

APPENDIX D

ASSEMBLY AREAS

The battalion occupies an assembly area for security while preparing for future operations. Preparations include reorganizing issuing orders, receiving and issuing supplies, and maintaining vehicles and equipment. Occupation of an assembly area can be directed by a higher commander or by the battalion commander. (See FM 7-20 for a detailed discussion on the occupation of assembly areas.)

D-1. CHARACTERISTICS

A force in an assembly area is given some security by being behind friendly lines, and by having another friendly element between it and the enemy. Regardless, the battalion must defend itself should the enemy break through, bypass forward defenses, drop airborne or air assault forces, or be seen from the air. It normally uses the same techniques used in the perimeter defense. The assembly area should provide –

- Concealment from air and ground observation.
- Cover from direct fire.
- Space for dispersion against massed chemical or nuclear fires.
- Adequate entrances, exits, and internal routes.
- Good drainage and soil conditions that support battalion or attached vehicles.

D-2. QUARTERING PARTY

Before the main body leaves the assembly area, the march commander sends a quartering party (or advance party) to the forward assembly area. The reconnaissance and the quartering parties do not travel as part of the march column. They precede the main body and move by infiltration.

a. A quartering party normally comprises an OIC (HHC commander, XO of the HHC, or battalion S1), security element, communications and medical personnel, and required staff section and subordinate unit personnel. Its mission is to reconnoiter the new area and to guide march elements to the assembly area. The commander of the quartering party must be told the route, order of march, and estimated time of arrival of the main body. A battalion quartering party consists of the quartering parties from each subordinate company. A company quartering party consists of one element from each platoon.

b. The quartering party should have enough guides, markers, and pioneer tools to improve the new area. As march elements clear the RP, quartering party members waiting in covered and concealed positions move out to guide elements to selected areas without halt.

c. To reduce being seen by the enemy during occupation, the quartering party reconnoiters. Then, it organizes the assembly area before the battalion arrives. The party ensures the area has the required features. It selects areas for each company, CP, and CS and CSS element. The party then guides arriving elements into position. This avoids stopping moving units on an exposed route of march.

D-3. ORGANIZATION

The assembly area is organized by assigning companies sectors of the battalion perimeter or dispersed company assembly areas (Figure D-1). It must allow for good dispersion of all elements of the battalion.

a. Security can be augmented by visual observation, sensors, and surveillance devices. Road security is the duty of the company in whose sector the units pass through. Contact points for units can also be named to help in coordinating security. All exits and entrances to the assembly area are strictly controlled. OPs cover key terrain features and avenues of approach.

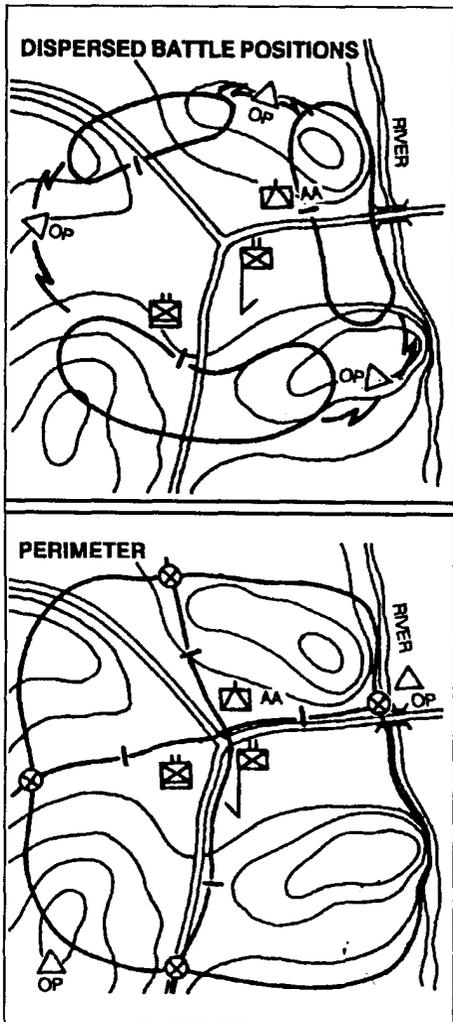


Figure D-1. Assembly areas.

b. The scout platoon may be tasked to reconnoiter routes of movement to counterattack positions, defensive positions, or passage lanes. It may also provide security by setting up OPs, roadblocks, or traffic control points.

c. CS elements are positioned with units they are to support. They are located to provide support to all elements of the battalion.

d. The battalion CP and trains are centrally located for security, which helps to plan, issue orders, distribute supplies, and so on.

e. Communication between elements is by wire or by messenger. Radio is used only in an emergency.

f. Company assembly areas should be large enough to allow for dispersion and for cover and concealment from observation and enemy direct fires. Company

positions within the battalion assembly area should aid movement for future operations.

g. Placement of mortars should consider minimum employment distance. This may result in mortars positioned in adjacent company sectors where emplacement must be coordinated. Mortars are normally employed with two-thirds of

their range forward. This covers the center of the company sector as the main direction of fire.

h. The quartering party must prepare for occupation of an assembly area during limited visibility. The vital handoff occurs at the RP. Coordination allows for a smooth passage of the march unit through the RP without halts. Guides meet the march unit at the RP. They lead the unit along a marked route to the assembly area. Subunit guides, using planned colored lights or flash recognition signals, link up with platoons/sections and lead them to prepared sectors. Individual, vehicle, crew, or squad positions are marked with stakes, chemical lights, engineer tape, or pre-laid communication wire.