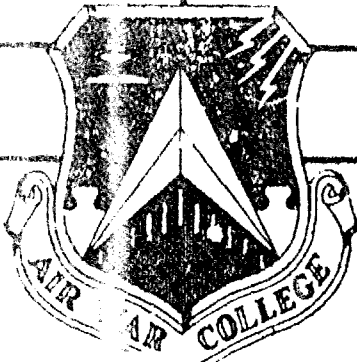


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# AIR WAR COLLEGE

## RESEARCH REPORT

SOVIET THREAT TO COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT FORCES:  
A TRAINING CHALLENGE

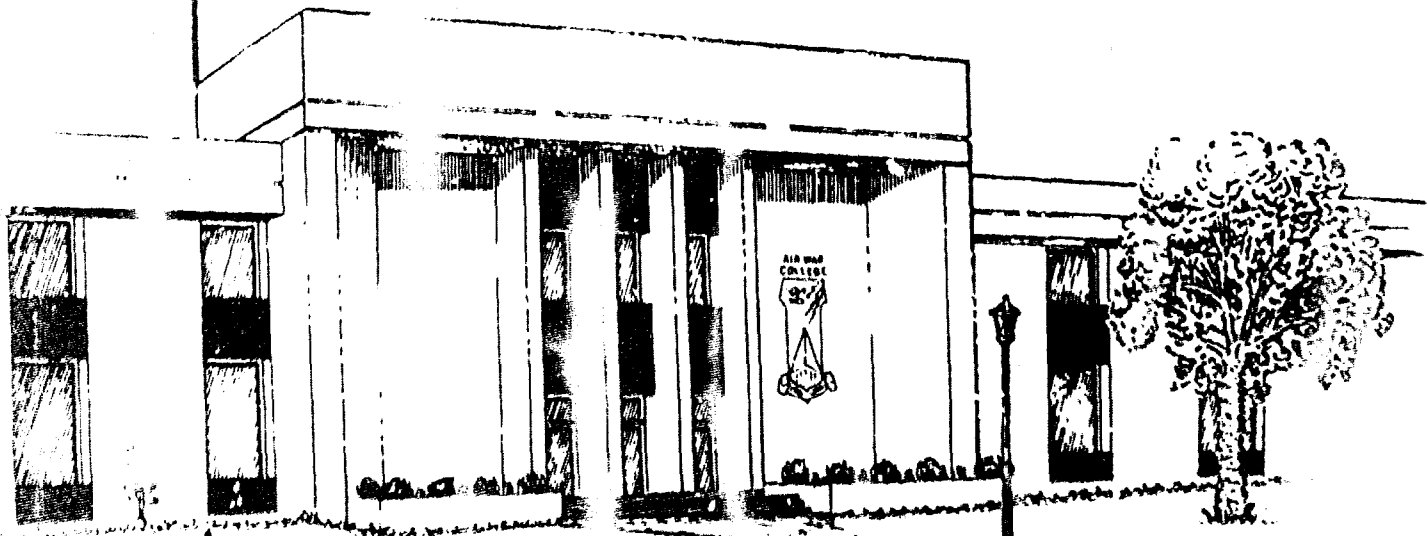
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SOVIET THREAT TO  
COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT FORCES:  
A Training Challenge

by

Jo B. Rusin  
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Dr Howard Hensel

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1988

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Soviet Threat to Combat Service Support Forces:  
A Training Challenge

**AUTHOR:** Jo B. Rusin, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army

↳ This report Examines the Soviet threat to U.S. Army combat service support forces from the perspective of Soviet doctrine. Evaluates the adequacy of U.S. Army rear battle doctrine and combat service support unit training and weapons to counter this threat. Recommends training strategies to prepare combat service support units to survive on the modern non-linear battlefield. Concentrates on training combat service support leaders to fight and conduct battles. Emphasizes training realism in defensive planning, use of combat arms aggressors in training, employment of indirect fire and close air support, early warning, intelligence collection, barriers, and coordination of efforts with adjacent bases. Keywords:

INDEX UNDER:

↳ Training;  
Combat service support;  
Soviet threat;  
Logistics;  
Rear area operations;  
Defense;  
Sustainment; (KT) ← —

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

LTC Jo B. Rusin is a U.S. Army combat service support officer. She has a Masters of Military Arts and Science from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Her most recent tactical assignment was as a company commander and battalion executive officer in the 1st Corps Support Command, Ft. Bragg, 1982-1985. LTC Rusin's master's thesis is titled "Command and Control of Replacement Personnel." LTC Rusin is a 1988 graduate of the Air War College.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Background

If a military unit cannot survive in combat, it is of no consequence how technically proficient it may be in its primary mission. While this is not a new idea, it is particularly applicable to U.S. Army combat service support units which have the mission of providing logistic support in war. There is a tendency among combat service support forces in peacetime to concentrate on technical proficiency to the exclusion of warfighting survival skills. World War II, Korea, and the Vietnam experience gave combat service support units the luxury of operating in generally secure rear areas well removed from the main battle. Given current Soviet and U.S. Army doctrine, such secure rear areas will not exist for combat service support units on the battlefields of the 1990s and beyond. Combat service support forces must devote more of their training to understanding and preparing to defend against the Soviet threat, if they are to survive to provide their primary mission of support.

