer their equipment and services. The SPF commander may requisition or confiscate local civilian transportation assets and materiel. This includes the use of civilian personnel for porters or labor. Draft animals may also serve as bearers or porters.

Personnel

All SPF soldiers are airborne qualified. Most speak several languages (which also enhances their ability to blend in), and many are qualified combat divers.

SPF personnel are trained in blending in and therefore may, or may not, be in uniform, depending on the circumstances. They may attempt to be indistinguishable from the local population (other than weaponry, which they may conceal or discard). Some, or all, may completely melt into the civilian population when not engaged in military operations.

The ability of the SPF teams to blend in with the population usually is in direct relationship to their ability to survive and also facilitates bonding with locals. When weapons are required, they may attempt to appear as if they are local militia, police, security guards, or other acceptable armed groups.

One of the primary missions of the SPF is to train, direct, use, and fight alongside of, or assist affiliated irregular forces to prepare for offensive actions, diversionary measures, or other missions. The irregular forces may be a mixture of men, women, and children. Local women and children may be used as runners, messengers, scouts, guides, suicide bombers, drivers, porters, snipers, lookouts, or in other roles. They may also emplace and/or detonate IEDs, booby traps, and mines. Women (and possibly children) may be fighters and participate in *drive-bys*, assassinations, ambushes, and/or assaults.

Logistics

Secrecy during movement or delivery complicates resupply of the deployed SPF team or detachment. This is complicated by the fact that the AOR for SPF units may be quite large geographically and cover a significant amount of terrain.

Detection by enemy personnel is always a priority concern. Once detected, the supplies can then be intercepted and destroyed, or the SPF personnel can be attacked, killed, or captured. The ability to escape detection while successfully resupplying the deployed SPF teams is susceptible to many factors, including time, distance, terrain, weather, and support of the local populace. All these factors pose challenges for SPF logistics planners at all levels. The surreptitious nature of resupplying what are usually covert activities is amplified by emergency requests and some on-call requests.

An SPF company or battalion usually has sufficient assets to transport munitions and materiel to meet immediate needs. It is dependent upon external support (brigade materiel support

company or battalion transport platoon) or other sources (caches or civilian augmentation) to transport and/or stage materiel for a sustained fight. Depending on the mission and other variables, however, SPF teams and even their parent SPF companies or battalions may have no vehicles at all and depend on caches, porters, or other transportation or supply means.

A team leader or detachment commander requesting extensive logistics support from the outside should limit his request to essential items not readily obtainable in the AOR. This could include major items such as weapons, ammunition, demolitions, communications equipment, medical supplies, or other items that are normally denied to the local population by the enemy. The team leader or detachment commander has several techniques available that will give him the supplies required when he needs them.

Accompanying Supplies

Accompanying supplies are items taken into the AOR by the SPF team during insertion or infiltration. These supplies are issued at the staging base in the final briefing stages and rigged by the team for delivery. When he plans his accompanying supplies, the team leader or detachment commander considers automatic resupply of survival and mission-essential items that he will receive. The accompanying supplies, plus the automatic resupply, will constitute the supply level of items required for the mission.

Some SPF units do not possess sufficient assets to transport munitions and materiel to meet immediate needs. This is especially true of the smaller teams or those with a mission of longer distance and/or duration.

Automatic Resupply

Automatic resupply is prearranged for time, location, and content during the team's or detachment's final preparation stage at the staging base. The automatic resupply gives the team or detachment flexibility by allowing it to include backup communications equipment, weapons, ammunition, demolitions, medical supplies, and other items to support small-scale tactical actions and/or training of local irregular forces that may be affiliated with the OPFOR.

The supplies designated for the automatic resupply are selected on the basis of available intelligence, indicating items essential to complete or continue the mission, conduct exfiltration, or support affiliated forces. Once they are issued and received, they are rigged and prepared and stored for delivery in accordance with the predetermined schedule.

On-Call Supplies

After commitment into an AOR, and once it has established communications with its higher headquarters, the team or detachment is ready to begin requesting supplies based on mission needs and the capability to receive and store them.

In order to expedite supply requests, ensure accurate identification of needs, and minimize communication transmission time, the team leader or detachment commander uses a logistics brevity code system. The code includes the general category, unit designation, unit weight, total bundle weight, and number of individual man-loads per package. The logistics brevity code system is used to request three categories of supplies:

- Survival items (medical supplies, blankets, clothing, and food).
- Mission-essential items (weapons, ammunition, and communications equipment).
- Bulk items (the aforementioned items in bulk quantities to support extended missions, or the rapid expansion of affiliated forces).

Each load is prepackaged and self-contained. For example, a weapon will be packaged with ammunition, tools, POL, batteries, medical supplies, cleaning equipment, and spare parts. Unused weight or space will be used for additional survival items.

Emergency Resupply

The emergency resupply procedure is used to restore the combat capability of a team or detachment. This procedure is initiated when requested or after sustaining losses from enemy actions, missing a scheduled radio contact, or discovering faulty equipment. It may also be triggered by other incidents such as medical emergencies (usually of the supported population). Items delivered normally consist of communications equipment and other mission-essential equipment.

