

CHAPTER 10. PATROL PREPARATION

For a patrol to succeed, all members must be well trained, briefed, and rehearsed. The patrol leader must have a complete understanding of the mission and a thorough understanding of the enemy and friendly situations. The patrol leader should make a complete reconnaissance of the terrain to be covered (either visual or map), and must issue an order to the patrol, supervise preparations, and conduct rehearsals.

10001. MISSION

The mission assigned to a patrol must be clear and oriented toward one objective with a specific task and purpose. More than one primary objective or indefinite missions invites confusion, casualties, and failure.

10002. FACTORS INFLUENCING PATROL SIZE

The circumstances under which patrolling by infantry units is conducted make it necessary for combat patrols to be able to fight offensively, security patrols to defend themselves, and reconnaissance patrols to move quickly and only fight if necessary to break contact or defend themselves. The size of a patrol depends on METT-T.

Generally, a patrol should contain the least number of members needed to accomplish the mission. Combat missions ordinarily require larger patrols than reconnaissance missions.

10003. COMMANDER'S DUTIES

Determining Patrol Requirements

The need for conducting patrols derives from the commander's stated mission (issued by higher level commander) and other specified and implied tasks (secondary or supporting efforts necessary to accomplish the stated mission). This requires analyzing the unit's mission and determining the necessary reconnaissance and/or combat tasks that must be performed. By considering the mission, along with time available, the commander develops the

overall concept of operations to include the patrol plan and the specific tasks for each patrol.

Assigning Units

When assigning patrol missions, maintaining the integrity of the existing unit while considering the skills and experience of the unit and its leader are critical factors to the infantry commander. To provide operational depth and equitable apportionment of hazardous assignments, the commander ensures that each of the subordinate leaders and units develops the skills and experience necessary to conduct successful patrols. Assignment of patrol units must consider the commander's concept of operations as a whole and the plans for subsequent employment of assigned forces after completion of the assigned patrolling mission.

Providing Adequate Time

The commander must allow the patrol sufficient preparation time by completing the mission analysis, estimate, and preparation of orders. The commander should use warning orders to alert subordinates to possible requirements and afford them the opportunity for concurrent planning.

Providing the Patrol Leader Information

The following information should be provided:

- ┆ A simple, straightforward explanation of the mission, particularly for night patrols.
- ┆ General routes (defined by checkpoints) or exact routes (defined by avenues of approach or other terrain features) to follow.
- ┆ Enemy composition, disposition, and strength.
- ┆ Location and activities of friendly troops.
- ┆ Outposts or other security elements through which the patrol is to pass.
- ┆ Terrain conditions.
- ┆ Missions and routes of other patrols.

- ┆ Time patrol is to depart and return.
- ┆ Method of reporting information while on patrol (radio, messenger), place where messengers are to be sent, and place where the patrol leader is to report upon completion of the patrol.
- ┆ The challenge and password to be used for exiting and reentering friendly lines.
- ┆ Special instructions such as locations to be avoided and essential elements of information higher headquarters is seeking.
- ┆ Report barrier/obstacle plan of friendly units if known; support available from friendly unit (e.g., medical evacuation [MEDEVAC], react force).
- ┆ Fire support available.

Providing Special Skills and Equipment

There will be situations when the unit assigned to conduct a patrol does not have the necessary technical skills or equipment organic to it to successfully accomplish the patrol mission. In these cases, additions (attachments) are made to the unit, such as—

- ┆ Machine gun and/or shoulder-launched, multipurpose assault weapon (SMAW) team and/or squad.
- ┆ Forward observers (mortar/artillery).
- ┆ Radio operator(s).
- ┆ Combat engineers.
- ┆ Tracked vehicle crewman to assess the ability to traverse the terrain.
- ┆ Corpsman.
- ┆ Other personnel (snipers, translators) as required.

