

Use of the Battery Gunnery Sergeants

FM 7-70 AFD V2 provides a sound base for identifying the gunnery sergeant's (GSG) duties and responsibilities during tactical operations. Much of the information provided below can be found in FM 6-70 AFD V2.

First and foremost the GSG is the primary reconnaissance expert for the platoon. The GSG assists the platoon sergeant and must be prepared to assume his duties. Additionally, the GSG must be prepared to operate under the direction of the battery commander (BC) in order to perform special missions important to the success of the battery. These BC directed missions take precedence over platoon related missions.

Gunnery Sergeant Platoon Duties

The GSG performs in-depth reconnaissance of route and platoon position areas (PAs) selecting multiple howitzer or pair locations for possible use. This is made easier by use of the GPS. As a minimum he:

1. Verifies the PA location and transmits the location (easting (E), northing (N), and altitude (alt) and radius per pair (if operating in paired howitzers) to the platoon operations center (POC).
2. Coordinates with the BC and survey team for emplacement of survey control points (SCPs).
Selects location of SCPs, release points, and rally points as required.
3. Verifies that SCPs are properly marked and conducts independent secondary check of all survey data. Assists and advises the BC during battery reconnaissance, selection, and occupation of position (RSOP) planning.
4. Selects the location for the POC and makes a radio check with battalion to ensure radio communications capability.
5. Provides fire direction officer (FDO) worse case site to crest data for computation of executive officer's (XO) minimum quadrant (Min QE).
6. As required, reconnoiters possible logistics release point (LRP) locations within or close to the PAs ensuring areas selected do not compromise platoon positions.
7. Initiates the platoon security plan as a part of his detailed RSOP.
8. Identifies the location of any friendly elements within or adjacent to the area of operation.

The GSG is the primary reconnaissance expert for the platoon and spends the majority of his time away from the platoon. He must have his own combat vehicle with a driver, long-range radio, and secure GPS/PLGR. At the National Training Center (NTC), the GSG should also be equipped with binoculars and anti-tank weapons.

The BC and GSG must determine the suitability of the position for Paladin operations and determine whether enemy ground forces, mines, or chemical hazards are present. Since there is no need to establish individual howitzer positions or determine initial deflections the advance party will usually consist of only the GSG and his driver. However, it may include any other personnel specified by the unit tactical standard operating procedures (TSOP) or required by the tactical situation. The primary function of the advance party is to determine what general areas or zones that his unit can operate within as a battery or platoon of howitzers. Mine sweeping and chemical monitoring are performed consistent with the threat. The BC and GSG also identify potential target reference points (TRPs) and enemy avenues of approach. Along with the BC, the GSG establishes the initial security of the firing area as required. The GSG verifies the SCPs, establishes a track plan, and reports any problems to the BC or platoon leader to include locations of friendly and enemy elements.

The commander must identify the task and purpose of the GSG's employment during his battery orders process. During the orders brief, the BC must ensure the platoon leadership understands the task and purpose as well as the commander's intent for the tactical employment of the GSG. Most importantly, the commander or platoon leader must receive a thorough back brief from the GSG ensuring he understands

the intent and task and purpose of his mission prior to allowing them to operate independently on the battlefield.

RSOP operations are facilitated with the Gunnery Sergeant's Card

The GSG identifies the POC location, potential target reference points (TRPs), and enemy avenues of approach. This information is graphically displayed on the initial PA/defensive diagram and given to the platoon sergeant/platoon leader upon his arrival (time permitting). After the platoon sergeant/platoon leader refine and approve the defense diagram/firing area map, the POC will use it to overlay the HTC.Task	Planned			Actual		
Center Grid (only refine if necessary)	E:	N:	Alt:	E:	N:	Alt:
Radius (meters)						
Min QE of Immediate Crest						
Range						
Sight						
Object						
Radio Check with Battalion FDC	Yes/No					
Entry Point						
Grid	E:	N:		E:	N:	
Description						
POC Location	E:	N:		E:	N:	
Terrain Restrictions						
Route Restrictions						
Firing Area Restrictions						
Visible Distant Aiming Point	Yes/No Description:					
Travel Time						
Rally Point						
Additional Information						

Note: Send the ready to fire information as soon as it is determined. Send as much of the report as is completed before platoon departs from start point.

