UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
THE BASIC SCHOOL
MARINE CORPS TRAINING COMMAND
CAMP BARRETT, VIRGINIA 22134-5019

RIFLE PLATOON IN THE DEFENSE B3J0435XQ STUDENT HANDOUT

Rifle Platoon in the Defense

Introduction

The Marine Corps' fighting doctrine is based on rapid, flexible, and opportunistic maneuver. As stated in MCDP 1, Warfighting, "Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope." Capitalizing on violence and shock effect, we must aggressively hunt to identify enemy gaps, continually seeking an opportunity for decisive action. When it arrives, "…we must exploit it fully, committing every ounce of combat power we can muster and pushing ourselves to the limits of exhaustion." (MCDP 1, pg.75)

Maneuver is not mutually exclusive to offensive operations. In fact, the offense and the defense cannot exist separately. The offense cannot exist indefinitely. At some point, a unit will reach their culminating point, or be ordered into the defense to facilitate decisive action elsewhere. Conversely, an effective defense must have offensive characteristics, striking when the enemy is most vulnerable. An effective unit is able to leverage the advantages of the defense, which is the more efficient form of combat, and the offense, which is the more decisive form of combat.

Importance

This student handout pertains equally to all Marine leaders, whether their duties entail combat service support (CSS), combat support, or combat arms. It applies tactics at the basic platoon level in the defense, which are used as building blocks for a larger unit. All Marines face tactical decisions in battle regardless of their roles. Tactical leaders must develop and hone their warfighting skills through study and practice.

In This Lesson

This lesson will give you a framework of how to make sound tactical decisions and begin to understand the tactical decision-making process in the defense at the platoon level. The entire handout is meant to be used as one document. There is a general overview of the defense in the main chapters, and several annexes for in-depth discussion and reference.

This lesson covers the following topics:

Rifle Platoon in the Defense (Continued)

Learning Objectives

Terminal Learning Objectives

TBS-DEF-2101 Given a unit, an assigned area or sector from which to defend, and an order from higher, conduct defensive operations to accomplish the mission.

TBS-DEF-1008Given a unit, an assigned area or sector, from which to defend, a mission, and an order lead a unit in defensive operations to accomplish the mission and meet the commander's intent.

TBS-DEF-1007 Given subordinate unit fire plan sketches, crew-served weapons range cards, a map, and an overlay, prepare a platoon fire plan overlay, to report the unit's defensive plan to higher, coordinate with adjacent units, or facilitate relief in place.

TBS-DEF-2203 Given a unit, a barrier plan, and materials needed to emplace obstacles, direct obstacle emplacement, to support the scheme of maneuver.

Enabling Learning Objectives

TBS-DEF-1007c Given a subordinate unit fire plan sketchers, crew-served weapons range cards, a map, and an overlay. Illustrate sectors of fire without omission.

TBS-DEF-1007d Given a subordinate unit fire plan sketches, crew-served weapons range cards, a map, and an overlay, illustrate tactical control measures without omission.

TBS-DEF-1007g Given a sector of fire, as part of a unit, create a fire plan sketch to depict your units area of responsibility.

TBS-DEF-1008b Given a mission, a commander's intent, and a defensive position, select command post location to facilitate command and control.

TBS-DEF-1008c Given a mission, a commander's intent, and a defensive position, plan for counter attack to accomplish the

mission.

TBS-DEF-1008d Given an order from higher, a mental estimate of the situation, and a defensive scheme of maneuver develop a security plan to support the ground scheme of maneuver.

TBS-DEF-1008h Given a unit, an assigned area or sector from which to defend, supervise the emplacement of sector bags, in accordance with MCWP 3-11.2 Marine Rifle Squad.

TBS-DEF-2101f Given a defensive operations order, a unit, and a simulated combat environment, employ a least engaged unit to protect a flank and accomplish the mission.

TBS-DEF-2101g Given a defensive operations order, a unit, and a simulated combat environment, establish a security plan for the defense that supports the mission.

TBS-DEF-2102k Given a mission and commander's intent, develop a mental estimate of the situation using METT-TC to accomplish the mission.

TBS-DEF-2102l Given a mission with a commander's intent and mental estimate of the situation, integrate the principles of war in tactical planning to accomplish the mission.

Characteristics of the Defense

Purpose: According to MCDP 1-0, a defense is "A coordinated effort to defeat an attack by an opposing force and prevent it from achieving its objectives." Additionally, defensive operations can force the enemy to reach his culminating point without meeting his objectives, allowing friendly forces to gain and maintain the initiative. At the rifle platoon level, the "coordination of effort" is the responsibility of the platoon commander. Defensive operations may also be conducted to:

- Gain time.
- Retain key terrain or deny a vital area to the enemy.
- Counter surprise action by the enemy.
- Economize force, allowing combat power to be concentrated elsewhere.
- Increase the enemy's vulnerability by forcing him to concentrate forces.
- Attrite or fix the enemy as a prelude to offensive operations.
- Prepare to resume the offensive.

Characteristics of the Defense

The platoon commander must consider the characteristics of the defense when planning, preparing, and conducting defensive operations. The ten characteristics described below should not be used as a checklist nor should they be thought of as hard and fast rules to be adhered to without exception. Rather, these concepts should help guide the commander's thinking and tactical planning process prior to engagement with the enemy with the platoon commander understanding that he/she may need to sacrifice one fundamental in order to maximize or enhance the utility of another.

Knowledge of the Enemy: A defender's options are dictated in large part by what the attacker does. Therefore, thorough knowledge of the enemy's capabilities, operational concepts, and habits is essential to a successful defense. A thorough tactical planning process, specifically enemy analysis, will provided valuable information on enemy assembly areas, assault positions, routes, firing positions for supporting arms units, axes of advance, and the area most advantageous for the enemy's main effort. When the defender can accurately anticipate the enemy's actions, he can trap the attacker within the defense and establish conditions for resumption of offensive operations.

Maneuver: Maneuver is as important in the defense as it is in the offense. While steadfastness and the tenacious holding of key terrain are essential in the defense, the defender must not become immobile. The defender must maintain freedom of maneuver. Maneuver is essential throughout the defensive battlespace, both forward of and within the engagement area. The platoon commander must ensure that elements of the platoon are able to maneuver in depth, taking advantage of terrain and tactical developments to concentrate, disperse, and occupy positions from which they can bring more effective fire to bear on the enemy. A defensive platoon commander can do this by launching spoiling attacks on enemy assembly areas; utilizing patrols

to harass, distract, deceive, and damage the enemy forward of the engagement area; and conducting counterattacks in the engagement area to destroy enemy penetrations.

Preparation: The defender arrives in the battle area before the attacker and the defender must make the most thorough preparations for combat possible in the time available. While the attacker can choose the specific time and point of attack, the defender, through the proper selection of terrain and reinforcing obstacles, can direct the energy of the enemy's attack into terrain of their choosing. Preparations begin with the tactical planning process and combat order, and they continue throughout the conduct of the defense. The platoon commander must be aware that these preparations may be made under constant observation by the enemy. Defensive planning and preparation can be either hasty or deliberate. These terms refer to preparations, and are not types of defense.

a. Hasty Defense: A hasty defense is a defense normally organized while in contact with the enemy or when contact is imminent and time available for organization is limited. Reconnaissance of the defensive area must be curtailed and the defense assumed either directly from the current positions of units or a nearby advantageous positon. A hasty defense is improved continuously as the situation permits and may eventually become a deliberate defense.
b. Deliberate Defense: A deliberate defense is a defense normally organized when out of contact with the enemy or when contact with the enemy is not imminent and time for organization is available. A deliberate defense normally includes fortifications, strongpoints, extensive use of obstacles, and fully integrated fires. The platoon commander normally is free to make a detailed reconnaissance of the area to be defended, select the terrain on which to defend, and decide the best tactical deployment of forces. The instruction at The Basic School will focus more heavily on the deliberate defense.

Regardless of whether the defense is hasty or deliberate, it is incumbent upon the defender to utilize all the assets at his/her disposal to make all necessary preparations to allow for a successful defense. This means that the defender needs to understand that the defense is a logistically heavy operation which may require him to bring tools, obstacles, etc into the fight. Further, this means that the defender has to take the time available to ensure that all assets are working together towards a coordinated, integrated and synchronized defense.

Use of Terrain: The defender must exploit every aspect of terrain and weather to his advantage. In the defense, as in the attack, terrain is valuable only if a force gains advantage from its possession or control. In developing the engagement area, the platoon commander takes account of key terrain and visualizes all possible enemy avenues of approach. The platoon

commander seeks to defend on terrain that maximizes effective fire, cover, concealment, movement, and surprise. When possible, the platoon commander should select terrain that has good defensive qualities but is not conspicuous.

Obstacle integration multiplies the effects and capabilities of firepower. The platoon commander leverages both natural and manmade obstacles when selecting their defensive position. The combination of firepower and obstacles causes the enemy to conform to the platoon commander's scheme of maneuver. Obstacles also magnify the effects of firepower by increasing target acquisition time and creating exploitable vulnerabilities. When not properly integrated into the defensive scheme of maneuver, obstacles become either useless or a hindrance to the defender himself as they inhibit friendly maneuver while having a negligible effect on enemy maneuver.

Surprise: The attacker possesses the initiative and chooses the time and place of his assault. However, the defender achieves surprise with obstacles, fires, security forces, cover and concealment, mutually supporting positions, and defensive mobility to delay, disrupt, fix, and eventually defeat the enemy. Deception, discipline, camouflage, and use of cover and concealment protect the force and preserve combat power by misleading the enemy as to the true location of friendly positions and strength of forces. The keys to surprise are concealment, counterreconnaissance, OPSEC, and thorough preparation.

