

Section 13

PATROLLING ORGANIZATION

Key Points

- 1 Reconnaissance Patrols
- 2 Combat Patrols

There is nothing so likely to produce peace as to be well prepared to meet an enemy.

GEN George Washington

From DA PAM 600-65, *Leadership Statements and Quotes*

Introduction

As you learned in the previous section, the purpose of a patrol is generally to gather information or to conduct combat operations. There are two main types of patrols: *reconnaissance* and *combat* patrols. In this section, you'll learn more about these two types of patrols and how to organize and conduct them.

The main purpose of a reconnaissance patrol is to gather intelligence about the enemy. Higher commanders depend on the information your platoon gathers in patrolling, as you can see from this vignette about the role of patrols in the liberation of Guam from the Japanese in 1944.

Reconnaissance Patrols on Guam, 1944

The mission of getting more intelligence about enemy strength in southern Guam fell to the 77th Reconnaissance Troop, which would move out on foot and search the ridge south of Mt. Alifan to Umatac, and the eastern coastal area between Ylig Bay and Talofofo Bay. Five patrols of about five men each, with native guides, would penetrate six miles each way south and east of Alifan into unknown territory. Patrols Able and Baker would proceed east from Road Junction 370 to the coast and return. Patrols Charlie, Dog, and Easy would move directly south along the ridge. Routes were laid out by division command, but the patrols were instructed that they could vary these if it seemed desirable. They were to report in by radio every two or three hours if possible and could call for artillery support if they needed it.

The assignment was a dangerous one, particularly so for green troops. All indications were that the Japanese did not hold the southern island in force, but they might have left behind strong parties for missions of harrying the beachhead. The five-man patrols of the 77th would have to match their wits with an enemy who was noted for his ability in hide-and-peek warfare and who knew every inch of the island. The patrols would lack the usual advantage of US troops—enormous fire power—and would be at the mercy of any large enemy group. But they would benefit by a psychological advantage which General Bruce had prepared by sending beachline patrols on increasingly long trips during the previous week. These had made little contact with the Japanese, and their reports were reassuring.

Early on the morning of 28 July [1944] the patrols moved out toward their objectives, Able and Baker covering the eastern shore and Charlie, Dog, and Easy reconnoitering the ridge south of Alifan. Able, assigned Ylig Bay, got less than halfway to the bay when the native guide and two members of the patrol were overcome by fever and had to stop. Shortly after 1200 the patrol turned back, reaching the divisional lines later that afternoon. The return of Patrol Able left Baker responsible for the whole area from Ylig to Talofof Bay.

Commanded by 2d Lt. Jack B. Miller and guided by Tony Cruz, the four men in Baker Patrol headed for the high ground overlooking Talofof Bay. Less than a mile from Road Junction 370 they saw five Japanese in open ground to their front, but both groups went to cover and bypassed each other without incident. The scouts continued toward the bay and spent the night in a cave near there. Next morning Patrol Baker received orders from division headquarters to go to Ylig Bay, taking over Able's mission. Approaching Ylig, the scouts met a small group of Chamorros [native people of Guam], who greeted them joyfully and reported that many Japanese troops were to the north but that only small groups of 10 or 15 were still in the southern area. On the return trip to the road junction the men found tracks and other signs confirming the natives' report of Japanese movement to the north.

At the same time, Patrols Charlie, Dog, and Easy proceeded along both sides of the range south of Mt. Alifan. On the slopes of Mt. Lamlam the scouts of Charlie and Dog were held up by sniper fire and decided to go back to the division lines. Patrol Easy reached Umatac and swung around to take the beach road north. The Easy scouts reported that they had seen little enemy activity and that the natives were friendly.

The information gathered by the 25 scouts of the 77th Reconnaissance Troop verified [MG Roy S.] Geiger's expectations that the enemy had organized his main defenses north of the Agana-Pago Bay line. He could now go ahead with plans for the second phase, arranging for only a small security detachment from the 77th Division to protect the right flank of the corps when it crossed to the waist of the island, and to deal with the Japanese in southern Guam when the corps moved to the north.

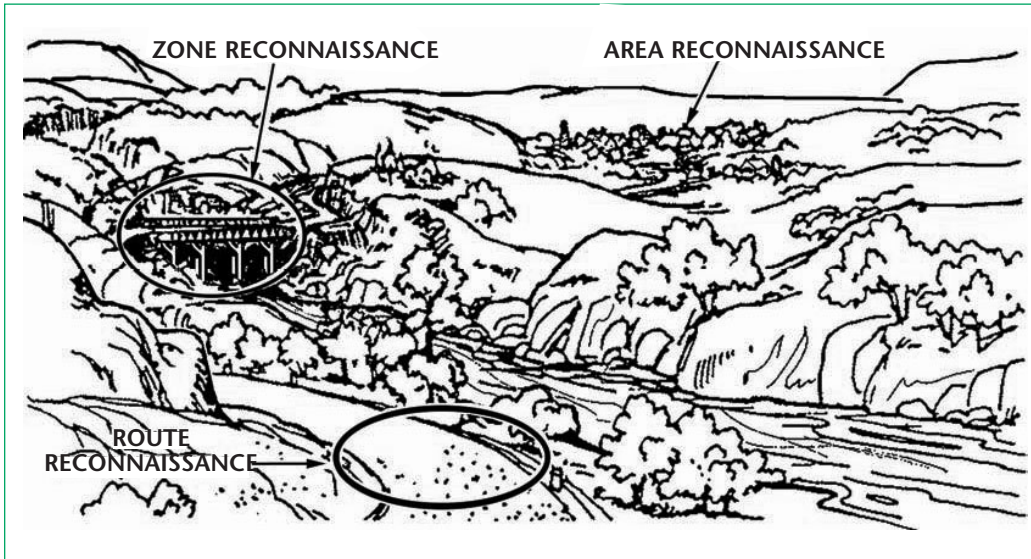


Figure 13.1 Types of Reconnaissance Patrols

Reconnaissance Patrols

Reconnaissance and combat patrols are broken down into types (Figure 13.1). The four most common types of reconnaissance patrols, and the ones we will focus on in this section, are: *area*, *route*, *zone*, and *point*.

Reconnaissance patrols provide timely and accurate information on the enemy and terrain. They confirm the leader's plan before it is executed. Before the mission begins, the higher commander must inform the patrol leader of the specific information he or she wants to receive from the patrol.

The intent of a reconnaissance patrol is to move stealthily, avoid enemy contact, and accomplish its tactical task without engaging in close combat. With one exception (presence patrols), reconnaissance patrols always try to accomplish their mission without being detected or observed. Because detection cannot always be avoided, a reconnaissance patrol carries the necessary arms and equipment to protect itself and break contact with the enemy.

A reconnaissance patrol normally travels light, with as few personnel, arms, ammunition, and equipment as possible. This increases stealth and cross-country mobility in close terrain. Regardless of how the patrol is armed and equipped, the leader always plans for the worst case: direct-fire contact with a hostile force. Leaders must anticipate where they might be observed and control the hazard by taking measures to lessen their risk. If detected or unanticipated opportunities arise, reconnaissance patrols must be able to rapidly transition to combat.