There have been dramatic reductions in combat service support forces in the past few years while combat forces have increased.<sup>1</sup> This has resulted in reliance for logistic support on a combat service support force that is

already too small for the missions. General Bernard W. Rogers, former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and U.S. Army Chief of Staff, has said that the U.S. Army has insufficient combat service support forces to support the forward deployed units in Europe.<sup>2</sup> His opinion of the disproportionate "tooth to tail" ratio has also been supported by General George B. Crist, U.S. Marine Corps, Commander, U.S. Central Command,<sup>3</sup> and by Secretary of the Navy James Webb when he was Assistant Secretary of Defense.<sup>4</sup> With an already insufficient number of combat service support units in the total force structure, that is active and reserve components, the survivability of these forces in combat becomes even more crucial. There are no additional combat service support reinforcements in the force structure to replace those lost in combat.<sup>5</sup> This is critical to the overall success or failure of the U.S. Army. Even if combat forces are successful in the initial stages of the war, they cannot continue to fight without logistic support.

Soviet Army doctrine is clear in its concept of deep battle. The Soviets consider destroying their opponent's logistic bases and disrupting rear operations a major mission. Like the U.S., the Soviets prefer not to fight against their opponent's strength, but rather seek out and exploit their opponent's weaknesses. Efforts will begin early in the conflict to reach deep behind enemy lines to

disrupt command, control, communications, and logistic support operations. The Soviets have a variety of combat forces trained for these missions, both conventional and unconventional. The Soviets intend to bypass combat elements, if possible, to engage and defeat their opponent's rear operation.

Most combat service support units will be well within the range of Soviet artillery and all will be in range of Soviet aviation. U.S. Army combat service support units need to be familiar with these Soviet tactics and be prepared to defend against them.

To deal with the Soviet threat to its rear area, the U.S. Army has developed a rear battle doctrine which assigns initial responsibility for defense to the rear area units themselves. (Most, but not all, units in the rear area will be combat service support units.) Control of the rear battle as it develops is the responsibility of the Rear Battle Officer and the Rear Area Operations Center or RAOC. The RAOC will have limited combat elements, primarily military police, to respond to enemy attacks of battalion or larger size.<sup>6</sup> Overall this doctrine puts the bulk of responsibility for defense on the combat service support units, because it is unlikely that forward deployed combat units will be available to fight the rear battle.

Soviet deep battle doctrine and U.S. Army rear battle doctrine present combat service support units with a unique

training challenge. While there are exceptions, in general combat service support commanders have glossed over the importance of training for this defense mission in favor of achieving technical proficiency. Technical proficiency is easier to attain, can be reflected in statistics, and receives far more attention in peacetime. Combat service support units have a significant challenge. They must be prepared to perform their technical mission under wartime field conditions and they must also be prepared to survive on the modern battlefield. Innovative training, the application of Air Land Battle principles, and the use of general support artillery and aviation offer combat service support units keys to surviving combat against Soviet threat forces.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to answer three questions: What is Soviet doctrine for conduct of the deep battle as it relates to enemy combat service support forces? What is the U.S. Army doctrine for conduct of the rear battle? Are there ways to improve combat service support unit training to meet the Soviet threat? Combat service support units are assigned at all levels, but this paper will address primarily non-divisional combat service support units at corps and higher level.

### Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made:

- Regardless of the intensity of the conflict, the next war in which the U.S. will be involved will be against an enemy using Soviet doctrine.
- There will be no appreciable increase in the number of combat service support units in the force in the 1990s and beyond.
- The number of combat units dedicated to the rear battle will not increase.

### Definition of Terms

**Combat service support units:** Units which provide tactical logistic support such as supply, transportation, medical, maintenance, decontamination, laundry and bath, graves registration, ammunition, movement control, finance, personnel replacement, and casualty reporting. Units may also be referred to as logistic units.

**Combat units:** Units which close with and engage the enemy in combat. Units such as infantry, armor, and cavalry.

**Combat support units:** Units which directly reinforce combat elements by providing fire support, intelligence, communications, and military police.

**Logistic units:** See combat service support units.

**Rear battle:** That portion of the battle that is conducted behind the division rear boundary.

**Rear Area Operation Center (RAOC):** Tactical operation center at corps, army, or theater level with the primary mission of coordinating the rear battle.

**Deep battle:** Operations directed against enemy forces not involved in the main battle but capable of affecting the future battle, forces such as logistic units, reserves, and communication centers. Generally a term used in offense.

**Rear battle:** Combat operations occurring behind the main battle area. Generally a term used in defense.

## CHAPTER II

### SOVIET DOCTRINE

Soviet doctrine on deep battle is designed to capitalize on speed, long range weapons, and enemy weakness to disrupt their enemy's rear area operations and create a rear battle for the enemy in addition to the main battle.