Mass and Concentration: The defender cannot defend everywhere in strength, and the successful defender concentrates combat power at a decisive time and place, while exercising economy of force in less critical areas. Some portions may rely more heavily on fires and obstacles rather than manpower. Massing fires into non-decisive areas or engagements is wasteful. The successful defender must determine where and when they believes the critical battle will take place and they must ensure that they are superior to the enemy at that time and place. The platoon commander designates the main effort based on the anticipation of the enemy's main effort. The defensive scheme of maneuver takes advantage of terrain essential to the integrity of the defense. Since the platoon commander cannot determine the exact enemy course of action, they must be prepared to shift the main effort. The platoon commander must be able to do this swiftly, since periods that allow them to deploy superior combat power will be brief. The platoon commander masses fires and concentrates combat power repeatedly to wrest the initiative from the attacking enemy. He may have to surrender some ground to gain the time necessary to concentrate forces.

Flexibility: While the platoon commander utilizes tactical cunning and a thorough tactical planning process to determine the enemy's course of action in advance, the plan must be flexible enough to deal with different enemy courses of action. Successful flexibility lies in sound preparation and effective command and control. The platoon commander must receive detailed,

accurate, and effective reporting from patrols and LP/OPs in order to determine when to adjust the plan based on enemy actions. Flexibility is created by:

- Detailed planning for contingencies (The platoon commander must be able to visualize the engagement before it occurs).
- Designating supplementary and alternate positions.
- Properly planning for the use of the least engaged unit.
- Designing counterattack plans.
- Preparing to assume the offense.
- Planning on-call fire support.
- Rehearsing employment of the least engaged unit, as well as movement between primary, alternate, and supplementary positions.

Local Security: All units provide their own local security and platoon commander's develop the Security Plan for their unit. Terrain, communications, target acquisition capabilities, and the enemy threat determine the depth of local security. Units use Passive and Active Security measures to provide security and give themselves depth.

- Passive Security Measures:
  - Camouflage
  - Movement Control (both within the BP and near the BP)
  - Light/Noise Discipline
  - Security Posture/Alert Status
- Active Security Measures:
  - LP/OPs – Provide early warning of enemy movement, confirm or deny EMLCOA
  - Patrols – Provide offensive action in the security area. Can emplace LP/OPs, investigate named areas of interest, and interdict enemy forces.

Mutual Support: Mutual support strengthens any position. It is that support which units render each other. In the defense we seek to achieve mutual support by ensuring that no attacker can assault any of our positions without coming under the fires of another position, by ensuring that, if we were to lose one position, we do not lose the ability to affect that sector of fire and finally, we seek to ensure that we are able to cover the withdrawal or counterattack to/ from our primary positions. The degree to which we achieve mutual support depends on the terrain, range of weapons, and visibility. Ideally, the frontage a force must defend is directly related to its ability to provide mutual support between its units. To neutralize mutually supporting positions, an attacker must disperse fire away from his main objective thus weakening his overall attack. Mutual support is essential at all levels.

Defense in Depth: Defense in depth is the positioning of mutually supporting defensive positions throughout the defensive battlespace to absorb and progressively weaken an enemy attack. It provides maneuver space within the defensive area for the maneuver of subordinate units against the enemy's main effort. It is necessary to:

- Disrupt the momentum of the attack and prevent a breakthrough.
- Force the enemy into the engagement area.
- Allow the platoon commander time to determine the enemy's main effort and counter it.
- Force the enemy to commit his force before a non-decisive point.
- Disperse the effects of enemy fire.

The greater the enemy's combat power and the wider the frontage held, the greater the required depth of the defense. Defense in depth is achieved by –:

- Engaging the enemy at the earliest opportunity with patrols and LP/OPs.
- Employing weapons at maximum effective range.
- Using blocking positions, obstacles, and supplementary positions throughout the engagement area.
- Planning for decisive use of the least engaged unit and fire support units at the decisive moment in the engagement.

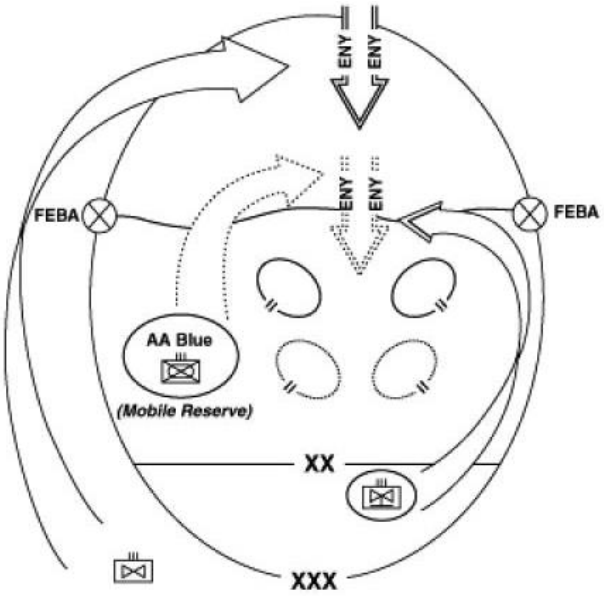
Types of Defensive Operations

Types of Defensive Operations. There are three broad types of defensive operations which can be accomplished using several different methods. The three types are mobile, area, and retrograde. The three types weight the defensive characteristics differently to accomplish their mission.

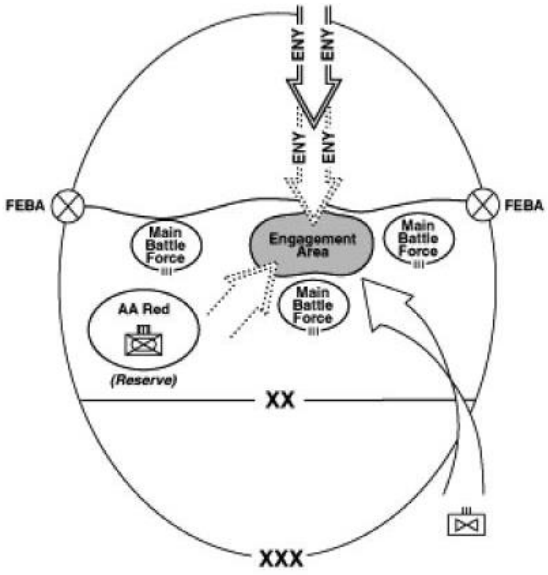
a. Mobile Defense: In a mobile defense, the bulk of the force is held as a mobile striking force with strict economy applied to dedicated positional supporting efforts designed to canalize, delay, and disrupt the enemy's attack. In this case, the static positions help control the depth and breadth of enemy penetrations and ensure retention of ground from which to launch counterattacks (MCDP 1-0). The striking force, normally a mobile reserve, is the defensive main effort which ultimately destroys the enemy through

b. Area Defense: An area defense orients on retention of terrain by absorbing the enemy in an interlocking series of positions and destroying him largely by fires. Mutual support and positions in depth force the enemy to expose his force in the attack to each position (MCWP 3-1). In this instance, dynamic elements include patrols, intelligence units, and reserve forces to cover gaps among defensive positions, reinforcing those positions as necessary and counterattacking as directed (MCDP 1-0). These tactics will be covered in more depth throughout the class. While at The Basic School, the lessons and field exercises will primarily be concerned with the Area Defense.

c. Retrograde: Retrograde involves organized movement away from the enemy. A transitional operation, the retrograde defense occurs within a larger scheme designed to regain the initiative from the enemy. Three specific defensive methods—delay, withdrawal, and retirement—are associated with the retrograde.



MOBILE DEFENSE



AREA DEFENSE

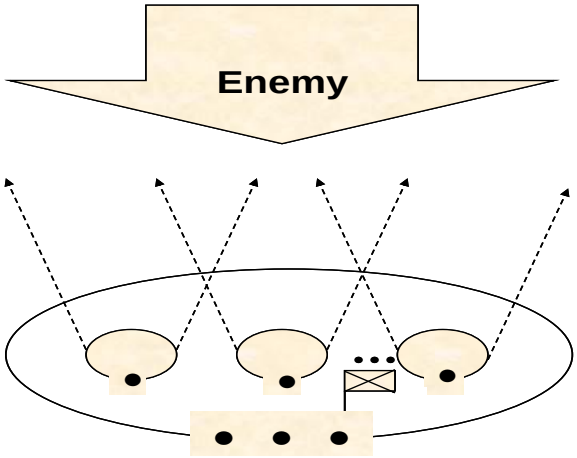
Defensive Methods

Defensive Methods.

Through a thorough estimate of the situation and tactical analysis, the commander will determine the most effective means of establishing a position defense. The following are several defensive methods the commander has at his/her disposal given the mission, enemy situation, terrain, and available time. Regardless of how the commander ultimately decides to defend, the ten characteristics of the defense should be used as a guide to defeat the enemy and accomplish the mission.

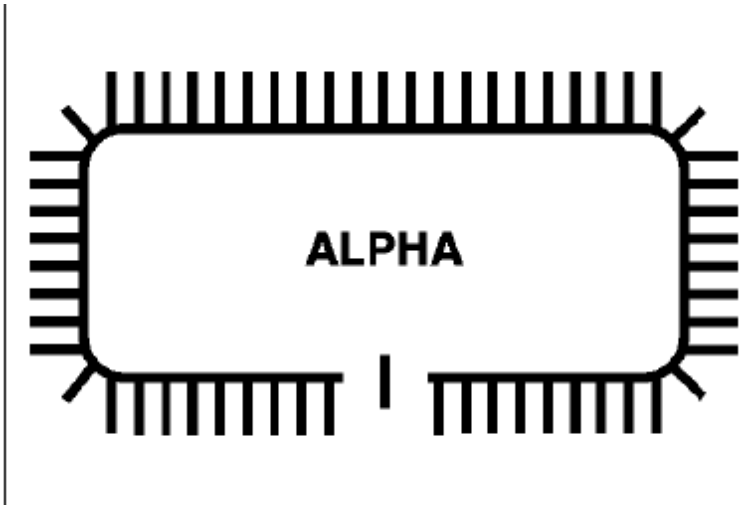
a. Battle Position: A battle position is a defense position oriented on the most likely enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend or attack. It can be used to deny or delay the enemy the use of certain terrain or an avenue of approach. Because a battle position is oriented on a likely enemy avenue of approach, it will generally be linear in nature so that the defender is able to mass his fires and maximize effects. It is important to note that a battle position may often be part of a larger defense which may or may not also be linear in nature.

Further it is important to note that a battle position is assigned to the commander by a higher headquarters and signifies that the higher headquarters has already conducted the tactical planning and has given that specific location since it supports the larger scheme of maneuver. The size of a battle position can vary with the size of the unit assigned.



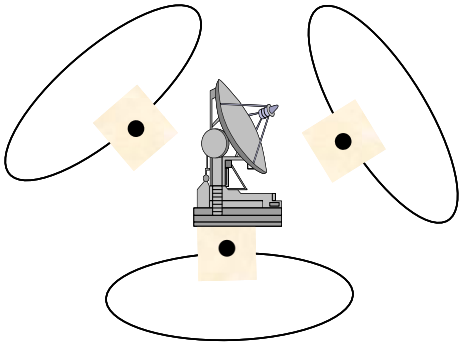
A platoon battle position showing the platoon CP, 3 squad battle positions, and their sectors of fire.

b. Strongpoint: A fortified defensive position designed to deny the enemy certain terrain as well as the use of an avenue of approach. It differs from a battle position in that it is designed to be occupied for an extended period of time. It is established on critical terrain and must be held for the defense to succeed. A strongpoint is organized for all-around defense and should have sufficient supplies and ammunition to continue to fight even if surrounded or cut off from resupply. A strongpoint will typically contain significant combat service support assets and will generally be utilized at the battalion level and above.



A Company strongpoint, note the outwardly extending lines indicated it is not a normal battle position graphic.

c. Perimeter: A perimeter defense is oriented in all directions. A unit can use this defensive technique to accomplish a specific mission, such as defend friendly infrastructure, or to provide immediate self-protection, such as during resupply operations when all-around security is required. Weapons employment considerations are similar to those used when conducting a strongpoint. The commander establishes a perimeter defense when the unit must hold critical terrain, or when it must defend itself in areas where the defense is not tied in with adjacent units. Within a perimeter defense, a subordinate unit may utilize another defensive technique as part of the larger unit's perimeter defense. The graphic below illustrates how a platoon perimeter defense can be comprised of three squad sized battle positions.



Three squad battle positions in a perimeter defense.

d. Reverse-Slope: A reverse slope is any slope which descends away from the enemy. A reverse slope defense is organized so that the main defensive positions are masked from enemy observation and direct fire by a topographical crest. A reverse slope aids the defender in bringing massed surprised fires to bear against an attacking enemy and may be particularly useful if the enemy possesses weapons with greater range and/or accuracy than the defender. While the crest is not occupied in strength, control of the crest by fire and employment of obstacles is key to success. When utilizing a reverse slope, the defender will typically utilize the battle position technique, with the preponderance of fires oriented towards the likely enemy avenue of approach (i.e., up the ascending slope).

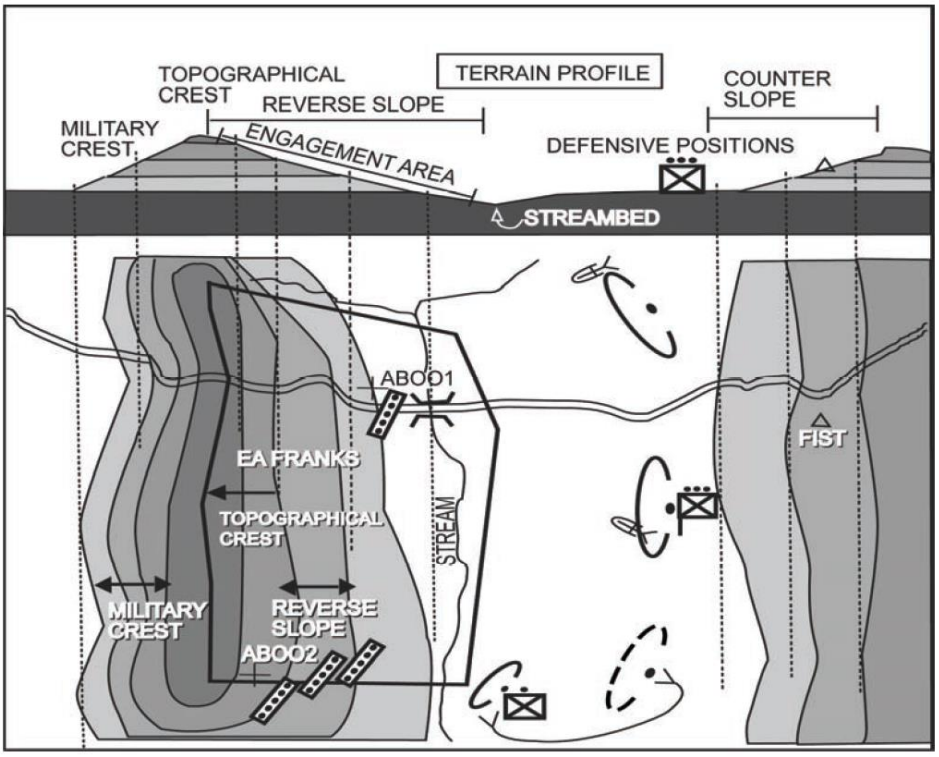


Figure 8-15. Reverse-slope defense options.
From FM 3-21.8 The Infantry Platoon/Squad

Sequence of the Defense

As with an attack, defensive operations follow an observable and predictable sequence. Through the duration of defensive operations the platoon commander must ensure that they are using their time and resources as efficiently as possible to prepare for the enemy's assault. The defense is conducted in the following sequence:

- Reconnaissance, Security Operations, and Enemy Preparatory Fires
- Occupation and Preparation
- Approach of the Enemy Main Attack
- Enemy Assault
- Counter Attack
- Consolidation and Reorganization

1. Reconnaissance, Security Operations, and Enemy Preparatory Fires
    a. Estimate of the Situation: After receipt of higher's order, the platoon commander begins the tactical planning process just like in any operation. The platoon commander conducts a minimum of a map reconnaissance when consideration a defensive. Additional reconnaissance could be a leader's reconnaissance patrol, ISR soak of the objective area, Scout Snipers, or similar units.
    b. Security Operations in this phase will include local security of the platoon, and could include forward security units at the company, battalion, and higher levels. Their purpose is to challenge the enemy ability to determine or affect friendly actions.

c. The enemy will attempt to disrupt the friendly unit's operations during this time with Preparatory fires and reconnaissance assets. Preparatory fires include harassing and interdicting fires, indirect fire, enemy Deep Air Support, enemy Electronic Warfare, and similar long range enemy fires. Enemy reconnaissance may include long range patrols, signals intelligence to include transmission triangulation, drones, and other similar elements.

2. Occupation and Preparation

a. The platoon commander defeats the enemy in the defense using an Engagement Area (EA). "The EA is where the…commander intends to contain and finish the enemy force using the massed fires of all available weapons." (MCWP 3-11.1) The platoon commander prepares their defense using the Seven Steps Engagement Area Development. They **are the key steps** of preparing a defensive position. See Annex A of this SHO for an in depth discussion, with examples, of creating an engagement area.

- Step 1: Identify ALL enemy avenues of approach: This is the METT-TC process that was supported with our reconnaissance efforts.
- Step 2: Determine LIKELY enemy Schemes of Maneuver. This is the next step in the TacPlanning process. A defender who defends everywhere defends nowhere, so the platoon commander must conduct the planning to determine the EMLCOA of the enemy force.
- Step 3: Determine where to kill the enemy. Related to the Center of Gravity, Critical Vulnerability, and exploitation plan, the platoon commanders picks a location where they can leverage all of their available assets to defeat the enemy. Terrain relative to the enemy's avenue of approach, friendly weapon systems capabilities, and size relative to the enemy are all factors in choosing a tenable engagement area.
- Step 4: Emplace Weapon Systems (Direct Fire Planning) The platoon commander plans to use their organic and attached weapon systems to mass fire in the engagement area. The platoon commander plans for and utilizes Trigger Lines, target references points, engagement criteria, and target precedence to control these fires.

1. Target Reference points are identifiable features on the deck used to facilitate communication across the defensive line, and to mass and distribute fires across the engagement area.

2. Trigger lines are phase lines used in the defense to effectively sequence and mass fires in the engagement area.

a. Engagement Criteria provides guidance to Marines on when to engage with what weapon systems. Example: At Trigger Line Red, M16s will engage at the sustained rate.

b. Target Precedence provide guidance on what order targets will be engaged when more than one target meets the platoon commander's engagement criteria. Example: Target precedence at Trigger line Red for M16s is enemy CSWs, C2 nodes, fire team sized elements, then enemy individual units.

3. Attached units, to include machineguns and rockets, are included in this planning. Their considerations include hot and cold positions for rockets, the positioning of machine guns, and the final protective fire mission assigned to the machinegun units (PDF or FPL).

4. The Platoon Commander assigns sectors of fire to the squad leaders. The Squad leader's assign sectors to their fire teams. The Fire team is the lowest level unit given a sector of fire, so that the fireteam's sector, and by extension every sector across the platoon, can be covered even when the platoon is at 25% security.

- Step 5: Plan and Integrate Obstacles. The platoon commander creates an obstacle plan to enhance the effects of their fires. There are three types of wire obstacles the platoon commander can emplace:
  1. Protective wire – This wire PROTECTS the fighting positions. It is the responsibility of the defending unit to emplace protective wire. It is emplaced just outside of hand grenade range, far enough out that all members of the fire team can affect the obstacle with their fires.
  2. Tactical wire – This wire accomplishes a TACTICAL TASK in the Engagement Area. Tactical wire FIXES, TURNS, BLOCKS, or DISRUPTS the enemy.
  3. Supplementary wire - This wire disguises the nature of protective and tactical wire.
- All obstacles must be covered by fire and observation, otherwise the enemy can breach them at their leisure.
- Step 6: Plan and Integrate indirect fires (organic and non-organic). Defensive fire support is integrated with the direct fire and obstacle plan to achieve the desired effects for the platoon commander. There are 3 types of indirect fire in the defense:
  1. Long Range Fires – These fires target the enemy out in the security area, they disrupt the enemy and cause them to deploy early.
  2. Close in Fires – These fires target the enemy in the engagement area. They canalize the enemy and disrupt enemy breaching elements.
  3. Final Protective Fires – These fires protect the defensive from being overrun and are used to destroy enemy units that culminate in the engagement area. They are **REGISTERED** during the preparation of the defense.