Providing Miscellaneous Support

The commander must ensure that the patrol leader is provided with the food, water, ammunition, radios and batteries, maps, special clothing, and any other items required by the unit (including attachments) needed for the mission. Post-patrol support such as debriefings by intelligence personnel must also be planned.

Reviewing the Patrol Leader's Plan and Preparations

Once the patrol leader receives the mission, conducts visual and/or map reconnaissance, and develops the plan, the commander confirms the patrol leader's understanding of the mission and plan for accomplishing it. This discussion between the patrol leader and commander ensures that the patrol leader understands the commander's intent and is properly

prepared to provide the patrol leader an opportunity to ask for clarification or additional support, if required.

Debriefing the Patrol

Upon return of the patrol, the commander receives the patrol report at a debriefing attended by the patrol leader and all patrol members. The debriefing should be conducted as soon as possible following the patrol's return, while information is still fresh in the minds of the patrol members. A patrol report, based on the information collected during the debrief, is generated and forwarded to the next higher commander.

10004. PATROL LEADER DUTIES

The patrol leader organizes and prepares the patrol by using the six troop-leading steps to make the best use of resources available. These steps are to—

1. Begin planning.
2. Arrange for reconnaissance and coordination.
3. Make reconnaissance.
4. Complete the plan.
5. Issue the order.
6. Supervise.

Begin Planning

The patrol leader begins by evaluating all factors affecting the mission. He looks for possible courses of action that lead to a decision, and then transforms this decision into an order. The first step includes making an initial assessment and decision on using available time, issuing a warning order and initial preparatory tasks, and initiating his estimate.

The initial planning effort assesses the time, assistance, and information available, and plans the proper use of each. Time allowances include reconnaissance; completion of the estimate and order; troop preparation; and such briefings, rehearsals, and inspections as required before beginning the patrol.

The patrol leader reviews the mission and the attachments and/or support available and decides what preparatory efforts must begin immediately. Proper use of subordinates to manage these initial tasks during this period reduces preparation time and frees

the patrol leader for proper planning and reconnaissance. A warning order is issued using a modified five-paragraph order format (situation, mission, execution, administration and logistics, and command and signal [SMEAC]) as a checklist. (Refer to app. A for specific information that a patrol warning order should contain within each checklist item.

Once the initial preparations are set in motion, the patrol leader begins estimating by analyzing the mission; considering the friendly, enemy, and operating environments; considering each course of action available against what the enemy might do; comparing the courses of action in terms of mission accomplishment, capabilities, and probable casualties; and choosing one that becomes the basis for concept and order. While the patrol leader should use and organize notes, estimates must be done quickly and accurately, particularly for immediate situations. To organize thinking, the patrol leader uses METT-T, which consists of:

- 1 Mission—the mission assigned to the patrol and how it relates to the mission of the commander who is sending the patrol.
- 1 Enemy—what is known or suspected of enemy presence and capabilities, habits and characteristics, and fighting techniques.
- 1 Terrain and weather—including ground, vegetation, drainage, weather, and visibility.
- 1 Troops and support available—friendly situation and support available.
- 1 Time available—the constraints and impact of time on preparation and mission accomplishment.

The estimate begins with mission analysis, which is the most important part of the entire planning process. Here, the patrol leader considers the specified tasks of the mission assigned and identifies other significant actions (specified and implied tasks) that must be undertaken to accomplish the stated mission. These tasks are arranged in sequence of accomplishment. The tasks and sequence create the framework for developing courses of action for the patrol concept of operations.

Arrange for Reconnaissance and Coordination

The patrol leader arranges a personal reconnaissance to observe as far forward as possible and also coordinates with the appropriate commanders for the patrol's "passage of lines" (see paragraph 11001 for

complete definition) and supporting fires. The patrol leader also coordinates with other patrol leaders who may be operating in the same or adjacent areas and requests that the commander assigning him the patrol mission coordinate the patrol action with adjacent commanders, local security, and night defensive fires, as appropriate. The patrol leader may delegate any or all of these arrangements to the assistant patrol leader if the patrol leader requires the time for planning.