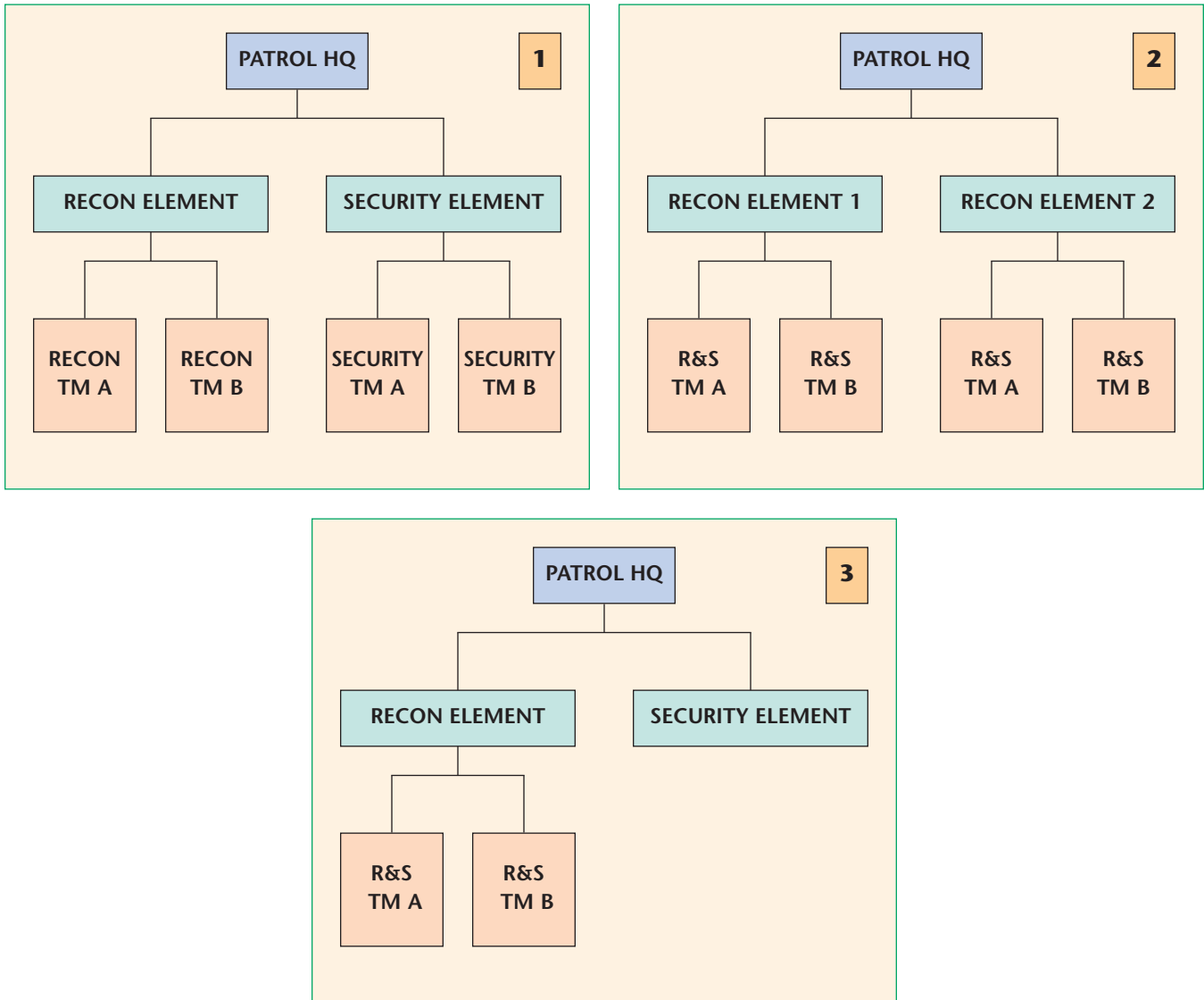


Figure 13.2 Organization of Reconnaissance Patrols

Organization of Reconnaissance Patrols

Besides the elements common to all patrols (see Section 12), reconnaissance patrols have a *reconnaissance* element and a *security* element (Figure 13.2). Reconnaissance elements reconnoiter the objective area once the security elements are in position. Normally reconnaissance elements consist of two Soldiers (buddy teams) to reduce the possibility of detection.

As the patrol leader, you normally use *reconnaissance and security* (R&S) elements in a zone reconnaissance. However, R&S elements may be useful in any situation when it's not practical to separate the responsibilities for reconnaissance and security.

Normally the platoon headquarters controls the platoon on a reconnaissance patrol mission. As platoon leader, you become the patrol leader and must consider the requirements for reconnaissance and security in assigning tasks to your squads or fire teams. You may separate the tasks so that one or more squads conduct the reconnaissance while other squads or fire teams provide security, or you may assign R&S tasks to each squad or team.

When a fire team conducts a reconnaissance patrol, it operates as a single R&S team. In assigning tasks, you must also consider the size and number of reconnaissance objectives, the need to secure the objective rally point (ORP) and other points, and the time you have available to conduct the mission.

Types of Reconnaissance Patrols

Area Reconnaissance Patrol

The area reconnaissance patrol focuses only on obtaining detailed information about the terrain or enemy activity *within a prescribed area*. You conduct an area reconnaissance to obtain information about a certain location and the area around it such as road junctions, hills, bridges, or enemy positions. You locate the objective by either grid coordinates or a map overlay. A boundary line encircles the area. In an area reconnaissance, use surveillance points, vantage points, or observation posts (OPs) around the objective to observe it and the surrounding area.

Actions at the objective for an area reconnaissance begin with the patrol in the ORP, and end with a distribution of information after a linkup of the patrol's subordinate units. The critical actions include:

- actions from the ORP
- execute the observation plan
- link up and continue the mission.

Actions From the Objective Rally Point (ORP)

Your patrol occupies the ORP and conducts associated priorities of work. While the patrol establishes security and prepares for the mission, you and selected personnel conduct a leader's reconnaissance. You must accomplish three things during this reconnaissance:

1. Pinpoint the objective and establish surveillance
2. Identify a release point and follow-on linkup point (if required)
3. Confirm the observation plan.

Observation Plan for Area Reconnaissance

Upon returning from your reconnaissance, you distribute information and fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) as required. Once everything is ready, the patrol departs. Your first task is to establish security. Once security is in position, the reconnaissance element moves along the specified routes to the observation posts and vantage points in accordance with the observation plan.

Route Reconnaissance Patrol

The *route reconnaissance* patrol obtains detailed information *about a specified route* and any terrain where the enemy could influence movement along that route (Figure 13.3). A *route reconnaissance* can orient on a road, a narrow axis such as an infiltration lane, or a general direction of attack. Patrols conducting route reconnaissance operations attempt to view the route from both the friendly and enemy perspective. Infantry platoons require added technical expertise for a complete detailed route reconnaissance. However, platoons can conduct hasty route reconnaissance or area reconnaissance of selected route areas. A platoon conducts a hasty route reconnaissance when there is too little time for a detailed route reconnaissance or when the mission requires less-detailed information. Information sought in a hasty route reconnaissance is restricted to the type of route (limited or unlimited), obstacle limitations (maximum weight, height, and width), and observed enemy.

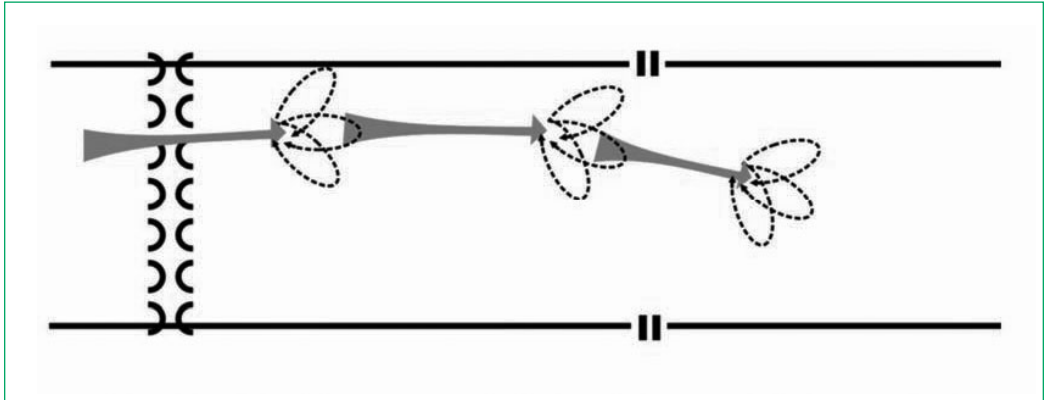


Figure 13.3 Route Reconnaissance Using Fans

The platoon reports conditions likely to affect friendly movement. These conditions include:

- enemy presence
- terrain information
- location and condition of bypasses, fords, and obstacles
- choke points
- route and bridge conditions.

If all or part of the proposed route is a road, treat the road as a danger area. Your platoon moves parallel to the road, using a covered and concealed route. When required, reconnaissance and security teams move close to the road to reconnoiter key areas. The platoon plans a different route for its return.

Zone Reconnaissance Patrol

Zone reconnaissance patrols involve a directed effort to obtain detailed information on all routes, obstacles, terrain, and enemy forces *within a zone defined by boundaries*. Zone reconnaissance techniques include the use of moving elements, stationary teams, or multiple area reconnaissance actions.

Moving Element Techniques

When using moving elements, the elements (squads or fire teams) move along multiple routes to cover the whole zone. When the mission requires a unit to saturate an area, the unit uses one of the following techniques: the *fan*, the *box*, *converging routes*, or *successive sectors*.

