

General Advanced Camp Tips

General Information

1. As I'm sure that you are aware by now, 90% of the material that you are presented with this year is tactical in nature. Do not be deceived, at Advance Camp probably only 15% of the things that you do on a day-to-day basis will be tactically oriented. **THE REMAINING 85% OF YOUR TIME WILL INVOLVE GARRISON LIFE.**

2. I do not mean to downplay the importance of tactics ~ a solid working knowledge is essential. However, I saw many individuals, last year, who were very squared away on tactics and horrible on garrison. On the whole, they did not come away from Camp with good scores. Your life will be an endless blur of formations, platoon and squad meetings, and drill and ceremony. This is NOT an exaggeration.

3. Due to the nature of our life as "part-time" cadets, your drill and ceremony and garrison experience will be marginal, at best, when you arrive at Camp. Remember, you will be competing with cadets from military schools that live and breathe garrison life (The Citadel, VMI, Georgia Military College, etc.) Consequently, all the experience that you can get in these areas is vital! Do independent research in FM 22-5 and get your questions answered soon! (Mini Camp plays an essential part in garrison practice for us at the Panther Battalion.)

4. Also, contrary to what your intuition might tell you, marching cadences are extremely important! All throughout camp, particularly during the first couple days, you will be constantly marching in company formations ~ to your physical exam, pictures, briefings, etc. This is a very valuable time to make a good impression on your tacs and to build a solid reputation in the platoon and company as a leader, someone with initiative! If, when volunteers are asked for, you can jump out in front of the company and belt out some high speed cadences (for miles on end, believe me), you are going to look and feel really good. Also, it is imperative that when you sing them, you use a full, confident command voice. There are few things more annoying than listening to someone lead cadences in a weak and unassured manner.

5. Running cadences are not important at all. The only time that you will run in formation will be during one or two early morning PT sessions and the Camp-wide run, mid-way through. But, you will march for many, many miles. A good idea is to jot down your cadences in a 3X5 inch notebook so you can whip it out while marching, if need be. Also, practice singing them to yourself (not out loud, obviously) while walking around campus, you will get surprisingly good between now and

Camp. But you have to practice them.

6. Concerning PT. As you know, this APFT will be the single most important one IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE. It will constitute 20% of your final score, and your score is the major factor in your branch and component assignment, hence your career. In addition, being in excellent physical condition will carry you all the way through Camp. When Camp is over, you will be really out of shape from not having done PT for six weeks. You will desperately need the stamina and strength that this program will provide if you want to do great things during All-American Challenge and earn your 5. Enough said.

7. Get into a habit of arriving early and staying late. You'll never miss important things and you'll always have a little extra time to prepare.

8. WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN. You'll never know when something that seemed insignificant comes back to haunt you. It also helps you remember ideas.

9. NEVER BE A SPOT LIGHT RANGER/CADET. IF YOU'RE A SNUFFY, BE A HELPFUL MOTIVATED SNUFFY. NEVER EVER SHARPSHOOT ANYONE.

10. Keep in mind that your career is on the line. Don't screw around too much, but know when to enjoy yourself. I had the BEST time at Lewis. It was GREAT.

Things You Will Need to Totally Rock Advance Camp (and why)

Note: This list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, it contains only those extra items which I found to be very useful, not absolutely necessary. You will receive a mandatory packing list from your Region prior to Advance Camp.

Note 2: These are all things that you can buy. There is also a list of things you can 'make' that will help you, too...

Note 3: Please note that I have included what I consider to be a "5's packing list" for those things which you will need to bring, but about which no one else will tell you.

1. Whistle. The best that I have found is called the Fox 40, it is sold through U.S. Cavalry for about \$5.00. It's ear splitting. Vital for

tactical signals.

2. Non-water soluble camo paint. Comes in three tubes (green, brown, and black). Works great and comes off easily. Stays on in the rain. Take extra camo sticks and be prepared to share with your squad - everyone will want some to look high speed and no one will have any, but you.

3. 2 heavy-duty key-operated pad locks. Arrive with them. You will not have a chance to purchase any. For wall and foot locker.

4. 2 big rolls of black cloth tape. Works much better than electrical tape. Can be bought at most art supply stores. Looks like black duct tape. Vital for tactics phase of Camp, taping equipment snaps, and minor repairs. Again be prepared to share ~ you'll probably be the only person with any in the squad.

5. Big Safety Pins (10). These are important for wear of leadership brassards on your uniform sleeve and minor repairs. Every one always needs one, so will you. Easily kept pinned inside the "Fudd flaps" of your BDU cap.

6. 1 spool O.D. thread, 1 spool Black thread, 3 needles. You will negotiate many obstacle courses. Most have razor wire. Your BDUs will get ripped.

7. Binoculars. The smaller, the better. 7X35 are perfect. Invaluable during all tactical phases for leader's recons and recon missions. I used mine all the time and my squad really appreciated them.