Local sympathizers may volunteer their equipment and services. The commander may requisition or confiscate local civilian transportation assets and materiel, to include POL and food. Civilian personnel may volunteer or be forced to serve as porters, farmers, or as general labor.

Reconstitution and Reorganization

Restoring combat effectiveness of subordinates is one of the most important duties of SPF commanders. It includesâ

- Determining the degree of combat effectiveness of subordinates.
- Assigning missions to subordinates that are still combat-effective.
- Withdrawing units from areas of destruction or contamination.
- Providing units with replacement personnel, weapons, ammunition, fuel, and other supplies.
- Restoring disrupted C2.

The OPFOR makes an effort to keep some units at full strength rather than all units at an equally reduced level. Usually, the unit with the fewest losses is the first to receive replacement personnel and equipment. However, once the casualties or equipment losses are sufficient to threaten the total loss of combat effectiveness, the commander may apply the concept of composite unit replacement. The composite unit concept involves a unit formed from other units reduced by combat action.

Mission Support Sites

A mission support site (MSS) is a temporary base used by units and personnel who are away from their base camp, during an extended mission. The MSS may provide food, shelter, medical support, ammunition, or demolitions. Often some weapons and/or equipment may not be required and therefore not carried on the mission. These may be left behind at a MSS, in a cache, or left at the company until needed for the next mission.

The use of an MSS eliminates unnecessary movement of supplies and allows a force to move more rapidly to and from objectives. When selecting an MSS, consideration is given to cover and concealment, proximity to the objective, proximity to supply routes, and the presence of enemy security forces in the area. Security dictates that DZs or landing zones (LZs) be a considerable distance from an MSS, cache, or base campâ although this may increase transportation problems.

Section II. Commandos

The SPF Command includes elite commando units. There are no commando units constituent to tactical level units at division and below in the AFS. Therefore, all commando assets employed at the tactical level will have been allocated from higher levels during task-organizing. This section addresses where those commando teams, squads, platoons, companies, battalions, and brigades come from, how they get to the tactical level, and how they are employed.

Most of what is addressed in this chapter applies to SPF and commando units alike. Like SPF units, commandos normally operate in enemy-controlled territory. In addition to proficiency in

various infantry-type tactics, these elite units receive training for more specialized commando missions.

Every commando mission is unique and unlike any other, and thus requires forces organized not in a standard fashion but rather adapted into a task organization based on the mission. All of these commando organizations provide the OPFOR a flexible, capable, and lethal means of achieving its military goals.

Command and Control

In the AFS, commando battalions are subordinate to the SPF Command. For administrative purposes, these battalions may be grouped under a commando brigade headquarters. However, commandos are employed as battalions, companies, platoons, and squads or as small teams, depending on the type of mission. The primary fighting element of the commandos is the company and platoon, more similar to regular infantry than SPF. Therefore, commandos are usually employed as battalions or companies depending on the mission, geographic area, and other conditions. In many cases, the commando companies and/or platoons are task-organized into teams. This is especially the case when operating in urban environments or other complex terrain.

Commando units can be allocated in a constituent or dedicated status to be task-organized as part of an OSC or of a tactical group based on a regular ground forces organization. Even in such cases, however, the reason for incorporating a commando unit into such an organization normally would be to perform specialized commando missions that contribute to the overall mission for which that task organization was created. In other cases, commando units may be allocated in a supporting relationship, while remaining under the command of their parent commando unit or the SPF Command. (See chapter 2 for a thorough discussion of the various command and support relationships.)

Missions

Commandos are elite units, specially trained for missions in enemy territory. When assigned such missions, the commando units may disperse into small teams. These small teams are harder to detect during infiltration and provide the ability to strike many targets simultaneously to achieve maximum effect. If necessary, once they infiltrate, they can re-form into platoon- to company-size units or into task organizations to perform attacks against subsequent targets.

Infantry

Sometimes, commandos may be called on to perform regular infantry missions. This may occur particularly in defensive situations, if the defensive mission is more important than reconnaissance or security. Commando units may fill gaps between the battle positions of dispersed regular forces. When performing such infantry-type missions, commandos typically fight as companies or battalions, using tactics similar to those of regular infantry or motorized infantry units.

Commando

Commando units generally conduct various types of reconnaissance and combat missions in the disruption zone or deep in enemy territory, during larger operations or tactical actions that are either offensive or defensive. The reconnaissance missions include actions such as surveillance, monitoring, and searches. Commando units are expected to conduct reconnaissance within the context of any combat mission. Conversely, when employed as reconnaissance elements, the commando units' activities are not limited to reconnaissance. They are also tasked with assaulting and destroying military or civilian targets.

Commandos provide the OPFOR with flexible, lethal forces capable of employment in a variety of roles. Typical missions that are assigned to the commandos include but are not limited to:

- Collecting information on deployment of enemy forces and reserve unit movement.
- Collecting information on logistics facilities and seaports.
- Collecting information on enemy aircraft operating from forward airfields.
- Conducting reconnaissance of terrain and enemy forces, in support of the offense.
- Locating and destroying enemy WMD.
- Conducting platoon-size or smaller raids and ambushes and destroy critical military or civilian targets in enemy territory.
- Conducting larger-scale (company- or battalion-size) raids and ambushes in the disruption zone or in enemy territory.
- Clearing LOCs for use by supported units during the offense or defense.
- Clearing or emplacing obstacles.
- Acting as an antilanding reserve.
- Conducting surprise attacks on enemy forces.
- Creating disturbances after infiltrating into enemy territory.
- Acting as a functional force or element as part of one in a combined arms tactical action (see Offense and Defense below).