Soviet offensive doctrine emphasizes dispersion of resources; the use of massed fires (including chemical and nuclear) to create breaches in the enemy defenses; the rapid concentration of maneuver forces to seize the opportunity of the breach created and, once through the breach, a subsequent dispersal of the maneuver force to conduct high speed, deep exploitation. The Soviets will achieve mass by concentrating firepower not maneuver forces. This follows their concept of rapid concentration and quick dispersal. The Soviets will conduct operations in the enemy's rear area as part of their overall offensive plan. This rear battle threat activity is preparation/supporting operations for current or future attacks. These activities in the rear area are designed to create fear, panic, and confusion . . . [and to] disrupt combat service support operations throughout all echelons of our rear area through independent activity or operations that support efforts in the close-in [main] battle area.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of deep battle is not new. Following the Russian Civil War, Soviet tacticians began exploring the potential for deep battle. Operations in depth to disrupt enemy rear operations were seen as an opportunity to exploit new technology and forces previously held as reserves. A major champion of this concept was Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky.<sup>2</sup> Deep battle and the use of mass armies became foundations of Soviet doctrine in the 1930s. These principles were used effectively against the Germans in

World War II<sup>3</sup> and remain cornerstones of Soviet doctrine to this day.

To defeat its enemy's rear operations Soviet doctrine calls for conventional forces, firepower, unconventional forces, or a combination of these. The primary threat to nondivisional combat service support forces, by virtue of its size, is the Operational Maneuver Group or OMG, a conventional force, that is most often tank heavy. The OMG is the modern version of mobile groups successfully used by the Soviets to drive through the German lines to disrupt German rear area operations in World War II.<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the tactics of the OMG is basic to understanding Soviet deep battle doctrine.

Operational Maneuver Group (OMG) is a mission not a type of unit. Technically the OMG could mean any size or type of combat unit. With the Soviet concept of deep and rapid advances in the offense, the OMG's mission is to "penetrate the enemy defenses, if required, and then to raid deep into the enemy rear as early in the offensive as possible."<sup>5</sup> Doctrinally the OMG avoids engaging forward deployed combat units to save its combat power for a decisive blow to the enemy's rear.<sup>6</sup> Once in the rear area, the OMG can be given a variety of targets to include destruction of nuclear weapon systems, air defenses, command, control, and communication centers, logistic operations, and to seize airfields, bridges, road junctions,

and other strategic facilities.<sup>7</sup> Once it has completed its mission, the OMG may be part of an encirclement effort or may wait for the main body of forces to link up with it and then continue the drive deeper into enemy territory. The OMG is not a diversionary tactic and cannot be considered in isolation. It is part of the Soviet Army's total offensive effort.

Consistent with the Soviet concept of operating in echelons, the OMG mission is assigned at various levels. At the division level, it is called the forward detachment, while at army and theater level, it is called the OMG. Whether it is called forward detachment or OMG, the mission is the same: make a rapid and strong thrust through enemy lines to reach and disrupt the enemy's rear area. Generally speaking US divisional combat service support units can expect attacks by forward detachments while nondivisional combat service support units can expect attacks by OMG elements. Because of the fluid nature of the modern battle field and the fact that Soviet and US forces are not identical in structure or capabilities, this is a generalization and not a rule.

OMG and forward detachment missions are assigned to ground maneuver elements. The size of the force depends on the level of operation. For example, in a Soviet first echelon division the forward detachment mission is normally given to a reinforced tank battalion.<sup>8</sup> Doctrinally a

Soviet tank battalion consists of three tank companies totaling 31 to 41 tanks and 135 to 195 soldiers.<sup>9</sup>

Forward detachments are given objectives from 20 to 50 km beyond the forward edge of their division.<sup>10</sup>

At army level the OMG would probably be a reinforced tank division<sup>11</sup> while at front level the OMG could be as large as an army.<sup>12</sup> A standard Soviet tank division consists of 16 battalions totaling 328 tanks, 129 armored personnel carriers, 11,470 soldiers, and 126 howitzers.<sup>13</sup> In addition to its organic units, an OMG could be reinforced with airborne or heliborne assault units, additional aviation, air defense, and engineer units.<sup>14</sup> A division with an OMG mission can operate 100 km or more in advance of its army's main forces.<sup>15</sup>

At front level the OMG mission can be given to an army. A Soviet army is composed of from one to two tank divisions and two to four motorized rifle divisions with an additional artillery brigade.<sup>16</sup> It can operate up to 150 km in advance of front forces.<sup>17</sup>

At any level a Soviet forward detachment or OMG is a formidable ground combat force targeted at the enemy's rear area. In addition to these forces, the Soviets have other conventional units which can be air delivered into their enemy's rear area to destroy targets, seize objectives, and disrupt rear area sustainment operations.