Make Reconnaissance and Complete the Estimate

The patrol leader uses personal reconnaissance to answer questions that arise from the map reconnaissance and METT-T evaluation. Specific points include passage points, lanes through obstacles, locations of friendly listening posts and observation posts, possible approach and return routes, enemy positions (if any), and intermediate observation points on the way to the objective.

In selecting approach and return routes, the patrol leader chooses routes that best use concealment and avoid opposition and obstacles. To lessen the chances of ambush by the enemy, the return trip is planned along a different route. In addition to personal reconnaissance and review of the map and aerial photographs, the advice of other patrol leaders who already are familiar with the terrain and the objective area should be considered.

After compiling information about the situation and possible time constraint, the patrol leader completes an estimate. The first step is developing courses of action, each of which will provide for movement to the objective area, mission accomplishment, and the return, based on the tasks and their sequencing identified in mission analysis. While the eventual concept of operations is presented in order of occurrence, the patrol leader must develop the courses of action by either backward or forward planning. In situations where the objective is well defined and there is sufficient information to plan the action for mission accomplishment (reconnaissance or combat), the patrol leader begins the scheme for accomplishing the mission at the objective and then, planning backwards, considers the options for getting there and back.

The following sections on movement to and return from the objective area, reconnaissance missions, and combat missions discuss methods and options available to the patrol leader in developing the courses of

action. The principal variables between courses of action will be who, where, and how in the following:

- 1 Patrol task organization.
- 1 Routes to the objective area.
- 1 Observation point(s) (reconnaissance patrol), ambush site, form of maneuver, type of ambush (combat patrol), fire support plan.
- 1 Return routes.

The patrol leader then mentally considers the progress of each course of action (a map or simple sketch is a useful aid) against expected and unexpected enemy action. By comparing the options against each other and prospective enemy opposition, the patrol leader chooses the course of action that has the best chance of success. Includes in this mental preview process is the time to determine the patrol plan for unexpected contingencies (enemy attack/counterattack, casualty handling). These contingency actions, together with the selected course of action, become the patrol concept of operations.

Once the patrol leader determines the scheme of maneuver, the fire support required to accomplish the mission is addressed including the fire power organic to the patrol and what additional indirect fire support will have to be provided by other units. When planning for indirect fire support, the patrol leader considers the following questions:

- 1 Will artillery, mortar, or close air support be required at the objective area (combat patrols)?
- 1 What artillery and mortar targets exist along the routes to and from the objective area that can be employed by the patrol if it encounters the enemy during movement (reconnaissance patrols and combat patrols)?
- 1 What additional fire support will be required to cover the patrol's movement from the objective area back to the friendly area once the enemy is aware of the patrol's actions at the objective area (combat patrols)?

The effect that casualties have upon the patrol depends upon many factors. Generally, more casualties can be expected in a combat patrol than in a reconnaissance patrol. A patrol may continue on to the objective carrying its casualties, send them back with a detail of Marines, abort the mission and return the entire patrol with the casualties, or call their parent unit for assistance.

Some factors that determine what action the patrol leader takes are: patrol's mission; unit's standing operating procedure for handling wounded; number of casualties and nature of their injuries; availability of aid, helicopters or other means of casualty evacuation. Helicopter evacuation should only be used for the most serious casualties. For infantry units conducting patrols in proximity to the enemy, helicopter evacuation of casualties may compromise the patrol's mission and force the patrol to return to friendly positions before the mission is completed.

The patrol leader determines the requirement for nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) defense equipment. Gas masks should always be carried due to the availability of riot control agents (RCAs) to the enemy. If chemical or biological agents have been employed in the area that the patrol must pass through, protective garments will have to be worn by patrol members for part of or the entire patrol. Wearing extra clothing and carrying extra equipment affects the speed of the patrol's movement. A contingency plan for post patrol decontamination must be developed.