8. Hangers (15). Everyone forgets these. Be prepared to share.

9. Liquid-filled wrist compass. Jeff and I both used these at Camp. You can get one at any Outdoor-type store for about \$7.00. It worked really well, especially if you want to become the resident land Nav expert. If you are walking point or compass, it's very easy to stay on azimuth, keep moving, and keep good control of your weapon, all at the same time. With your regular compass, you usually have to stop and do the old cheek-hold method. Also, it is remarkably stable. A buddy of mine and I ran the Land Nav course at Camp with one.

10. Your own field gear. The rucksack that you will be issued at camp is ridiculously small. You will barely be able to fit 3 MREs and 1 uniform in it, much less anything else. Also, the pistol belt issued is a worn out clasp-fit variety from the Viet Nam war. Try to negotiate with Jerry to bring at least your own LARGE rucksack and LBE. Leave the rucksack frame at home, you can use the one they issue at camp with your

own rucksack. Also, try to bring an extra pistol belt for wear at formations. This way, you can tape up your LBE and leave it that way, nice and comfortable, and won't have to disassemble it to get to your pistol belt. Remember, time is your most precious asset ~ save it anywhere you can.

11. Poncho liner and an extra sheet. The poncho liner is a little expensive. You can probably get one for \$25.00 at a surplus store. Any old sheet is OK. You will not be bringing, nor will you be issued a sleeping bag at Camp. So, unless you want to sleep on your poncho in the field ~ get these two things! You will really appreciate them when you are in the field during a torrential downpour and everyone else is shivering in their shelter halves. Also, the sheet is great, not only for the field, but in the barracks. Make your bunk at night, place the sheet over your made bunk, and hit the rack. Then you don't have to sleep on itchy wool all night or remake your bunk in the morning, simply tighten it up! More time saving.

12. Battery operated travel alarm clock. You will always be tired. You should always want to be the first one awake in the morning, so you can square your gear away and help your buddies out (this is the mentality that you must start developing). Also, valuable in the field. Bring extra batteries.

13. Iron, small ironing board, spray starch. With a little practice you can press a full uniform in 10 minutes. Very few cadets take the time to do this at night, every night. Those who do definitely get noticed. Everyone polishes their boots; go the extra mile, it really pays dividends.

14. Baby wipes. Removes camo after three days in the field, quickly!

15. Pond's cold cream will take off camo in seconds. Works better than baby oil, shampoo, or soap. THE BEST camo peeler in the world, IMHO.

16. Shower shoes ("flip-flops"). You do not want to step on those shower floors, believe me.

17. Weapon Cleaning Kit. Easy to make. Place a packet of 1000 Q-tips in a bag. Get a dental scraping tool at a drug store (\$1.50) and a soft rag and place them in the bag, too. There you have it. The Q-tips are really valuable - you will fire your weapon almost every day during the last two weeks. The dental tool works better than anything else that I have found on the star chamber.

18. Markers. 2 big black permanent ones, and a few thick colors. Great

for writing daily schedules on the platoon butcher board. Also, for any hip-pocket projects.

19. Get yourself some 550 cord (parachute riser cords). This stuff will save your life out in the field.

20. Buy, beg, steal a pair of field suspenders. I actually sowed a loop on my bdu pants to hook them in. But you can use the belt loop. The reason is that you'll carry a lot of crap in your pants and belts won't cut it. During our first break, 90% of my platoon members RAN over to the mil clothing sales and bought one.

21. Get a nice lil map case. Waterproof type.

22. Take some laminated range cards. Will shave 10min in the field.

23. Make sure you have a small knife. A Gerber LST will do fine. DO NOT TAKE a rambo survival knife to Ft LEwis. You'll look like a dick! IF at a possible, take a secondary knife. My Gerber was in my Ammo pouch. Make sure it's dummy corded. I highly recommend the Leatherman's knife. It has a pair of pliers, file, knives etc in a very compact design. WONDERFULL stuff.

24. Take a Mosquito Head net. Great cammo and you won't survive in the woods w/o one.

25. If you wear glasses, head over to the nearest mil clothing sales store and buy yourself a "ranger" goggle. It's made of black plastic/rubber frame. Practially indestructable. If you can't find one, invest in a prescription sports goggles. My brother tells me that it save his life out in the field.

26. Take your own TA-50. That way, you can lock up the TA-50 that you get from CIF. It's a bitch to clear CIF.

27. Take some waterproof paper. Make sure that you have some lighters too. Also, TAKE A SHITLOAD of ziploc (all sizes) bags. It will save your ass when it's damp or when it rains.

28. Take a ranger handbook with you at all times. And DON'T be afraid to use it. They made it small so that you can use it out in the field!

29. Take some sandtable material. Those green army guys work GREAT. Take some yarns (diff color), precut squares/circles of paper that are laminated works good also. You can use your alcohol pens to right on them. If you're in a pinch, those COLORFUL coolaid powder will work

also (depending on the humidity level!).

30. Buy a set of alcohol pens and an alcohol eraser. You can use them to write on the plastic sheets or laminated stuff in your carrier (better name: Battle Book). Get alcohol ones because rain won't wash them off.