- Step 7: Conduct Engagement Area Rehearsal – The 'Supervise' troop leading step; the platoon commander conducts rehearsals to ensure the plan is understand and effective. Rehearsals can include: Radio/Comm rehearsal of all trigger lines and fire control measures in the Engagement Area, occupation of alternate and supplementary positions, counter attacks, and employment of the least engaged unit. The least engaged unit at the platoon level is defined as "the unit under minimal enemy influence when the engagement begins."

b. Once the platoon commander has completed their plan, they issue their orders to their subordinate. The Scheme of Maneuver of a defensive order is issued in the **TDOOTS** format:
- Type/Method of Defense – The type and method to be used: (Area defense using Battle Position/linear/reverse slope method)
- Distribution of Forces - (Main Effort, SE1, SE2, SE3, etc.)
- Orientation – Cardinal Direction (South)
- Occupation Method – Same as an ambush: (Crow's Foot, Bent L, Combination)
- Tactical Control Measures – The way the platoon commander will sequence and control the defense, just as the platoon commander uses them in the attack: Target Reference Points, Trigger Lines, Patrol Routes, ORP, and similar ones should be included.
- Security Plan – How will the platoon provide local security during all aspects of the defense: Upon Occupation, LP/OP and patrolling efforts, when 'Stand-to' will be conducted, etc.

c. Following the order's issue the platoon finishes their preparation for combat and displaces to their ORP. They then conduct a leader's reconnaissance, if they have not done so already, and occupy their position.

d. A defensive position is occupied using the Crow's Foot, Bent-L, or Combination method.

e. Immediately following occupation, the platoon remains at 100% security, or 'stand –to' to ensure local security during this vulnerable phase in the platoon's occupation. Once the platoon commander believes that an enemy attack is not imminently, they order the platoon to reduce their alert posture and begin the priorities of work. CSWs are emplaced first, then M249s, then the rest of the fire team.

f. The priorities of work, and their proper supervision, are key in the defense. Effectively managing the physical preparation of the battle position while ensure the success of the platoon. Physical preparation of fighting positions, and in depth discussions on the priorities of work, are discussed in detail in Annex D and E, respectively.

g. A key responsibility of the platoon commander in the defense is creating the Fire Plan Sketch. The Fire plan Sketch is a graphical, to scale, depiction of the battle position and engagement area. The platoon commander fights the platoon off of the fire plan sketch. It

verifies that all weapon systems were emplaced correctly so that their fires are deconflicted with friendly positions, distributed across the width and depth of the EA, and massed appropriately. The platoon commander creates this fire plan sketch off of the squad leader's fire plan sketch and crew served weapons range cards. The squad leader creates their fire plan sketch off of the individual fighting positions' range cards. A how-to guide for the construction of the fire plan sketch and more details on it can be found in Annex G.

h. Once the priorities of work begin, the platoon constructs its battle positions and the platoon commander creates a platoon command post. The command post is best positioned behind the main effort where the platoon commander can see the engagement effort. There are four types of battle positions that a platoon can creates:
    - Primary positions: The primary BP is the best place to accomplish the assigned mission. It is frequently focused on the enemy's most likely avenue of approach.
    - Alternate Positions: The alternate BP is where a unit can still accomplish its assigned mission, but that is occupied when the primary BP becomes either untenable or unsuitable.
    - Supplementary: Supplementary positions allows a unit to address unexpected enemy schemes of maneuver. For example, they may cover the flank of the primary positions.
    - Subsequent: A subsequent BP is a preplanned position to which a unit expects to move during the course of the defensive battle. A unit may have a series of subsequent BPs, each of which may have its own set of alternate and supplementary positions.

3. Approach of the Enemy Main Attack
    a. In preparation of the enemy main attack, the platoon deploys security forces to provide local security and depth to the defense, IAW with the platoon commander's Security Plan. These forces use offensive action to shape the battlefield, slow the enemy's advance, and disrupt the enemy's formations.
        - Listening Posts/Observation Posts: LP/OPs are employed to observe enemy avenues of approach and provide early warning to the platoon commander. They are placed forward in the security area and can act as observers for Long Range Fires.
        - Patrols: Patrols observe, report on, and engage the enemy in the security area. They also emplace LP/OPs, investigate Named Areas of Interest, and interdict enemy forces along possible enemy avenues of approach. The exit and reentry of patrols from the BP and battle tracking of patrols that have departed the BP are key to preventing fratricide in the defense.
        - Alert posture: As the enemy force approaches and the platoon commander sets their alert posture to accomplish their priorities of work and provide local security. Before the enemy reaches direct fire range the platoon goes to 100% or 'stand-

to'. The security posture during stand-to is all Marines are in full equipment with weapon system in their primary positions. Dawn and dusk, when patrols are entering and exiting, and when contact with the enemy is imminent are all examples of when a platoon may conduct stand-to.

b. Through this phase the objective of the platoon commander is to weaken the enemy force and to force them in to the decisive point in the engagement area. They use their security forces, long range fires, and tactical disrupting obstacles to accomplish this.

4. Enemy Assault
   a. During the assault the platoon commander leverages all the coordinated assets available in to the engagement area to defeat the enemy. The platoon engages the enemy utilizing the pre-established TRPs and trigger lines, IAW the engagement criteria. The platoon commander maneuvers forces in to alternate or supplemental positions during the course of the assault as required. The supplementary positions are occupied by the Least Engaged Unit as defined in Step 7 of EA Development above. The platoon can use Close-in fires to target enemy forces in the EA; to suppress enemy support by fire positions, canalize the enemy, and disrupt enemy breaching elements. If necessary, the platoon commander fires the Final Protective Fire to destroy an enemy culminating in the EA, or to prevent the platoon from being over run.
5. Counterattack
   a. Counterattacks may be hasty or deliberate, like all attacks. At the company level and higher, they frequently are accomplished by employing a reserve unit. Platoons can attack withdrawing enemy by fire or utilize the least engaged unit in a pursuit. During the counterattack phase, the platoon commander should exploit fleeting opportunities, but avoid overextending their forces.
6. Consolidation and Reorganization
   a. The first priority of the platoon commander during the consolidation phase is the security of their unit. They must reestablish control of their engagement area. The platoon commander may need to redistribute sectors of fire and/or reposition CSWs. The platoon treats casualties and processes enemy prisoners of war. The platoon redistributes ammunition and requests resupply. When feasible, security forces are deployed to reestablish control of the security area. The platoon commander prepares the platoon for follow on operations.
   b. Relief in Place: A relief in place is : "An operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit. The responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission are the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. The incoming unit continues the operation as ordered"(JP 1-02). Platoons conduct RIPs to transition to the offense, retrograde for reconsolidation or retrofit, or assume other missions. Just like an attack or a defense, RIPs can be *hasty* or *deliberate* in nature, as denoted by the level of planning that goes in to them. There are three types of RIPs:

- Sequential RIP – “A sequential relief occurs when each element in the relieved unit is relieved in succession, from right to left or left to right, depending on how it is deployed.” (FM 3-90_2, 4-1)
    1. For example: 1st squad on the left flank RIPS, then 2nd squad in the center, then 3rd on the right flank.
- Simultaneous RIP - “A simultaneous relief occurs when all elements are relieved at the same time…Simultaneous relief takes the least time to execute, but is more easily detected by the enemy. ” (FM 3-90_2, 4-1)
    1. For example: All three squads RIP at once.
- Staggered RIP – “A staggered relief occurs when the commander relieves each element in a sequence determined by the tactical situation, not its geographical orientation…Sequential or staggered reliefs can occur over a significant amount of time.” (FM 3-90_2, 4-1)
    1. For Example: Oncoming unit RIPs out main effort and assumes the primary positions. Supported unit continues to man LP/OPs and patrolling effort. Oncoming then RIPs out the rest of the BP. Once BP is RIP’d, Oncoming takes over for patrolling effort and dispatches a patrol to relieve LP/OPs. “If the relieved unit’s forward elements can defend the AO, the relieving unit executes the relief in place from the rear to the front. This facilitates movement and terrain management.” (FM 3-90-2

c. The RIP is a tactically vulnerable operation; every effort must be made to conceal RIP from the enemy. RIPs additionally require extensive cooperation and coordination between RIPing units. RIPs should be conducted during periods of reduced visibility such as darkness or fog. The stationary owns the AO (and all forces within it) until the Passage of Command and Transfer of Authority has been conducted. Passage of Command should be done whenever the Oncoming unit is capable of accomplishing the mission independently. Even if the incoming unit has assumed many or most of the responsibility for the AO, the outgoing commander will fight the defense until the RIP is complete and the TOA conducted.
    - For additional information on RIPs, to include the sequence of events and additional considerations, see ANNEX H.

