

**FM 3-21.20**  
(FM 7-20)

# **THE INFANTRY BATTALION**

**DECEMBER 2006**

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# The Infantry Battalion

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# Preface

This manual defines the role, operational requirements, mission tasks, battlefield functions, and command and control relationships of Infantry battalions organic to the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT). Users of this manual must understand the elements of doctrinal literature and their relationship to each other. The commonly used terms, tactics, techniques, and procedures are both interrelated and mutually supportive. However, each term has its own usage, level of detail, and place in the hierarchy of doctrinal publications. FMs provide doctrine, tactics, and some techniques, while mission training plans (MTP) provide techniques and procedures. Procedures can also be found in publications such as unit standing operating procedures (SOP) and Soldiers' manuals as well as others. Tactics, techniques, and procedures, in that order, become more prescriptive and require less judgment as these elements are applied.

This manual is provided for use by Infantry battalion commanders and staffs, company commanders, and special platoon leaders. The term Infantry unit, as used in this context throughout this manual, refers to all Infantry and Ranger units unless otherwise specified. Air assault and airborne mission trained units are organized as Infantry units and are not differentiated in this manual. This manual is also provided for use by instructors of US Army Infantry battalion operations. It provides the doctrine for Infantry battalions to use in combat training and combat. It establishes a common base of tactical knowledge from which specific solutions to battalion-level tactical problems can be developed. It is designed to increase the effectiveness of battalion-level operations by providing doctrinal principles and selected battlefield-proven tactics, techniques, and procedures.

While this manual is primarily written for US Army Infantry units, it is also a source of information for other branches of the US Army and US military, and for multinational forces while working in a joint environment. It applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard (ARNG), the National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS), and the US Army Reserve (USAR), unless otherwise stated.

The *Summary of Change* lists major changes from the previous edition by chapter and appendix. Changes include lessons learned.

The proponent for this publication is the US Army Training and Doctrine Command. The preparing agency is the US Army Infantry School. You may send comments and recommendations by any means, US mail, e-mail, fax, or telephone, as long as you use or follow the format of DA Form 2028, *Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*. You may also phone for more information.

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Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns may refer to either men or women.

Also, to improve clarity, some graphics show Soldiers' uniforms without the camouflage pattern.

## Summary of Changes

Chapter 1 .....	UPDATED ..... Infantry battalion organization ADDED ..... Discussion of modularity issues ADDED ..... Organization of IBCT ADDED ..... Discussion of COE
Chapters 1, 4, 10 .....	ADDED ..... Discussion of weapons company
Chapters 1, 10 .....	ADDED ..... Forward support company
Chapter 3 .....	ADDED ..... ISR ADDED ..... Integration of UAS into collection and surveillance plan
Chapter 4 .....	ADDED ..... Discussion of sniper squad employment
Chapter 5 .....	NA
Chapter 6 .....	ADDED ..... Stability operations
Chapter 7 .....	UPDATED ..... Civil support operations
Chapter 8 .....	ADDED ..... Tactical enabling operations
Chapter 9 .....	ADDED ..... Command post operations
Chapter 10 .....	CHANGED ..... BOS to WFFs CHANGED ..... CSS to sustainment ADDED ..... IBCT operations
Chapter 11 .....	ADDED ..... Urban operations
Appendix A.....	ADDED ..... Risk management and fratricide avoidance
Appendix B.....	ADDED ..... Movements and assembly areas
Appendix C .....	ADDED ..... Air assault operations
Appendix D .....	UPDATED ..... Operations with Heavy and Stryker
Appendix E.....	UPDATED ..... Aviation support to ground operations
Appendix F .....	UPDATED ..... Sniper operations ADDED ..... Squad designated marksman.
Appendix G .....	ADDED ..... SOF, joint, interagency, and multinational operations
Appendix H .....	ADDED ..... Continuous operations
Appendix I.....	ADDED ..... Operations in CBRN
Appendix J .....	ADDED ..... Media considerations
Appendix K.....	ADDED ..... UAS and A2C2
Appendix L .....	ADDED ..... Lethal/nonlethal capabilities
Appendix M .....	ADDED ..... Forward operating bases
Appendix N (TBP) .....	TO BE PUBLISHED ... Counterinsurgency operations

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Infantry battalion is the first level of command that includes an assigned staff supporting a commander. The battalion can deploy rapidly, execute early-entry operations, and execute missions throughout the full spectrum of operations. It can conduct effective combat or other operations immediately upon arrival to assist in the prevention, containment, stabilization, or resolution of a conflict.