31. Bring lots of foot powder. You'll need it for all those long road marches. It'll help prevent your feet from rotting. (It's very painful...)

32. Bunjee (sp?) cords. You can setup a hooch in 30secs flat. Take some extras.

33. A smokeless candle. Great inside a shelter half. It'll warm it up, too.

34. A mini-mag light. Ditch those worthless gooseneck issue flash lights.

These last two are somewhat of a dispute... My MS IV's say it's just crap, others say they work great... make your own decision...

35. 1 pair of cheap walkie talkies. A guy in my squad had a pair and they were fantastic. You can get a perfect pair at Radio Shack for \$20.00. They are great for communication between male and female barracks in garrison. You'll never waste time with runners or fall into the common trap of "forgetting about the females." Also, they work beautifully during STRAC. You can communicate with the leader's recon and between the support and assault elements. They really helped us a lot. The platoon and squad will love you.

36. Fag Bag. If you do Camp correctly, you'll always have lots of stuff to carry. The tacs will usually let you carry an O.D. green map case or small bag. This is really important. Otherwise, be prepared to look stupid and have stuff spilling out of your cargo pockets.

From <http://edtech.tph.wku.edu/~milsci/ADVCMPTP.HTM>

This was written by a cadet fresh out of advanced camp. It has alot of key points that your MSIII Instructor harps on daily. We hope it helps you in your Advance camp prep.

In this, the second installment of the ongoing Advance Camp Prep series, I will offer a "grab bag" of ideas that worked and did not work at Advance Camp, for myself and the individuals in my platoon. Important Note: these are extras and will only help if your fundamentals (tactics, APFT, D&C, followership) are strong! It is my hope that you will save these packets and review them prior to both FTXs and Advance Camp. Also, if you hang on

to them, you can build on them for next year's MS IIIs when you become the Battalion trainers.

1. One of the most important keys to getting an E or O as a Sqd or Plt Ldr is using time effectively. It is your most precious resource. Almost every day, you will have some type of "down-time," whether it be on a bus for 20 minutes or during company training rotations. As a leader, use this time to give hip-pocket instruction on your current or next Camp training objective (Land Nav, BRM, etc.) Something that I wished I had done was to get about 10 pages of butcher paper (poster size) and write out some diagrams for hip pocket instruction, fold them up, and bring them to Camp with me. For example, let's say your next day at Camp is Hand Grenades, and you are a sqd ldr. If, at the platoon meeting before light's out, you can pull out a well-drawn sheet with diagrams of hand grenades that you have prepared and give a 5 minute class, you are going to look really good. Also, this preparation is easy! Sometime during the next couple of weeks, get the Camp schedule, get the FMs you will need, draw the poster, and write up a 3X5 card with the important information. You could make up 10 in an afternoon, cover all the important blocks at Camp, and have them available to whip out at the appropriate time this summer. Also, not only will you look totally squared away, you will be helping many cadets who go to Camp with very little preparation. Ideas for classes: Land Nav, BRM, NBC, Artillery, Camouflage, M-249 SAW, M60 machine gun, Air Assault Ops., Rappelling, Rope Bridges, and Commo. (Note: I received two O-rating spot reports at Camp for these types of classes).

2. Barracks maintenance is critical! Immediately when you arrive, the platoon leadership should divide the barracks into squad duties. This will not be enough (it never is). Take the initiative to write up a schedule (again on butcher paper) for fire guard duties and post it on the inside of the latrine door. Example, 2200-2300: sweep downstairs bay and wipe down tops of lockers. With approximately 7 fire guard hours per night, imagine how much work can get done! My platoon made this realization 3 weeks into Camp. You can start on day 1. Also, meals and maintenance are super difficult. Here's how we did it. In the morning, let's say your platoon is third in order of chow in the company. Send a runner to the chow hall so he can come back and tell the PL when the platoon before you has one squad left to eat. Then send three squads to eat. Leave one squad behind to clean. When your first platoon member is done eating, he comes back to your barracks and relieves one of the guys who is cleaning. The next guy does the same. And so on. This way you always have one full squad cleaning every morning, all morning! Then, do the same for dinner. It really works well. But it takes trust and coordination.

3. Set up a fire escape plan. (This might seem really cheesy, but it's important, works well, and if you're the first in your company to do it you'll look really good!) Again, with butcher paper, diagram and post prominently

a schematic of the platoon barracks and where every individual and squad exits in case of fire. Also, where they will meet and get accountability outside. Then when you are in a Plt leadership position, have a fire drill for the morning formation. Instead of simply falling out of the barracks, practice the fire plan. Inform everyone the night before and use a whistle. It shows initiative, sensitivity, and makes a lot of noise.

4. Every squad has a personality. Every squad has someone who becomes the backbone, who people come to for advice. Be it. One way to do this is to become the resident Land Nav expert. Get really good and get your questions answered now. Assume duties as the "permanent" compass man for your squad and platoon. This will be crucial at the end of camp during tactics. No one really wants to take responsibility for guiding the platoon. If you always volunteer for it, you will become a fixture in that job because you are reliable. It means always knowing where you are, carrying the map, advising the PL, and generally getting less sleep during field time. It's much easier to simply follow along. But, remember we are training to be leaders. So lead. The TACs will definitely notice. It worked for me.

