RAIDS AND AMBUSCADES

Combat patrols provide security, and harass, destroy, or capture enemy troops, equipment and installations. There are three (3) types of combat patrols.

A.  **Raid Patrol**

A raid is conducted by a combat patrol whose mission is to attack a position or installation for any or all of these purposes:

1. Destroy the position or installation.
2. Destroy or capture troops or equipment.
3. Liberate personnel.

Surprise, firepower, and violent action are the keys to raid.

4. Surprise is best achieved by attacking:
   a) When the enemy may least expect an attack.
   b) When visibility is poor, and
   c) From an unexpected direction e.g., approaching from the rear or through seemingly impossible terrain such as a swamp.

5. Fire is concentrated at critical points to suppress the enemy.
6. Violence is best achieved by gaining surprise, by using massed fire, and by attacking aggressively.

B.  **Conduct of Raid**

The patrol moves to the ORP as described for a reconnaissance patrol. The ORP is secured, the leaders’ reconnaissance is conducted, and plans are confirmed. Elements and team move to their positions. If possible, their movement are coordinated so that all reach their positions about the same time. This improves the patrol’s capability for decisive action if it is detected by the enemy too soon.

1. **Security Element** -- the teams of the security element move to positions from which they can secure the ORP, give warning of enemy approach, block avenues of approach into the objective area, prevent enemy escape from the objective area, or perform any combination of these tasks within their capability.

   As the assault and support elements move into position, the security element keeps the patrol leader informed of all enemy action. It shoots only if detected or on the patrol leader’s order.

   Once the assault starts, the security element prevents enemy entry into, or escape from, the objective area.

   When the assault is completed, the security element covers the withdrawal of the assault and support elements to the ORP. It withdraws itself on order or on a pre-arranged signal.

2. **Support Element** -- the support element moves into position prior to the assault element so that it can suppress the objective and shift fire when the assault starts. It normally covers the withdrawal of the assault element from the immediate area of the objective. It withdraws itself on oral order or on signal.

3. **Assault Element** -- the assault element deploys close enough to the objective to permit immediate assault if detected by the enemy. As supporting fire is lifted or shifted, the assault element assaults, seizes, and secures the objective. It protects demolition teams, search teams, and other teams while they work. On order or signal, the assault element withdraws to the ORP.
At the ORP, the patrol reorganizes and moves about 1,000 meters or one terrain feature away to disseminate information. During reorganization, ammunition is redistributed, casualties are treated and status reports are given.

C. Ambush Patrol

An ambush is a surprise attack from a concealed position on a moving or temporarily halted target. It may include an assault to close with and destroy the target, or the attack may be fire only. It does not require that ground be seized and held. It enables a small unit with few weapons and little equipment to harass or destroy a larger better armed unit.

1. Types of Ambush

A Point Ambush is one which troops deploy to attack a single kill zone. An Area Ambush is one which troops are deployed as multiple related point ambush.

2. Categories of Ambush

Ambushes are categorized as either hasty or deliberate.

a) A Hasty Ambush is an immediate action drill.

b) A Deliberate Ambush is planned as a specific action against a specific target. Detailed information on the target are required e.g. size, organization, weapons, and equipment carried, route and direction of movement, and times the target will reach or pass certain points on its route. Deliberate ambushes are planned when --

   1) A reliable information is received on the expected movement of a specific target; and
   2) Patrols, convoys, carrying parties, or similar targets establish patterns of size, time and movement sufficient to permit detailed planning for their ambush.

3. Ambush Terms

Ambushes are described in the following terms:

__________________AMBUSH SITE__________________
The terrain on which a point ambush is established.

__________________KILL ZONE_______________________
The part of an ambush site where fire is concentrated to isolate, trap, and destroy the target.

__________________ASSAULT ELEMENT______________
The part of the patrol that fires into and assaults the kill zone.

__________________SUPPORT ELEMENT_______________
The part of the patrol that supports the assault element by firing into and around the kill zone.

The early warning and security part of an ambush patrol. It secures the ORP and blocks enemy avenues of approach into and out of the ambush site. It does this to prevent any enemy from getting into or out of the ambush site.

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

**Coordinated Fire** -- all weapons, including mines and demolition, must be positioned, and all fire, including that of supporting artillery and mortars, must be coordinated 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 maximum damage so that when required, the target can be quickly assaulted and destroyed.

