

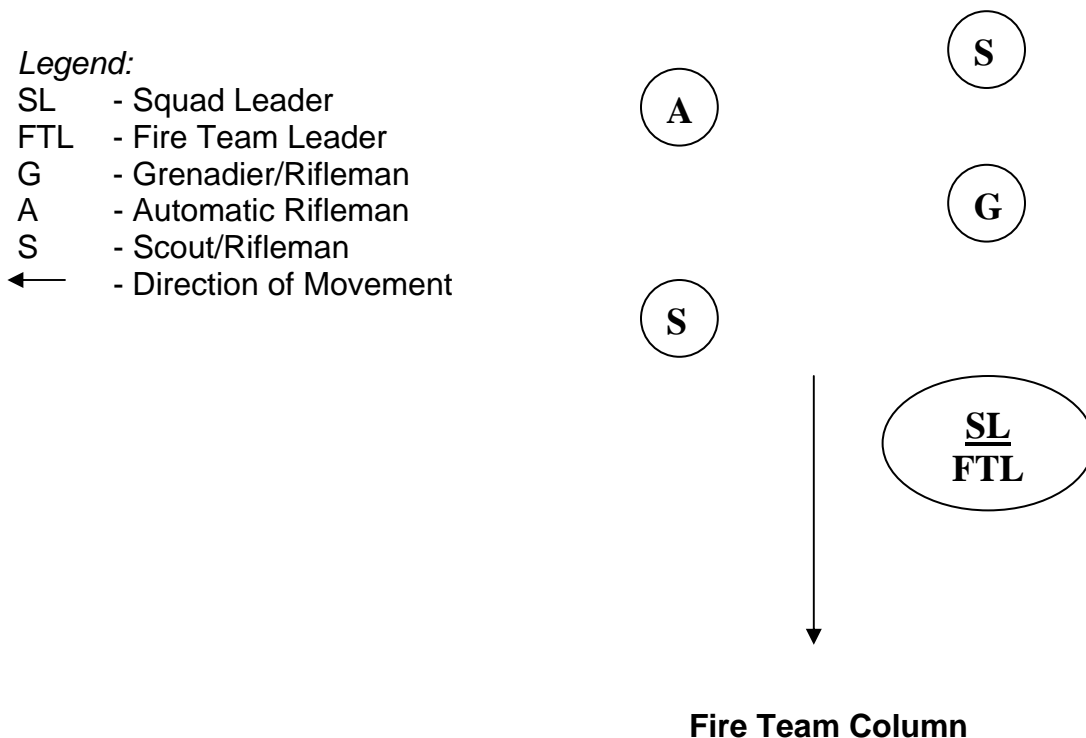
COMBAT FORMATIONS

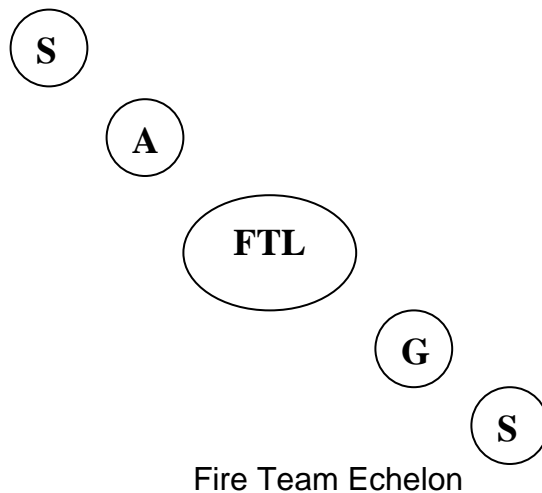
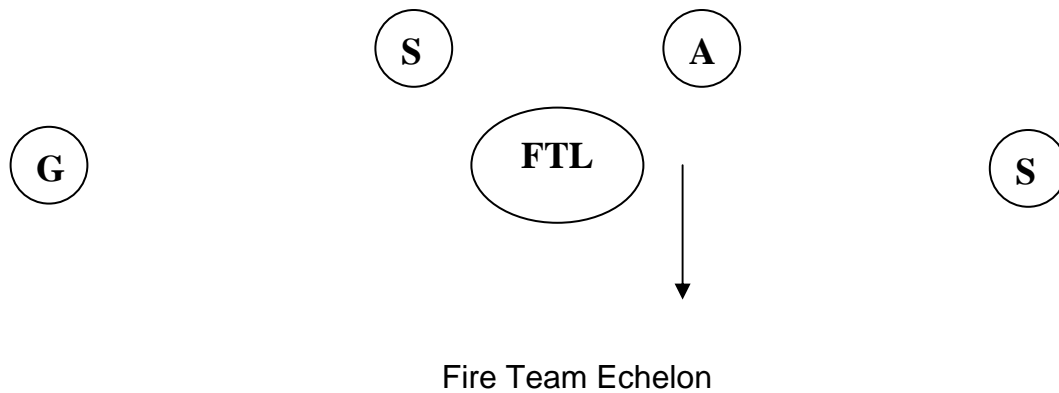
During combat operations, it is necessary to group Marines into effective fighting teams in order that they can effectively maneuver, assault and defeat the enemy. Closed and extended combat formations are both used by the troops depending on the situation, the terrain and the expected enemy action. These combat formations would be made a part of the unit's SOP. Otherwise, they should be taught to them during the conduct of training. They should be very familiar with the execution of these formations, such that their performance becomes automatic upon the execution of arm and hand signals by their commanders. Included in these chapter are the most common fire team and squad combat formations. Normally, combat formations for higher echelon and larger units are only magnifications of the basic formations discussed in these chapters.

