

DOES A REQUIREMENT EXIST FOR SIGNAL CORPS QUALIFIED
PERSONNEL AT INFANTRY BATTALION (AIRBORNE) LEVEL ?

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ROSTER NUMBER 083, FACULTY ADVISOR GROUP 16

IOAC 2-69

JANUARY 1969



The United States Army Infantry School
Fort Benning, Georgia
22 January 1969

IOAC-2-69

SUBJECT: Does a Requirement Exist for Signal Corps Qualified Personnel at Infantry Battalion (Airborne) Level?

1. PROBLEM. To determine if a requirement exist for Signal Corps qualified personnel at Infantry Battalion (ABN) Level.
2. ASSUMPTION.
 - a. Infantry Battalions (ABN) will continue to operate in the manner prescribed in current tactical doctrine.
 - b. Infantry Battalions (ABN) will continue to operate under a Table of Organization and Equipment similar to the present Tables of Organization and Equipment.
 - c. Infantry Battalions (ABN) will retain their capabilities for operating in the terrain and climatic conditions specified in their tables of organization and equipment.
 - d. Any radio or communications equipment developed in the immediate or far ranging future will be more complex internally, but be simplified externally, easier to operate and (completely free of defects and maintenance problems with the exception of normal every day care and cleaning.)
 - e. Infantry Battalions (ABN) communications requirements will remain simplified in that communications is required with the next higher and the next lower level of command only, or as the commander directs.
 - f. Extensive communications requirements will remain an integral part of the Airborne Division Signal Battalion.
 - g. Primary responsibility of maintenance and repair of communication equipment will remain within the realm of responsibility of the Division Signal Battalion.
 - h. The mission of the Division Signal Battalion will remain the same as it is stated in Chapter 2, paragraph 5, a thru j, in FM-11-50 (Signal Battalion Armored, Infantry and Infantry (Mechanized) Division.
 - i. The Signal Officer at Infantry Battalions (ABN) will continue to be a Signal Corps Officer as specified in the Table of Organization and Equipment.

- j. The outstanding instruction and training that our communications personnel now receive will continue on an equally high plane.
- k. Another assumption that is extremely important is that we should consider Department of the Army's decision to remove Signal Corps personnel from the combat arms in 1920 was made by competent individuals; and that the individuals were equally competent that again surveyed the question of placing Signal Corps personnel back into the combat arms in 1957 with negative results. I make these assumptions because I cannot find the reference material again to document them and place them in the facts section of this study.

3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.

- a. If technical service personnel were integrated into the communications platoon it would cause increased reliance on the specialist and would result in lowered proficiency of the individual Infantryman. (Annex F, para. 2)
- b. The technical knowledge of Signal Corps personnel would be very valuable in attaining higher standards of maintenance. (Annex F, para. 1)
- c. The lack of infantry background and experience of Signal Corps personnel would hinder their performance in their jobs. (Annex F, para. 1)
- d. Only when specialist positions reach highly technical proportions should we have technical service personnel assume these functions. (Annex F, para. 1)
- e. Signal Corps personnel do not receive adequate training to be able to fight as infantry. (Annex F, para. 7)
- f. The organization and training of the communications platoon of the Infantry Battalions (Airborne) is adequate to support any operations that it may be called upon to do within the scope of the battalions assigned mission. (Annex A; Annex D)

4. DISCUSSION.

- a. To fully accomplish the mission, the communication personnel must be thoroughly knowledgeable in Infantry tactics to better understand communication needs, and also be prepared when necessary to fight as an infantryman. The Signal Corps personnel do not have the proper training to accomplish this.
- b. Considering the present world situation it is highly likely that doctrine will continue relatively the same.

- c. It is of general agreement that combat arms will maintain their present capabilities.
- d. The present arrangement of branch immaterial assignment of communication personnel is a very effective arrangement. It is felt that assignment of Signal Corps personnel could cause morale problems.
- e. The maintenance requirement is very minimal at organizational level.
- f. It was determined once before that technical services should be separated from the combat arms. Since the separation the support provided by the technical services ~~has~~ improved as well as resulting in a more rounded qualified fighting soldier with better equipment in a better state of repair.


5. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. The Infantry will continue to operate under similar doctrine.
- b. The Infantry will retain present or similar capabilities of operation.
- c. The quality of Infantry Communications personnel will remain at its present high state.
- d. The Signal Officer of Infantry Battalions will continue to be a Signal Corps Officer.
- e. The Signal Corps technical proficiency could prove valuable at battalion level, but, the disadvantages could be damaging, ie not being trained to fight as Infantry.
- f. Communication problems at battalion level have not reached a high technical proportion.
- g. The present Infantry communications platoon is capable of providing communications for any mission that the battalion is capable of accomplishing. Consequently, there is no requirement or need for signal corps qualified personnel at Infantry Battalion (Airborne) Level.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS.

- a. Consideration should be given to additional training in the technical areas of communications be added to the present program of instruction.

- b. The present personnel organization of the Infantry Battalion (Airborne) communications platoon remain exactly as it is specified in the current Table of Organization and Equipment and that signal corps personnel not be considered for integration into the platoon at this time.


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- ANNEXES: A - Mission of an Infantry Battalion (Airborne), Headquarters and Headquarters Company
B - Organization of Personnel Within the Infantry Battalion (Airborne) Communications Platoon.
C - A Typical Organization of Commander and Staff of an Airborne Battalion
D - Examples of Employment of Communications at Battalion Level
E - Survey of Combat-Experienced Officers (Appendix 1)
F - Bibliography

CONCURRENCES: (Omitted)

NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)

CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)

ANNEXES ADDED: (Omitted)

ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

DATE:

Approved (disapproved), including (excluding) exceptions.

Signature

ANNEX A--Mission of an Infantry Battalion (Airborne),
Headquarters and Headquarters Company

The following quote from the applicable table or organization and equipment delineate the operational capabilities of a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Infantry Battalion, Airborne Division.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Infantry Battalion,
Airborne Division (TOE 7-36G)

". . . To provide command, staff, administration, ground surveillance, heavy mortar, reconnaissance, antitank, communications, supply, maintenance and medical support for the Infantry Battalion, Airborne Division."

The word "communications" is underlined to bring out the fact that it is of equal importance with the other components of the mission.

ANNEX B--Organization of Personnel Within the Infantry Battalion
(Airborne) Communications Platoon.

The following information is the composition of personnel by line number description, grade, MOS, branch and authorized strength level, from Column G, as extracted from Section II Personnel Allowances, paragraph 04, Table of Organization and Equipment, 7-36G, dated 30 June, 1966.

Para	* Line	* Description Comm. Platoon	* Grade	* MOS	* Branch	* Strenght Level
04					<u>2/</u>	
	01	Communication-CH	E-7	31F4P	NC	1
	02	Wire Foreman	E-6	31F4P	NC	1
	03	RTT Team Chief	E-5	05C4P	NC	1
	04	Wire Team Chief	E-5	31B4P	NC	2
	05	Sr Radio Mechanic	E-5	31B2P		1
	06	Radio Mechanic	E-4	31B2P		2
	07	Radio TT Operator	E-4	05G2P		2
	08	Sr Field Wireman	E-4	36A1P		2
	09	Sr Message Clerk	E-4	36A1P		1
	10	Sr SWBD Operator	E-4	36A1P		1
	11	Field Wireman	E-3	36A1P		4
	12	Message Clerk	E-3	36A1P		3
	13	Motor Messenger	E-3	36A1P		2
	14	Radio Telephone OP	E-3	36A1P		4
	15	Switchboard OP	E-3	36A1P		<u>2</u>
	<u>1/</u>	Communications Officer				
*	*	TOTAL	*	*	*	29 *

