

Scorpion 27 – Wolf Web Page

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Issue: Task Force Observation Plan

Discussion: Throughout most rotations, the Task Force FSO fails to develop a proper observer plan, or when one is developed it is developed after wargaming and lacks the details and synchronization required to ensure observers are in position prepared to execute the scheme of fires. Observation planning begins during the COA development and is refined during the wargaming process. The first step the FSO must accomplish is to clearly identify the task force EFST in terms of task, purpose, method, and effects. By doing this, the FSO can concentrate on how and where to position available observers to best accomplish the EFST. The next step is to coordinate with the task force S2 to determine enemy information as portrayed in the situational and event templates. This helps the FSO to visualize what the enemy formations will look like in relation to the terrain, and when/where enemy actions/events should occur in terms of time and space. Additionally, the S2 can provide a thorough terrain analysis to help the FSO in determining possible OP locations in terms of Line of Sight, trafficability, and survivability. Finally, the products included in the task force OPORD should include detailed guidance for each planned OP. Items to address should include:

- EFST to execute (specific and detailed task and purpose).
- OP location with visibility/equipment requirements.
- Time to occupy (friendly/enemy event).
- Route.
- Security requirements/arrangements.
- Disengagement criteria.

Recommendation: During the MDMP, an observer plan must be constructed in concert with the battle staff and should use terra based computer programs to assist in position selection. The TF FSNCO can provide line of sight diagrams to the FISTs for each selected OP through the use of a terra based computer program. The use of computerized terrain programs greatly increases the effectiveness of an operation by allowing you to see the terrain without actually being on it. The terra base program should be used in the selection of all OPs. The FSO should develop a checklist of OP selection tasks for inclusion in the SOP. An example listing of tasks follows:

Step 1. Identify the requirements for an OP (during the wargaming). The OP may be required to assist in the R&S plan or to trigger fire support targets.

Step 2. Conduct terrain analysis. Terrabase is an effective tool to accomplish this task. Run a shot from the NAI/TAI or the target to determine possible OP locations. This method saves time by identifying all possible OP locations.

Step 3. Allocate assets. Choose based on the mission of the OP. If Copperhead is used, a G/VLLD equipped observer is necessary; a recon observer may need Sappers; surveillance OP may use scouts. Consider brigade COLTs and BRTs operating in zone in addition to task force observers.

Step 4. Select the OP. Select from likely OPs developed during terrain analysis. Consider mission and capabilities of the asset (i.e., angle-T, limited visibility, and enemy situation).

Step 5. Plan movement and occupation of OPs within the constraints of the scheme of maneuver.

Step 6. If the observer is a company FIST, specify tasks to subordinate units responsible for executing.

Step 7. Confirm requirements of observation plan and disseminate changes.

Step 8. Facilitate execution.