5. Camp is also designed to place you in the clutch position. Expect it. If you are hit by a near ambush, you know what to do. Assault through violently. If your buddy becomes a casualty, go back and get him. Carry him if necessary, no matter how far. Don't be satisfied with half-done jobs. Perform to and exceed the standard. You will encounter these scenarios very soon and you will be evaluated on your performance. You know what to do ~ you must execute when the time comes. No other action (or in-action) will be acceptable.

6. If you want to immediately get on the Company TAC Officer's bad side, here's how. When you are chosen for CO, XO, or 1SG, give a nice long speech about who you are, what school you are from, how you are from the mighty 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th platoon, and why the Company is going to have an outstanding day of training! Periodically during the day, have unnecessary formations to recite the day's safety motto and be more than 0.005 seconds late to any training. Make sure that you don't know the exact number of people in the company at any time, who's on sick call, and who has decided to wander off. Freak out, run around yelling at people. Also, as the CO be extremely visible, loud, and prone to micromanagement. Believe me, you will see people who do these things. You'll also see the smoking skid marks on their head after the Company TAC Officer evaluates them.

7. Don't do stupid things. During the last 2 or 3 days of Camp, there are always people who get destroyed. They are so happy that the whole thing is almost over that they forget one important thing: it's not over. Don't disobey the guidance put out by your PLT chain of command or TAC Officer/NCO. Many cadets like to go off without telling their squad leaders

and use the phone when they are not authorized to do so. If you know that you are prone to these sorts of things, watch yourself very carefully the last couple of days. Stay focused.

8. True Story: (This is from Jesse T. Pearson, from the Panther Battalion) During All-American Challenge, the whole platoon was really beat. We had been running missions for three days straight. The last mission was a 3,000 M tactical movement with a platoon-sized raid patrol on an enemy bunker. Movement was really tough through thick vines and 0% illumination. It took four hours to reach the ORP. We were rushed. Everything was going OK, though; we set up support and assault and waited for the initiate signal. It never came. I was in the support element and both of our 60s jammed. We had to call the PL and ask her what she wanted to do. She started crying on the radio. The stress of 72 hours of combat missions had totally gotten to her and she couldn't take any more. She tried to pull herself together and lead the assault, but she fell apart and the PSG had to take over on the objective. The OPFOR was laughing at her at that point. All the while, the TACs were busy writing. I also found out (I won't say how) that she peered out dead last in the platoon. Lesson: As a leader, you must always maintain control and can not afford shows of excessive emotion! If you work as hard as you must to do well at Camp, you will reach a breaking point at some time. Camp is designed specifically for this purpose be ready for it! This is the true test of a leader and it will occur if you do your job correctly. Maintain control and continue the mission.

9.. Lastly, remember my warning. It's easy to get caught up with all these extras and not focus on the fundamentals. Without a rock solid basis in tactics, APFT, D&C, and followership, these ideas will not help you! Hammer down the basics first. Then work on the details.

How to Write Yellow Cards

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Results from the Actions

Keep the situation brief and to the point, i.e., I was the PSG for 12 July 19__.

The task is basically the job you are given to complete.

Example -- I had the responsibility of preparing for movement and insuring that the bivouac site was set up in an efficient manner.

What action did you take to complete the mission -- take 3/4 of the card for the actions and results

There are two methods for writing yellow cards: complete sentences or bullet comments. You should use complete sentences to do your

yellow cards unless your TAC officer says otherwise.

Use key words when describing the STAR. Examples -- the 16 leadership dimensions, coordinated, supervised, ensured, inspected, checked, etc.

Take notes while you are in a leadership position. This will help you to remember the things that you did well.

Never put down anything bad that you did on the card. Only put down the positive things.

For the strengths and weaknesses portion, use such dimensions as Initiative, Influence, Decisiveness, and Judgment as positives, and Sensitivity as a negative. Feel your TAC out for what s/he wants for this part. Some TAC's want two positives and two negatives, others want three positives and one negative.

Put down everything that you did well on the cards. The TAC's use these cards to help make their decisions at the end of camp. In addition, many times the TAC will not have seen your performance because they were busy doing something else and your yellow card

is

STX Tips

Tips for Conducting a STX Lane from an evaluators point of view.

ENSURE YOU ARE CLEARLY IN CHARGE FROM THE TIME YOU OCCUPY THE ASSEMBLY AREA UNTIL YOU HEAR THE EVALUATOR SAY "CHANGE OF MISSION".

STX LANES are 90 minutes long, 2 minutes to receive the mission, 23 minutes for TLP (troop leading procedures), 40 minutes to conduct the movement and actions on the OBJ, 10 minutes to consolidate and report, 10 minutes for the AAR, and 5 minutes for movement from AAR to the next lane.