### Airborne

The Soviets have used elite airborne divisions since the 1930s. They are generally employed as part of a front or army and because of their flexibility can be used in a variety of roles. Although they can be inserted deep into enemy territory, they cannot sustain themselves for more than a few days. Therefore they are most often given operational missions which permit them to link up with advancing ground forces.<sup>18</sup> Airborne units may or may not be a part of an OMG operation but typical mission objectives are similar including neutralizing nuclear weapon systems, command posts, communication centers, logistic facilities, ports, and airfields, and seizing strategic choke points such as mountain passes or bridges.<sup>19</sup> They can also be employed as unconventional warfare forces with reconnaissance, sabotage, or deception missions or other missions specifically designed to create panic in the enemy's rear area.<sup>20</sup>

Soviet airborne units receive a higher calibre of army recruit and are equipped with BMDs (air-droppable amphibious assault vehicles). Each division is composed of three airborne regiments or a total of nine airborne battalions. In addition, it has an organic artillery regiment, air defense battalion, assault gun battalion, and signal and support battalions.<sup>21</sup> An airborne division has a total of 6500 soldiers, 354 BMDs, 30 howitzers, and

six multiple rocket launchers. Due to the size of the equipment, the Soviets prefer air landing when possible but are not restricted to air landing.<sup>22</sup>

Soviet airborne troops receive rigorous training using simulated combat conditions including operations in an NBC environment. In addition to their training in airborne operations, they are also thoroughly grounded in motorized rifle tactics.<sup>23</sup>

The Soviets routinely conduct airborne operations at night and prefer to complete the airdrop portion of the operation before dawn.<sup>24</sup> Their preference is to plan drop zones as close to the objective as possible. If landing on the objective is impossible then the drop zone should be no more than 30 km from the objective.<sup>25</sup> Once they have landed they can attack dismounted or in BMDs. When attacking an enemy with a weak defense, particularly one with few antitank weapons, they may attack in one echelon with all personnel mounted in their BMDs.<sup>26</sup> In attacking US combat service support forces whose only antitank weapons are the light antitank weapon (LAW), a mounted attack in BMDs would appear to be the most likely tactic.

Once the airborne unit has seized the objective, it establishes a defense and awaits link-up with advancing Soviet forces. In some instances, for example if the mission was to destroy rather than seize an objective, they

might be required to fight their way back to friendly lines.<sup>27</sup>

### Heliborne

Soviet heliborne or air assault operations in the enemy's rear area are similar to airborne operations in terms of objectives and employment. The major differences are size and training. Airborne forces are seldom used in packages smaller than regiments while heliborne forces are employed by battalion or smaller size unit. A heliborne battalion can contain over 500 soldiers with equipment similar to a motorized rifle battalion.<sup>28</sup> Using Soviet doctrine, heliborne forces would most often be deployed in the enemy rear area as part of a divisional forward detachment. Their objectives are more restricted than those of the larger airborne units, for example, raids, sabotage, and mine laying or mine clearing in the rear area.<sup>29</sup>

Unlike U.S. air assault troops, Soviet heliborne soldiers do not receive lengthy training or rappelling instruction. In fact Soviet heliborne troops are regular motorized rifle (infantry) soldiers who may have received no more than one day of training with helicopters prior to their employment. The helicopters normally land to unload troops and equipment.<sup>30</sup> Like airborne troops, they are most vulnerable when landing. Heliborne troops do not usually have BMDs or BMPs on heliborne operations and thus operate dismounted.<sup>31</sup> U.S. combat service support units

in the rear area can capitalize on their vulnerabilities by identifying potential landing zones in their area, planning, and rehearsing defenses and counterattacks on these potential landing zones in the event they are used for Soviet heliborne assaults. Clearly U.S. airfields would be the ideal, but not the only, landing zones for Soviet forces.

### Artillery

While the Soviet Army views itself as predominantly a tank army, it is generally recognized as an artillery army. Artillery is an integral part of all Soviet operations including forward detachments and OMGs. Because U.S. nondivisional combat service support forces are most often concentrated in consolidated logistic support areas, they present excellent targets for Soviet artillery. Even with ideal operational security, it is difficult to conceal the location of a logistic support area. In order to provide support, a logistic support area is a hub for vehicular traffic not to mention communications.

Soviet artillery can reach deep into its enemy's rear area at its discretion. The range for Soviet howitzers is 17-27 km.<sup>32</sup> Soviet rocket systems can reach even deeper. For example, the FROG-7 has a range of 70 km and the SCUD-B has a range of 30 km. SS-23 and SS-22 can engage targets at ranges of 900 and 500 km respectively. The SS-12 SCALEBOARD, which is a nuclear weapon, has a range of 900

km.<sup>33</sup> Soviet artillery is a primary means of launching chemical and biological munitions which could be a major threat to rear area operations.