Offense

Commandos are employed as infiltration units during the offense. Following land, air, or water infiltration, commandos are operating independently and may perform various reconnaissance and combat missions described above. However, they may also act in conjunction with regular ground forces. In the latter role, commandos can conduct the following missions to ensure the success of the overall offensive action.

Commandos can act as a disruption force or element, or as part of such a force or element. In addition to reconnaissance missions, they can be tasked with creating confusion in the disruption zone or in enemy territory by:

- Removing or emplacing obstacles.
- Raiding and destroying headquarters, LOCs, and tactical missile firing locations.
- Occupying key terrain features (in advance of regular ground forces).
- Occupying ambush positions on enemy withdrawal routes.

Commandos can act as a fixing force or element. In this role, they can set up ambushes or emplace obstacles to prevent further enemy forces from coming to the aid of the target of the regular forces' attack. They can occupy key terrain features that control choke points that hinder enemy reserve unit movements. Such choke points may be valleys, bridges, and crossroads that are critical for the enemy movement.

Commandos can act as part of an action force or element. In this role, they can conduct raids and surprise attacks against C2 sites, logistics elements, fire support units (to include attack helicopter units), and other high-priority civilian and military targets. They also conduct attacks against other objectives or seize terrain that hinders enemy reserve unit movements or hampers his withdrawal.

Commandos may attack a withdrawing enemy force from his flank and rear. Commando units can be air-inserted ahead of the withdrawing enemy force to establish ambush positions along the enemy's withdrawal route.

Defense

During a defensive action conducted by tactical group or detachment based on a regular ground force unit, commando units allocated to that task organization can support the action primarily in reconnaissance and security roles. Commando units can conduct reconnaissance in the

disruption zone or deep in enemy territory. They may also act as a security force in the support zone. When acting as a security force, commandos are normally employed as companies or battalions. The commando unit can be augmented with vehicles and/or additional forces (such as tank or mechanized units, fire support, or aviation) to act as an action force in limited-objective attacks against enemy airborne, air assault, or special operations forces units.

When regular maneuver forces are forced to withdraw from an area, commando units can remain deployed in the original disruption zone and battle zone to perform reconnaissance, raids, and ambushes. The stay-behind commandos attempt to maneuver in small teams to conduct reconnaissance and limited-objective attacks against enemy targets such as C2 sites, isolated combat units, LOCs, and logistics units.

Organization for Combat

Commando brigades and battalions, along with their subordinate companies, platoons, and squads exist in the AFS. However, they are not organized as uniformly as regular ground forces. Examples in figures 15-5 through 15-12 indicate the fact that there is actually no fixed structure by depicting some subordinates in dashed boxes, indicating optional structures. The size and composition of commando organizations at each level in the AFS can vary greatly, depending on the situation and the assets available. When actually employed, the units may be further task-organized to fit specific missions.

No commando assets are constituent to tactical level units at division and below in the AFS. All commando assets employed at the tactical level will have been allocated from higher levels. Therefore, it is necessary to understand where those commando platoons, companies, battalions, and brigades come from, how they get to the tactical level, and how they are employed to support the tactical fight.

Every mission performed by commandos is unique and unlike any other, and thus requires task organization based on the mission. All of these commando organizations provide the OPFOR a flexible and capable means of achieving its military goals.

Although some commando units are intended for use at the operation level, the TTP used by all commando units are similar and are actually performed at a tactical level. Regardless of the level from which they come or the level at which they are employed, all units at commando brigade level and lower have similar capabilities, equipment, manning, and TTP.

Commando units from the SPF Command can be allocated in a constituent or dedicated status to be task-organized as part of a tactical group. In other cases, commando units may be allocated in a supporting relationship, while remaining under the command of their parent organization.

Commando Brigades and Battalions

As with SPF units, commandos generally reach the tactical battlefield via the OSC. The OSC commander may employ the commando assets allocated to him as constituent or dedicated as part of the overall tactical battle scheme. Commando units, especially at the tactical level, are task-organized to provide the best possible chance of mission success.

The malleable structure of commando units from squad to brigade provides the ability to continually adapt and to allow continuous improvisation. Units will be added, deleted, or modified, as the mission and conditions dictate. For additional information on commando organizations at operational and strategic level, see FM 7-100.1 and FM 7-100.4. See chapter 2 for specifics on task organizations.

Commando Brigade

Figure 15-5 shows a typical example of a commando brigade in the AFS. A commando brigade will generally need to be task-organized to meet specific mission requirements and conditions, in which case it becomes a commando BTG. Its AFS organization is limited to those units required to perform most missions. The brigade is structured in a manner that easily accepts appropriate task-organizing to meet specific or unique mission requirements. Had the mission or the environment dictated, the organizational example in figure 15-5 could easily have included an engineer battalion (for civil affairs), an artillery and/or MRL battalion or battery, an SPF battalion or company, affiliated irregular forces, or even a helicopter company. The structure of each commando brigade is situational, adapted to the specific conditions.