Summary

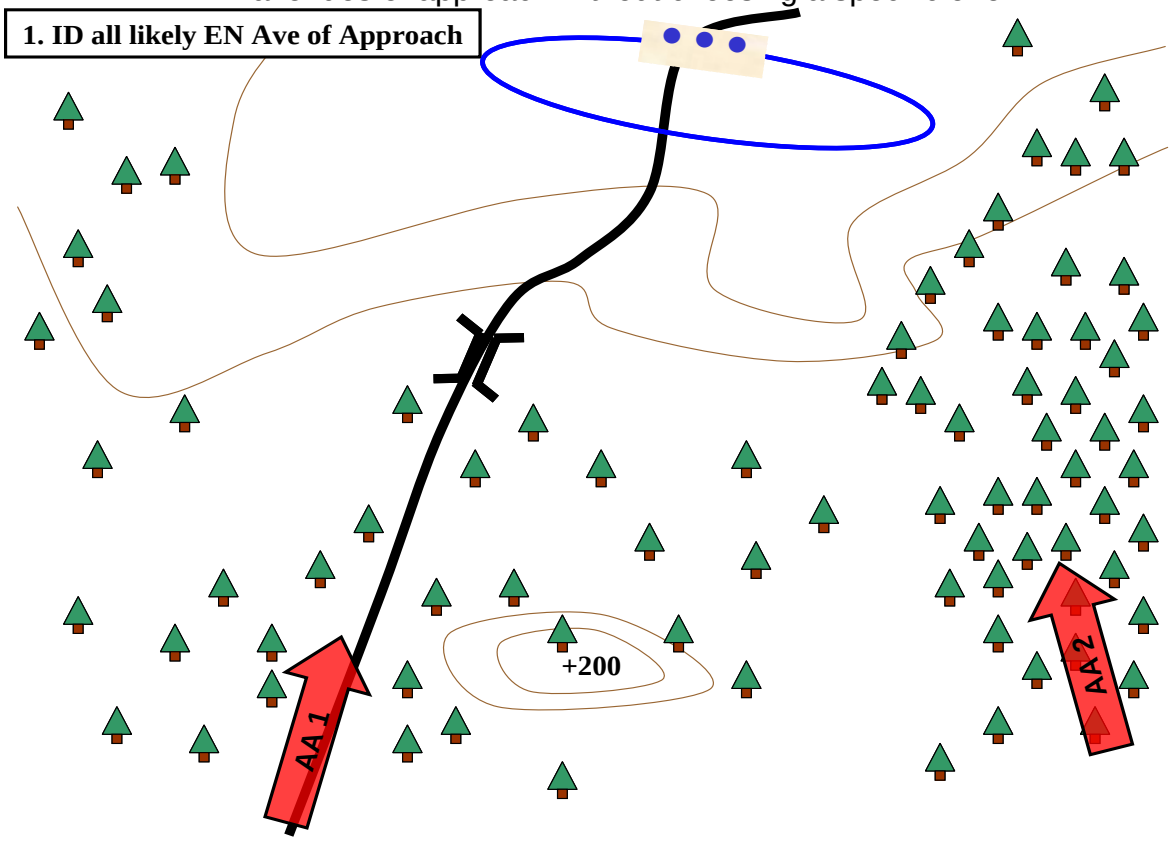
This class has covered the doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures of platoon level defensive operations. Platoon commanders must always remember that the offense and defense must co-exist. A good leader is able to transition seamlessly between the two. While the defense is labor and resource intensive, the platoon commander must remember the overall goal of defensive operations: An integrated and synchronized plan in which the effects of all resources are maximized in the engagement area to

defeat an enemy attack. The first part of the student handout covered the defense in broad detail. The **Annexes that follow are vital** to the success of the platoon commander as they provide greater detail and concrete examples of the topics discussed. This hand out is designed to be used in concert with the annexes.

Annex A: Engagement Area Development

The engagement area (EA) is the location where the platoon commander intends to destroy an enemy force using the massed fires of all available weapons and supporting assets. The location of the engagement area is based on a detailed and thorough estimate of the situation and leaders reconnaissance by the platoon commander. The EA facilitates focus, mass and concentration, as well as economy of force in areas outside of it. The success of the engagement with the enemy depends on how effectively the platoon commander can integrate and synchronize the obstacle plan, indirect fire plan, and direct fire plan with one another and the terrain in the engagement area to achieve the platoon's purpose.
The following steps can be used for developing an EA:

1. Identify all likely enemy avenues of approach:
   Beginning with the initial estimate of the situation, the platoon commander conducts terrain analysis during the map reconnaissance and physical leader's reconnaissance. The platoon commander must identify key aspects of terrain which can be utilized by the enemy to gain a position of advantage. During this step, the platoon commander identifies the possible enemy avenues of approach without choosing a specific one.



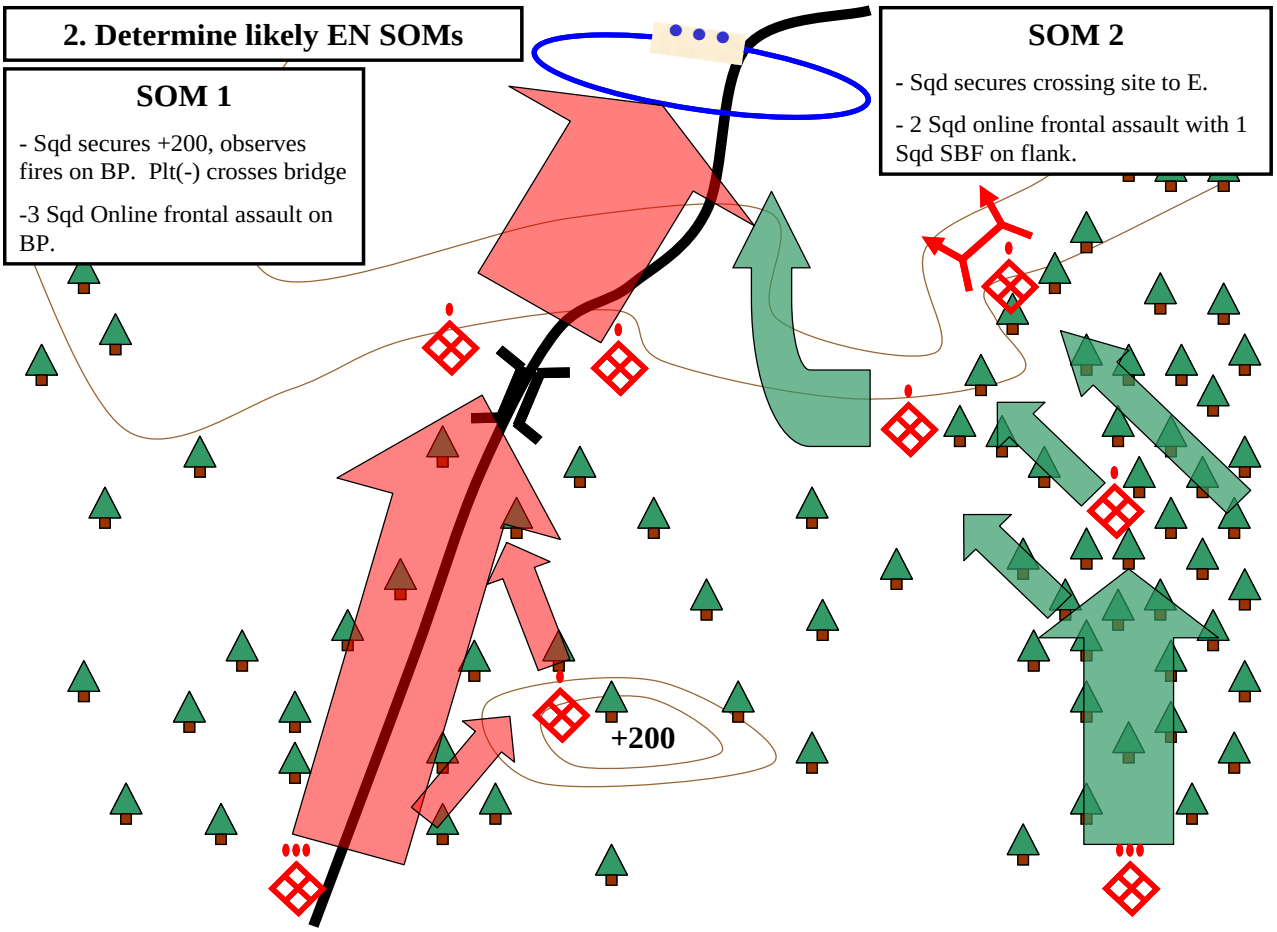
2. Determine likely enemy schemes of maneuver:

Once the possible enemy routes towards an area are developed, the platoon commander uses them to develop likely enemy schemes of maneuver. The platoon commander identifies the ways in which the enemy can use the terrain along the respective routes to their advantage in order to accomplish their overall goals. The enemy's equipment, order of battle, weapons employment considerations, and capabilities at this time on the battlefield assist the leader during this step. This analysis enables the platoon commander to look at the advantages and disadvantages associated with each possible enemy scheme of maneuver.

The final element of this step is developing the enemy's most likely course of action (EMLCOA), i.e. what the enemy WILL do.

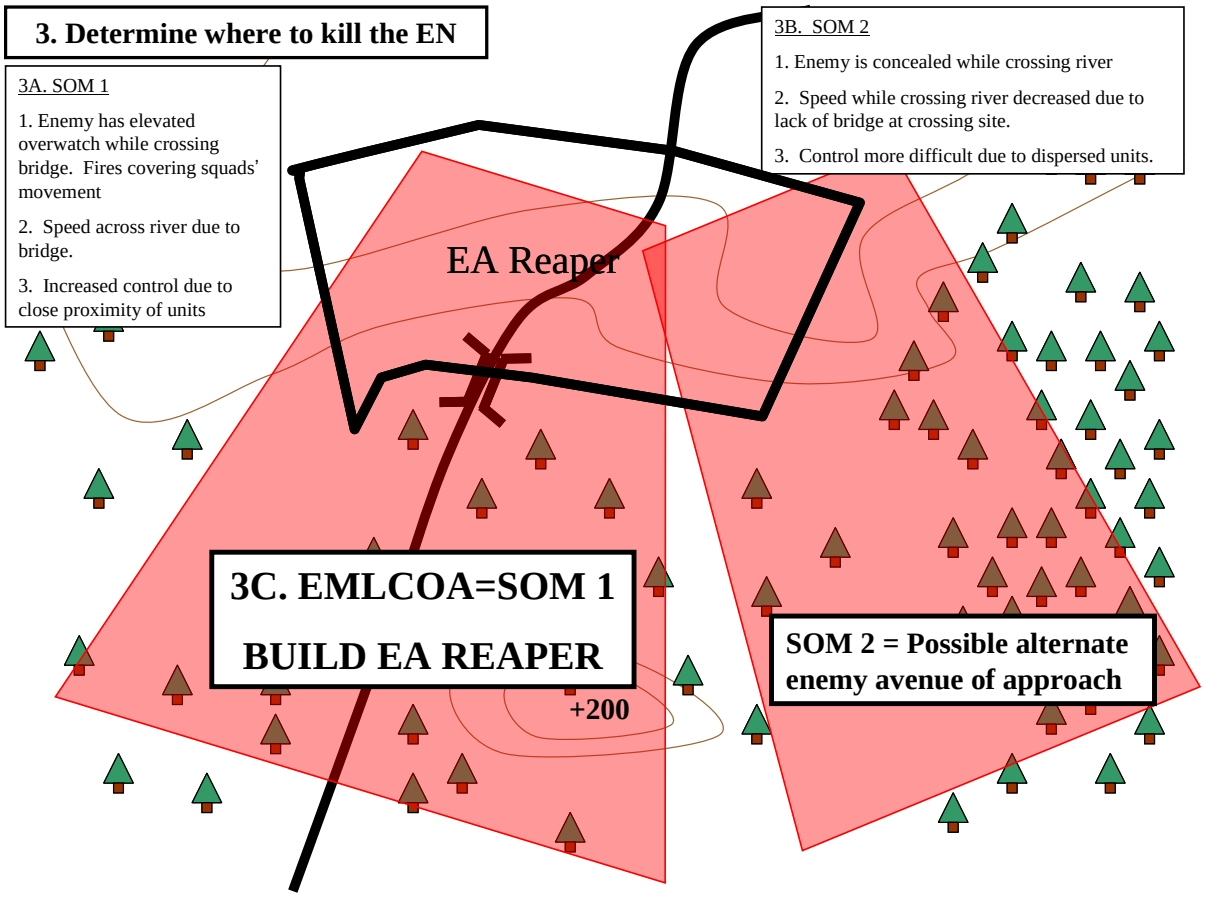
Looking at the following questions can assist during this portion of developing an EA:

- Determine the enemy's form of maneuver. How does the enemy plan on using terrain to his advantage?
- How will the enemy use his reconnaissance elements?
- How will the enemy attempt to infiltrate?
- How does the enemy plan on using fires to support his maneuver?
- How does the enemy plan on negotiating our obstacle plan?
- What is the enemy's rate of movement?
- How will the enemy react to our scheme of maneuver?



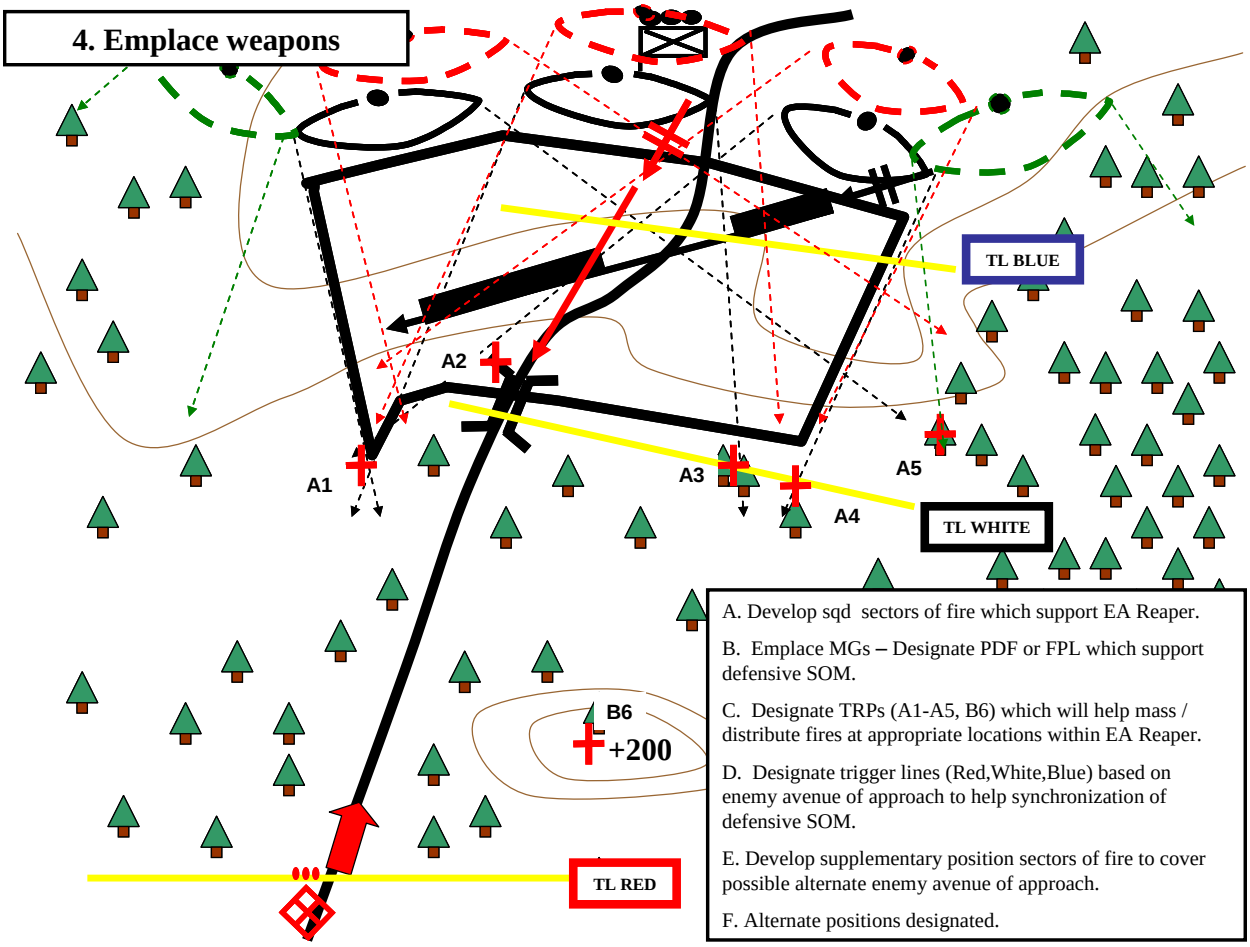
3. <u>Determine where to kill the enemy</u>
The EA's location can be determined once the EMLCOA is developed (see above step). The platoon commander seeks to visualize the enemy's approach and engagement, allowing him/her to select the location which allows for the most advantageous use of terrain by the platoon.

Once the engagement area is defined, the platoon commander can begin to identify control measures which will assist in executing the direct and indirect fire plans. Identifying sectors of fire, target reference points (TRPs), and trigger lines can facilitate control and distribution of fires in the defense. The platoon commander can also determine which weapons to use between certain TRPs to maximize their effectiveness.



4. Emplace weapon systems
   The platoon's weapon systems must be placed to maximize their capabilities and weaponeering effects, as well as the terrain's effects on the employment of the weapons. The exact location of crew served weapons and squad sectors of fire are determined based on maximizing the weapons effects in the engagement area. The platoon commander should consider (not an exhaustive list):

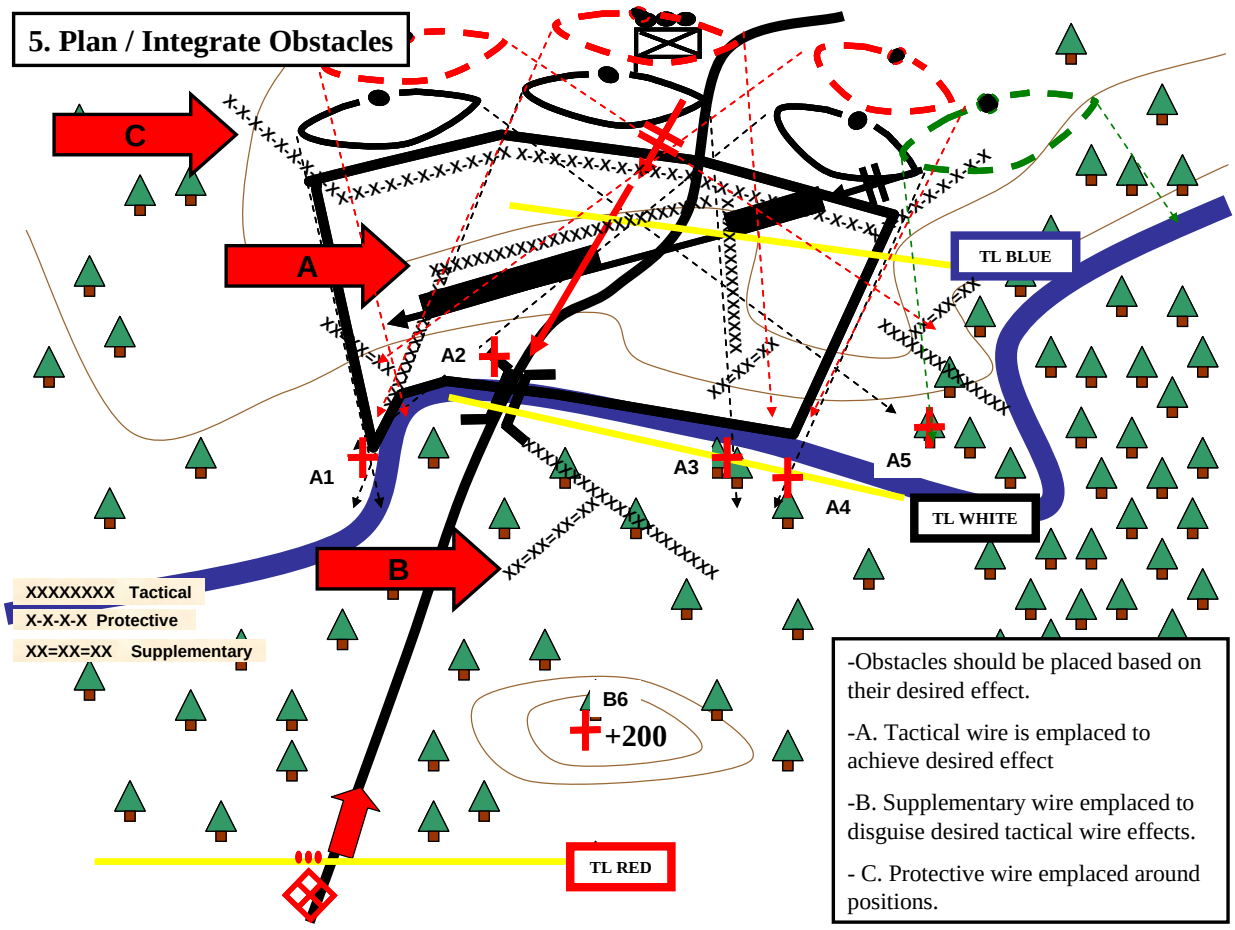
   - M240B assigned FPL or PDF mission and the locations of the fighting positions.
   - Location of squad sectors of fire.
   - Hot and Cold Positions for rockets.
   - Integrating TRPs and trigger lines with the location of weapons.
   - Location of alternate and supplementary sectors of fire to cover possible alternate enemy avenues of approach.