Combat service support forces in the rear area must be prepared to take defensive countermeasures against Soviet artillery. Doctrinally, enemy combat service support units are in the Soviet's top five priorities for offensive artillery fire.<sup>34</sup> This targeting priority makes it essential that combat service support forces set up operations whenever possible, where terrain and man-made obstacles, such as buildings, provide protection from artillery. As an absolute minimum, combat service support forces must constantly train to dig in positions with overhead cover so that personnel, if not equipment, can survive an artillery or rocket attack.

#### Unconventional Warfare

The Soviets have a long history of successfully using unconventional warfare units dating back to the Russian Civil War. Unconventional warfare units have been and continue to be employed during peacetime as well as wartime.<sup>35</sup> Doctrinally "Soviet unconventional warfare is designed primarily to support a surprise attack. Before the start of hostilities, clandestine operations in the target area increase the probability of destruction of key targets well before enemy rear area security measures are heightened."<sup>36</sup> While specially trained airborne and

heliborne troops can be used for unconventional warfare missions behind enemy lines, the standard Soviet force for this is its spetsnaz units.

Spetsnaz forces are similar to U.S. Army Special Forces and Rangers. They operate in small teams of 8-10 soldiers, similar to special forces, and are highly trained. But unlike special forces, they do not have military security assistance training missions. Their missions are more like those of rangers, for example, covertly destroying key targets or personnel or seizing an enemy airfield. Like special forces and rangers, their soldiers are hand picked for their mental and physical abilities and carefully trained. Spetsnaz are also selected for their loyalty to the regime. Like the rest of the Soviet Army the spetsnaz rely on two year conscripts and officers. They do not have a core of experienced noncommissioned officers, although they send a high percentage of their recruits to noncommissioned officer training schools.<sup>37</sup>

The existence of spetsnaz units is not well known in the USSR. A recent Soviet defector, Viktor Suvorov, has shed considerable light on their organization. Each army has a spetsnaz company. Each front has a spetsnaz brigade consisting of three to four parachute battalions, its own signal battalion, and supporting units.<sup>38</sup> There are also spetsnaz naval brigades with capabilities similar to

U.S. Navy SEALs. The standard spetsnaz brigade consists of 1000-1300 soldiers.<sup>39</sup> Spetsnaz do not have BMPs or heavy weapons but are trained to use captured equipment. They may also wear their enemy's uniforms.<sup>40</sup>

Although their composition is monitored by the KGB, spetsnaz units are part of and work only for the GRU, the Soviet Army's military intelligence organization. They can be deployed as part of the front or army effort or small teams can be prepositioned behind enemy lines well before hostilities begin to prepare for and then strike specified targets.<sup>41</sup>

Identifying spetsnaz personnel and then defeating them before they are able to accomplish their mission in the rear area will be a major challenge for combat service support forces. For example, it would be comparatively easy for spetsnaz personnel to disguise themselves as local national laborers and gain entry into U.S. logistic bases on a regular basis. In this way the spetsnaz would be familiar with the routine on the base, the location of defenses, and the exact location of their target. It would then be relatively simple to hit the desired target on command and then disappear before U.S. combat service support troops have time to react.

Soviet doctrine places high priority on striking deep into their enemy's rear area to disrupt rear operations and to create a second battle. As outlined here, they have a

variety of units trained for and capable of this mission. These units are also supported with a great deal of firepower. The threat to U.S. nondivisional combat service support forces is clear. The challenge must be to prepare to counter and defeat this threat.

### CHAPTER III

#### U.S. ARMY REAR BATTLE DOCTRINE

To counter the Soviet threat to its rear area, the U.S. Army has developed operational concepts for conduct of the rear battle. This doctrine is outlined in a 1985 field manual, titled Rear Battle. The manual briefly defines the threat, divides the threat into three levels of combat, and designates responsibility for the rear battle.

In assessing the threat for rear battle planning, U.S. Army doctrine assigns threat levels to the type of enemy operations which are expected in the rear area. Doctrinal responses to these threats are then outlined based on the level of threat. Threat Level I consists of sabotage by enemy sympathizers, heightened activity by enemy controlled agents, and terrorist acts. The major distinguishing characteristic of Level I is that the threat operations are not conducted by Soviet or other enemy troops but rather by third parties.<sup>1</sup>

Level II threat operations are conducted by enemy military forces and include unconventional warfare sabotage missions and raids, ambushes, or reconnaissance operations carried out by combat units. Level II operations are unique in that they are attacks by enemy units of less than battalion strength.<sup>2</sup>

Level III threat operations are any enemy military operation in the rear area of battalion size or larger. These include but are not limited to airborne, heliborne, amphibious, or ground force combat operations.<sup>3</sup> Consistent with Soviet doctrine this would include most divisional forward detachment actions and all OMGs, as well as, most airborne and heliborne assaults. No threat level is assigned to enemy artillery or aircraft attacks.

Primary responsibility for defending against all levels of threat rests with the rear area units themselves.<sup>4</sup> Rear Battle goes into considerable detail assigning responsibility for control of the rear battle. Briefly each echelon of command appoints a rear battle officer to control the rear battle.<sup>5</sup> For example, in the case of a corps rear area, the rear battle officer is often the corps deputy commanding general. To control the battle, the rear battle officer has a staff, the rear area operations center or RAOC. At present all RAOCs are reserve component units.