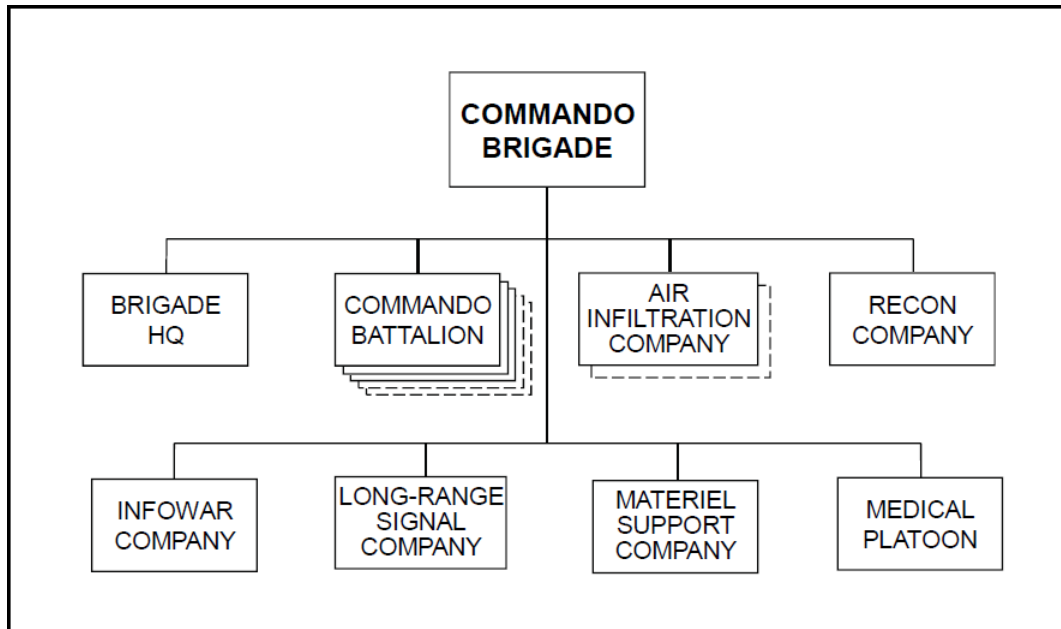


Figure 15-5. Commando brigade (example)

Air Infiltration Company

Assets of the commando air infiltration company either infiltrate by air and/or assist other units in air infiltration and in conducting other air operations. It is responsible for all insertion, supply, and other air operations planning and coordination for the commando brigade. The company also performs tests, diagnostic checks, repairs, and maintenance on all parachutes, ultralight aircraft, support systems, and related equipment. All members of this company are qualified riggers. See figure 15-6 for organization.

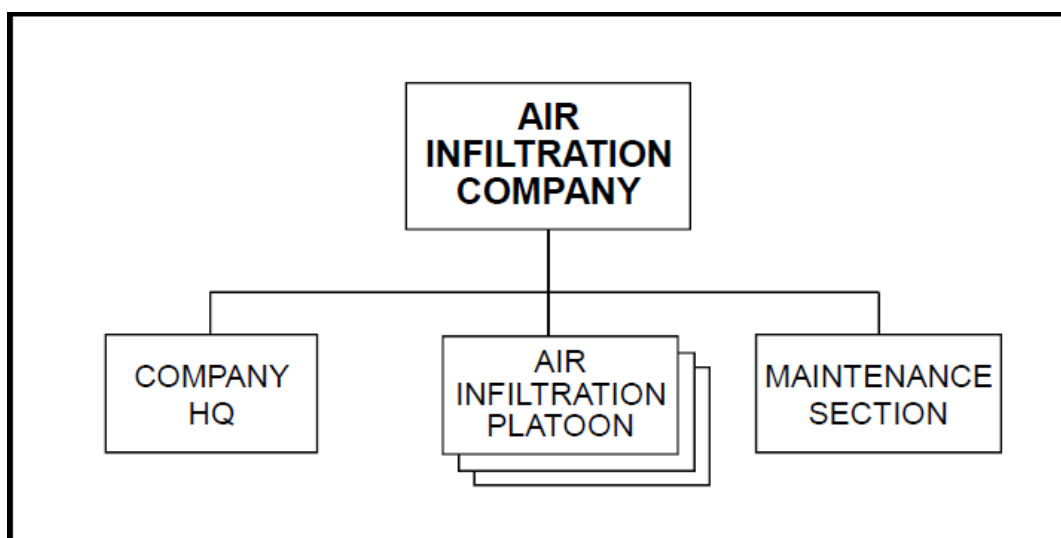


Figure 15-6. Air infiltration company (example)

The capabilities and techniques of the commando air infiltration company are very similar to those of the SPF counterpart air infiltration team, except that this is a much larger organization. The ultralight aircraft may, or may not, be equipped with light and general-purpose machineguns, AGLs, ATDLs, or other weapons systems. They may also be fitted with radios, cameras, sensor sets, or laser target designators. The ultralights are dismantled for trailer transport, two aircraft per trailer. All members of the air infiltration company are qualified to operate the ultralight aircraft (single- or two-seaters) or to serve as gunners/equipment operators.