1. The most important item that effects each cadet in the squad is the squads SOP. The squad that you are with at camp must be on the same sheet of music (ie., having only one SOP that is common to all in the squad) There are many different styles of SOPs and all will work. One style of a SOP that works very well, is the number system (numbering each position 1-? with duties and special teams.) This type of SOP also helps with a quick change of positions when the new squad leader and team leaders our ID'd. It also works well during the OPORD with tasking

subordinates (the squad leader will be able to ID quickly individual cadets with key tasks with little confusion).

2. Time starts right after you're asked if you have any questions. Ask smart questions, ensure you are focused on the mission. The first thing you should ask for is the PIR (priority intelligence requirement) for the mission. Then confirm all the map information (like your location), it may or may not be given to you. Then ask for equipment or items that may enhance your ability to accomplish the mission (ie., additional arms if it's an attack or binos and camera if it's a recon).

3. As soon as time starts ensure the time keeper started the watch. Immediately issue your warning order to the team leaders, be clear, concise and quick. At minimum give mission, time and place of OPORD, who's participating as noted in FM 7-8. The four paragraph warning order works the best (ie., situation [be brief], mission, general instructions [time line], and specific instruction). Take no more than two minutes to issue the warning order. Ref: Warning Orders FM7-8, Ranger Handbook, FM7-92 and many others make sure they are current (check the date).

4. Issue instructions to the map/terrain model setup on what you want (be clear, concise and quick). Then move off and put your order together. Ensure you supervise throughout the troop leading procedures. One technique is to have the team leaders come back to you when they complete their tasks you specified to them. Tell the cadet that's preparing the terrain model to let you know when it is complete. Then your supervision will happen automatically. Be aware of your time always. One technique that works well, is to have the time keeper call the time out every two minutes until 15 min, after which start calling time every minute. You must SP (start movement) before 23minutes. If you miss this time mark BAD things will happen (most likely you'll receive incoming artillery).

DEFINITION OF A FRAGO:

USE: FRAGOs are used to change specific missions or to provide timely changes to existing orders. BREVITY. Only those items that are changed from the original OPORD are included in the FRAGO. FORMAT. FRAGOs follow the standard 5-paragraph order. Items not required (already known) are deleted.

5. Issuing the OPORD, when you issue the warning order to the team leaders give them the time, place and uniform of the OPORD (ie., here at the sand table in 4 minutes have them seated Btm on the left and Atm on the right with pen and paper ready to receive the OPORD, which implies to those tm ldrs to move their tms in a minute early and have them ready). This will accomplish a number of things 1st. time is not wasted waiting for the squad to be seated and position themselves, 2nd shows that you are clearly in charge, 3rd has your subordinates ready waiting for you .

Start the OPORD by taking a roll call, ID'ing yourself, telling the squad to take good notes, and finally saying "hold all questions until the end". Orientate the squad to the terrain model (only focus on north, south, east, west, the terrain only and any hazards).

Brief the Situation: if no change from the warning order state no change (don't waste time on information that is already known). A STX OPORD is a FRAGO don't forget this.

Mission: (MUST BE STATED TWICE) ensure it is clear concise and covers the 5 W's (who, what, where, when, and why). When you give WHEN it's best to give an actual clock hard time (ie., NLT 1030 hrs. rather than NLT 50 minutes from now) this demonstrates good TC (technical competence).

Execution: Intent, when you give your intent keep it clear, concise, and focused.

Concept of the Operation: (tell a story) Step by step from the AA (assembly area) to the ORP (objective rally point) then to the OBJ (objective) and back to the ORP. An example of this follows: We will move out of the AA on an Az (azimuth) of 190deg for 50m in a team wedge sqd in column traveling formation here we will conduct a 5 min listening halt. After which, we will move on an azimuth of 190deg in a team wedge, squad in column, traveling overwatch formation (demonstrates good TC) for a distance of 250m where we will establish our ORP, during movement we will establish rally points (RP) every 100m. We have one LDA (linear danger area) which we will cross as per our SOP. We will halt the squad at the tentative ORP location then I will Look for a suitable ORP (remember: *cover and concealed, defensible, off of key terrain, and off the natural line of drift--sometimes you will only be able to find one or two of these characteristics on the STX lane, but be aware*). Then we will occupy the ORP by force. I will issue my 5 point contingency plan (GOTWA). Then I will go forward to pin point the OBJ to confirm the plan and establish surveillance(leaving a GOTWA). Then I will return to the ORP together the Assault and Support tms.

NOTE: EACH MISSION RECON, ATTACK OR MOVEMENT TO CONTACT WILL BE EXPLAINED DIFFERENTLY. (this is only an example)

Explain action on the OBJ how it will be conducted again play by play, step by step. At this point you can explain the PIR to be gathered. Then cover the withdraw off the OBJ (the three fire in the hole technique works well). Cover control of the withdraw (ie., everyone goes through the choke point where the Btm ldr will be positioned).

Tasks to subordinates: This when your sqd SOP will pay off, ID who's doing what.