Fan Method. First, you select a series of ORPs throughout the zone to operate from. Establish security at the first ORP. Upon confirming the ORP location, confirm reconnaissance routes out from and back to the ORP. These routes form a fan-shaped pattern around the ORP. The routes must overlap to ensure the entire area is reconnoitered.

Once you have confirmed the routes, send out R&S teams along the routes. When all R&S teams have returned to the ORP, collect and disseminate all information to every Soldier before moving on to the next ORP.

Each R&S team moves from the ORP along a different fan-shaped route that overlaps with others to ensure reconnaissance of the entire area (Figure 13.4). These routes should be adjacent to each other. Adjacent routes prevent the patrol from potentially making contact in two different directions. You should maintain a reserve at the ORP.

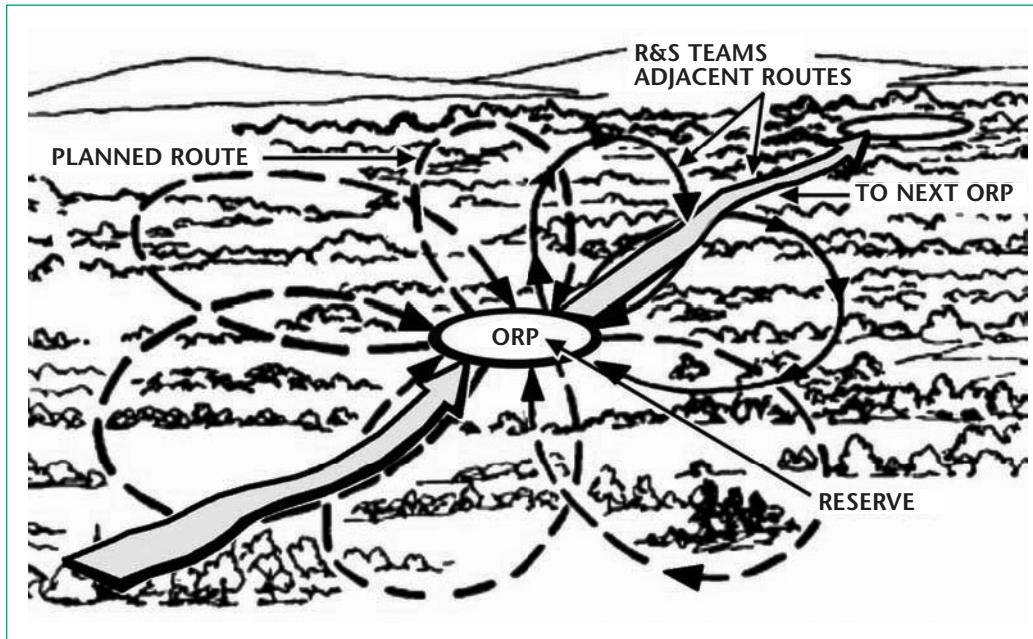


Figure 13.4 Fan Method

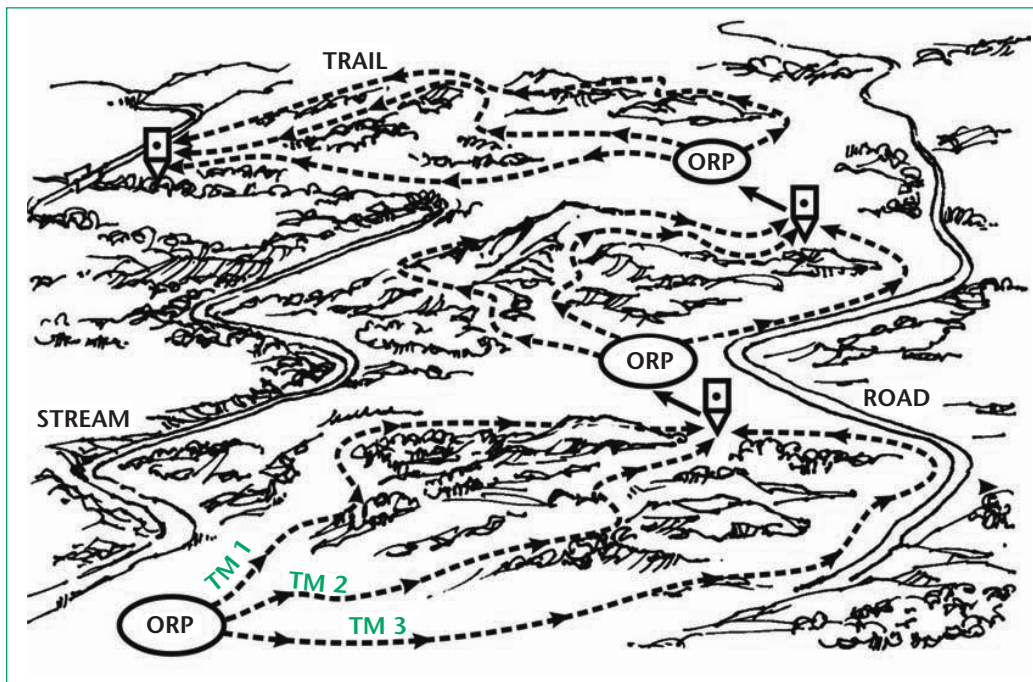


Figure 13.5 Box Method

Box Method. In this method, you send your R&S teams from the ORP along routes that form a boxed-in area (Figure 13.5). You send other teams along routes through the area within the box. All teams meet at a linkup point at the far side of the box from the ORP. Your assistant patrol leader (APL) should travel with one of the R&S teams and be responsible for executing the linkup.

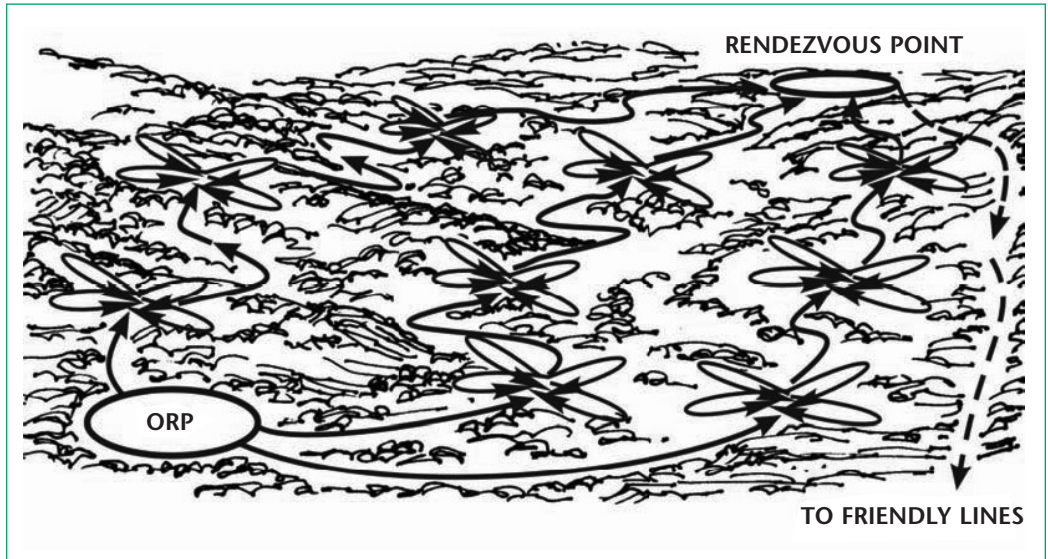


Figure 13.6 Converging Routes Method

Converging Routes Method. In this method, you select routes from the ORP through the zone to a linkup point at the far side of the zone from the ORP. Each R&S team moves along a specified route and uses the fan method to reconnoiter the area between routes (Figure 13.6). You designate a time for all teams to link up and delegate your APL the task of linking up.

Successive Sector Method. This is a continuation of the converging routes method (Figure 13.7). You divide the zone into a series of sectors. Your platoon uses the converging routes within each sector to reconnoiter to an intermediate linkup point where it collects and disseminates the information gathered to that point. It then reconnoiters to the next sector. Using this method, select an ORP, a series of reconnaissance routes, and linkup points. The actions from each ORP to each linkup point are the same as in the converging routes method. Each linkup point becomes the ORP for the next phase. Upon linkup at a linkup point, again confirm or select reconnaissance routes, a linkup time, and the next linkup point. Continue this action until you have reconnoitered the entire zone. Once the reconnaissance is completed, the unit returns to friendly lines.

