

Unit Preparation Strategy for Mobile Border Security Operations in Papua (A Case Study of Battalion 613/RJA in 2021)

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the importance of unit readiness in supporting mobile border security operations in Papua, a region characterized by complex geographical conditions, limited infrastructure, and continuously evolving security threats. These conditions require unit preparation that is not only administrative in nature but also adaptive to actual operational conditions in the field. The existing problems indicate that the preparation of personnel, operations, and logistics has not yet been fully optimized to meet operational demands, particularly in terms of human resource quality, operational planning, and sustainable logistical support. The urgency of this study lies in the need to formulate a more effective, adaptive, and integrated unit preparation strategy to improve the success of mobile border security operations. The objectives of this research are to analyze the factors influencing unit preparation and to formulate an appropriate strategy for preparing military units to support mobile border security operations in Papua. This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through interviews, document analysis, and field observations to obtain comprehensive information. The analysis was conducted using the Security Theory developed by Barry Buzan (1991), the Ends, Ways, Means Strategy Theory proposed by Arthur F. Lykke (1989), the Deterrence Theory of Thomas C. Schelling (1961), the Readiness Theory of Francisco J. Herrera (2020), and the Military Unit Readiness Theory of Aris Sarjito (2024). The findings reveal that personnel preparation has been conducted systematically but has not yet fully adapted to Papua's geographical and socio-cultural conditions. Operational preparation still faces gaps between planning and actual field conditions, while logistical preparation remains suboptimal, particularly regarding distribution systems and material readiness. The study concludes that the existing unit preparation strategy is generally appropriate but requires improvements in contextual, integrative, and adaptive aspects to better meet operational requirements. Therefore, this study recommends refining personnel selection policies, enhancing the quality of pre-deployment training, strengthening operational planning, and optimizing logistical support systems to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of mobile border security operations in Papua.

Keywords: Unit Preparation, Personel, Operations, Papua



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INTRODUCTION

The security of national border areas has become an increasingly important component of Indonesia's national defense strategy due to the growing complexity of conventional and non-conventional threats. Border regions are no longer viewed solely as territorial boundaries but also as strategic spaces where issues of sovereignty, transnational crime, separatist movements, and regional stability intersect. The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea (RI-PNG) border, particularly in Papua, represents one of the country's most vulnerable security environments because of its difficult terrain, limited infrastructure, and persistent activities of armed separatist groups and cross-border illegal activities. These conditions require the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) to implement adaptive and sustainable border security operations capable of safeguarding national sovereignty while maintaining stability in

border communities (Buzan, 1991; Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia, 2015). The background, research problems, and objectives of the thesis emphasize that Battalion Raider 613/RJA was deployed to conduct Mobile Border Security Operations in Papua in response to these operational challenges.

In response to the dynamic security situation, the Indonesian Army has implemented Mobile Border Security Operations (Operasi Pengamanan Perbatasan Mobile) by deploying combat battalions with high operational mobility and readiness. Unlike static border security operations, mobile operations require military units to operate across vast operational areas while responding rapidly to evolving threats. Consequently, operational success depends not only on tactical capability but also on comprehensive unit preparation involving personnel readiness, operational planning, intelligence support, logistical sustainability, and command integration. Military readiness has long been recognized as a decisive factor influencing operational effectiveness because preparedness directly determines a unit's ability to accomplish assigned missions under complex operational environments (Lykke, 1989; Herrera, 2020). The thesis further identifies three critical dimensions of unit preparation personnel, operations, and logistics-as the primary determinants of mission success during the deployment of Battalion Raider 613/RJA in Papua.

Although Battalion Raider 613/RJA implemented systematic preparation before deployment, the study identifies several strategic challenges that reduced operational effectiveness. Personnel preparation was constrained by shortages of qualified soldiers, psychological readiness issues, and limited adaptation to Papua's geographical and socio-cultural environment. Operational preparation also encountered limitations due to inadequate training facilities that realistically replicated Papua's mountainous terrain, while logistical preparation faced shortages of surveillance technology, individual equipment, communications systems, and sustainable logistical support. These limitations indicate that successful border security operations require an integrated preparation strategy capable of synchronizing personnel, operational planning, and logistics within a comprehensive military readiness framework (Herrera, 2020; Sarjito, 2024). These empirical issues constitute the central research problem addressed in this study.

Therefore, this study examines the Unit Preparation Strategy for Mobile Border Security Operations in Papua through a qualitative case study of Battalion Raider 613/RJA during its 2021 deployment. Using Barry Buzan's Security Theory, Arthur F. Lykke Jr.'s Ends-Ways-Means Strategy, Thomas C. Schelling's Deterrence Theory, Herrera's Readiness Theory, and the Military Unit Readiness concept proposed by Aris Sarjito, this research analyzes how personnel preparation, operational planning, and logistical readiness can be integrated to improve operational performance. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of military strategic studies while providing practical recommendations for strengthening future Indonesian Army border security operations in Papua and other strategically sensitive border regions.