Combat service support forces are generally dispersed throughout the rear area in composite logistic support bases. The senior commander on each base is responsible for the defense of his base. He establishes a defensive perimeter and develops a defense plan for his base consistent with the guidance provided by the rear battle officer through the RAOC. The base commander is also

responsible for designating a rapid response force from within his base assets. Base defensive operations must rely on organic personnel and equipment.<sup>6</sup> In the event of an attack the base commander takes appropriate defensive measures using his organic forces, assesses the level of the threat, and advises the RAOC of the situation.

If the enemy force is of less than battalion size, that is Level I or II, delaying and defeating it is the responsibility of the base commander. In the event of an attack by enemy forces which cannot be quickly defeated by organic base defenses, doctrine says the base commander will obtain supporting fire from adjacent rear area units.<sup>7</sup>

Rear area combat service support units are seldom, if ever, located closely enough to each other to provide supporting fire especially considering the organic weapons available, that is, no heavy weapons. While all base commanders are required to have a rapid response force, doctrine states that "only under extreme circumstances will a base defense reaction force be committed to support assets outside the base."<sup>8</sup>

If the enemy force attacking the base is of battalion size or larger, that is Level III, the RAOC will direct the support of reinforcements in the form of military police units in the rear area.<sup>9</sup> The RAOC can also use its discretion to deploy reinforcements if the threat exceeds the base's ability to defend itself even if the threat is

below Level III. However, because of the extremely limited number of military police forces available to the RAOC, the RAOC must use extreme caution in committing these reserves. Military police units are seldom given rear area security as a primary mission. Generally this is an additional mission after route security.

Theoretically the RAOC can also call upon combat forces in the rear area for assistance. Except in the very early stages of the war, it is unlikely that combat forces in the rear area will be capable of much force because they will be back for reconstitution. A unit being reconstituted has been so decimated in the main battle that it has been withdrawn to be rearmed and reinforced with personnel. The RAOC can also request that reserve forces or units in the main battle area be diverted to the rear battle. This is a possibility but doing so would clearly jeopardize the outcome of the main battle. As addressed in Chapter II, diversion of main battle forces to the rear battle meets the objectives of Soviet deep battle doctrine as it will weaken the strength of the main battle effort.

To defend his base against attack the base commander has at his disposal all personnel on the base and their individual weapons: M-16 rifles and M9 or M1911 pistols. Crew served weapons in combat service support units consist of M-60 and M-80 (50 caliber) machine guns, M-24 squad automatic weapons, and M-203 grenade launchers. Efforts are

underway to equip combat service support units with the MK-19 grenade machine gun in the future. Combat service support units also have access to mines and light antitank weapons (LAW). There are no heavy weapons in combat service support units nor are there early warning devices, such as the platoon early warning system or ground surveillance radar. All early warning must be accomplished with expedient devices and occupied observation posts. The organic weapons in a combat service support base in the rear area might allow it to defend against small dismounted forces such as spetsnaz or heliborne units but they are clearly inadequate to contend with Soviet or other enemy forces mounted in BMPs, BMDs, or tanks. Soviet OMGs, forward detachments, and airborne forces are equipped with such vehicles and can be expected to attack rear area bases mounted in these vehicles.

In addressing what rear area bases must do when threatened by a superior enemy force, U.S. Army doctrine acknowledges the inadequacy of the weapon systems available. "If the threat exceeds the available base assets, the preplanned measure to delay the force may be seriously tested until the MP response force or [a] TCF [tactical combat force] can arrive."<sup>10</sup> This guidance assumes that military police or combat forces will be

available to reinforce the base and will not have been committed elsewhere.

At times, due to facilities and assets the base will not prevent the breach of the perimeter. Base defense plans should consider this problem. Critical units or bases may be evacuated from the area if the factors of METT-T [mission, enemy, terrain, time and troops available] permit. Close and continuous coordination with the RAOC will enhance this defense.<sup>11</sup>

The challenge to combat service support forces to be prepared to defend themselves is clear. The difficulty is compounded by the requirement to sustain support to forward combat units despite enemy action.<sup>12</sup> With severely constrained combat service support forces, this presents a unique training challenge to combat service support commanders. Unless their forces are thoroughly trained in light infantry tactics, it is only a matter of time before enemy forces attack and defeat them. A poorly trained force will be overrun long before the RAOC can send reinforcements.

CHAPTER IV  
TRAINING CHALLENGES

Combat service support forces must be trained to survive on the modern battlefield. The key to survival is realistic training in peacetime. Under current doctrine, combat service support units will not be located in secure rear areas nor will combat units be given the mission to protect them. Combat service support forces must be able to fight for themselves and win.