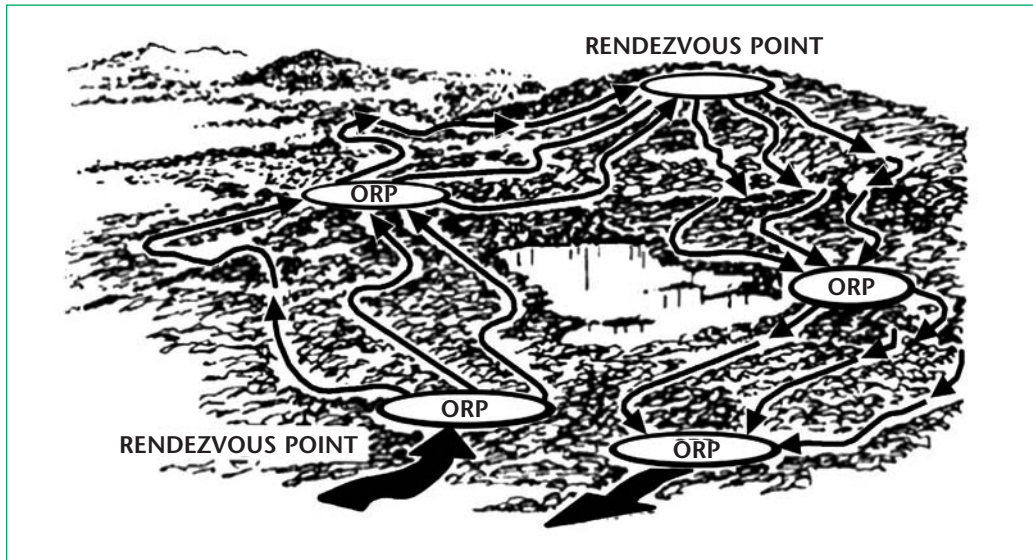


Figure 13.7 Successive Sector Method

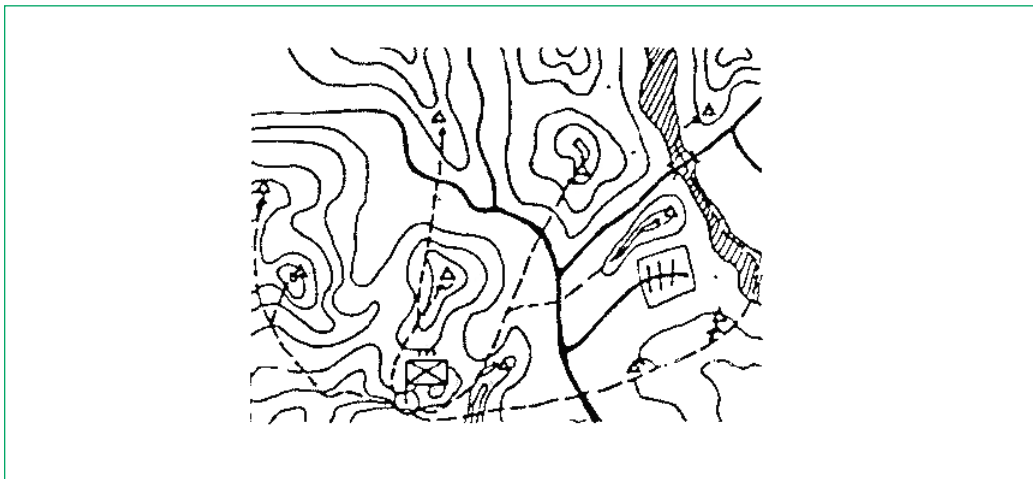


Figure 13.8 Zone Reconnaissance Using the Stationary Element Technique

Stationary Element Techniques

Using the stationary element technique, you position surveillance teams in locations where they can collectively observe the entire zone for long-term, continuous information gathering (Figure 13.8). You must consider sustainment requirements when developing your Soldiers' load plan; that is, how much each Soldier will carry.

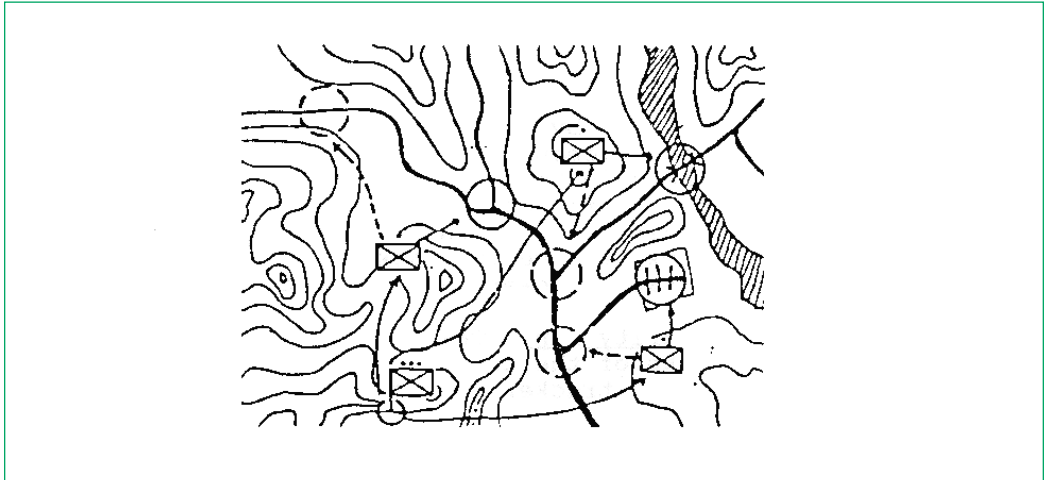


Figure 13.9 Zone Reconnaissance Using Multiple Area Reconnaissance

Multiple Area Reconnaissance

When using multiple area reconnaissance, you task each of your subordinate units to conduct a series of area reconnaissance actions within the zone. This technique calls for you to task each of your squads to conduct a series of area reconnaissance actions along a specified route (Figure 13.9). This task is very similar to the task required of a listening/observation post (LP/OP).

Critical Thinking

Why is it essential that you distribute information gathered to every Soldier?

Combat Patrols

In Section 12, you learned that the three types of combat patrols are **raid** patrols, ambush patrols, and security patrols.

raid

a surprise attack against a position or installation for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding the terrain

Raid

The sequence of a patrol's actions for a raid is similar to those for an ambush. Additionally, the patrol's assault element may have to conduct a breach of an obstacle. It may have additional tasks to perform on the objective (for example, demolition of fixed facilities). Squads do not execute raids independent of larger units.

The characteristics of a raid are:

- destroying key systems or facilities (command and control nodes, logistical areas, other high-value areas)
- providing or denying critical information
- securing hostages or prisoners
- confusing the enemy or disrupting his plans
- collecting detailed intelligence (significant ISR assets committed)
- command and control from the higher HQ to synchronize the operation
- creating a window of opportunity for the raiding force.

You normally conduct raids in five phases (Figure 13.10):

- Approach the objective
- Isolate the objective area
- Set conditions for the assault element
- Assault the objective
- Tactical movement away from the objective area.

A successful raid includes surprise, overwhelming firepower, violence of action, and planned withdrawal. This last factor is what makes a raid different from a deliberate attack—your patrol will not remain to defend the objective.