Coordinating Instructions, cover the following: PIR, Safety (ensure it's realistic demonstrates good SN [sensitivity]), and engagement/dis-engagement criteria (actions if contact is made enroute).

Service Support: Remember it's a FRAGO if it has not change don't state it, only state those things that have changed [the equipment given to you by the evaluator when you asked questions while receiving the mission]).

*****DON'T BRIEF SOMETHING YOU DON'T HAVE, IT WILL HAUNT YOU!**

Command and Signal: Command, Your location during each step of the mission, Chain of Command (DON'T SAY BY BOOT SIZE OR GPA etc... be realistic [your being evaluated]).

Signal, Control measures (ie., time hack for initiating fires on the OBJ), Challenge and Password, Running password, Number combination, ect...

Once the order is complete: Ask for any questions ensure you address each question.

Conduct an back brief (while you are back briefing the team leaders have them stand up and inspect them while you ask them questions) Ask pointed question (ie., what is the mission, what is the azimuth, what is the distance, how often will RPs to be established?) Once complete direct the destruction of the terrain model. Move right into rehearsals.

6. Rehearsals: #1 actions on the objective from the ORP (the step by step method works well for rehearsals [ie., put squad into movement formation, take one step forward enforce movement, take another step hand arm signal for the OPR, another step establish ORP take a knee, and so on...]). #2 Actions on contact enroute, #3 Crossing LDA, (BEWARE: Don't conduct a talk through rehearsal ensure everyone is involved and actually performing the task, THE EVALUATOR IS WATCHING). Ensure you are aware of the time throughout the entire Mission. Finally conduct a final inspection. Call in your SP to higher (ie., higher this lower we are SP'ing at this time).

7. Movement: Ensure your compass is out and that you check the AZ, you will be looked at or asked by the evaluator. Follow your plan step by step. Confirm your pace count with both the primary and alt. pace cadets. Remember you are in CHARGE if it's broke fix it. Before you cross a LDA ensure you physically check it out, then confirm or deny that you will cross at that location. Remember the characteristics of an ORP. Once the OPR is established give a good 5-pnt cont. plan (GOTWA, G- where your going, O- others you are taking, T- time you will be gone, W-what to do if, A-

actions to be taken you and me). Ensure this GOTWA is realistic you may need it.)

8. Actions on the OBJ (FOR AN ATTACK): Ensure that the bunker/immediate area is clear before establishing security. Remember security first. Then call out for the special teams (EPW and Search, Aid and Litter if needed, and then the Demo team) Ensure you maintain security and adjust the perimeter to maintain 360 security. Time on the OBJ should be no longer than 2 min, but if you need more time take it. You don't want to be on the OBJ any longer than what is required together the PIR. Control the withdraw off the OBJ; there are many techniques that work, one that works well is the 3 fire in the hole method (once the Demo tm is called for the Btm ldr positions him/herself at the choke point, 1st fire in the hole assault team moves off the objective moving through the choke point to the ORP, 2nd fire in the hole the support team moves off the same way, 3rd fire in the hole the squad ldr and demo tm moves off the same way). The reason for the choke point is for accountability.

9. Sending the SALUTE Report: DO NOT WING IT! Prepare your SALUTE Report and send it once your back in the ORP. Along with the SALUTE you'll send an ACE or LACE Report. Once this is complete the evaluator will probably give CHANGE OF MISSION and move the squad to the AAR sand table.

Listen to the AAR it will help you for the follow on missions and the next day of STX.

STX at advanced camp is 3 days long. The first day is a training day. The second and third days are straight out missions (evaluated) Each lane may have a variable. Variables are things that will cause you to react to different situation, ie. change of mission from a recon to an attack, an ambush that turns into a meeting engagement, reacting to indirect fire, walking into an ambush, ect...

I hope this page helps you in preparing for STX at advanced camp and understanding how it is conducted. Lastly: this page explains a few techniques, understand they are only techniques. Ensure you understand FM 7-8 and the doctrine, there are many different techniques of accomplishing these same tasks.

This is not meant to be an all inclusive or absolute guide. However, it provides a decent timeline of what should be going on in your STRAC lane.

Receive the Mission

Appoint an RTO who's good with a map. Have him attend your OPORD. Get him to plot distance and direction to the target while you receive the situation. Ask

questions to the TAC regarding special equipment. Here are some good questions:

What is (are):

Grid of AA?
Distance/ Direction/Grid of target? (He/She may not give it!)
Callsign/freq of higher
Callsign/freq of Medevac (Only use if you know how!)
Callsign/freq of artillery support/FSO/FAC (Same as above!)
PIR requirements (Very important, especially for recon)
Strength and disposition of enemy forces (can't hurt to ask, at TAC of mine at camp told me the number)
Hit times? (Very Important! For all Tactics)
Adjacent units? (Fill in your situation paragraph.)

Can I have/use:

Artillery support?
Medevac?
Ghost security for rehearsals?(Generally standard, but ask anyway)
Binoculars?(Use them if you have them!)
Smoke?(Simulated or real - use when ambushed or sniped!)
Pyrotechnics?(Army simulators are cool!)

