

# **MCPP PRACTICAL EXERCISE (PE) RECONNAISSANCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND COUNTER-RECONNAISSANCE (RS&C)**

## **Special Situation**

It is now 1200 on 15 October. After reviewing the mission analysis brief and the regimental operations order, the battalion commander has assembled the S-2 and the S-3 and is now going to issue guidance for the development of the RS&C plan. Planning an attack is a dynamic process that involves parallel and concurrent planning between staffs and even within staffs. Normally this guidance is issued in several iterations and is refined as additional information comes to light and as the battalion's courses of action (COAs) begin to develop. For clarity, in this PE the battalion commander waited until the mission analysis brief was conducted and yielded an approved mission statement and CCIR list. For this PE you are acting as the Battalion S-2 and S-3 for 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Rein), 6<sup>th</sup> Marines.

## **Initial Planning Guidance (for the RS&C plan)**

“Sit down, gentlemen. I will gather the rest of the staff later to issue commander's planning guidance, but in the interest of saving time I need to issue you some guidance to get you moving on our RS&C plan to support this operation. We have an important mission here. **We are not the main effort**, but the Regiment's and perhaps the Division's success depends on us being able to seize Hopewell Gap and prevent the 342d Mtzd Inf Bde from counter-attacking via Hopewell Gap. I'm satisfied with our mission analysis. It's thorough, we have a solid mission statement, and we have done a good job on the IPB products as well, but remember—the MCOO and enemy SitTemp are only assumptions. We can plan on them for now, but we need to get some eyes on to validate those products. As you know, there are an infinite number of things we want to know about the enemy, but we have finite collection assets. This is exacerbated by the fact we are a supporting effort. I've talked to the Regimental CO and he fully understands our need for collection assets and has agreed to allot us one of his reconnaissance teams and a one-hour UAV mission. Regiment will plan and execute these for us, but we will provide the reconnaissance objectives. More on this later. That said, when it comes to getting access to additional collection assets, we won't tell ourselves 'no.' Deuce, you know what my CCIRs and PIRs are. While you are developing the intelligence collection worksheet, go ahead and determine what other MAGTF assets could collect on these and send up requests for information (RFI) to support our planning. Both the 37<sup>th</sup> Independent Tank Battalion and the Brigade Artillery Group fall within our area of interest and can certainly influence our attack, but believe me—the regimental commander is focused on both of those and has that for action. We need to remain focused on the task at hand, which is getting the information we need to plan and execute the seizure of Hopewell Gap. Let me provide a bit of amplification on my information requirements.

**CCIRs:** We will not be successful unless we confirm our MCOO and SitTemp. We need to nail down the enemy's location, composition, disposition, and orientation. I need to know how he plans on succeeding in his mission, which is to defend Hopewell Gap. Once we get a read on his scheme of maneuver, we can devise a detailed plan that attacks his CV from a position of advantage. Be clear in tasking our reconnaissance assets and give them concrete indicators to look for and a solid execution timeline. “Find the bad guys” just will not cut it.

I also need to determine whether or not that CSOP is where you templated it, as well as its combat capabilities and what the enemy commander plans to do with it. Will he withdraw it on contact? Does he have enough mobility assets to withdraw? Is he robust enough in combat power and field fortification to continue the fight as a bypassed unit?

I have to know if the enemy reinforces Hopewell Gap. I'm not just talking about the 37<sup>th</sup> Independent Tank Battalion. I know the Regiment is looking hard at them and we will know when they move. I'm talking about any reinforcements that could tip the relative combat power in his favor. Even an additional motorized infantry platoon with a weapons squad could be an unwelcome surprise. I want to have that information come to me real time from the time our reconnaissance is inserted until we have consolidated on the objective.

**PIRs:** Enemy obstacles. As I stated in my CBAE, even though we were not given a specified task to clear Route 601 for the passage of another unit, we will need to eventually make it trafficable for our own use to pass forward our heavier weapons, re-supply, and evacuate casualties. I do not envision a tactical breach here, but we will need to know what our engineers are up against. With all the rain lately, I want to ensure that the streams are fordable to foot traffic and where.

**FFIRs:** S-3, get with the AO and find out what our weather minimums will be for rotary-wing and fixed-wing CAS. We need to find out if the forecasted weather will interfere with our CAS and, if so, when. I know we only have priority of fire for rotary-wing, but plan as if it will all be available.

**EEFIs:** This is not for the intelligence collection plan, but it falls under our counter-reconnaissance plan. We need to ensure that the enemy does not discover our assembly areas, attack positions, and passage of lines lanes. If he does through his own collection efforts or our own carelessness, his brigade artillery will punish us. I want the companies to actively patrol around their assembly areas and coordinate closely with the LAR elements to their west to ensure this does not happen.

**Further Guidance on use of assets:** Plan on using four scout sniper teams. We will need to keep the remainder ready to employ immediately once we have consolidated on the objective and transition to the defense. Teams will have to insert via foot through Company B, 2<sup>nd</sup> LAR. Plan to insert them tonight and for them to operate at least 72 hours since I want some of them near the objective to maintain observation on the enemy and potentially to serve as guides for the assault. Ensure we coordinate communications, fire support, and recovery. Bring the entire staff in on this planning to ensure we do not send them out unsupported. Ensure we coordinate with Regiment and 2d LAR. It will be a crowded area of battlespace forward of the LD/LC and we need to ensure that the fratricide risk is reduced to an acceptable level. The UAV flight is a gift so let's use it wisely and at the right time. Plot a recommended track and submit higher. Ensure the air officer is involved and is talking to the regimental AO.

The recon team that is working for regiment based on our input has a different skill set than our scout snipers. Their teams are larger, better sustained, and have a more robust communications capability. If we need someone to call for fire, they are better trained for the most part.

Do not forget our infantry companies in the RS&C plan. Dismounted infantry patrols are often our best way of collecting combat information and can help us fill in the picture.

One final and perhaps most important note. We need the CCIRs and PIRs collected on and reported back to us by 0100 on the 13th so that we can complete our planning and issue the order to the companies. They need adequate time, but we also need a supportable plan based on the best information we can collect. We must plan on information and not only on assumptions."

## Requirements

- a. Why did the CO name the location, disposition, composition, and orientation of the enemy's main defenses and CSOP as CCIRs? Why did he name the enemy obstacles and whether the creeks were fordable as PIRs? How do these information requirements differ from the others? What do you think the CO will do with the information collected on the CCIRs and PIRs?
- b. How much time do you have to collect on the CO's CCIRs and PIRs? Construct a timeline using the Intelligence Collection Cycle Model (MCWP 2-1) to assist you in collecting on the information requirements in a timely manner. Great information received in an untimely manner is not beneficial.
- c. Designate NAIs. Describe what enemy course of action each NAI confirms or denies. What assets will you use to observe each NAI? How many NAIs can you have?
- d. Collections worksheet:
  - (1) Complete a collection worksheet and assign collection assets under your control to satisfy each CCIR and PIR.
  - (2) Submit a list of RFIs for the Regiment, Division, and MAGTF to collect on.
- e. BPT should discuss the planning and coordination required to insert and recover a single scout sniper team.