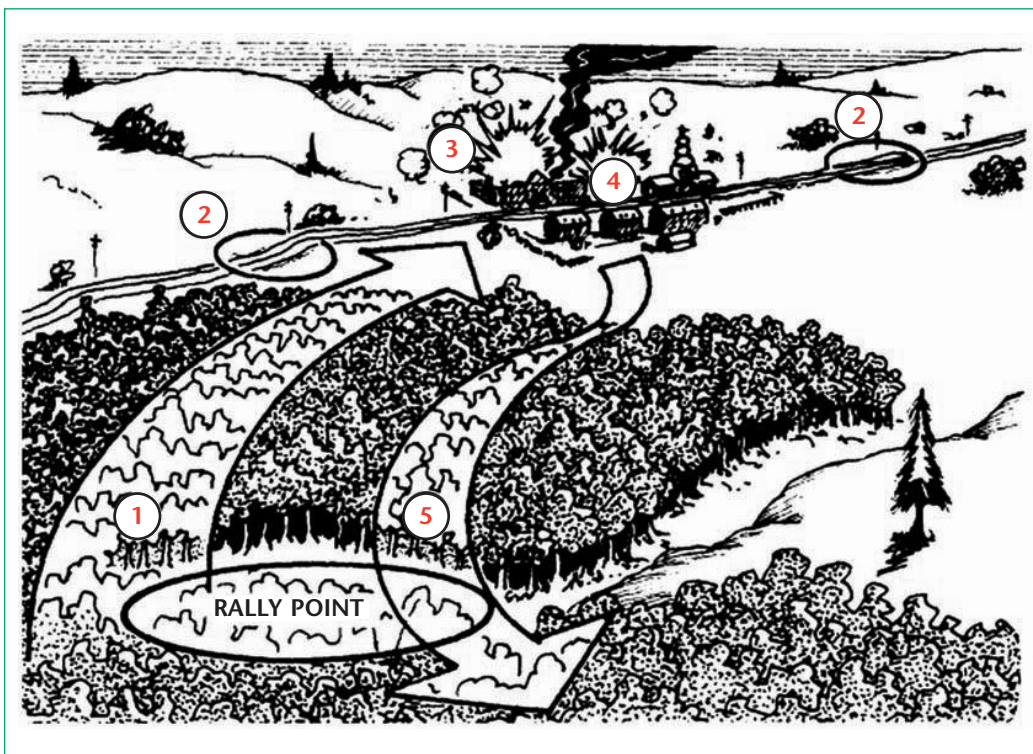


Figure 13.10 The Five Phases of a Raid

ambush

a surprise attack from a concealed position on a moving or temporarily halted target

Ambush

Like a raid, an **ambush** need not seize or hold ground. The purpose of an ambush is to destroy or harass enemy forces.

The ambush combines the advantages of the defense with the advantages of the offense, allowing a smaller force with limited means the ability to destroy a much larger force. Ambushes are enemy-oriented. You hold terrain only long enough to conduct the ambush; then the force withdraws. Ambushes range from very simple to complex and synchronized; from short duration of minutes to long duration of hours; and from hand-grenade range to maximum standoff.

Ambushes employ direct fire systems as well as other destructive means, such as command-detonated mines and explosives, and indirect fires on the enemy force. The attack may include an assault to close with and destroy the enemy, or may just be a harassing attack by fire. You may conduct ambushes as independent operations or as part of a larger operation.

There are countless ways to develop an ambush. To help in clarifying what you want, develop the ambush based on its purpose, type, time, and formation. The purpose of an ambush is either harassment or destruction. A *harassing ambush* is one in which you attack by fire only (meaning there is no assault element). A *destruction ambush* includes assault to close with and destroy the enemy. The two types of ambushes are *point ambush* and *area ambush*. In a point ambush, Soldiers deploy to attack a single kill zone. In an area ambush, Soldiers deploy as two or more related point ambushes. These ambushes at separate sites are related by their purpose (Figure 13.11).

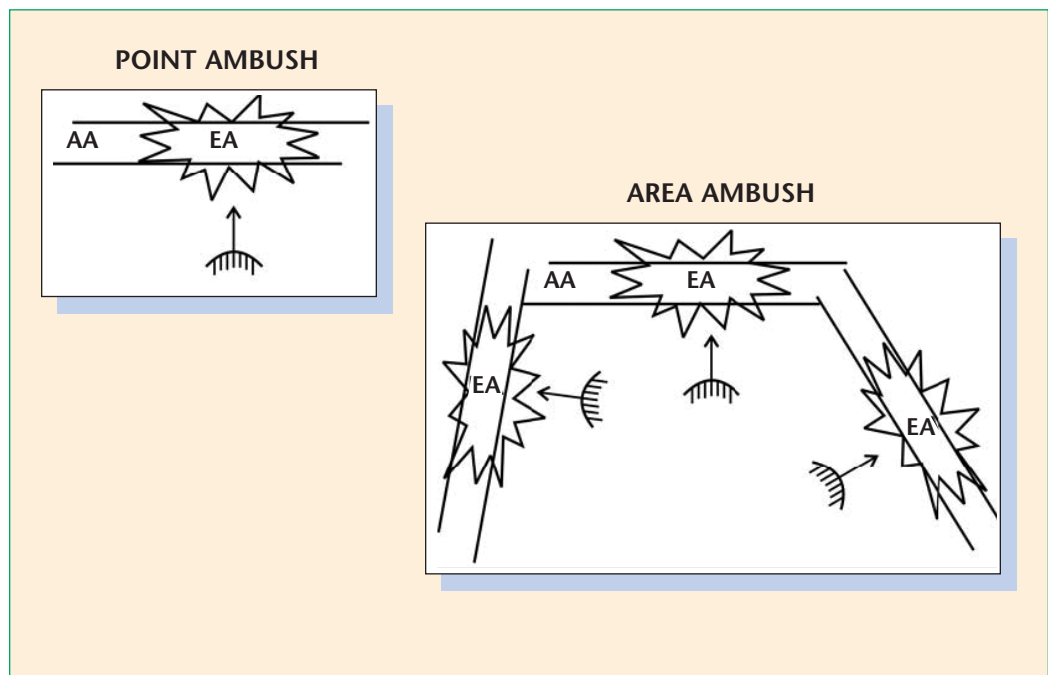


Figure 13.11 Point and Area Ambush

Based on the amount of time available to set an ambush, ambushes are either hasty or deliberate.

You conduct a *hasty ambush* based on an unanticipated opportunity. Use it when your patrol sees the enemy before the enemy sees you, and you have time to act. You give the prearranged signal to start the action, and all Soldiers move to concealed firing positions, prepared to engage the enemy. Depending on the mission, the patrol may allow the enemy to pass if the enemy does not detect the patrol.

You conduct a *deliberate ambush* against a specific target at a location chosen based on intelligence. With a deliberate ambush, you plan and prepare based on detailed information that allows you to anticipate enemy actions and enemy locations. Detailed information includes the type and size of target; its organization or formation; routes and direction of movement; the time the force will reach or pass certain points on its route; and the weapons and equipment you are carrying.

Terminology

During terrain analysis, you identify at least four different locations: the *ambush site*, the *kill zone*, *security positions*, and *rally points*. As far as possible, so-called “ideal” ambush sites should be avoided because alert enemies avoid them if possible and increase their vigilance and security when they must enter them. This makes surprise difficult to achieve. Instead, you should choose unlikely sites when possible. Following are the ideal characteristics of the four locations:

Ambush Site

The ambush site is the terrain on which you establish a point ambush. The ambush site consists of a support-by-fire position for the support element and an assault position for the assault element. An ideal ambush site:

- has good fields of fire into the kill zone
- has good cover and concealment
- has a protective obstacle
- has a covered and concealed withdrawal route
- makes it difficult for the enemy to conduct a flank attack.

Kill Zone

The **kill zone** is the part of an ambush site where fire is concentrated to isolate or destroy the enemy. An ideal kill zone has these characteristics:

- Enemy forces are likely to enter it
- It has natural tactical obstacles
- It is large enough to observe and engage the anticipated enemy force.

kill zone

the part of an ambush site where fire is concentrated to isolate or destroy the enemy

Claymore

a command-detonated M18A1 antipersonnel mine weighing 3.5 lbs, containing explosives and ball bearings—used to defend Soldiers from mass infantry attacks and to produce mass casualties during ambushes

isolate

a tactical task given to a unit to seal off (both physically and psychologically) an enemy from sources of support, deny enemy freedom of movement, and prevent an enemy unit from having contact with other enemy forces

In planning the kill zone, you should consider:

- covering the entire kill zone by fire
- using existing or reinforcing obstacles (**Claymores** and other mines) to keep the enemy in the kill zone
- protecting the assault and support elements with mines, Claymores, or explosives
- using security elements or teams to **isolate** the kill zone
- assaulting into the kill zone to search dead and wounded, assemble prisoners, and collect equipment—the assault element must be able to move quickly through its own protective obstacles
- timing the actions of all platoon elements to preclude loss of surprise
- using only one squad to conduct the entire ambush and rotating squads over time from the ORP—this technique is useful when you must man the ambush for a long time.