Complete the Plan

At this point, the patrol leader has completed the basic thinking necessary for accomplishing the assigned mission. The patrol leader prepares the patrol order to spell out the details, assign tasks to subordinates, and explain the entire endeavor for ease of understanding by the other members of the patrol.

Prepare the Order

The patrol leader's order contains more detailed information than discussed in the warning order. Orders follow the prescribed five-paragraph order format but contain greater detail. The patrol order is a modified 5-paragraph order; the major modifications are to paragraphs 3a and 3c. The format for the order is contained in appendix B.

Issue the Order

The patrol leader asks for a status report on the initial preparatory tasks assigned to subordinate leaders and specialists when the warning order was issued. When the patrol leader has completed planning and initial preparations have progressed to the point where the patrol order may be issued, the members of the patrol are assembled. Roll call is taken to ensure all patrol members are present, then the prepared order is issued.

This will be the only opportunity for the patrol leader to issue detailed instructions. The mission, in particular, must be unmistakably clear so that once the patrol is committed, all subordinate leaders can act with unity of purpose.

Whenever possible, the patrol leader should have a Marine, such as the navigator, build a terrain model using dirt, sand, twigs, etc., explaining the concept of operations for movement to the objective area, actions at the objective area, and the return. Terrain models provide patrol members with a clear and simple layout of the area of operations and key terrain.

Supervise

Inspections and rehearsals, vital to proper preparation, are conducted even though the patrol leader and patrol members are well experienced in patrolling. Inspections determine the patrol's state of physical and mental readiness.

The patrol leader inspects before rehearsals to ensure completeness and correctness of uniform and equipment. The following areas are checked:

- ┆ Camouflage.
- ┆ Identification tags, Geneva Convention cards.
- ┆ Prescribed equipment, weapons, and ammunition are available and serviceable.
- ┆ Tape and other items are used to "silence" equipment (prevent noise produced during movement).
- ┆ Items that could provide information to the enemy (e.g., letters and papers) remain behind.
- ┆ Unnecessary equipment and excess weight remain behind.

The patrol leader questions each patrol member to ensure the following is known:

- ┆ The mission, planned routes (primary and alternate), and the fire support plan of the patrol.
- ┆ The individual's role: what to do and when to do it.
- ┆ What others are to do and how their actions impact.

- ┆ Challenges and passwords, codes, reporting times, radio call signs, frequencies, and any other pertinent details.

There is usually a period of time between final rehearsal and departure. The patrol leader reinspects just before departure to ensure all equipment is still in working order and the unit is ready to embark on the mission.

Rehearsals ensure the operational proficiency of the patrol. Plans are checked and needed changes are made. The patrol leader verifies the suitability of equipment. It is through rehearsals that patrol members become thoroughly familiar with the actions to take during the patrol.

If the patrol will operate at night, both day and night rehearsals are conducted. Terrain similar to that over which the patrol will operate is used. All actions are rehearsed. If time is limited, the most critical phases are rehearsed. Action at the objective is the most critical phase of the patrol and is always rehearsed.

An effective method is to talk the patrol through each phase, describing the actions and having each member perform individual duties. When satisfied, the patrol leader walks the patrol through all phases of the patrol using only the signals and commands to be used during the actual conduct of the patrol. Rehearsals continue until the patrol is thoroughly familiar with the plan. The rehearsal is also used to test the soundness of the patrol order and patrol organization.

After the rehearsal, the patrol leader makes final adjustments to the plan and patrol organization based on what was learned during the rehearsal and from other sources, such as the S-2 and adjacent patrols. When this is completed, the patrol leader issues final instructions to subordinate leaders noting any changes made in the patrol organization or plan. While the subordinate leaders are briefing the remainder of the patrol members, the patrol leader reports to the commander stating that the patrol is ready to begin the mission. The patrol leader also coordinates the location and time that the patrol can test fire all weapons prior to departure.