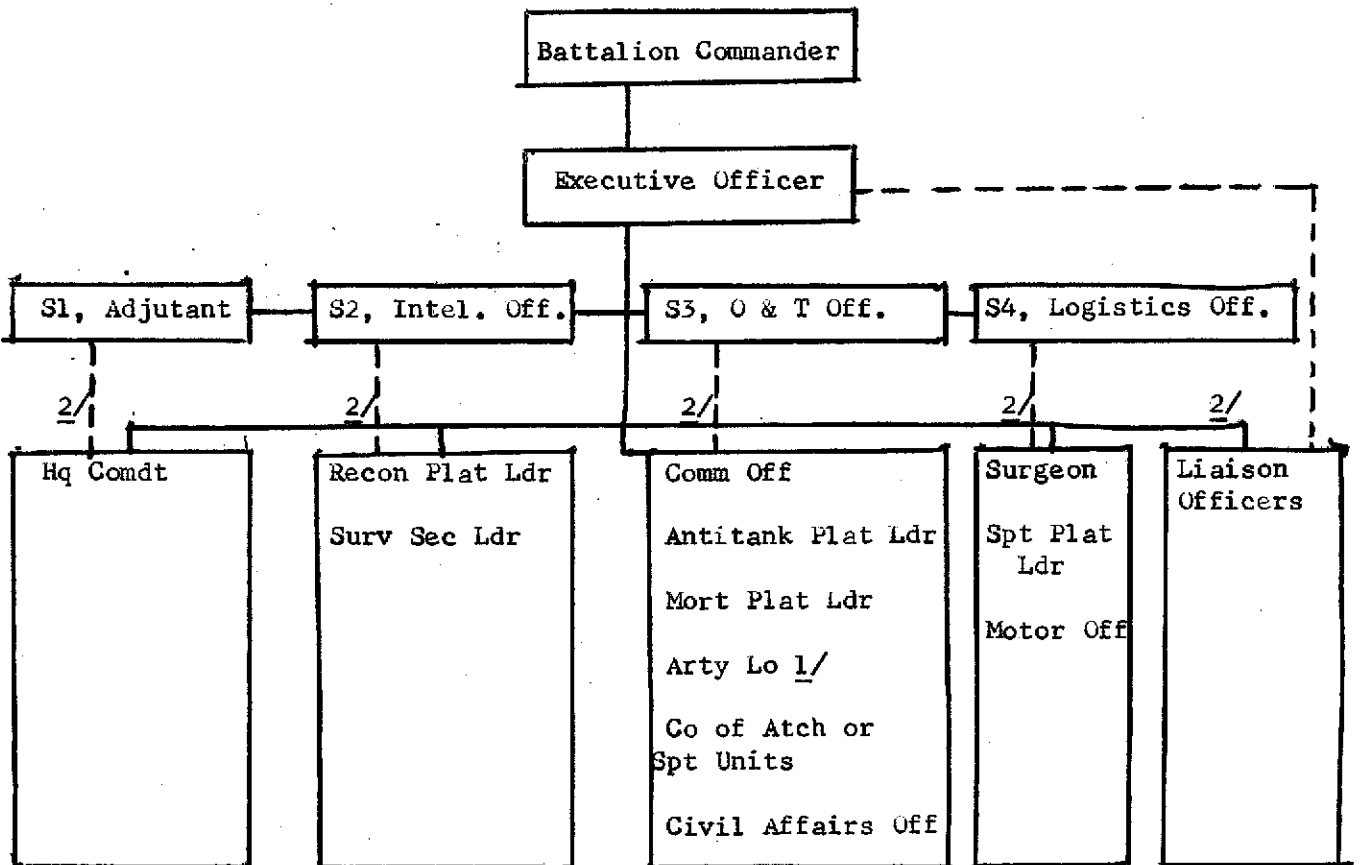
NOTE: 1/ The Communication Officer is listed in paragraph 01,
line 04, TO&E 7-36G.

2/ Note that branch of service is immaterial.

ANNEX B

ANNEX C--A Typical Organization of Commander and Staff of an Infantry Battalion (Airborne).

This is an example of a typical organization of the commander and his staff. It is included merely to show the relationship of the communication officer in respect to the rest of the staff to depict the relative importance of communication as related to other technical or special areas of the battalions.



NOTE: 1/ Indicates FSCOORD

2/ The dotted line indicates primary unit staff responsibility for staff supervision of the personnel or activity. Eventhough two or more unit staff officers may have an interest in the activity, a commander assigns the responsibility to only one in order to avoid mission conflict. The commander makes the decision based on his desires and the best arrangement to achieve his objective.

ANNEX D--Examples of Employment of Communications at Battalion Level.