When conducting an ambush, you task organize your platoon into three elements—security, support, and assault. As the patrol leader (PL), you will lead the assault element while your APL (platoon sergeant) will lead the support element. Ambushes, like all combat patrols, also use other combat patrol elements such as aid and litter teams, enemy prisoner of war (EPW) teams, surveillance teams, en route recorders, compass man, and pace man.

The distance your assault element is from the kill zone distinguishes a *near ambush* from a *far ambush*. A near ambush is a point ambush in which the assault element is within reasonable assaulting distance of the kill zone (less than 50 meters). Close terrain, such as an urban area or heavy woods, may require this positioning. It may also be appropriate in open terrain in a “rise from the ground” ambush. A far ambush is a point ambush in which the assault element is beyond reasonable assaulting distance of the kill zone (beyond 50 meters). This location may be appropriate in open terrain offering good fields of fire or when you attack by fire for a harassing ambush.

Security Positions

An ideal security position:

- does not mask fires of the main body
- provides timely information for the main body (that is, it gives the leader enough time to act on information provided)
- can provide a support-by-fire position.

Rally Points

Recall from Section 12 that rally points must:

- be easy to find
- have cover and concealment
- be away from natural lines of drift
- be defensible for short periods.

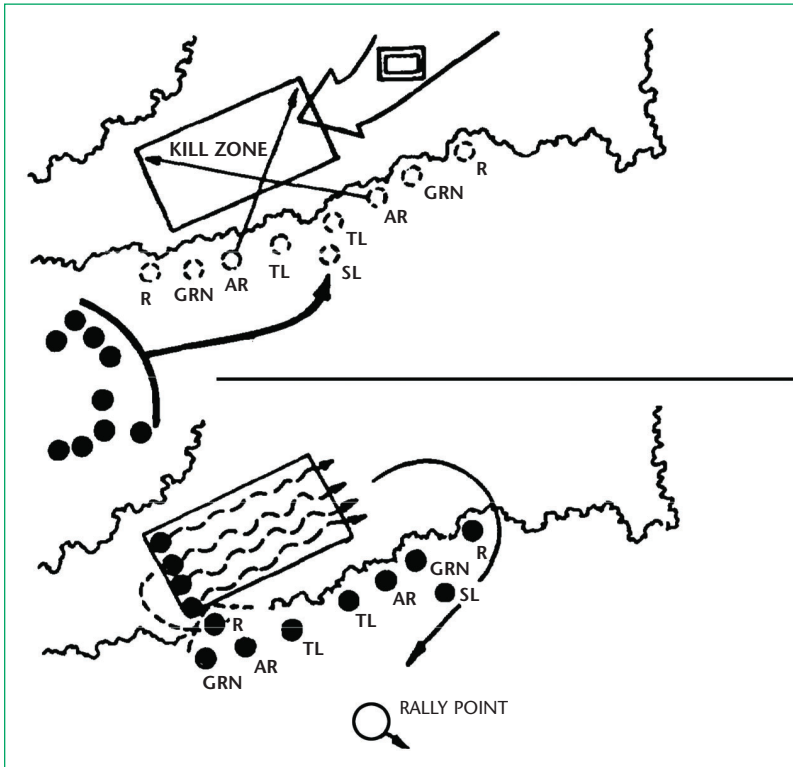


Figure 13.12 Squad Hasty Ambush

Hasty Ambush

As previously stated, you conduct a *hasty ambush* when you see an enemy force before it sees you and you have time to establish an ambush without the enemy detecting you. You must rehearse the actions for a hasty ambush well so your Soldiers know what to do on your signal. They must also know what action to take if the enemy detects them before they are ready to initiate the ambush. Executing a smooth hasty ambush also requires a detailed unit standing operating procedure (SOP) that identifies which squads are to execute the tasks of the support, security, and assault elements when the situation calls for a hasty ambush. When the enemy is approaching you is not the time to try to figure out who will do which task. In planning and rehearsing a hasty ambush, you should consider the following sequence of actions:

1. Using visual signals, any Soldier alerts the platoon that an enemy force is in sight. The Soldier continues to monitor the location and activities of the enemy force until the team or squad leader assumes the task.
2. The platoon or squad halts and remains motionless.
3. You determine the best nearby location for a hasty ambush. You use hand-and-arm signals to direct Soldiers to covered and concealed positions. You decide where the kill zone will be and how big it will be.
4. The security element sends out left and right flank security and, if required, rear security. You direct the security elements to move a given distance, set up, and rejoin the platoon on your signal when the ambush is completed. At the squad level, the two outside buddy teams normally provide flank security as well as fire into the kill zone (Figure 13.12). At platoon level, a squad will provide its fire teams to make up the security elements (Figure 13.13).

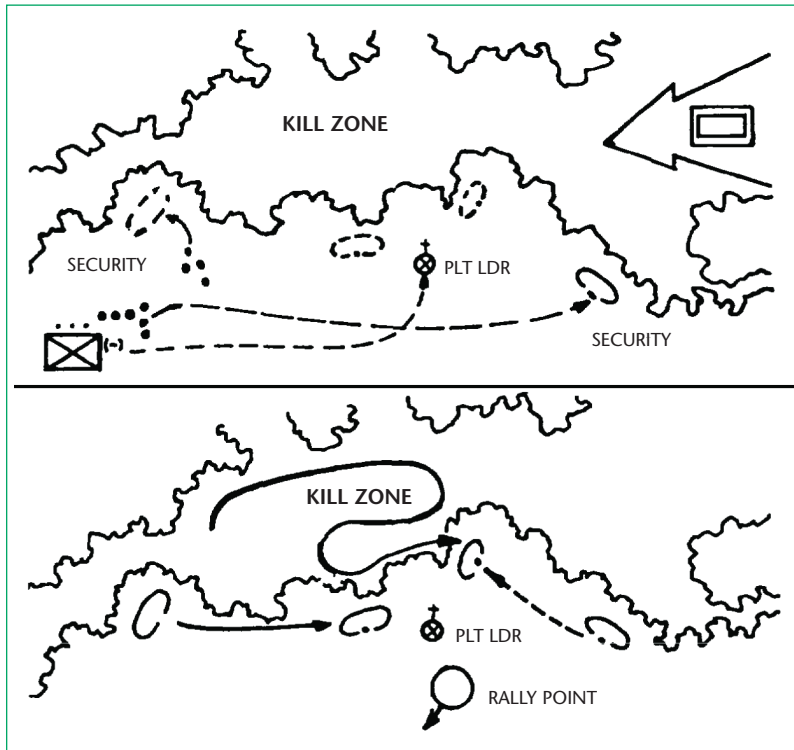


Figure 13.13 Platoon Hasty Ambush

5. You direct your APL to take charge and emplace the support element while you emplace the assault element. Soldiers move quickly to covered and concealed positions, normally five to 10 meters apart. Soldiers ensure that they have good cover and concealment, observation, and fields of fire onto the kill zone that you have selected.
6. As the PL, you initiate the ambush with the most-casualty-producing weapon when the majority of the enemy force enters the kill zone. In a hasty ambush, you will probably not have the time to emplace a Claymore, so you must signal your APL to initiate the ambush with a machine gun. Of course, your backup plan must be your own weapon if the method for signaling your APL fails. Using a hand grenade to initiate an ambush is not desirable, as the noise from the initiator and spoon will give the enemy nearly four seconds to react to your ambush.

Note: If the enemy detects a Soldier, the Soldier initiates the ambush by opening fire and alerting the rest of the platoon, saying “Enemy Right” (or “Left” or “Front,” as the case may be). One of the reasons you plan for a rear security element is to thwart the enemy from flanking you to your rear if the enemy detects your ambush too early.

7. As the PL, you control the rate and distribution of fire. You order cease fire when the enemy force is destroyed or stops resisting. You lead the assault element to move into the kill zone and conduct a hasty search of the enemy soldiers. All your other Soldiers remain in place to provide security.

8. The security elements rejoin the platoon after the assault element has cleared through the kill zone. Your patrol withdraws from the ambush site using a covered and concealed route. The patrol returns to the current ORP, collects and distributes all information, reorganizes as necessary, and continues the mission.

Deliberate Ambush

You conduct a *deliberate ambush* against a specific target at a predetermined location. You need detailed information to plan a deliberate ambush:

- the size and composition of the enemy unit you will ambush
- the weapons and equipment available to the enemy
- the enemy's route and direction of movement
- the times that the targeted unit will reach or pass specified points along the route.