Once you have all your questions answered, your RTO should be able to confirm your distance and direction with the TAC.

The 18 Minute Drill

Here it is, in a loose outline - METT-T always!

0:00-2:00 Appoint A and B team leaders, if not already done. Issue WARNORD. Direct TL's to disseminate and have squad camo and redistribute ammo. Have your RTO set up sandtable. Brief on tentative layout/plan.

2:00-6:00 Plan OPORD. Rehearse briefly to self. Get a pointer stick. Take a second to collect yourself and remember to stay calm. You're under stress, and a messed up OPORD can kill your evaluation!

6:00-12:00 Issue OPORD, confidently and quickly. Read mission statement twice. Make eye contact with each TL and squad members to ensure understanding. Have Squad put down pens during Concept of the Operation - paragraph 3a of OPORD. In this phase, tell a story of how you're going to accomplish the mission. During coordinating instructions be sure to brief signals, any IAD's necessary, rally points, actions up to and through the objective, *including contingencies*. Remember - it's coordinating instructions! During Command and Signal be sure to brief *succession of command, location of key leaders, callsigns, freqs, and passwords*. Brief signals such as whistle blasts and

smoke use in coordinating instructions, although it doesn't hurt to repeat. I cannot stress this enough - **FOLLOW FM 7-8 TO THE LETTER!** Be sure to ask for questions and then briefback!

12:00-13:00 Have your TL's inspect their squads. Ensure squad drinks water. Clean and destroy sandtable.

13:00-17:00 Rehearse. Practice actions on objective first, and then practice IAD's. Use the shoulder to shoulder method. Here's a neat trick I saw at camp - during your rehearsal, when you're practicing the key point of the mission, kill yourself off. Then ask the TL what he would do. Major cheese points, and a common sense contingency. It's also a good way to ensure your squad understands the plan. Make sure everyone knows ALL the signals for lift, shift, withdrawal, etc.

17:00-18:00 Form up and Move out. Remember to call higher before moving out. Use hand and arm signals from the on.

Again, this is a generic outline, you may need to alter it. Like everything, use METT-T.

To the ORP!

You now have 37 minutes to complete your mission. 90% of the time you will be in traveling overwatch formation Move at a fast walk pace, not the Vietnam style snail's pace. You will need every second of time you can get, so get to the ORP fast. More time allows a better leader's recon and preparation of the objective. Besides, a slow moving target is easier to hit than a fast moving target. And if you're going to be hit by a sniper/Ambush, It'll likely happen regardless of how fast/slow you are moving. You may even catch the ambushing party unprepared or moving into position, as happened to my squad at camp. Practice crossing LDA's with your squad so you can blow through them without losing much time. If arty comes in, you know the drill. Do 50 meters at 12 o'clock, simulating an actual 300-500m movement out of the impact area. Moving 12 is as good as any direction, and you stay on azimuth. It's also a good opportunity to move fast on azimuth. If a sniper hits you and you can locate him, take him out. Otherwise pop smoke and bound back to your last RP. If ambushed close, assault through violently. If far ambushed, suppress with one team and flank with another. After all encounters call in SLAUTE/ACE. If your RTO is competent, he will already have the data ready when you rally. Feel free to let your RTO call in reports. (Good DL!) This frees you to check other things and get reorganized.

Upon Arrival at the ORP, set up 360 security immediately. Assemble your leader's recon team, and prepare to move.

On the Recon

Who to take on leader's recon is mainly personal preference. I generally take a TL, my RTO, and a member from the team of the TL staying behind. Do whatever works for you, as there is no doctrinal setup for the team. Leave a GOTWA with the TL at the ORP, and instruct him to disseminate it. Move out, and then separate into two groups of two and approach the suspected objective from two directions. Use a binocular to get good intel on the site. Try to find good terrain to assault from, and get a count of weapons and personnel. You can get a large amount of PIR on a leader's recon. Be sure to return to the ORP with at least 15 minutes left. Disseminate information to ALL members of the squad on what was seen, and then execute your plan. If your mission was a Recon, you can end it here if you have satisfied all PIR requirements. Just call higher with SALUTE and LACE. Otherwise move out and get your teams to IMT into their positions, and await the signal.

Assaulting the Objective

Don't get too close and force the OPFOR to shoot at you because of stupidity. Your M16 has an effective range longer than most lanes at camp. If ambushing, be a good distance from the road. As long as you can keep control and can get a good bead on the objective, there is no reason to get within 20 feet of it, which usually allows the OPFOR to shoot first.. You may even surprise the OPFOR. Once all the elements are in place, initiate with your signal. The most casualty producing weapon (LAW, SAW, claymore, etc.) should open, followed by the rest of the squad. At the appropriate time, conduct your actions on the objective - lift, shift, etc. Immediately set up security and bring your support team to close the perimeter. Be sure OPFOR weapons are moved away from their bodies. Call out special teams quickly. Get your RTO to record PIR and begin getting SALUTE/ACE together. Try to be off the objective in 2 minutes, using the plan briefed in your OPORD. Call in your reports at the rally point. You have just completed a STRAC lane.