1. General. Weather, enemy, and terrain must not interfere with the ability to communicate with superior and subordinates in order to accomplish the mission. Listed below are some employment considerations applicable to the communications platoon at battalion level.
2. Detailed Examples.
 - a. River Crossing Operations (FM31-60).
 - (1) Reliable communications are necessary for continuous coordination.
 - (2) Reliable communications are absolutely necessary for accomplishment of the mission.
 - b. Combat in Mountains (FM7-20).
 - (1) The environment and nature of operations and special equipment needed for these operations require that the battalion receive specialized training for combat in these areas.
 - (2) The organization of the battalion is suitable for operations in the mountains and northern regions.
 - c. Northern Operations (FM7-20).
 - (1) Operations in northern regions are affected by the climatic conditions at various times of the year.
 - (2) Special training for personnel is required to acquaint them with the necessary precautions to prevent cold weather injuries and to overcome difficulties in operations of weapons, vehicles, and other equipment.
 - d. Desert Operations (FM7-20).
 - (1) The organization of the infantry battalion is suitable for desert operations with minor modifications.
 - (2) These modifications are directed by added emphasis on mobility, maintenance, communication, and combat service support.

CONTINUATION OF ANNEX D

e. Amphibious Operations (FM7-20), (FM31-11).

- (1) Communication is absolutely essential to the success of an amphibious operation.
- (2) The organization of the infantry battalion is suitable for amphibious operations with minor modifications.

f. Structure

- (1) Generally speaking the present structure of the Infantry Battalion is suitable for all types of operations with only minor adjustments necessary.
- (2) The composition of the communications platoon of the Infantry Battalion is suitable for all types of operations with only minor adjustments necessary.

ANNEX E--Survey of Combat-Experienced Officers

The attached questionnaire (Appendix I) was completed in January 1969 by Infantry officers that have had combat experience in Viet Nam. A summary is included after each of the questions. All officers answering the questionnaire were members of the Infantry Officer Career Course, FY1969.

ANNEX E

6 January 1969

SUBJECT: Questionnaire to Determine if There is a Requirement for Signal Corps Personnel at Infantry Battalion (Airborne) Level.

TO: Selected Infantry Officers of Advance Course 2-69, (Personal Interview)

THE QUESTIONS BELOW ARE FOR AN INFANTRY OFFICER CAREER COURSE STAFF STUDY. THE SUBJECT OF THE STUDY IS TO DETERMINE IF A REQUIREMENT EXISTS FOR SIGNAL CORPS QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AT INFANTRY BATTALION (AIRBORNE) LEVEL.

1. Were you ever assigned a member of a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, (Airborne) Infantry Battalion?

Check position(s) applicable.

- Company Commander
- Executive Officer
- Staff Position (if so, state which staff)
- Communication Officer

Question number one results were as follows:

- 3 Company Commander
- 2 Executive Officer
- Staff Position (if so, state which staff)
- 8 S1
- 11 S2
- 28 S3 (or asst.)
- 7 S4 (or asst.)
- 0 Communications Officer

NOTE: Some officers held more than one position during their tour of duty.

2. Based on your combat experience, would you recommend that the personnel in the communications platoon be from the Signal Corps, qualified in a signal Military Occupational Specialty?

Yes _____ No _____

Question number two received ten percent yes and ninety percent no.

CONTINUATION OF APPENDIX 1 to ANNEX E

3. Do you feel that formal military training of the personnel in an Infantry communication platoon is adequate?

Yes _____ No _____

Question number three received 100 percent yes.

4. What areas of training needs more emphasis place on it? Check areas applicable.

____ Wire
____ Radio
____ Maintenance
____ None

Question number four received checks as follows:

0 Wire
31 Radio
33 Maintenance
11 None

NOTE: Some of the personnel interviewed selected more than one area that needed additional emphasis.

5. In what area of communications did you experience difficulty, if any? Check areas applicable.

____ Wire
____ Radio
____ Maintenance
____ None

Question number five results were as follows:

0 Wire
46 Radio
13 Maintenance
4 None

NOTE: The primary difficulty was with radio sets becoming inoperable, for unknown reason, in an extremely short period of use.

6. Do you consider that communications were hampered by a lack of qualified trained personnel? Yes _____ No _____

Question number six received 100 percent yes.

7. Is the current TO&E for the communications platoon personnel adequate at Infantry Battalion (Airborne) Level? Yes _____ No _____

Question number seven received 100 percent yes.

ANNEX F--Bibliography

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ANNEX F