In the case of nondivisional combat service support forces, corps, army, and theater commanders must acknowledge the very real threat to their combat service support units. For too long the Soviet threat to these forces has been ignored because of overriding concern for the threat to combat units. Without combat service support sustainment, combat units cannot win sustained battles much less a war. Corps commanders in particular, need to require combat service support units to conduct realistic defensive training and to give units the time necessary to train. With the heavy peacetime load of support missions, combat service support units often can only use short weekend blocks of time for training. Deployments and exercises are ideal times for realistic training but higher commanders must give combat service support forces the impetus and resources to conduct defensive training. Too often the

defense plans of combat service support units are not closely scrutinized by the corps G-3. Strands of concertina wire, a few individual fighting positions, and guards with machine guns at each entrance and exit point are frequently accepted as adequate.

Nondivisional combat service support commanders need to have a clear understanding of what Soviet doctrine says will be used against them and when. This includes conventional, as well as unconventional forces. Knowledge of the threat has the potential to make training more realistic if the resources are made available. For example, combat service support units, when attacked in training, are often attacked by dismounted aggressors from another combat service support unit simulating Soviet spetsnaz troops. While this is expedient, it is hardly realistic. If spetsnaz are to be simulated, then the most realistic U.S. forces to use are cavalry scouts, rangers, or special forces teams. The corps or higher level commander needs to make these assets available for training.

The most significant threat to combat service support forces, as outlined in Chapter II, are mounted Soviet forces. While there are exceptions, few nondivisional combat service support units ever train with mechanized or armor forces as aggressors. Training with mounted forces is particularly critical when considering the disadvantage combat service support units have in weapons, as addressed

in Chapter III. Unless they have been trained with attacks by mounted forces, combat service support units have no concept of how rapidly these forces can move nor of their firepower and protection. The use of multiple integrated laser engagement simulation (MILES) has the potential to enhance this training even more.

Early warning and maximum use of indirect fire are critical to the survival of combat service support forces. By virtue of their mission, combat service support units cannot hide nor do they have the ability to rapidly relocate. They must, therefore, take full advantage of the inherent strengths of being in defense. The location of combat service support bases in the rear area should be carefully planned by the higher headquarters' rear battle officer and the RAOC.<sup>1</sup> A good road network is vital to the success of a combat service support unit's primary mission, but selection of a defensible position is even more vital for survival. This may mean accepting less desirable roads or traffic congestion. Obviously high ground and good visibility are basic. In addition, setting up operations in existing buildings, where possible, versus tents and vans can offer advantages to the defender.<sup>2</sup> Practicing this in field exercises may well be more difficult than establishing a tent compound in a field or on a hill top, but it will train units better for reality.

Once a base location has been selected, the base commander must develop a realistic base defense plan. This has been a traditional weakness for combat service support units and will continue to worsen if training is not changed. Combat service support officers have not served combat arms details since the early 1970s. Thus, few have any experience in training for combat operations. Senior commanders need to carefully scrutinize the defensive plans of support bases and train their junior leaders in this task. Interlocking fields of fire, positioning crew served weapons, establishing outposts, and connecting the perimeter with communication are basic, but need to be practiced in training. Also basic, given the Soviets reliance on artillery, is training combat service support soldiers to dig fighting positions with overhead cover every time they go to the field. It is worth noting that FM 90-14, the Army's rear battle doctrine manual, depicts soldiers fighting from shallow pits with no overhead or frontal cover, no camouflage, and no aiming stakes for final protective fire.<sup>3</sup> Soldiers in combat service support units must train to standard on individual as well as collective common soldier tasks, such as preparing fighting positions.

Base defense plans, once developed and approved by higher headquarters (either the rear battle officer or the RAOC), must be rehearsed. In order for combat service

support commanders to learn to direct a battle, a responsibility they must accept,<sup>4</sup> they must practice first without aggressors and then with realistic aggressors who simulate the Soviet threat. The skills of combat service support leaders will be challenged by U.S. combat forces conducting a coordinated attack. Without such realistic training, however, combat service support leaders will be unable to repulse attacks by trained and determined Soviet forces in wartime.

Base commanders must know their own vulnerabilities in advance and must have current intelligence on enemy intentions in order to maximize their advantages in defense. To fully understand their vulnerabilities, base commanders along with the rear battle officer and RAOC must be thoroughly knowledgeable of the terrain surrounding the base. This knowledge must extend beyond the range of base organic weapons. For example, the location of potential landing zones and drop zones must be known, as well as built up or heavily wooded areas and defiles, which could offer the enemy temporary concealment. Base commanders also need to know the defense plans and fields of fire of neighboring friendly force bases. This terrain analysis should include potential convoy ambush sites along routes leading to and from the base in the event the base forces are called upon to assist in battles outside the perimeter.

Traditionally combat service support units do not receive high priority for intelligence data. With restricted combat power, combat service support units may have even greater requirements for early warning of enemy intentions than many main battle area combat units. Combat service support commanders must aggressively seek intelligence information. Doctrinally this information is provided by the RAOC.<sup>5</sup> It is also available through the commander's higher headquarters.