A. FIRE TEAM COMBAT FORMATION

Following are the three basic combat formations that may be assumed by the Marine Fire Team:

Fire Team Combat Formations





1. **Column.** This combat formation permits the rapid and easily controlled movements of the troops. It also allows effective fire and maneuver to the flanks. It is however vulnerable to enemy fire from the front. The ability to fire to the front when in this type of formation is also limited.

2. **Skirmishers Right (or Left).** This formation permits maximum fire power to the front but it is a formation which is difficult to control. The ability to fire to the flanks is also very limited.

3. **Echelon Right (or Left).** This formation is similar to Skirmishers right and left except that one of its flanks is angled to the rear (right or left). It is a formation that is also difficult to control and is vulnerable to enemy fire on the flank that is not echeloned or angled back.

B. SQUAD COMBAT FORMATION

The combat formation generally used by the Marine Squad are the: Squad Column, Squad Line and Squad Echelon Right (or Left). In the first 4 formations, the position of the fire team corresponds to the positions of the individual in the fire team combat formation of same name. hence, the principal difference in these types of formations is that the Individual Marine is the maneuvering

element in a fire team combat formation, while the fire team is the maneuvering element in a squad combat formation.

1. **Squad Column.** In this formation, the fire team arranged in succession one behind the other. It is used to maintain speed and control and when moving through thick terrain such as a jungle or during periods of reduced visibility along roads or narrow route of advance. Although easily controlled, this formation is vulnerable to enemy fire from the front and permits only limited volume of fire to the front. It however provides maximum fire and maneuver to the flanks.

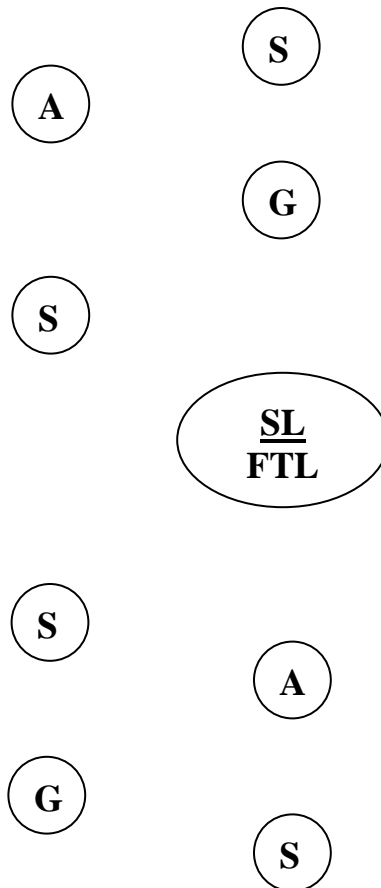
2. **Squad Line.** In this formation, all the 3 fire teams are abreast or on a line. It is normally used during the assault or when the squad must rapidly cross an open area exposed to hostile automatic weapons or artillery fire. The Squad Line is difficult to control and maneuver with. The ability to return firepower however is concentrated to the front, and consequently the formation is less vulnerable to enemy fire from that direction.