**Control** -- close to control must be maintained 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 of fire and until the target has moved into the kill zone.
- Opening fire at the proper time.
- Initiation of Report Action if the ambush is prematurely detected.
- Lifting or shifting of supporting fire when the attack includes assault of the target, and
- Timely and orderly withdrawal of the patrol to the ORP.

The men of the patrol must control themselves so that the ambush will not be detected. They must have patience and self discipline to stay still and quiet while waiting for the target to appear, when the target approaches, they must resist the temptation to open fire because the signal is given.

5. **Ambush Formations**

**LINE** -- the assault and support elements are deployed generally parallel to the target’s route of movement (road, trail, streams). This positions the assault and support elements parallel to the long axis of the kill zone and subject the target to flanking fires. The size of the target which can be trapped in the kill zone is limited by the size area which the assault and security elements can cover with a great volume of fire. The target is trapped in the kill zone by natural obstacles, mines (Claymore, anti-tank, anti-personnel) explosives, and direct and indirect fire. A disadvantage of a line formation is that its may be so dispersed that it is larger that the kill zone. The line formation is good in close terrain which restrict the target’s maneuver and in open terrain where one flank is blocked by natural obstacles or can be locked by mines or explosives. Similar obstacles may be put between the assault and support elements and the kill zone to protect the patrol from the target’s counter-ambush actions. When a patrol is deployed this way, access lanes are left through the obstacles so the target can be assaulted. An advantage of line formation is the relative ease by which it can be controlled under all conditions of visibility.

“L” Formation -- is a variation of line formation. Th long leg of L (Assault Element) is parallel to the kill zone. This provides flanking fire. The short leg (support element) is at the end of, and at right angle to the kill zone. This provides infilade fire, which interlocks with fire from the other leg.

“Z” Formation -- Is another variation of the line formation. The attack elements is deployed as in the “L” formation, but with on additional side so that the formation resembles the letter “Z” the additional side may serve any of the following purpose:

a. To engage a force attempting to relieve or reinforce the target.
b. To seal the end of the kill zone
c. To restrict flank
d. To prevent envelopment
   “T” Formation – can be used to interdict small groups attempting to high movements across open areas.
   “V” Shaped Formation – The attack element is deployed along both sides of the target’s route so that it forms a letter “V”

DEFENSE AGAINST AMBUSH

The small unit commander responsible for moving his unit independently must plan for the formation to be used, march security, communications and control, special equipment, the actions to be taken if ambushed and reorganization.

1. Formation – The formation should be an all around security. In the jungle, troops usually move in column or in file. This is necessary for control purposes due to the dense undergrowth hinders but does not preclude the use of a point, flank guards, and rear guards. The interval between men should be about five yards or as visibility permits. The commander should well be forward in column and the firepower of the unit should be evenly dispersed throughout the column, such that if ambushed, all his firepower are not knocked out.

2. Security – The best defense against ambush is security. It is the best method, yet devised for preventing or reducing the possibility of being ambushed. Security includes measures, both active and passive, which provide safety for the unit. Regardless of the formation employed, security to the front, rear and flanks is necessary when ambush is likely. A front security element moving in a jungle should provide its own flank security, be placed well forward or as far forward as possible and still be in communication with the element must be strong enough to sustain itself until follow up units can be deployed to assist in reducing the ambush. Flank security elements in the jungle usually must move adjacent to the column along routes paralleling to the direction of march. The flank security elements must be close enough for control and yet distant enough to preclude jeopardy to the main column in case it receives fire. Reconnaissance by fire may be effective method of causing the enemy to activate his ambush prematurely, this rendering his efforts ineffective. This method may find usefulness when moving along suspected site.

3. Control – The use of communications equipment and control measures are the next items the commander considers.

4. Special Equipment – Additional items and weapons are sometimes needed by the unit.

5. Counter Ambush:
   a. The most effective means of combating ambush is the reversion of its occurrence by steadfast and correct employment of security.
   b. Two things that should be done immediately:
      1). Return of fire with all weapons.
      2). To get out of the killing zone.
      3). Smoke and grenades are extremely directive in executing counter ambush.
      4). Elements that are not trapped must initiate an immediate flank or rear assault.