Final Thoughts

This paper only scratches the surface of ROTC tactics, and is only meant to be a primer to get started. Tactics is something which requires practice, but is not all that hard to do well at. All the tips and tricks in the world are no good unless you can think on your feet and make quick decisions. Indecisiveness is the greatest sin at camp. Better to do something, even if it may not be the best solution, than do nothing. Keep calm and collected. Don't let one mistake ruin your whole lane. Use correct IMT. Know the OPORD backwards and forwards. Never let an instruction be given to you that is unclear. Read, know, and learn FM 7-8. Learn to use the radio, it will pay off and shine if you are the RTO for your buddies and able to call in Arty, Medevac, etc. Have a good notebook with cheat cards. Even the most seasoned cadets forget things under pressure. React aggressively to situations. Be motivated assaulting the objective. Just remember, this is your chance to stick it to the OPFOR. I remember the best comment made to my squad near the end of camp by a major was : "You looked like real soldiers

coming onto the objective. Best lane I've seen." Set a goal to be professional and motivated. Your whole squad can get an "O" if you cooperate.

Don't stress too much on tactics, like other evals, it is but one part of the whole.

Table STX Training

1. Training STX is a time consuming task. In order to rotate through one squad of cadets allowing each cadet to be squad leader once, it will take at least 11 hours of training to make cadets proficient. Using this method of training and evaluation in no way replaces the need for the collective task of moving through a STX lane as a squad leader or member of a fire team. This method does teach the leadership process and reinforces it in a direct and timely manner.

Table STX is a "TEWT". It's a one on one experience; the squad leader, his squad of dog tags (marked by position of a 9 cadet squad), the blank table (lane), the mission, a 5x8" card with a simple terrain sketch (the sand table), a pencil (power stick), the evaluator, the evaluation level (1,2), and the bag of tricks (OPFOR, incoming, bunkers, wire, roads, etc...). A cadet is forced to learn the process of leadership; they're by themselves with no other cadets to help (remind, jump start, or ask questions to help the evaluated cadet through the task). This is very effective and a cadet can be stressed as squad leader effectively.

2. The training value and use of time is maximized. In one hour's time a cadet can be challenged with two STX lanes as the squad leader. This way when the cadets do perform actual STX lanes they'll be refining the skill of managing the squad and conducting movement. This also is evaluated using the STX lane evaluation giving the cadet a tactical leadership floor for the on-campus LAP.

3. How to conduct table STX. There are so many different situations, missions, and variables that can be introduced. Try to keep them realistic and winnable for the cadet or the training effect will be lost. Use your imagination.

Following is how to conduct table STX with a few techniques:

Two minutes to receive mission and ask questions. The evaluator gives all the setup information (i.e., AZ and Dist to the obj.), briefs the terrain, issues the situation and mission, then asks for questions. If the cadet is not mission focused or stalls in asking questions then the time begins.

23minutes to conduct TLP must cross LD NLT 23minutes, but is not to cross any earlier than 22minutes. This is so the cadet learns to use time effectively.

The WO and OPORD are given directly to the dog tags (which represent 8 subordinates in the squad).

If the squad leader delegates tasks to the Tm Ldrs, then they are implied as being completed. If time keeping is designated, then the evaluator keeps the time and calls it out as specified. This is so the cadet will stay on his/her time line.

The cadet actually asks for questions from the squad and conducts brief backs with the squad, the evaluator replies with the questions and answers as it applies.

Eight minutes to conduct the mission after crossing the LD. Have the cadet turn their back away from the board (so they cannot see the board while the board is modified by the evaluator) between each segment of movement (i.e., how far have you gone, correcting movement formation, showing different obstacles, x-ing danger area, reacting to indirect fire, seeing OBJ only during the recon, reacting to the variables),. The cadet sees nothing but a bare table until that step of the lane is reached. Once the action has been accomplished then it disappears.

Once the cadet turns back around only give the cadet a second to assess the situation. If he/she fails to react to the given situation, it develops against them. This is where the stress comes into play.

Note: If the situation is reacting to indirect fire and they run forward to a security halt, with the cadets back turned take one dog tag and this enforces the task of keeping accountability. See if they identify they're missing a dog tag and who? How do they go about locating their missing cadet (dog tag)?

STX is a timed event. Time schedule must be followed. Two minutes to give AAR. The evaluator starts right at receiving the mission. After completion of the table STX lane the cadet fills out a yellow card and is counseled prior to being released. STX is a leadership assessment in a tactical situation. The reference is FM 7-8. The tool is the patrol and leadership is evaluated. Total time for table STX is 45 minutes.

NOTE: The evaluators (cadre and MSIVs) must understand table STX, it must be thought through and rehearsed with the evaluators prior to executing it with the MSIVs. Many tables (STX lanes) can be setup at the same time, so that more cadets can be trained during the lab or class.

We have trained our cadets on table STX for the last four years. It has proven to be very effective in teaching the STX process and reinforcing tactics.