Note. Armed ultralight aircraft can also be used in attack, reconnaissance, or multimission roles, not just in infiltration. The company also has powered parachutes available. These are extremely effective for surreptitious infiltration and exfiltration. Once successfully infiltrated, the team hides the parachutes in a cache. Upon successful completion of the mission, the parachutes are retrieved and the company exfiltrates to a more secure location, possibly for further transport out of the area. For additional information on the commando air infiltration company, see FM 7-100.4.

Reconnaissance Company and INFOWAR Company

Two other units peculiar to a commando brigade are the reconnaissance company and the INFOWAR company (see figures 15-7 and 15-8). Other brigade subordinates are organized and function similar to their counterparts in regular ground forces organizations.

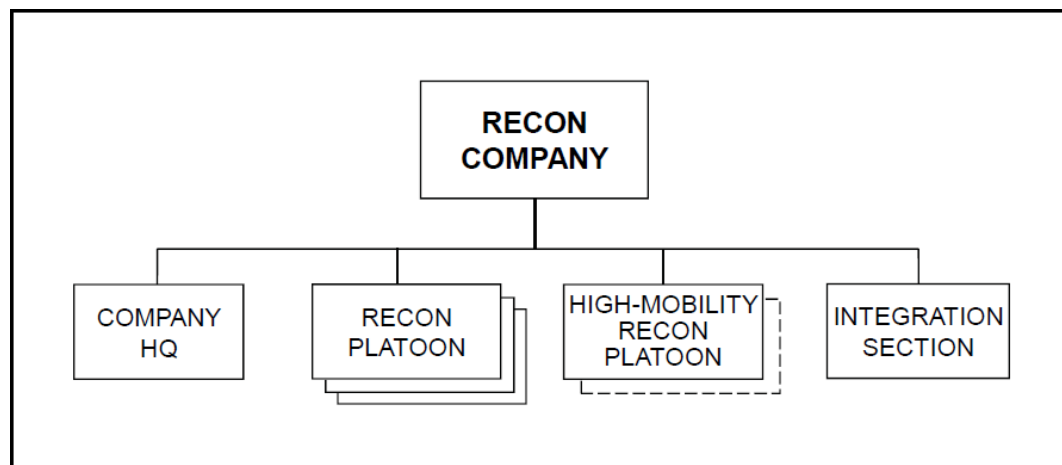


Figure 15-7. Reconnaissance company (example)