Combat service support units have the potential for their own intelligence gathering network as they move about from base to base on their daily missions. Presently combat service support units talk about this network but few capitalize on it in training. This intelligence collection potential can be developed into a real asset by routinely debriefing all outposts, drivers, and convoy commanders, and by focusing intelligence collection on a specific person or section. Ideally this would be the S-2/3. Because many combat service support bases are composites of a variety of units, there is not always an S-2/3. The base commander must designate someone to perform this mission. Obviously sharing intelligence data with adjacent units and the RAOC is imperative. Knowing potential vulnerabilities and early warning of attack are key to defense of combat service support bases.

In the case of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) threat, intelligence and advance warning are critical. While combat service support units routinely practice wearing chemical protective equipment and decontaminating individuals and equipment, less attention in training is paid to the use of chemical alarms, radiation monitors, and warning indicators. Wearing chemical protective equipment all the time is not a solution, as this equipment is generally recognized to reduce efficiency by 30-50%. Combat service support units must practice emplacing and using NBC warning equipment routinely in training. The practice in some units of teaching soldiers to react to all smoke or artillery as if it were gas will severely hamper combat effectiveness. Masking and donning protective equipment and then following unmasking procedures are time consuming even for false alarms. Knowing through current intelligence whether the enemy is firing chemical artillery or not, can save combat service support units valuable time and resources. Having trained personnel, operational NBC warning equipment, and a SOP for sounding the alarm in the event of an NBC attack will give the unit survivability as well as the freedom to perform its mission.

After planning, intelligence, and early warning questions have been answered, combat service support units must be prepared to defeat an enemy attack. Given the organic weapons previously addressed in Chapter III, combat

service support units can be expected to locate, isolate, and defeat small dismounted enemy forces. But against mounted forces such as Soviet airborne, motorized rifle, or tank units which compose forward detachments and OMGs, combat service support units will have to rely on early warning, barriers to canalize the attack, and indirect fire weapons from general support artillery or aviation.

Depending upon the terrain and friendly situation, a well coordinated barrier plan has the potential to force the enemy to use roads. However, barriers, particularly mines are also a threat to friendly forces attempting to maneuver in the area. The expertise and guidance of the rear battle officer is important here, particularly as regards the higher commanders' concept of operations. For example, is the combat service support base located astride a possible retrograde route? If so, how would the barriers fit into the overall plan? Combat service support units must construct barriers and barrier plans routinely in training. This requires training mines, both anti-armor and anti-personnel, as well as barrier materials and possible engineer support.

Because mounted enemy troops can engage combat service support bases while they are still well beyond the range of organic combat service support weapons, the most critical aspect of combat service support base defense is indirect fire: artillery and aviation.

General support artillery is the heaviest weapon system available to nondivisional combat service support units to defeat mounted enemy forces. Artillery can also defeat overwhelming numbers of dismounted troops, such as heliborne forces. Nondivisional combat service support bases do not move frequently. Therefore preplanned artillery fire on anticipated enemy avenues of approach, potential landing zones, etc., offer advantages not only to the combat service support units but to the supporting artillery units. To successfully employ artillery, though, a unit must have regular practice. While some combat service support units include artillery support in their training operation plans, few combat service support leaders have actual experience coordinating or adjusting artillery fire. The time to learn this skill is peacetime. It must be a training priority if combat service support units are to survive Soviet mounted attacks. Allocating time and training assets for artillery training has to come from the corps or higher level headquarters.

The employment of helicopter gunships and close air support also offers combat service support units the advantage of weapon systems that can engage and defeat Soviet mounted forces. Like the use of artillery, combat service support leaders need to be trained in peacetime when to call for this support and how to direct it in order to maximize the firepower advantages it offers. The RAOC can

coordinate and request artillery and aviation support, but it cannot direct the battle. That is the responsibility of the base commander.

Because of the Soviet's emphasis on speed and firepower, communication speed in calling for supporting artillery and aviation is imperative. Compared to combat units, combat service support units have few organic radios. Soldiers in combat service support units need to be trained to use the available radios and telephones to call for support and to give situation reports to the RAOC. In addition, back-up signalling devices, such as flares and sirens, must be made part of the SOP for the RAOC and must be practiced in training. Speed is of the essence in calling for support once superior enemy forces have been detected or an attack is underway. Combat service support units do not have the staying power in their organic weapons to survive determined Soviet mounted attacks.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Training is the key to survival of combat service support units in combat. Given the heavy support missions of combat service support units, training time is difficult to find. Training opportunities must be developed and exercised both in garrison and in the field. Commanders at every level must reverse the complacency that has to date surrounded combat service support training. The freedom offered by secure rear areas on the linear battlefield of the past is gone. Combat service support units, both active and reserve component, must take combat and combat training seriously because combat service support units are priority targets for the Soviets. Without the sustainment of combat service support units, combat and combat support units cannot survive to defeat the enemy.

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