5. <u>Plan and integrate obstacles</u>

In the defense, tactical obstacles must be integrated with the direct and indirect fire plans to be successful. The platoon commander must understand the desired effects of each obstacle, facilitating optimum emplacement to complement the overall plan for the engagement area. The platoon commander should conduct detailed coordination with engineers during the planning phase, leader's recon, as well as once obstacle construction begins. Obstacles multiply the effects of fires. Obstacle effects will be discussed later in this student handout.

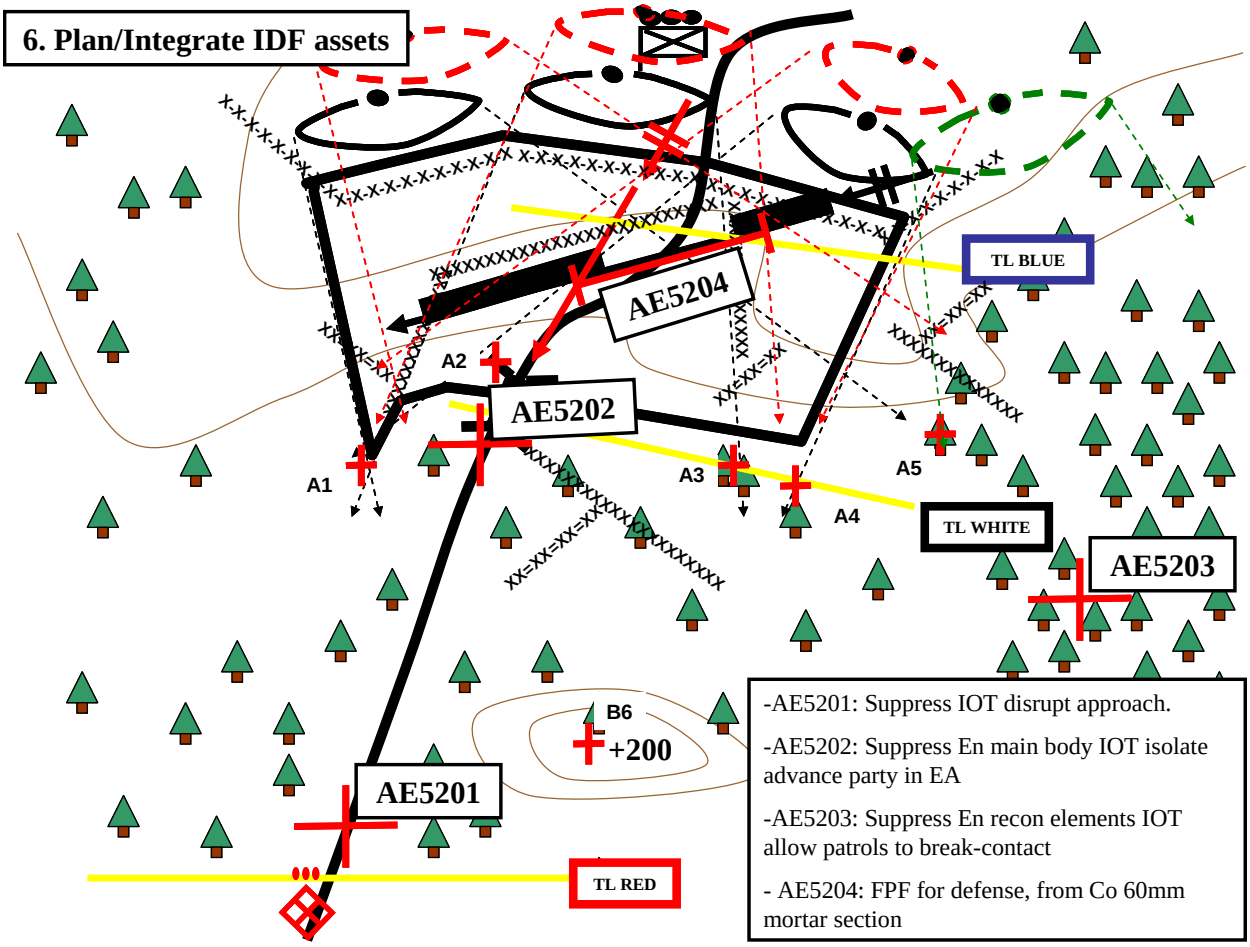
The platoon commander must ensure that the platoon obstacle plan follows the company commander's intent for the overall obstacle plan.



6. <u>Plan and integrate indirect fires (organic / non-organic)</u>

Indirect fires must be fully integrated and synchronized with the direct fire plan and obstacle plan. The platoon commander must develop the purpose for his fire support plan, as well as:

- Determine the location of indirect fire targets that will best support the intent of the engagement area.
- Determine the location of the observer for each target, ensuring that every observer can effectively communicate with the fire agency in a timely manner.
- Obtain accurate target location.
- Register appropriate targets.
- Plan and register FPF. Location of FPF must be integrated with obstacles and machine gun FPLs.



7. Conduct EA rehearsal

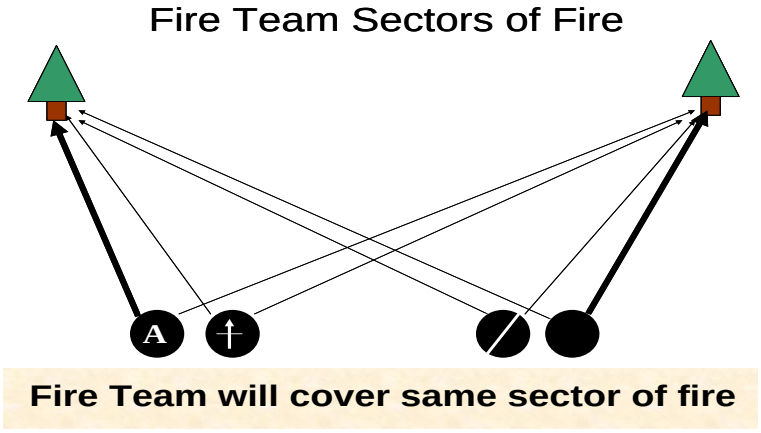
The purpose of the rehearsal is to ensure that all Marines understand the plan, specifically the ways in which each unit and Marine are integrated. All Marines must understand the TRPs associated with their sectors, as well as the trigger lines that initiate their fires. Proper execution of the integration and synchronization of the fire plan ensures that the maximum effect of all weapon systems and obstacles are applied to the enemy in the engagement area. This can be done utilizing a terrain model and Rehearsal of Concepts (ROC) drills during the planning/preparation phase.

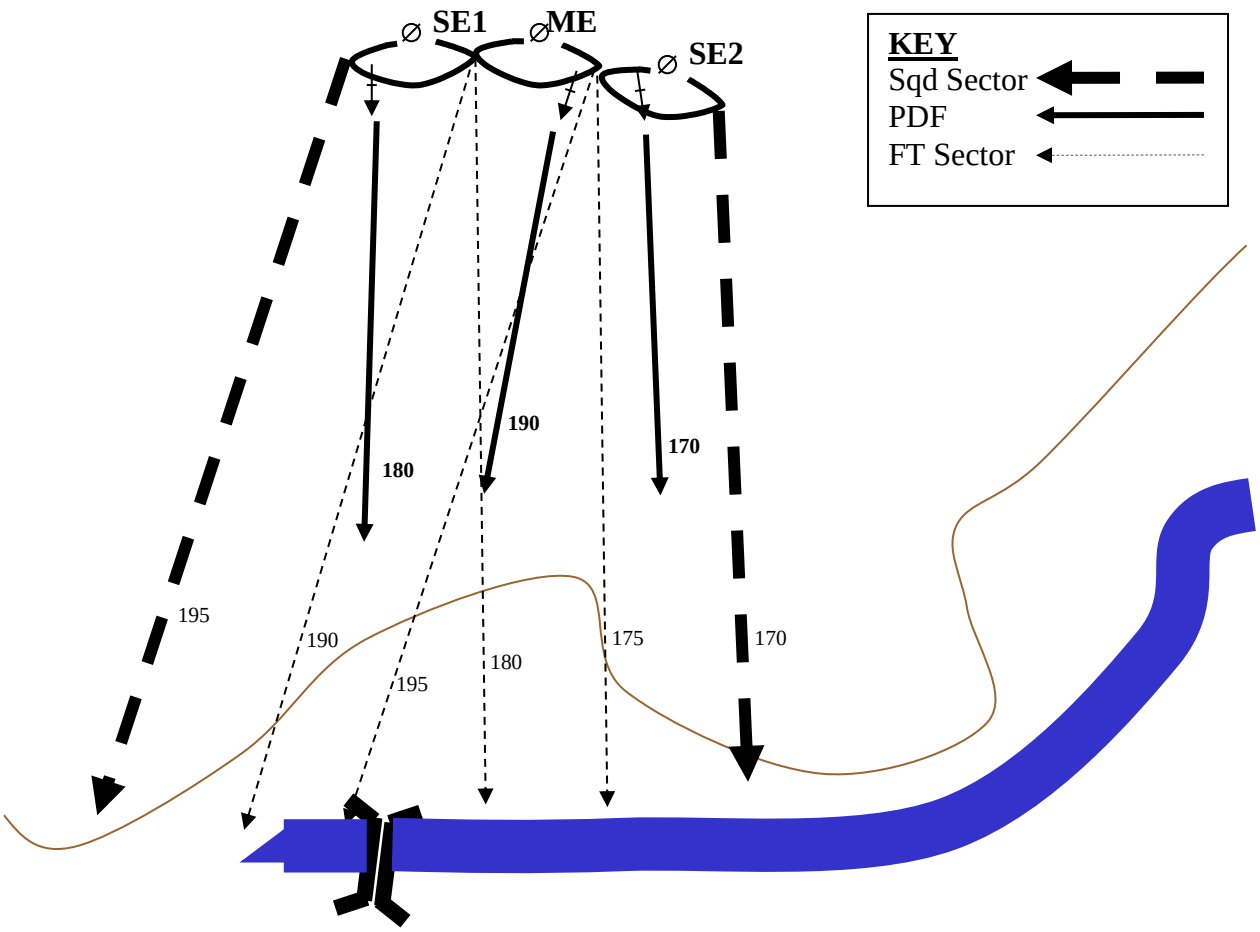
Annex B: Additional Planning Considerations

Direct Fire Planning:
A defense's strength lies in the proper utilization of time during preparation to ensure effective use of terrain and maximizing weapons effects in the engagement area. Direct fire planning should assist in effectively distributing and integrating fires at all levels in the platoon.

