Military Intelligence

PROFESSIONAL BULLETIN

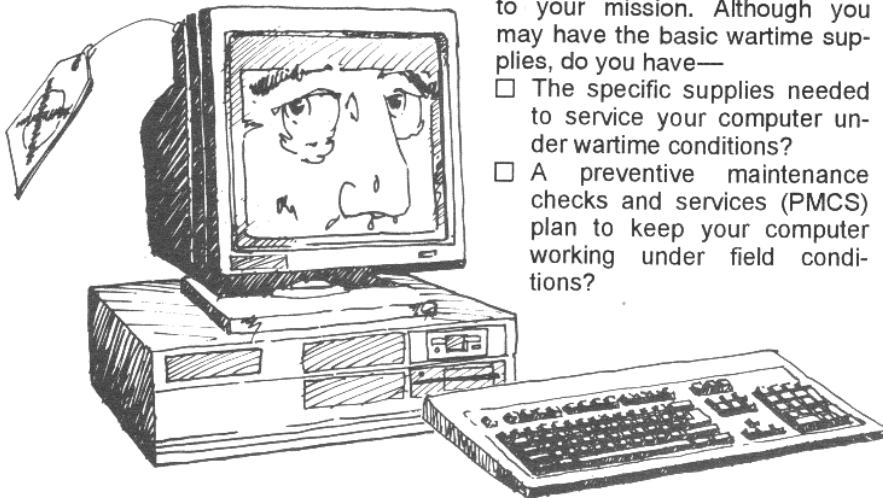## Intelligence Support to the Logistician

Plugged In

YOU CAN'T "CIRCLE X" A DEADLINED COMPUTER

by Captain Gregory J. Conti

August 1990: The lieutenant felt like an idiot carrying his laptop computer along with his M-16 onto the plane. The division was deploying to a probable war with Iraq, and he had to sling a computer over his shoulder.

The major made him handcarry the computer instead of sending it on the ship with the rest of the equipment. The lieutenant didn't think the unit would need the computer before the equipment arrived. He was wrong!

Today's military must perform force projection. As an intelligence officer you could deploy to any number of hot spots around the world. When you go, you will take the tools of the trade—maps, 100-mile-an-hour tape, acetate, alcohol markers, and a computer.

You will use your computer to write operations orders and collection plans and for telecommunications. Your computer, in conjunction with a printer, enables you to reproduce and disseminate information. It is absolutely critical to your mission. Although you may have the basic wartime supplies, do you have—

☐ The specific supplies needed to service your computer under wartime conditions?
☐ A preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS) plan to keep your computer working under field conditions?

☐ Common repair parts?
☐ Adequate inventory to last approximately 30 days during heavy field use?

Check your on-hand inventory of these items now, before you deploy.

Printers

The first thing you'll need is printer ribbons and paper. During Desert Shield, the 24th Infantry Division's Special Security Office communications center went through a carton of printer paper and a ribbon every three days. We kept spare ribbons in zip-lock bags so they didn't dry out.

With the increased use of laser printers and copy machines, you must keep spare toner cartridges on hand. Also, bring a spare printer cable. This $10 part will render your computer virtually useless if it is lost, broken, or stolen. Try to get a heavy-duty printer and a light-duty battery-powered printer to give you flexibility under all conditions.

Power

A shared unit generator will probably power your computer. Try to get a small AC generator just for your shop. You will need extension cables to carry the power from the generator and surge suppressors to filter the power. A power strip will give you the multiple outlets you need for your equipment.

You will also need three-to-two-prong adapters for extra flexibility. A Traveler's Power Adapter Kit is worth its weight in gold in many overseas locations. An uninterruptable power supply (UPS) will provide power if your generator fails, thus saving your work.

A spare battery for your laptop computer will act as a UPS and allow you to run for hours without AC power. Bring an extra power cable (laptop and desktop) and power supply (laptop). You cannot operate without these critical parts.

Communication

You may not use your computer for communications **now**, but if deployed, you **will**. Your computer must have a modem—a FAX-modem if possible. With a modem, you can connect into the phone system and send documents and FAXs around your local area and back to home station.

Bring the extra phone cables your modem will require. They only cost about a dollar, but if broken, will shut down your telecommunications. Bring along a spool of standard issue communications wire to tie into the phone system.

Preventive Maintenance

Follow these basic rules to

maintain your computer.

- ☐ Keep your computer covered and inside shelter.
- ☐ Make covers for your computers, either store-bought or home-made from trash bags and duct tape.
- ☐ Use covers only when the equipment is off. (The cover blocks the ventilation holes and overheats the machine.)
- ☐ Always transport a laptop in its carrying case.
- ☐ Get a computer cleaning kit, and clean the screen, case, and disk drive regularly. Carry a can of compressed air to "dust off" the inside and outside of your system. You can purchase this at any computer store in a travel size.
- ☐ Bring small screwdrivers, pliers, wire strippers, and electrical tape to make field expedient connections and repairs.
- ☐ Install a good anti-virus program to protect your system. Bring an extra copy on a write-protected disk.

Computer diskettes can fail quickly in the field. One piece of dirt inside a disk will ruin it. Keep spare disks inside zip-lock bags. Hard drives are less prone to failure because they are sealed, but you must still treat them gently. You can ruin all of your programs and data if you treat them roughly.

Backups

You must backup your information. Keep at least one spare set of disks that contain your programs and DOS. Put them in a plastic bag and keep them in a safe place. Make daily copies of important documents and data. To make this process easier, try to get a tape backup drive, or if your hard drive is removable, get a spare.

Bring a large supply of floppy disks. You will need them to disseminate information and make backup copies. If you have space, take your DOS and program manuals so you can troubleshoot easier.

Conclusion

Your computer is a great tool for your section. It can double your effectiveness, but it must be kept in sound working order. Develop a combat load of supplies. When you train, implement a system of backups and maintenance. With proper care, you can always count on your computer when you need it.

CPT Conti is assigned to the National Systems Development Program, 743d MI Battalion, Fort Meade, MD. He is a West Point graduate with a bachelor's degree in computer science. His E-Mail address is CONTI@ACM.ORG (75260, 1350 on Compuserve).

TECHINT

- ☐ 69-II tanks; and type 59, 59-1, and 83 artillery.
- ☐ British: a Ferret Scout Car, a Chieftain tank.
- ☐ French: various Panhard and AMX-10 APCs.
- ☐ Egyptian: a Fahd APC.
- ☐ Brazilian: an Engessa EE11 APC.
- ☐ South African: a G5 155mm gun.
- ☐ United States: M113, M109, 203 mm towed howitzers, and a Sherman tank.

The primary training challenge for the TECHINT detachment was identifying models, types, and variants. Severely damaged vehicles were almost impossible to identify. Many were severely burned or were little more than hunks of twisted metal.

We used automatic data processing and E-Mail to pass information from Kuwait back to the FMIB on telephone lines. We used the Chroma digital imaging camera to send back pictures of pieces of equipment. This vital communications link enables TECHINT teams to dissiminate information worldwide, and CONUS-based analysts to request further pictures or reports.

Team members visited equipment sites and exchanged information with elements of the Kuwaiti land forces. Engineer TECHINT analysts visited the Kuwaiti Military Ordnance Disposal unit to observe mine breaching equipment.

The detachment also toured the Kuwait Armor School. TECHINT analysts drove the M84, a Yugoslavian-produced tank the Kuwaitis use. They also observed cutaways of the engine, hull, and turret the armor school uses to train tank crews and mechanics.

Lessons Learned

TECHINT analysts observed upgrade packages, either from various countries or locally produced, that significantly increased the capabilities of an old weapon system (considered obsolete). For instance, a T-55 with a new gun, laser range finder, new engine, additional communications equipment, or additional armor still looks like a T-55 from the outside. However, it is significantly more lethal than the original T-55.

Every nation knows that it is cheaper to expand their capabilities by upgrading existing equipment, rather than buying new systems.

TECHINT identifies, assesses, and exploits technological innovations and modifications to foreign military equipment. TECHINT analysts can tell commanders what weapons and equipment they can expect to encounter and how to employ effective countermeasures.

Captain Spencer is Commander, 11th MI Company (TECHINT). Previous assignments include assistant S3 for the FMIB, company fire support officer, platoon fire direction officer, and battalion S2 for 5-41 FA Battalion, 3d ID.