Research Gap and Novelty

Previous studies on border security operations have primarily emphasized operational tactics, counterinsurgency strategies, border management, or defense policy at the national level. Although military readiness has been widely discussed, relatively few studies comprehensively examine unit preparation strategies by integrating personnel readiness, operational planning, and logistical support within a single analytical framework for mobile border security operations in Papua. Moreover, existing research rarely applies Arthur F. Lykke Jr.'s Ends-Ways-Means strategic model together with Security Theory, Deterrence Theory, and

Readiness Theory to evaluate how military units prepare to operate in geographically isolated areas characterized by complex security threats and limited infrastructure (Buzan, 1991; Lykke, 1989; Herrera, 2020). These limitations indicate the need for a more integrated strategic approach to military unit preparation. The thesis also demonstrates that Battalion Raider 613/RJA encountered challenges related to personnel readiness, operational preparation, and logistical support, highlighting the necessity for a more adaptive preparation strategy.

The novelty of this study lies in proposing an integrated unit preparation strategy that combines the dimensions of personnel, operations, and logistics through the Ends–Ways–Means framework while incorporating the principles of security, deterrence, and military readiness. Unlike previous studies that evaluate operational readiness separately, this research develops a comprehensive analytical model that explains the interrelationship between organizational objectives, operational methods, and available resources in supporting Mobile Border Security Operations. The findings contribute both theoretically, by enriching the literature on military strategy and readiness, and practically, by providing strategic recommendations for improving the preparation of Indonesian Army combat units assigned to border security operations in Papua and other high-risk operational environments (Schelling, 1966; Herrera, 2020; Sarjito, 2024). This contribution is consistent with the research objective to formulate a more effective, adaptive, and integrated unit preparation strategy for Battalion Raider 613/RJA.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case-study approach to analyze the unit preparation strategy for Mobile Border Security Operations conducted by Battalion Raider 613/RJA during its deployment in Papua in 2021. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aimed to explore strategic planning, organizational readiness, and operational implementation in a complex border security environment rather than to measure variables quantitatively. The case study focused on Battalion Raider 613/RJA as it represented an operational unit directly responsible for conducting mobile border security missions in Papua, where security challenges, geographical conditions, and logistical constraints required comprehensive preparation and adaptive military strategies (Yin, 2018). The study examined three principal dimensions of unit preparation, namely personnel readiness, operational readiness, and logistical readiness, as the primary determinants of mission effectiveness.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with commanders, staff officers, and military personnel directly involved in the preparation and implementation of the operation, while secondary data were obtained from operational documents, military regulations, official reports, and relevant academic literature. Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical process was guided by Barry Buzan's Security Theory to examine border security challenges (Buzan, 1991), Arthur F. Lykke Jr.'s Ends–Ways–Means Strategy to evaluate strategic alignment (Lykke, 1989), Thomas C. Schelling's Deterrence Theory to analyze deterrence in border operations (Schelling, 1966), Herrera's Military Readiness Theory to assess organizational preparedness (Herrera, 2020), and Aris Sarjito's Military Unit Readiness framework to evaluate personnel, operational, and logistical readiness. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was conducted through the comparison of interview results, operational documents, and relevant literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

This section presents the empirical findings derived from interviews with key informants, document analysis, and field observations concerning the unit preparation strategy of Battalion Raider 613/RJA for the 2021 Mobile Border Security Operation in Papua. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of unit preparation was determined by the integration of personnel readiness, operational planning, logistical support, leadership, and intelligence capabilities. These components collectively enabled the battalion to accomplish its operational tasks despite facing geographical constraints, limited infrastructure, and complex security threats posed by armed criminal groups operating in Papua. The study further reveals that the preparation process was implemented systematically before deployment through personnel selection, mission-oriented training, operational planning, equipment readiness, and logistical support to ensure the unit's operational capability.

Personnel Preparation

The findings show that personnel preparation constituted the primary foundation for mission success. Battalion Raider 613/RJA conducted rigorous personnel selection, physical conditioning, psychological assessments, tactical exercises, and mission-specific training before deployment. Nevertheless, several challenges were identified, including limited operational experience among some personnel, adaptation to Papua's geographical conditions, and the need for continuous professional development. These findings indicate that personnel readiness should not only focus on physical capability but also emphasize mental resilience, leadership, cultural understanding, and operational adaptability to support long-term mission effectiveness.

