

PART 2. INFANTRY PATROLLING

CHAPTER 8. FUNDAMENTALS OF INFANTRY PATROLLING

This chapter begins Part 2 and provides basic information about infantry patrols; specifically, their purpose, types, and missions. Infantry patrol training is also addressed and keys to successful patrolling are presented. Subsequent chapters of this part cover patrol organization, preparation, movement, and reconnaissance actions.

8001. DEFINITIONS

A patrol is a detachment of ground, sea or air forces sent out for the purpose of gathering information or carrying out a destructive, harassing, mopping-up or security mission (Joint Publication [JP] 1-02). The mission to conduct a patrol may be given to a fire team, squad, platoon or company.

8002. RELATION OF PATROLLING TO SCOUTING

Each patrol member must be knowledgeable in the principles of scouting and maintain membership of a larger team. To develop the teamwork skills required among the members of a patrol, additional training beyond the basic principles is necessary to become a well-trained scout. A patrol member must respond quickly to the decisions and orders of the patrol leader. There must be complete confidence among all members of the patrol and the confidence that they, as a team, will be successful in their mission.

8003. PURPOSE

A commander must have current information about the enemy and the terrain in order to employ the unit effectively. Patrols are an important means of gaining this information and are used to destroy enemy installations, capture enemy personnel, perform security missions or prevent the enemy from gaining

information. Modern warfare places a high premium on effective patrolling because units have larger areas of operations and can be threatened from all directions. As distances between units increase, more patrolling becomes necessary to prevent infiltration by guerrillas or small enemy units, as well as to maintain contact with friendly adjacent units. Active patrolling by numerous small groups is needed to locate the enemy and gather information on the enemy's disposition, strength, morale, and weapons, as well as gather and confirm information about the terrain.

8004. TYPES OF PATROLS

Classification as to Mission

Reconnaissance Patrol

Reconnaissance patrols gather information about the enemy, terrain or resources. Relying on stealth rather than combat strength, they gather this information and fight only when necessary to complete the mission or to defend themselves. The distance covered by reconnaissance patrols varies based on the terrain and mission. The squad is ideally suited for reconnaissance patrol missions because of its relative small size and its experience of working together.

Combat Patrol

A combat patrol is a fighting patrol assigned missions that require engagement with the enemy in combat. Larger and more heavily armed than reconnaissance patrols, combat patrols have a mission to capture enemy documents, provide security, and capture or destroy enemy equipment and installations. Such action is ordinarily followed by a return to friendly

positions. Regardless of the mission, the patrol reports any information concerning the enemy and terrain acquired during the accomplishment of the assigned mission. There are four types of combat patrols: raid, contact, ambush, and security (normally conducted by a Marine rifle platoon). A rifle platoon reinforced with crew-served weapons is normally considered the minimum size for contact, economy of force or ambush patrols. In some situations, such as the capture of a small enemy outpost, a rifle platoon could conduct a raid. However, a raid is a complex mission and, due to the organization of a raid force (command, reconnaissance, assault, support, security, and reserve elements), a rifle company is normally the smallest force assigned to a raid.

Classification as to Means of Movement

Foot Patrols

Movement by foot is the most common means; however, there are inherent disadvantages. Foot patrols travel slowly and carry limited quantity and types of equipment and supplies. Range and area coverage is relatively restricted. Foot patrols also have apparent advantages in that they have fewer restrictions as to terrain that can be covered; are more difficult for the enemy to detect; provide thorough coverage within limits of range; and are generally not inhibited by weather.

Motorized Patrols

Where terrain and road networks permit, a motorized patrol overcomes the inherent disadvantages of the foot patrol. Mechanized forces require patrolling units that can keep pace with them. However, motorized patrols are restricted to certain types of terrain, and tend to bypass areas that may be advantageous to and occupied by enemy infantry.

Waterborne Patrols

Waterborne patrols move over seas, lakes, rivers and streams, canals, and other inland waterways. The water is either used as a medium of entry to an objective area or is the actual patrol route. Waterborne patrols are limited by the location of water routes in the terrain and tend to bypass areas that may be advantageous to and occupied by the enemy.

Helicopterborne Patrols

Where terrain is extremely difficult or the enemy situation precludes the use of vehicle or motorized patrols, helicopterborne patrols are a method or means to conduct a patrol.

8005. TRAINING

Training is essential to successful patrolling. Premature and unordered actions by members of the patrol destroy coordination and control. Leaders are trained to issue their orders calmly to inspire confidence and discipline, and to avoid misunderstanding. Patrol members must work together and fight as a team. Training should develop the following skills:

- 1 Expertise in handling individual and special weapons, and familiarity with enemy weapons that may be captured.
- 1 Recognize camouflaged personnel, equipment, and defensive positions; ability to pick up fleeting targets fire the rifle from any firing position.
- 1 Understand fire discipline and, after weapon firing, immediately change position (see fig. 8-1).
- 1 Quick and accurate observation skills, and the ability to recall and transmit clearly and briefly, both orally and in writing.



Figure 8-1. Changing Position After Firing.

- | Recognize and quickly respond to improvised signals, visually or by sound.
- | Ability to swim with weapon and equipment.
- | Use issued or improvised camouflage suits and garrison helmet in order to blend with the surroundings. Smudge face, hands, and any bright surfaces of weapons and equipment with some substance, such as mud or charcoal, to prevent the reflection of light.
- | Silence self, equipment, and weapon.
- | Use antimalarial and water purification tablets.
- | Acclimation to temperature extremes.
- | Develop a sense of direction and learn how to follow a course by compass, stars, sun, flow of streams, prominent terrain features, and by observing other natural phenomenon. Learn to determine the distance traveled from a known point and to keep a record of azimuths and the distance traveled on each azimuth (dead reckoning).
- | Call for and adjust indirect fire assets.
- | Familiarization with all communications assets and the use of field expedient antennae.

8006. KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL PATROLLING

Regardless of the category or means of conducting a patrol, the keys to successful patrolling are—

- | Detailed planning. Every portion of the patrol must be planned, all possible contingencies considered.
- | Productive, realistic rehearsals. Each phase of the patrol is rehearsed, beginning with actions in the objective area. Similar terrain and environmental conditions are used when conducting rehearsals.
- | Thorough reconnaissance. Ideally, the patrol leader will physically conduct a reconnaissance of the route and objective. Photographs and/or maps will be used to supplement the reconnaissance.
- | Positive control. The patrol leader must maintain positive control, this includes supervision during patrol preparations.
- | All-around security. Security must be maintained at all times, particularly near the end of the patrol where there is a natural tendency to relax.