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14 September 2008
Van Deman Program
VIP paper

Improving the Performance of Collectors in the Reserve Components

As exemplified by military operations conducted since 11 September 2001, Reserve component Soldiers are an integral and important part of the forces of the United States Army. Soldiers from the Reserve components have been

Each month, Reservists and Guard members typically meet over the course of a weekend for their two-day Battle Assembly. During monthly Battle Assemblies, Reserve Component Soldiers predominantly focus on the practice and completion of Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills (WTBDs). These Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills are conducted along with other training elemental to a unit's mission and specialty. Resulting from limited training time and particular training requirements, Reservists are not adequately prepared to be effective collectors of intelligence for the units with which they will deploy down range. Therefore, it is imperative that Reserve component Soldiers train for intelligence collection during monthly Battle Assemblies. As noted in the Army's Counterinsurgency manual, "In [a counterinsurgency], the side with the better learning organization usually wins... Soldiers cannot wait until they are alerted to deploy to prepare for a COIN mission."¹

Solution

The time and resource commodities afforded to Reserve component units during monthly Battle Assemblies and annual active training are precious. Any proposed intelligence training should therefore maximize the efficiency of unit activity and training time. To do this, intelligence and collection training should be conducted as a part, of

and in conjunction with, the typical training tasks that units perform on a monthly and annual basis.

It is understandable that unit commanders may be hesitant to add new training to already busy training schedules. Therefore, it is extremely important that commanders understand how intelligence and collection training can benefit their units without detracting from their other training requirements, unit effectiveness, and military readiness. Any intelligence and collection training should not only just increase the collection capabilities of Soldiers, but it should also increase a unit's ability to effectively conduct its stated missions. Tools for any proposed intelligence and collection training should be readily available to units. Units and commanders should not have to detract from their planning and training. Ready-made products and suggested training plans that are accessible and readily available will increase the likelihood of use and the consistency of training across units.

Solution Implementation

A number of potential training tasks exist that can be implemented to increase the performance of collectors in the Reserve components. These training tasks range from the simple to the complex. However, in the interest of ease of implementation and the least amount of resistance from units, a few simple tasks and tools are ideal for success of the solution implementation. Training such as Every-Soldier-A-Sensor (ES2) Drills, cultural briefings and education lessons, counterinsurgency discussions, and reporting drills are all relatively simple, low-cost methods that, if conducted for only a few hours each monthly Battle Drill over the course of time, can improve the awareness and performance of Reserve component collectors.

The United States Army has incredible intelligence collection capabilities. However, while the most technologically advanced collection systems or highly trained intelligence specialists can provide immense benefit to their units, these systems and professionals may not be able to make the ground level observations, establish the personal connections, or access all the places that the average soldier out on a neighborhood patrol can. It is therefore essential that every soldier, regardless of Military Occupational Specialty, be a proficient sensor of information that may be of intelligence value.

The implementation of ES2 drills is perhaps the simplest act a Reserve unit can make to increase the effectiveness of its soldiers as intelligence collectors. Simple ES2 drills can include photo memorization drills, change-detection exercises at unit facilities, and scanning drills.

Photo memorization drills encompass presenting soldiers with a photograph of a situation, allowing the soldiers a limited amount of time to study the situation, and then quizzing them regarding the details they may or may not have noticed. Photo memorization drills can take as little as ten minutes to perform and increases soldiers' situational awareness, attention detail, and ability to recall and communicate their observations.

Change-detection exercises at unit facilities test soldiers' situational awareness in a physical environment where they may not otherwise be expecting anything out of the ordinary. These exercises can be accomplished through simple methods such as moving the unit's water cooler or placing new posters around the unit facilities between monthly Battle Assemblies and quizzing the soldiers as to whether or not they noticed any changes.

Scanning drills can be implemented directly into training already conducted by units. Combining the recall skills of photo memorization and the awareness in physical environments of change-detection, quizzing soldiers on fine details of what they may have noticed during patrols, training for EPW handling, or any other tactical training that a particular unit may conduct on a monthly basis can directly improve the tactical collection skills of Reserve and Guard soldiers.

Educational briefings and handouts regarding world hotspots and the latest enemy actions and TTPs serve to teach Reserve component soldiers critical information regarding local cultures where the Army is serving and what indicators to look for when Soldiers are outside the wire. Similarly, group discussions regarding counterinsurgency strategy and tactics serve to make soldiers more thoughtful of their actions and to impart key lessons that may give them insights on how to collect from the population when they are deployed overseas.

Finally, reporting drills train to ensure that any information that is collected and observed by soldiers successfully makes it up the chain of command to the commanders and their staff. Regular practice of SALUTE reports can be incorporated into nearly all types of training and work to ensure that a valuable reporting method, often overlooked after early stages of training in a soldier's career, is not lost.

Ensuring Successful Implementation

In order to successfully implement improved intelligence collection training for Reserve component Soldiers, several actions must be taken. Incentives need to be provided to encourage implementation, requirements need to be mandated in order to ensure implementation, ready-made products need to be provided to ease the implementation, and better advertisement of available tools needs to be made to the

Reserve and Guard by the Active Army to increase awareness of how to implement training.

Soldiers will appreciate training that is both relative to current operations, informative, and fresh. Simple, innovative discussions and lessons regarding collection methods and counterinsurgency operations provide a way to capture Reserve component Soldiers' willingness to accept the training concept and fully engage. Adding requirements for ES2 and intelligence collection training to the monthly WTT and Battle Drill requirements will force the implementation of training across Reserve and Guard units. Providing ready-made tools and handouts, much of which already exists at the Active Army level on the Army's Intelligence Knowledge Network,² and advertising that these tools are available, will ease the acceptance and implementation by Reserve component units.

Assessment

Following the implementation of intelligence collection training, non-military intelligence units should be able to assess and note distinct performance improvements over the course of monthly Battle Assemblies. Soldiers' ES2 scores and overall self-awareness should increase and improve. Communication up and down the chain of command and with a unit's S2 shop should increase. Soldiers' will become more aware of the relationship their actions have in a counterinsurgency environment. Finally, in a measurable manner, units will meet the required training standards that are set for them within a given time period.

Conclusion

The Army has recognized that ES2 training, cultural awareness, and intelligence collection training are imperative to success in modern operations. In the 2008 Army

Posture Statement, the Army itself noted that, *“Every Soldier is a Sensor (ES2) and Cultural Awareness are wartime readiness imperatives and are key to adapting traditional military processes and thinking to current and future complex operating environments.”*³ Applying this training concurrently with other mission-essential training will ensure that Reserve component Soldiers are dutifully trained to aid in intelligence collection without detracting from units’ mission readiness and effectiveness.



Soldiers from C Co., 304th MI BN conduct ES2 training on Ft. Huachuca, AZ.

Sample education handouts provide easy ways to inform Reserve component soldiers of the latest enemy TTPs.

About the Author:

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Endnotes

¹ Counterinsurgency, FM 3-24. Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006, ix.

² Intelligence Knowledge Network, <https://icon.army.mil/apps/es2>

³ 2008 Army Posture Statement, 26 February 2008, <http://www.army.mil/aps/08/index.html>