### Section I. MISSION, CAPABILITIES, AND LIMITATIONS

The Infantry battalion can execute military operations in varying terrain and under any visibility conditions throughout the full spectrum of operations. Infantry battalions use, and even seek out limited visibility conditions in tactical and training situations to continually enhance their capabilities. Darkness, fog, heavy rain, and falling snow offer the battalion opportunities to maximize its technical abilities and tactical skills. Infantry battalions are also well suited for restrictive terrain such as mountains, jungles, and urban areas. They are best when used in a combined arms formation, especially when armor, artillery, engineers, aviation, and other joint assets are integrated into the operation. Task organizing combined arms with access to joint capabilities tailors the organization to the mission. This flexibility allows the commander to apply combat power at a designated time and place. An Infantry battalion can be completely wheel mobile using trucks from the forward support company (FSC) and more trucks from the brigade support battalion (BSB). However, the Infantry brigade combat team (IBCT) can only provide this mobility to one Infantry battalion at a time.

#### MISSION

1-1. The primary mission of the Infantry battalion is to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver. Its purpose is to destroy or capture him, to repel his assaults by fire, close combat, and counterattack, or all of these. Infantry battalions can deploy rapidly and can be sustained by an austere support structure. They conduct operations against conventional and unconventional enemy forces in all types of terrain and climate conditions. The battalion's composition and training uniquely equip it to conduct its mission. In addition to its primary war-fighting mission, the Infantry battalion might be tasked to perform other types of operations, including stability operations and civil support operations, semi-independently or as an integral part of a larger force. The Infantry battalion can routinely be task organized as part of an IBCT, Heavy brigade combat team (HBCT), Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT), or possibly to a supporting brigade.

#### CAPABILITIES

1-2. The inherent capability of the Infantry battalion is linked to that of the BCT to which it is assigned or task organized. The BCT is the primary fighting headquarters of the US Army tactical fight. The Infantry battalion's relatively small, light organization allows it to move rapidly and strategically. As a result, the Infantry battalion functioning as part of the IBCT often arrives in a theater of operations before the HBCTs and SBCTs. BCTs have assigned robust intelligence collection, fires management, and command and control systems. These systems allow the Infantry battalion to maneuver to points of advantage before making physical contact with the enemy. In doing so, the battalion is less likely to conduct movement to contact tactical offensive operations; it is more likely to conduct maneuver to a

known point and to execute deliberate tactical offensive operations. It can accomplish this by using its assigned Army Battle Command System (ABCS) to—

- Quickly access the BCT and higher intelligence databases.
- Maintain a clear picture of friendly force locations.
- Communicate over distance via satellite and digital means.
- Quickly communicate orders without the need for face-to-face coordination.

1-3. All Infantry battalions share the same table of organization and equipment (TOE) and can conduct air assault operations. However, some Infantry battalions receive regular, intense, and specialized training in air assault and airborne operations.

## LIMITATIONS

1-4. Once the Infantry battalion is deployed to an area of operations, lack of rapid mobility is a limitation. While insertion means vary, all Infantry battalions are comprised mostly of foot-mobile Soldiers, and thus require organic or supporting unit vehicles for enhanced ground movement of troops or supplies. In addition to limited mobility, the Infantry battalion lacks the firepower and protection of an SBCT Infantry battalion or HBCT combined arms battalion. While moving, Infantry battalions are especially vulnerable to enemy indirect fires and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks. Also, the Infantry battalion can only conduct independent operations for short periods. Sustainment must be carefully planned. It must focus on quantities of supplies immediately available to the unit, forecasted requirements, and a distribution plan that is synchronized with the maneuver plan.

## Section II. ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

The Infantry battalion is designed for employment in full spectrum operations, specifically, offense, defense, stability operations, and civil support operations. The combination of rifle companies, weapons company, and specialty assets such as the scouts, mortars, and snipers, allows the commander to internally task-organize capabilities as needed.

## COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

1-5. In addition, the command and control structure can readily accept external task-organized elements, to include combat arms, combat support, and sustainment. Close attention must be paid to the command and support relationship of task-organized elements to ensure adequate command, control, and logistical support.

## FUNCTION

1-6. The Infantry battalion normally functions as part of an IBCT. Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-2 (page 1-4) show, and the following paragraphs discuss the organization of the two basic Infantry battalions: Infantry and Ranger. Appendix D discusses the integration of Infantry, Heavy, and Stryker forces; and Appendix G discusses integration with SOF, joint, interagency, and multinational operations. Each battalion has three rifle companies, a weapons company, and a headquarters and headquarters company (HHC). The battalion also has a habitually associated FSC task-organized for sustainment from the BSB. The HHC has two elements: the headquarters section and the headquarters (HQ) company: