



Effective Uses of Paratroopers

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<i>Last Update:</i>	<i>15 Dec. 2006</i>
<i>Game Version:</i>	<i>1.24</i>

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Introduction

Since their release, Paratroopers have become one of the most mobile and versatile units in the history of World War II Online. With a payload similar to that of Sub-Machine Gunners, they are ideal for assaulting enemy positions and with an added satchel charge, they become tank hunters or Fire Base busters.

Credits

Various contributions from the 101st Airborne— <http://www.oldabe.org/>

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Operation Factors

There are several factors that will determine what kind of effective paratrooper uses will be available. If any of these factors are ignored, the paratrooper mission is risking failure.

Numbers

Perhaps the most important thing to consider before any paratrooper operation is to consider how many paratroopers are available. Airborne operations differ greatly whether you only have one paratrooper or several sticks inbound. For instance, dropping only one or two paratroopers over a very active enemy firebase probably won't be very successful. However dropping 20 paratroopers over the same firebase would most likely yield appreciable results.

In addition to considering how many paratroopers are inbound, you should also consider how many of them are left in the spawns. If there are only five paratroopers left in the spawn list, you won't want to waste the paratroopers whom have spawned in—no suicide drops, every trooper is valuable. On the other hand, if there's more than a hundred left, you can consider more dangerous missions as each paratrooper isn't necessarily valuable as it can be replaced.

Distance and Time

Considering the distance between the rally point and the drop zone is also critical. The further away the rally point is from the drop zone, the longer the travel time and by implication, the longer the interval between airborne reinforcements will be. If one wave of paratroopers drop over a hot target, they will need reinforcements as soon as possible. They are outnumbered and outgunned—generally speaking, the faster airborne reinforcements can arrive, the more likely the initial waves of paratroopers will be able to hold their ground.

Also take into account the waiting time for paratroopers to spawn in and board the plane. You can't wait there forever; set a deadline and takeoff at that time. No exceptions. The longer you wait at the airfield gives the enemy that much longer to regroup and overwhelm any forces at the drop zone already.

The Element of Surprise

Another factor is the element of surprise. If it's your first paradrop over an area, chances are the enemy won't be looking in the sky and won't know you're coming; you will achieve a slight element of surprise as you jump out of the plane. However, if it's a subsequent drop over the same area, the enemy will be expecting you and will deploy its forces accordingly; AAA guns especially will be scanning the skies in search of more paratroopers floating down. Essentially, airborne missions get much more difficult for the paratrooper if the enemy is expecting you.

Airborne Operations

Now that you've made some decisions before the big drop, it's time to get into some of the common paratrooper missions. The follow isn't by far a comprehensive list of every possible paratrooper operation. It is however a list that many airborne-specialized squads will tend to deploy.

Firebase Busting

While paratroopers will do the job for any FB, sometimes it's more advantageous to use paratroopers to knockout a heavily defended FB. What constitutes as a heavily defended FB? Basically any FB whose defenses simply cannot be easily broken by traditional ground forces. Provided the plane survives long enough for everyone to jump, paratroopers can land practically on top of the FB spawns, bypassing many otherwise impassible defenses along the perimeter. Once soldiers can bypass the initial line of defenses, their chances of destroying the FB greatly improve. It may be a tough nut to crack, but paratroopers can crack it so to speak.

Crumbling Stubborn Defenses

Similar in ideology to Firebase busting is weakening enemy strongholds in cities. Often times the enemy will attempt to establish a 'wall' of defensive positions around the city. The 'wall' is actually rather effective as it does what it's supposed to do—to keep traditional forces out of the city—and is hard to break with traditional forces. Paratroopers on the other hand can be dropped in the middle of the 'wall.' Through combinations of capping flags and taking out targets of opportunity, paratroopers can force the enemy to withdraw some of its forces from the perimeter and have them seek out and kill the paratroopers in the city. With more enemy forces falling back into the city, traditional forces can finally start to make some progress pushing into the city as there are fewer enemy units to worry about on the perimeter. Eventually, the enemy defenses crumble and the attacking forces can surge into the city.

Surprise Attack

Another effective use for paratroopers is the swift execution of the surprise attack. Paratroopers can be dropped over army bases in large cities and cap the bunker when the enemy isn't expecting a big attack. As the attack unfolds, the enemy will scramble to secure its bases once he realizes paratroopers are occupying them. When the enemy hastily scrambles, they become unorganized and ineffective. This generally opens them up for a more decisive defeat.

This can also be applied to other choke points throughout the city such as key spawnables. It tends to be easier to cap and hold a flag before the enemy has a chance to build a defense. Traditional forces can accomplish this too, though they stand a higher chance of being discovered by the enemy long before they reach the objective thus giving the enemy time to set up a defense. Paratroopers on the other hand can be dropped over a target and quickly mobilize to secure it before the enemy can adequately react to their presence.

Distractions

When paratroopers are dropped over a city, the defenses in the city will tend to respond to the paratroopers allowing the main attack force to gain a slight advantage as the enemy isn't watching for attacking ground forces for a few moments. When the enemy looks away, even for an instant, they open themselves up to be killed.

A small band of paratroopers can also trick the enemy into believing there is a larger force inside the city than there really is. The paratroopers have enough grenades, smoke, and ammunition to simulate a much larger force. Thus the enemy will allocate more forces to patrol the city—less will be available to deal with any advancing attackers on the perimeter.

Scout Recon

Due to their amplified stamina after a paradrop, paratroopers make for extremely mobile infantry. They can run faster longer so they can cover more ground in less time, no doubt a valued scouting ability. With their unique payload, paratroopers are also able to ambush enemies while scouting ahead; they have the ability to scout in force.

In addition, as paratroopers can be inserted nearly anywhere on the map, they are able to infiltrate enemy lines and thus are in a better position to watch the enemy more easily than their infantry counterparts. Regular infantry cannot infiltrate cities as fast because they have to maneuver around AI emplacements and other enemy positions whereas paratroopers can land immediately in the heart of the city. Reconnaissance becomes quite effective when a paratrooper is sitting practically on top of the enemy, watching his movements and his spawned equipment, and relaying that information to a larger attack force on the way.

Defense

As paratroopers are considered 'free-infantry,' they can also be very helpful on the defense as reinforcements, especially when the spawn lists have been drained during a prolonged siege. When the supply is drained, the enemy supply will also be depleted and will only have rifles left to finish off the town for the most part. SMGs definitely have the advantage over rifles in close quarters. A small group of paratroopers can usually hold a bunker against rifleman charges while more ground reinforcements can arrive from the rear town.

Conclusion

Whether it be inspiring confusion, spearheading an operation or saving the day, paratroopers are indeed a force to be reckoned with. They can be deployed for many situations and they always perform exceptionally well with whatever task they have. They are airborne infantry; hear their call.