Operational and Logistical Preparation

The research also found that operational and logistical preparation significantly influenced the implementation of Mobile Border Security Operations. Operational planning included intelligence preparation, mission rehearsals, contingency planning, command coordination, and operational synchronization with higher headquarters. Simultaneously, logistical preparation emphasized the availability of weapons, ammunition, communication systems, transportation assets, medical support, and sustainment supplies. However, the study identified several limitations related to surveillance technology, communications equipment, transportation infrastructure, and logistical distribution in remote operational areas. These constraints required commanders to implement adaptive decision-making and optimize available resources to maintain operational continuity throughout the mission.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings

Preparation Aspect	Research Findings	Strategic Implication
Personnel	Physical fitness, tactical competence, psychological readiness, leadership	Enhances operational effectiveness
Operations	Intelligence preparation, mission planning, rehearsals, command coordination	Improves operational responsiveness
Logistics	Equipment readiness, mobility, communications, medical support	Ensures operational sustainability
External Environment	Terrain, infrastructure, armed group activities	Requires adaptive operational planning

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the preparation strategy implemented by Battalion Raider 613/RJA reflects the integration of strategic objectives, operational methods, and organizational resources. This finding supports Arthur F. Lykke Jr.'s Ends–Ways–Means Strategy, which argues that military success depends on the alignment between strategic objectives (ends), operational approaches (ways), and available capabilities (means) (Lykke, 1989). In the context of Mobile Border Security Operations, the battalion successfully translated operational objectives into comprehensive preparation activities encompassing personnel development, operational planning, and logistical readiness. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that future operations require continuous modernization of equipment, improved intelligence capability, and adaptive operational planning to address increasingly dynamic border security challenges. From the perspective of Barry Buzan's Security Theory, border security should be understood not merely as territorial defense but as an integral component of national security involving military, political, economic, and societal dimensions (Buzan, 1991). The security challenges encountered in Papua including armed violence, difficult terrain, limited infrastructure, and cross-border vulnerabilities demonstrate that effective border security operations require a comprehensive strategy integrating military capability with interagency cooperation and community engagement. Furthermore, Thomas C. Schelling's Deterrence Theory suggests that well-prepared military forces create a credible deterrent effect that discourages hostile actions while strengthening state authority in strategically sensitive border regions (Schelling, 1966).

The research findings are also consistent with Military Readiness Theory, which emphasizes that operational success is closely associated with personnel competence, organizational preparedness, logistical sustainability, and leadership effectiveness (Herrera, 2020). Similarly, Sarjito (2024) argues that military unit readiness is achieved through the balanced integration of personnel, operations, logistics, command systems, and institutional support. The experience of Battalion Raider 613/RJA demonstrates that the effectiveness of Mobile Border Security Operations depends on continuous improvements in training, operational doctrine, intelligence integration, equipment modernization, and logistical resilience. Therefore, an integrated preparation strategy should become the foundation for strengthening the operational capability of Indonesian Army units assigned to future border security missions.



Figure 1. Integrated Unit Preparation Strategy for Mobile Border Security Operations

Source: Developed by the author based on Lykke's Ends–Ways–Means Strategy (1989) and the research findings

Figure 1 illustrates that the success of Mobile Border Security Operations depends on the strategic integration of mission objectives, operational preparation, and military capabilities. Personnel readiness, operational planning, and logistical support function as the principal components of organizational capability that collectively determine operational effectiveness. The model demonstrates that comprehensive preparation strengthens the battalion's ability to respond to complex security challenges, safeguard national sovereignty, and maintain stability in border areas. This strategic alignment reflects the principles of Ends–Ways–Means Strategy, where the balance between objectives, implementation methods, and available resources becomes the key determinant of mission success (Lykke, 1989).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the unit preparation strategy implemented by Battalion Raider 613/RJA for the 2021 Mobile Border Security Operation in Papua was generally systematic but had not yet fully addressed the operational demands of Papua's complex geographical, socio-cultural, and security environment. Personnel preparation was constrained by limited manpower, uneven physical and psychological readiness, and insufficient adaptation to the characteristics of the operational area. Operational preparation also showed gaps between pre-deployment planning and actual field conditions, while logistical preparation remained limited in the availability of surveillance technology, communications equipment, individual gear, transportation, and sustainable distribution systems. These findings confirm that military readiness depends on the integrated preparation of personnel, operational procedures, equipment, and logistical support rather than on administrative preparation alone (Buzan, 1991; Lykke, 1989).

Accordingly, the effectiveness of future mobile border security operations requires a preparation strategy that is more contextual, integrated, and adaptive. The strategic objective of safeguarding sovereignty and maintaining border stability must be supported by mission-oriented personnel selection, realistic pre-deployment training, intelligence-based operational planning, technological modernization, and reliable logistical sustainment. This alignment reflects the Ends–Ways–Means framework, in which operational objectives must be balanced with appropriate methods and sufficient resources (Lykke, 1989). Moreover, a credible and continuously prepared military presence can strengthen deterrence against armed violence, illegal cross-border activities, and other threats to national sovereignty (Schelling, 1966). Therefore, the proposed strategy provides a practical framework for improving the readiness of Indonesian Army units while strengthening national security and state presence in Papua's border areas.

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