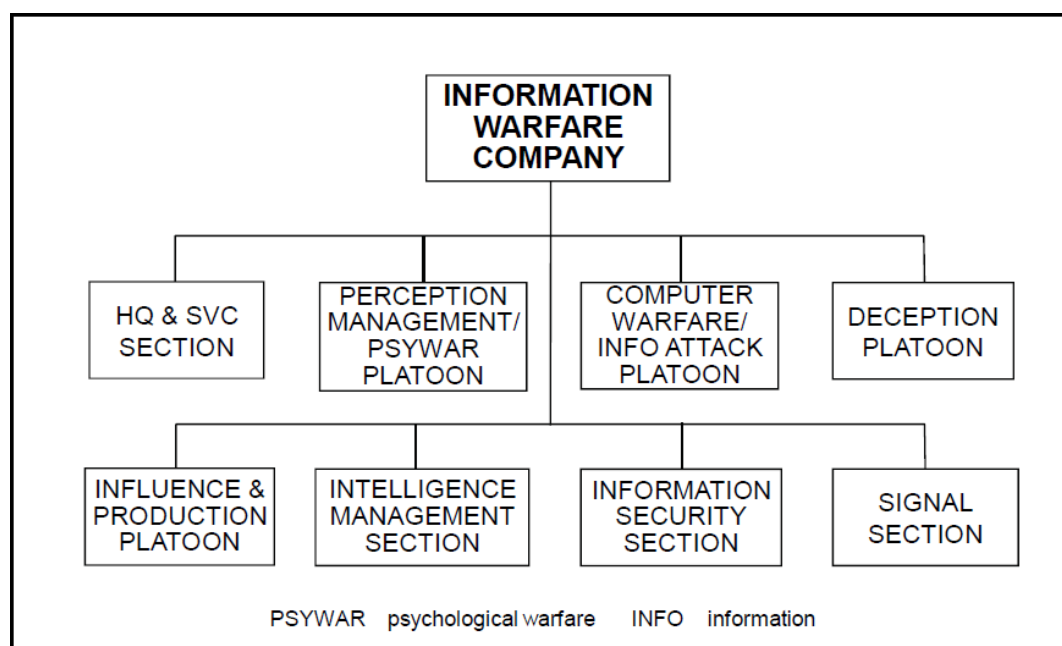


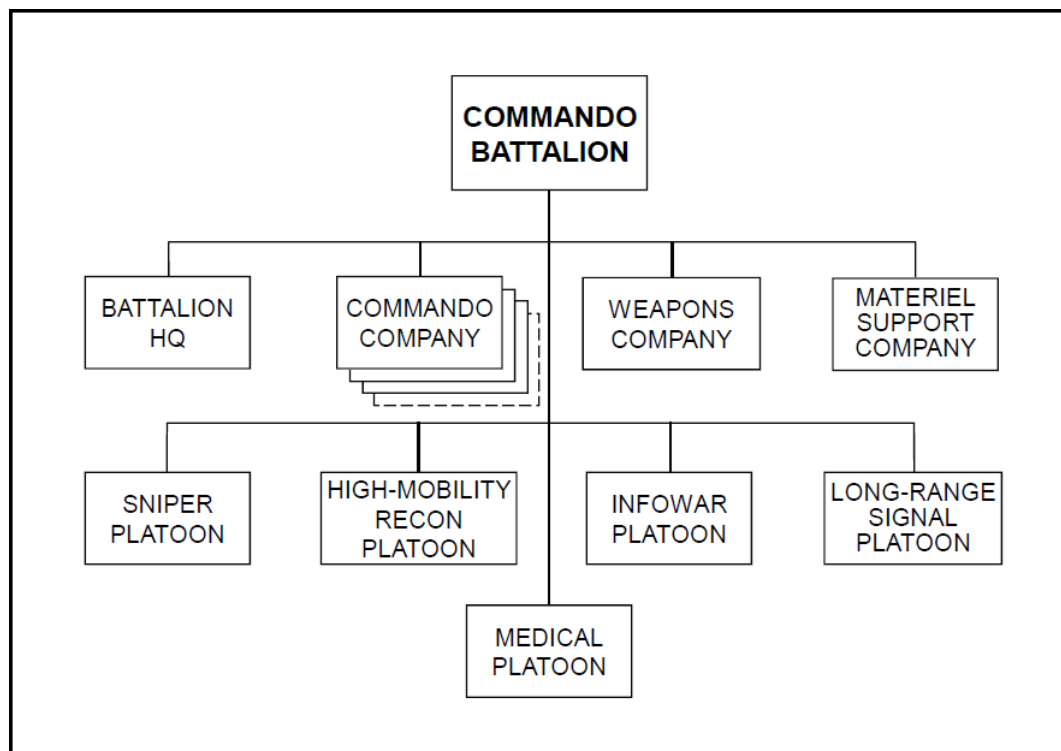
Figure 15-8. INFOWAR company (example)

The high-mobility reconnaissance platoon(s) in the reconnaissance company of a commando brigade would likely be very similar to the one found in a commando battalion. (See figure 15-13.)

Commando Battalion

The commando battalion and its subordinates contain organic transportation assets sufficient for it to move several hundred kilometers and sustain itself for as long as 7 days without resupply. Quite often, however, the battalion or its companies are required to quickly deploy as specialized light infantry units. In these events, all of the organic transport may be left in garrison, and support is provided by either higher commando organizations or outside assistance. Without organic transportation, the battalion can only be expected to sustain itself for 3 days without resupply, caches, or external support.

See figure 15-9 for the structure of an example commando battalion. See figures 15-10 through 15-13 for the composition of the commando company, weapons company, INFOWAR platoon, and high-mobility reconnaissance platoon subordinate to the commando battalion. Other subordinates are organized and function similar to their counterparts in regular ground forces organizations.



A commando company typically consists of a company headquarters, three commando platoons, and a weapons platoon. (See figure 15-10.) In the AFS, the commando platoons typically have a headquarters and weapons squad, and three commando squads. In organization for combat, however, these squads may form into task-organized teams of various sizes. These teams may resemble the HK teams formed by regular infantry or perhaps some of the types of teams found in SPF organizations.

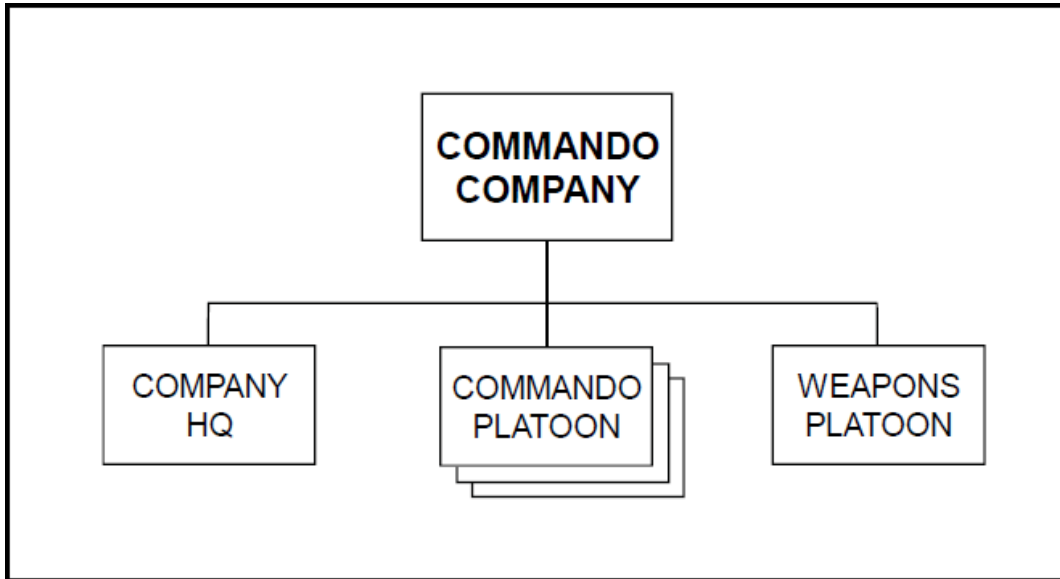


Figure 15-10. Commando company (example)

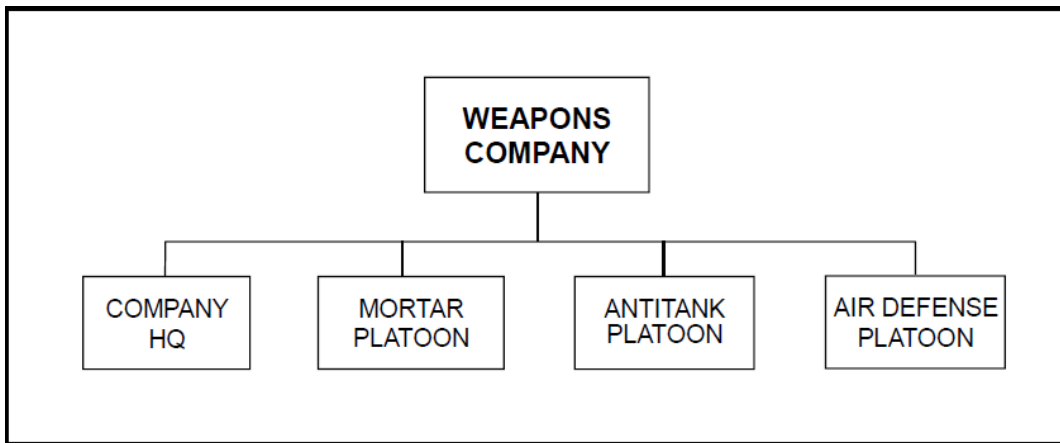


Figure 15-11. Weapons company (example)

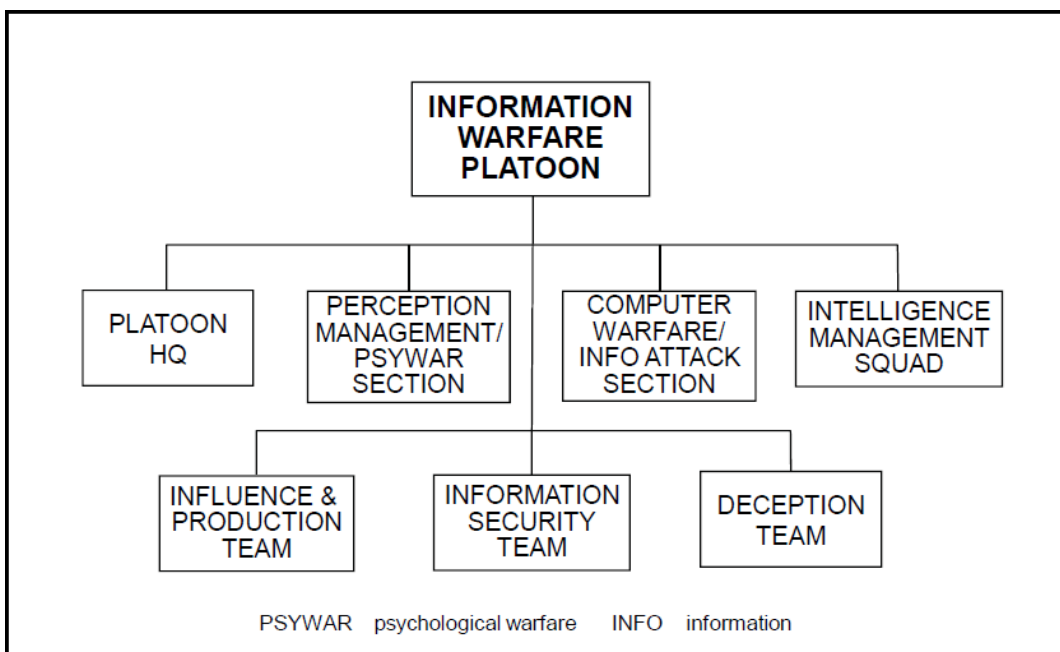


Figure 15-12. INFOWAR platoon (example)

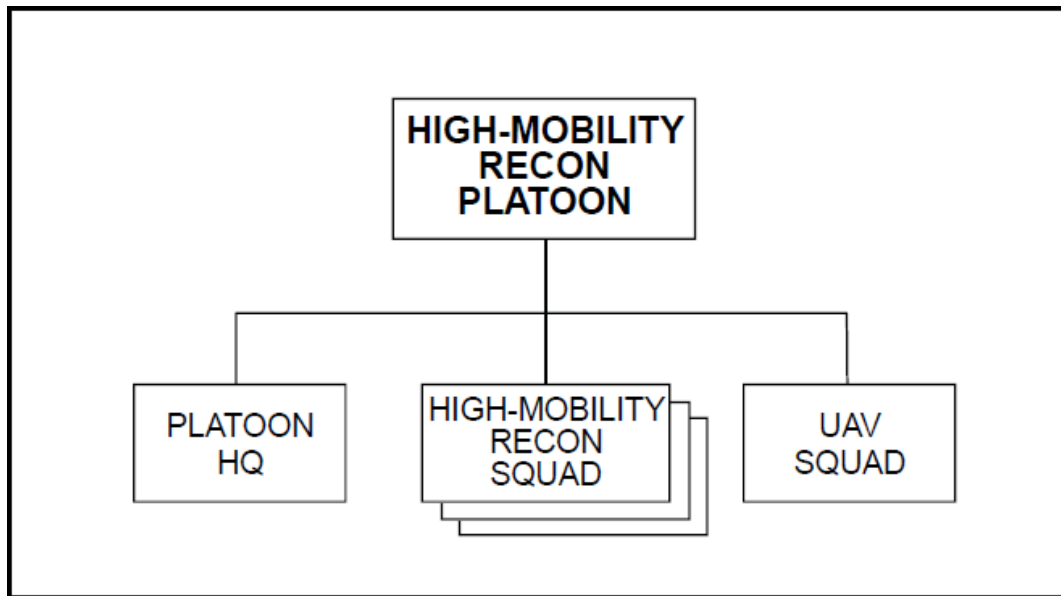


Figure 15-13. High-mobility reconnaissance platoon, commando battalion (example)

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

Regardless of the level from which commando units come or the level at which they are employed, the TTP used by all commando units are similar and are actually performed at a tactical level. Their TTP, like their organization structures, are adaptive, dynamic, and malleable.

Infiltration

Commandos infiltrate during the offense and defense. Although commandos prefer to conduct infiltration at night or under the cover of reduced visibility, they will infiltrate whenever and wherever they are least expected. The method they use will depend on the mission, situation, condition, terrain, time available, distance and ease of infiltration, available transportation means, geography, or many other factors.

Land

Although commando units may have vehicles and are capable of infiltrating using the vehicles, the most common method of infiltration by far, is by foot. The infiltrating units are dispersed to one or more areas, depending on the size of the infiltrating force. Infiltration is accomplished as a unit or as small teams, using different routes. After careful consideration, routes are selected in

- Difficult or complex terrain the enemy may consider impassable.
- Areas having sufficient camouflage to cover movement.
- Areas where streams or mountains form natural corridors.
- Areas where the enemy is not using night observation or surveillance equipment.
- Gaps between enemy units.

A very successful infiltration method used by the commandos is to infiltrate under the guise of reconnaissance probes. Small units, from a team of 3 to 4 men to a squad, or a platoon, or even a company of over 100 men, conduct small probes along the enemy defensive positions. If the enemy does not respond to these probes, the commandos infiltrate in small numbers and spread out. This permits larger numbers to penetrate. Once behind enemy lines, one team may cut off the escape route of the enemy, while the other teams conduct a coordinated assault on both the front and flanks. The attacks will continue on all sides until the defenders are destroyed or forced to withdraw. The commandos will then move stealthily forward to the open flank of the next enemy position, and repeat the tactics.

The OPFOR also conducts another very successful variation of this infiltration. In this variant, the commandos do not immediately attack as soon as they are successfully behind enemy lines. Once behind the enemy, the commandos may wait a few hours or up to 3 days or more and may number as much as a full company or even a battalion, depending on the circumstances. Once emplaced either behind the enemy or more likely behind and on both flanks of the enemy, the infiltrated force then awaits for the main OPFOR attack. If the main OPFOR attack is successful, the enemy will either retreat or fall back. At that time, the infiltrated commandos will ambush and destroy the remaining enemy forces. If the OPFOR main attack is faltering or appears as if it may fail, the infiltrated commandos simultaneously attack from both the rear and flanks, ensuring victory.

Air

When time is limited and air transport is available, commandos may be airdropped or air-landed from helicopters or fixed-wing transport aircraft for deeper penetration. The enemy situation and terrain features in the area selected as the DZ or LZ are carefully studied before airborne or heliborne infiltration. DZs are generally mountainous valleys, hills, and clear areas in or adjacent to a forest.

Water

Commando units may use naval vessels (to include mini-submarine and semi-submersible insertion craft) for seaborne infiltration. The landing sites are selected in coastal areas far from any hostile naval bases, fishing villages, and coastal defense units. The landing time is determined by consideringâ

- The time required to arrive at the landing site.
- Maritime and coastal security measures employed by the enemy forces.
- Tidal conditions.
- Hours of moonrise and moonset.
- Weather conditions.

Commandos can also infiltrate using watercraft on inland waterways.

Swarming and Stay-Behind

Commando units can use the same types of swarming and stay-behind TTP as SPF. (See section I of this chapter.)

Personnel

Commando organizations are elite units, specially trained for missions in the disruption zone or in enemy territory. Normally, personnel selected for commando units come from soldiers who have already served 3 to 7 years in other combat arms. In addition to proficiency in various infantry-type tactics, they receive training for more specialized commando missions, with emphasis on infiltrating and fighting in complex terrain and at night.