Deliberate Ambush Types

There are two kinds of deliberate ambush: the *point* ambush and the *area* ambush.

Point Ambush

In a point ambush, the patrol is task organized to attack an enemy in a single kill zone. You should consider the following sequence of actions when planning a deliberate point ambush:

1. Security

Position the security or surveillance team(s) first. The support element should be in position before the assault element moves forward of the **release point**. The support element must oversee the movement of the assault element into position.

2. Assault

The PL leads the assault element. The PL must position the assault element so that its fires are centered on the kill zone. The PL checks each Soldier's cover, concealment, observation, and fields of fire once the assault element is in place and adjusts positions as necessary. The PL can signal for the surveillance team to rejoin the assault element, or the PL can leave the surveillance team to the rear of the ambush site to perform the rear-security task.

The assault element should:

- identify individual sectors of fire as you assign them and set up aiming stakes
- set up Claymores and other protective devices
- set up Claymores, mines, or other explosives in dead space within the kill zone
- camouflage its positions
- take weapons off "safe"—taking care not to compromise the mission by the sound of the metallic click when moving the selection lever. (This must be the last action all Soldiers perform before waiting to initiate the ambush.)

3. Support

The PL identifies the kill zone to the APL, and the APL positions the support element and identifies sectors of fire for all its weapons, especially the machine guns. Gunners set up limiting stakes to prevent friendly fires from hitting the assault element in an L-shaped ambush. They also set up Claymores and other protective devices to guard against the enemy overrunning the support element's position after the ambush has begun.

release point

a location on a route where elements are released from centralized control

4. *Communication*

Your instructions to security teams must include the method for notifying you of the enemy force's approach into the kill zone; its size, composition, types of weapons, and rate of march; and whether the enemy is using a traveling overwatch formation or an advance guard. The security element must also inform you if any additional enemy forces are following the lead force, especially after you have initiated the ambush.

5. *Initiation*

You must determine how large an element you can successfully ambush, and you must be prepared to let units that are too large pass by. You must report to higher headquarters any units that pass your ambush that you did not engage.

As PL, you initiate the ambush; you should always use a command-detonated Claymore to do so, not only because it is the most-casualty-producing weapon, but also because its initiation method (clacker) is silent and its blast produces an instantaneous shock effect on the enemy. You must also plan a backup method for initiating the ambush—which should always be a second Claymore—should the primary means fail. If both Claymores fail, your tertiary plan should be to use the machine gun. All your Soldiers must understand how you will begin the ambush and practice it during rehearsals.

Your Soldiers must have a way to engage the enemy in the kill zone during limited visibility. You must balance using tracers with the risk that doing so might help the enemy to identify your positions. You may use handheld or indirect illumination flares. As a PL conducting an ambush, you must always weigh the importance of each Soldier's ability to see the kill zone against the risk that the enemy will spot a pair of eyes peering through concealment. If a Soldier can see the enemy, then it's possible that the enemy will also spot one or more of your Soldiers lying in wait for the ambush. This would negate the element of surprise. This is especially true for near ambushes.

Technically, only one member of the ambush needs to see the center of the kill zone, and that is the patrol leader, because the PL must know when to initiate the ambush. If you think about it, once the patrol leader initiates the ambush with the Claymores, the support and assault elements need only to unload their individual weapons at grazing level and between their sector stakes to achieve massed and concentrated fires into the kill zone. So when planning your ambush, think about how many sets of eyes you want looking out at the enemy, and consider how this increases the chances that the enemy will detect you early.

6. *Indirect Fire*

Your ambush plan should include indirect fire support. Indirect fires can cover the flanks and far side of the kill zone to seal the enemy from escaping as well as to isolate the kill zone from follow-on reinforcements. Preplanned fires at the release point and ORP can also help the patrol disengage if the ambush is compromised, or the patrol must depart the ambush site under pressure.

7. Signals

You must have a good plan to signal the advance of your assault element into the kill zone to begin its search and collection activities. Remember that the support element may not be able to see smoke or hear a whistle. All Soldiers must know and practice relaying this signal during rehearsals.

8. Actions in the Kill Zone

The assault element must be prepared to move across the kill zone using individual movement techniques if there is any return fire once they begin to search. Otherwise, the assault element moves across by bounding fire teams.

While in the kill zone, the assault element also collects and secures all enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) and moves them out of the kill zone before searching bodies. Consider moving them to the designated release point as you will already have rear security there and your APL will be there for accountability purposes. If you are not taking EPWs, you must place them in a location that provides them cover, yet allows their units to find them easily. The search team searches from one side to the other and marks bodies that it has searched to ensure the area is thoroughly covered and to avoid duplication of effort. It uses the two-man search technique:

- As the search team approaches an enemy soldier, one Soldier aims a weapon at the enemy's head and guards while the other Soldier searches. First, the searcher kicks the enemy weapon away. Second, the searcher lies over the enemy and rolls the body in a manner that exposes the enemy's stomach to the guard to check for grenades. The guard gives the all clear and the searcher begins to search the enemy.
- The searchers then perform a systematic search of the enemy from head to toe, removing all papers and collecting all items that are priority information requirements (PIR) for the command. Record rank, insignia, types of weapons, amount of ammo, condition of uniforms, and enemy's health and morale. Take note of the radio frequency, **signal operating instruction (SOI)**, and maps. The searchers continue in this manner until they have searched all enemy personnel in and near the kill zone.

The search team identifies and collects equipment it will carry back, and prepares it for transport. (Clear all weapons and place them on "safe.") It identifies and collects remaining equipment for destruction. The demolition team prepares dual-primed explosives and awaits the signal to initiate. This is normally the last action performed before departing the objective and may signal the security elements to return to the ORP. The aid and litter team treats friendly wounded first, then enemy wounded, time permitting.

9. Flank Security Teams

The flank security teams move, if necessary, to a more advantageous position to seal off the objective from reinforcements. The flank security teams may also place out antiarmor mines after you have begun the ambush if you know the enemy has armor. If a flank security team makes contact, it fights as long as possible without becoming decisively engaged. It uses a prearranged signal to let you know it is breaking contact. You may direct a portion of the support element to assist the security team in breaking contact.

signal operating instruction (SOI)

unit daily frequencies, call signs, and passwords the unit members use

10. *Withdrawal*

As the platoon leader, you must plan the withdrawal from the ambush site. Normally elements withdraw in the reverse order that they established their positions. The elements may return first to the release point, where the APL counts them, then move to the ORP as a patrol. Depending on the distance from the ambush site to the ORP, you can plan to have elements move from the ambush site directly back to the ORP, and the APL will conduct accountability before departing the ORP. The security element at the ORP must be alert to assist the platoon's return to the ORP. It maintains security for the ORP while the rest of the platoon prepares to leave.

Once you have returned to the ORP, you must see that all Soldiers and equipment are accounted for. Before departing the ORP you must recover the platoon's rucksacks and other equipment left at the ORP during the ambush.

Critical Thinking

Consider and compare the advantages and disadvantages of accounting for your personnel and equipment at the release point versus waiting until you return to the ORP.

Critical Thinking

Why is a platoon the smallest unit that can conduct an area ambush?.

Area Ambush

In an area ambush, Soldiers deploy in two or more related point ambushes. You should consider the following when planning a deliberate area ambush:

1. A platoon is the smallest unit to conduct an area ambush. Platoons conduct area ambushes where enemy movement is largely restricted to trails or streams (Figure 13.14).
2. You should select one principal ambush site around which you organize outlying ambushes. Position these secondary sites along the enemy's most likely approach to and escape from the principal ambush site. Squad-sized elements are normally responsible for each ambush site. They establish an area ambush as described above.
3. You must determine the best employment of your machine guns. You normally position them both with the support element of the principal site.
4. The squads responsible for outlying ambushes begin their ambushes after you initiate the principal one. They then engage to prevent enemy forces from escaping or reinforcing.