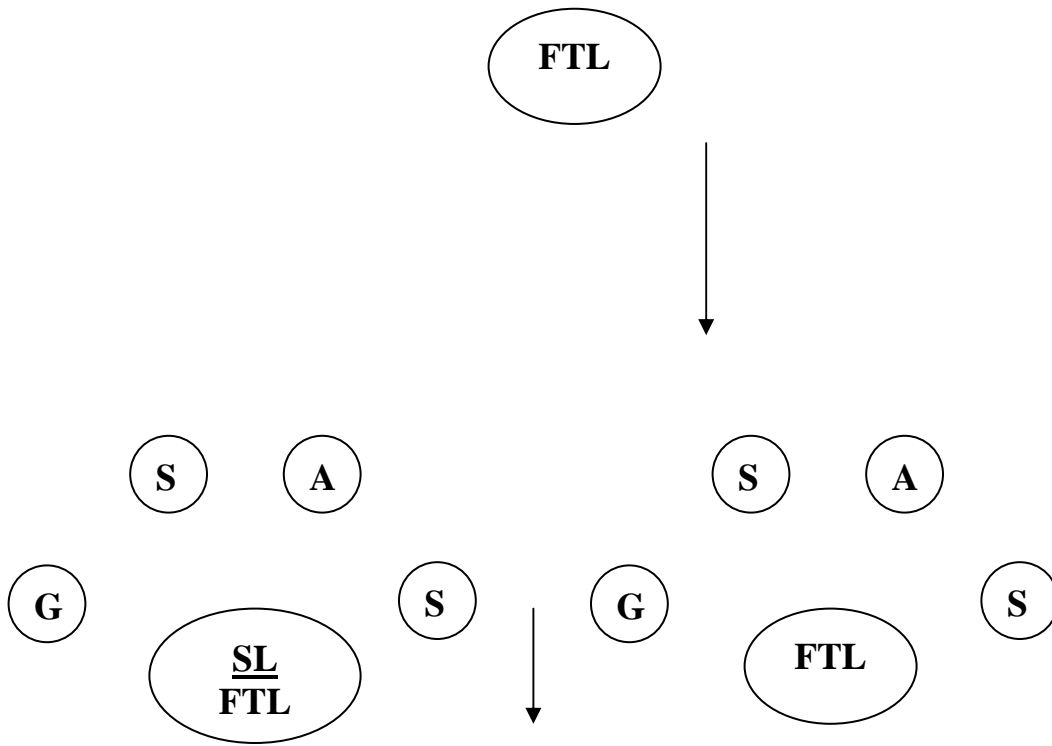
3. **Squad Echelon Right (or Left).** In this formation, the two fire teams are echeloned or angled to the rear (right or left). This combat formation is used to effectively protect an open or exposed flank. This formation is relatively difficult to control and it is vulnerable to enemy fire from the flank that is not echeloned. The advantage of this combat formation however, is that it concentrates maximum fire power to the front and to the flank that is echeloned.

SQUAD COMBAT FORMATIONS

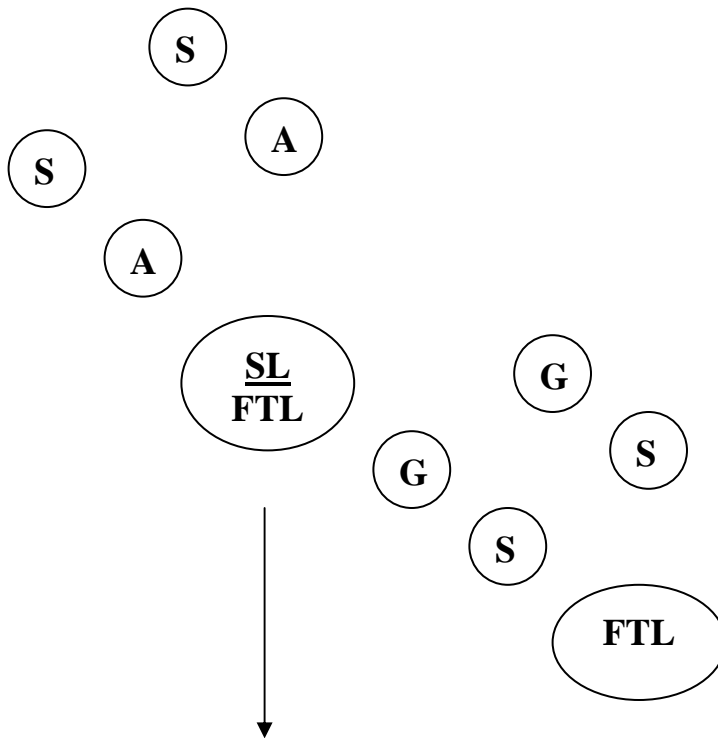
Legend:

- SL - Squad Leader
- FTL - Fire Team Leader
- G - Grenadier/Rifleman
- A - Automatic Rifleman
- S - Scout/Rifleman
- ← - Direction of Movement





Squad Line (Fire Teams in Skirmishers)



Squad Echelon