Example Gunnery Sergeant's Card (6-70 pg. 3-11)

Gunnery Sergeant's Battery Duties

The GSG can be a powerful force multiplier for the BC. At the NTC, we are beginning to see units operate under battery operations. Many times units operating as batteries are unsure how to effectively use their GSGs. Some units continue to use them IAW 6-70 others merely use them to assist the platoon leader and the platoon sergeant. Ineffective units employ the GSG to conduct administrative duties such as coordinating ammunition re-supply during the battle or leading the battery trains from location to location. Guidance from the commander including intent, task, and purpose helps to ensure the GSG is utilized effectively.

One way to successfully utilize the GSG is to allow him to conduct his RSOP duties and then transition to a screening role for battery defense. Because of his mobility and communication equipment the GSG can position himself forward on the battlefield and maintain constant lookout for enemy action that may impact the success of the unit. Again, guidance from the commander will allow the GSG to operate effectively when operating in a screening role. The following are a few tips to enable the GSG to serve as an effective screening element for the battery

- Ensure the GSG understands the BLUFOR and OPFOR schemes of maneuver. At a minimum he must know the primary threats to the battery and enemy avenues of approach.
- Ensure the GSG has operational graphics down to task force (TF) level for the zone the battery is operating in.
- Ensure the GSG has conducted radio checks on the TF command, fire support, and operations and intelligence (O&I) radio nets. These nets provide a good source of intelligence for both BLUFOR and OPFOR actions.
- Establish effective reporting procedures for the GSG ensuring he reports information needed to effectively maneuver the battery free of enemy action to include possible direct fire contact, enemy air, enemy use of chemical munitions and enemy engineering efforts (FASCAM included).
- If a unit is following a particular company during an offensive operation, ensure the GSG is provided with a point of contact with the unit to arrange for link-up and, if possible, participation in the company rehearsal.
- If needed, the GSG can provide effective force protection by using anti-tank weapons to eliminate possible threats to the battery.
- The commander must receive a thorough backbrief from the GSG prior to his leaving the battery area.

“Gunnery sergeants get paid to drive in the dark”

-A former Firing Battery Commander

The above statement is certainly true. Another way to think of it is to say the GSG is never in reserve. This is certainly the case between missions when the GSG is not actively involved in RSOP, security, or coordination missions. Far too often we see GSGs relaxing during the planning and preparation phases of the operation when they could be effectively engaged in setting the unit up for success. Commanders should not lose sight of the contributions the GSG can provide during this important phase of the operation. Following are examples of ways the GSG can be effectively utilized as a force multiplier:

- Adjacent unit coordination.
- Assisting in PCIs of the platoon/battery.
- Ammunition re-supply efforts (*not during the battle*).
- Recovering repaired or equipment and vehicles from the unit maintenance collection point (UMCP) or brigade support area (BSA).

- Going to other units, the UMCP, or BSA to obtain emergency resupply of needed repair parts. This allows the unit maintenance NCOIC to stay with the battery.
- Picking up WARNOS, FRAGOS and graphics from the TOC.
- Any other mission deemed important to the unit leadership requiring someone to leave the unit area.

In conclusion, GSGs are a valuable asset to the unit. Use them in accordance with our doctrine and according to METT-TC. Do not be afraid to think “outside of the box” when developing missions for your Gunnery Sergeants. The information provided is intended to allow Battery Commanders to gain insight on effective techniques for Gunner Sergeant utilization. Lastly, train your Gunnery Sergeants at home station in the same manner you plan on utilizing them at NTC or wherever you may find yourself deployed. Train the Force.