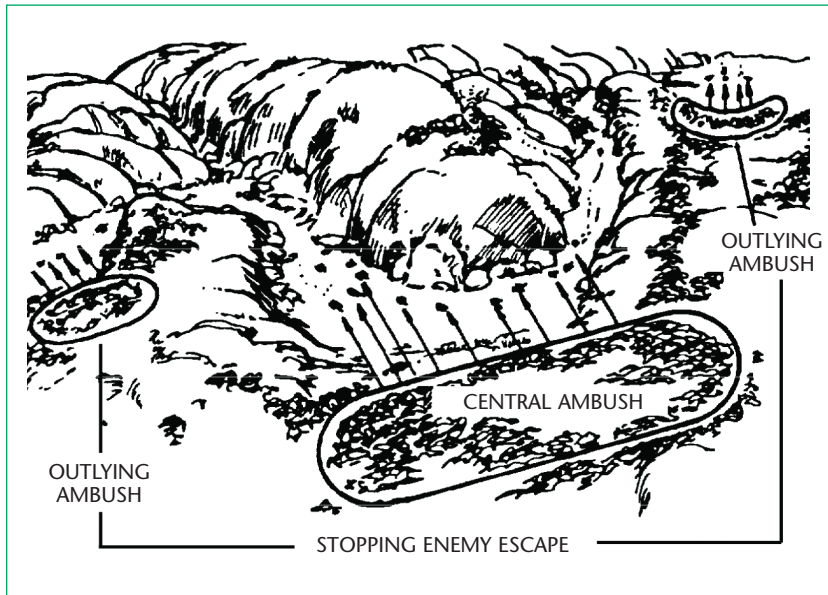


Figure 13.14 Area Ambush

Ambush Formations

You conduct a deliberate ambush using either the linear or L-shaped formations.

Linear Formation

In an ambush using a linear formation, the assault and support elements deploy parallel to the enemy's route (Figure 13.15). This positions both elements on the long axis of the kill zone and subjects the enemy to flanking fire. You use this formation in close terrain that restricts the enemy's ability to maneuver against your platoon, or in open terrain—provided you have a way to keep the enemy in the kill zone. A linear ambush is most effective if you establish the kill zone next to impassable or severely restricted terrain such as a wall, canal, deep ditch, or water source. Doing so will prevent the enemy from escaping to the far side of the kill zone.

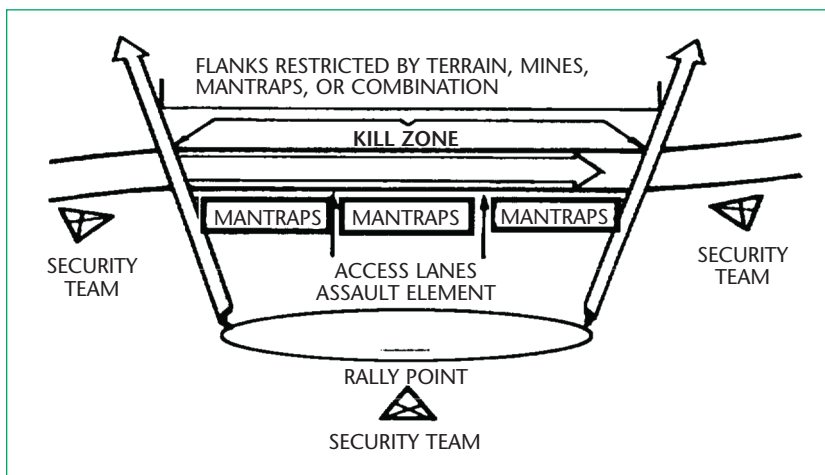


Figure 13.15 Linear Ambush Formation

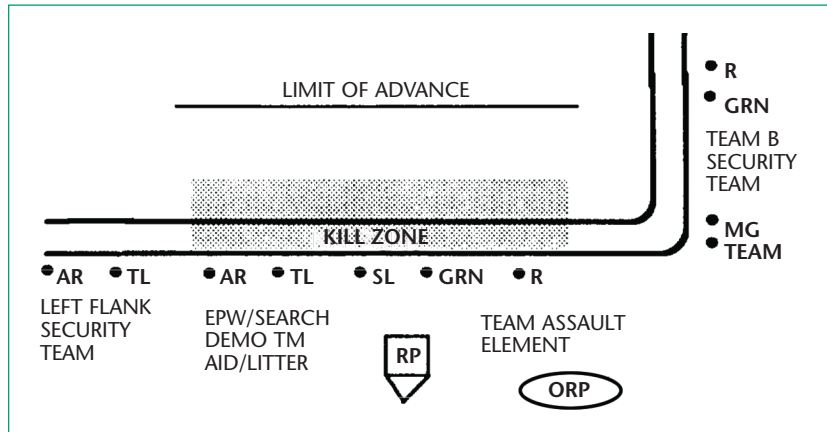


Figure 13.16 L-Shaped Ambush Formation

L-Shaped Formation

In an L-shaped ambush, the assault element forms the long leg parallel to the enemy's direction of movement along the kill zone (Figure 13.16). The support element forms the short leg at one end of and at right angles to the assault element. This provides both flanking (long leg) and **enfilade fire** (short leg) against the enemy. You can use the L-shaped ambush at a sharp bend in a trail, road, or stream, but don't use it where the short leg would have to cross a straight road or trail. As with the linear ambush, try to tie the kill zone to impassable or severely restricted terrain.

enfilade fire

fire delivered on the broad side of a target in such a manner that the range pattern of the fall of shot generally aligns with the long axis of the target

Fundamentals of a Successful Ambush

A successful ambush includes the elements of surprise, coordinated fire, and control.

Surprise. Surprise is a major feature that distinguishes an ambush from other forms of attack. Surprise allows the patrol to seize control of the situation. If you cannot achieve complete surprise, the surprise must be so nearly complete that the target does not know of the ambush until it is too late for effective reaction. You achieve surprise by good planning, preparation, and execution.

Coordinated Fire. You must position all weapons, including mines and demolitions, and you must coordinate all fire, including that of supporting artillery and mortars, to achieve:

- the isolation of the kill zone to prevent escape or reinforcement
- the surprise delivery of a large volume of highly concentrated fire into the kill zone; this fire must inflict as much damage as possible so that the target can be quickly assaulted, when required, and destroyed.

Control. As the platoon leader, you must maintain close control during movement to, occupation of, and withdrawal from the ambush site. Control is most critical at the time of the target's approach. Control measures must provide for:

- early warning of target approach
- withholding fire until the target has moved into the kill zone
- opening fire at the proper time
- initiation of proper action if the ambush is prematurely detected
- lifting or shifting of supporting fire when the attack includes assault of the target
- timely and orderly withdrawal of the patrol to the ORP.

Raid

A raid is a combat operation to attack a position or installation followed by a planned withdrawal. Squads do not execute raids independent of larger units. The sequence of a patrol's actions for a raid is similar to those for an ambush. Additionally, the patrol's assault element may have to conduct a breach of an obstacle. It may have additional tasks to perform on the objective (for example, demolition of freed facilities).

A raid has at least one of these five main purposes:

1. To capture enemy soldiers or destroy enemy equipment or supplies
2. To destroy installations, positions, facilities, or key points
3. To harass enemy forces or gain the initiative
4. To gain intelligence
5. To rescue friendly personnel.

You organize a raid similarly to other patrol activities (see Section 12). A raid has headquarters, assault, support, and security teams. As with a patrol and ambush, you appoint a series of special teams for aid and litter for the wounded, handling EPWs, demolition, and breach. These special teams are members of the assault element. You should always designate alternate special teams to back up the primary teams. A successful raid includes surprise, overwhelming firepower, violence of action, and planned withdrawal. This last factor is what makes a raid different from a deliberate attack—your patrol will not remain to defend the objective.

Critical Thinking

What other kinds of offensive operations have *surprise* as a key element?



CONCLUSION

Patrolling is at the heart of an infantry platoon's work. But in the Contemporary Operating Environment, units from many other Army branches are now finding themselves with the responsibility of conducting patrols as well. The key to conducting successful patrols with as few casualties as possible lies in learning how to plan and execute the different types of patrols. As a platoon leader, you will be in charge of planning and organizing these combat and reconnaissance patrols. Your Soldiers will look to you to lead them in these operations. Your superior officers will depend heavily on the information you gather in patrolling. To be a successful junior officer, you must make the effort to master this important task. You and your Soldiers will be glad you did.

Key Words

raid
ambush
kill zone
Claymore
isolate
release point
signal operating instruction
enfilade fire

Learning Assessment

1. Identify and describe the two categories of patrols.
2. What are the three main types of combat patrols?
3. What are the four most common types of reconnaissance patrols?
4. What are the two types of ambush?
5. What are the two formations for an ambush?

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