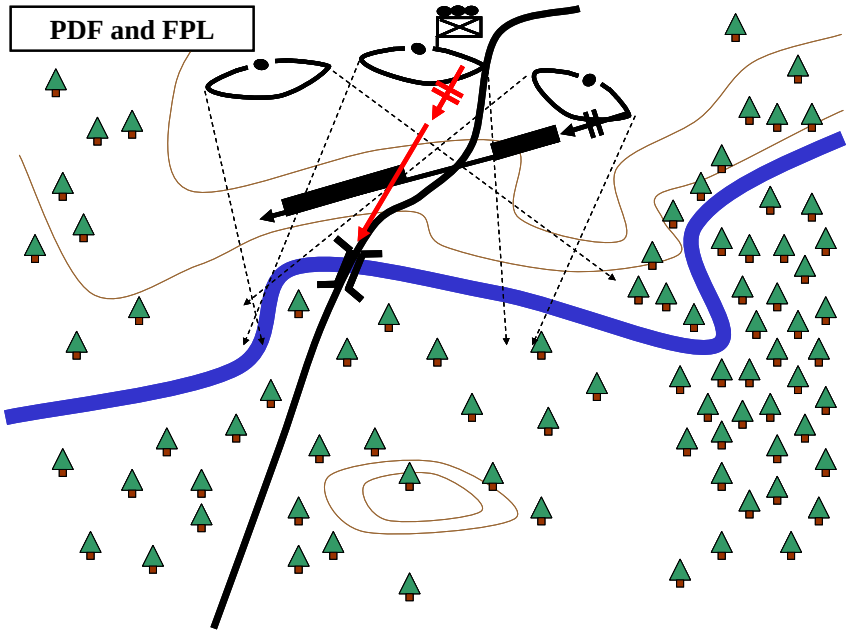
- Employment Considerations: The platoon commander must ensure that all weapons systems are being employed to maximize their effectiveness within their respective capabilities. For example, M203s should be used to cover dead space within fire team's sectors of fire while M249s are assigned to likely enemy avenues of approach within the sector.
- Sectors of Fire: The platoon commander establishes sectors of fire in order to translate the concept of the engagement area into manageable portions for the rifle squads and crew-served weapons. Squad sectors of fire should overlap to avoid gaps in coverage. The platoon commander assigns sectors of fire based on the tasks given to subordinates in the operation order. The platoon's main effort squad should be assigned a sector of fire that will enable it to accomplish the platoon's assigned mission while the supporting efforts assist in facilitating the main effort. At the platoon level, the main effort squad will normally have a sector of fire in the middle of the platoon position.

Once the platoon commander has distributed his forces and assigned squads sectors of fire. The platoon commander must select a location for his Command Post, which is generally located behind the Main Effort where they can see the engagement area and influence the fight. The squad leaders must divide their sectors into fire team sectors of fire. The squad leader should emplace the main effort fire team first during occupation, due to the fact that the main effort is the squad leader's bid for accomplishing the mission. Within the fire team, the M249 should be emplaced first on the most likely enemy avenue of approach. The remainder of the fire team will be emplaced around the M249, ensuring adequate coverage of the sector. The squad leader inspects his Marines sectors continuously to ensure they meet the platoon commander's intent. The fire team is the smallest unit that gets assigned a sector of fire. The fire team sector of fire ensures adequate coverage of the security in the event of casualties, as well as when executing the defensive priorities of work.





- Principal Directions of Fire: M249 and M240B MMG can be assigned principal directions of fire to cover likely enemy avenues of approach. The location of PDFs must be integrated into the platoon commander's overall defensive scheme of maneuver.
- Final Protective Lines: Machine guns may be assigned a FPL mission in the defense when the platoon commander desires to achieve grazing fire across the defense's frontage. The FPL is utilized in concert with PDF's when the platoon commander believes his defense is in imminent danger of being overrun. (Refer to B3N0511 Machine Gun Employment).



- Target Reference Points: Easily recognizable points on the ground (either natural or man-made) used to initiate, distribute, and control fires. Fire team and squad leaders must all understand their respective TRPs to ensure proper distribution of fires.
- Trigger Lines: A designated linear feature (selected along identifiable terrain) in an engagement area used to commence massed fires at a predetermined range. Trigger lines assist in synchronizing the defensive plan to maximize weapons effects in the engagement area. Units and weapon systems should understand which trigger line is used to commence their respective fires. These tactical control measures, both the trigger lines and the target reference points, may be naturally occurring or they may be marked by the defender. What matters most is that these tactical control measures are universally understood and provide a common frame of reference for the defending unit.
- Engagement Criteria: Normally associated with trigger lines or specific enemy elements, engagement criteria allows Marines to engage enemy targets at the proper time in accordance with the platoon commander's overall scheme of maneuver. Simplified engagement criteria tells Marines WHEN to engage. It facilitates decentralized execution and proper synchronization to maximize weapons effects in the engagement area. This control measure also assists in concealing friendly assets, such as machine guns, until the decisive time and place in the defensive scheme of maneuver despite enemy reconnaissance techniques
- Target Precedence: When engagement criteria is met by multiple targets simultaneously, target precedence determines the order in which targets should be engaged. Each weapon system is given target precedence in accordance with its capabilities. Another control measure facilitating decentralized execution, the platoon commander should develop target precedence which maximizes weapons effects and which will most quickly

disrupt the enemy's scheme of maneuver. While engagement criteria tells Marines WHEN to engage, target precedence tells Marines WHAT to engage.

Fire Support Planning (Refer to B2C0329 Fire Support Planning)

Platoon defensive operations require detailed and thorough fire support planning. Indirect fires must be fully integrated with the obstacle and direct fire plans to ensure overlapping fires which complement one another and achieve the desired effects. Defensive fire support can be divided into three categories:

- Long Range Fires:

  The platoon commander seeks to use long range fires to engage the enemy forward of the engagement area. These fires are developed to create confusion and cause the enemy to deploy early. The disruptive effects of long range fires should begin to cause the enemy to bend to our will and pick a course of action which is favorable to the friendly scheme of maneuver. Long range fires also support security patrols and LP/OPs which are operating forward of and adjacent to the platoon's engagement area. Indirect fire asset range, employment considerations, observer identification, and communications architecture are all considerations which the platoon commander must take into account while supporting the patrolling effort. The platoon commander must also have a plan for battle handover of fires from the patrolling elements when the enemy begins their final assault.

- Close In Fires:

  Close in fires are used to target the enemy in the engagement area prior to reaching the trigger for final protective fires. These massed fires should canalize and slow the enemy, as well as disrupt enemy breaching elements. Targets can be planned on the likely enemy avenue of approach, potential enemy over watch and support by fire positions, as well as targets which support the platoon commander's counterattack plan. Close in fires must be completely integrated with the obstacle plan and synchronized with the direct fire plan in order to maximize their effectiveness and the casualties, which they produce.

- Final Protective Fire (FPF):

  The Final Protective Fires are prearranged barriers of fire designed to protect friendly troops by impeding enemy movement across defense lines or areas. They are coordinated with other fires and with natural and artificial obstacles. Final protective lines are positioned to cover gaps and dead spaces in the final protective fires of the machineguns. Normally, these fires are planned to cover dangerous avenues of approach into the battle area and break up enemy assaults against friendly positions. They take priority over all other fire missions. Artillery

and mortar final protective fires are fired on order of the company commander whose battle are is protected by them. When delivered, they are fired continuously at maximum rate until ordered to discontinue. The final protective fire is registered.

When firing the FPF, the enemy should be fixed, or at least be significantly slowed, by the obstacle plan. This will ensure maximum enemy casualties in the engagement area. The overall final protective fire for the defense encompasses all direct fire weapons and indirect fire assets which have the platoon as first on the priority of fires. The decision to fire the FPF is made by the platoon commander and must be tied to a specific trigger line.

Final Protective Fires Indirect Target Dimensions			
Weapon	Unit	Width of FPF (ECR)	Length of FPF (# of tubes X ECR)
60mm Mortar	Squad	30 meters	30 meters
60mm Mortar	Section	30 meters	90 meters
81mm Mortar	Squad	35 meters	35 meters
81mm Mortar	Section	35 meters	140 meters
81mm Mortar	Platoon	35 meters	280 meters
155mm Howitzer	Battery	50 meters	300 meters

Obstacle Planning:

The platoon commander must understand obstacle effects in order to ensure all obstacles are fully integrated with the platoon defensive plan. Tactical obstacles and fires manipulate the enemy in a way that supports the commander's intent and scheme of maneuver. The four tactical obstacle effects are:

- Disrupt: These obstacles cause the enemy to break up formation and temp, interrupt the sequence of their attack, and cause the enemy to commit breaching assets early.
- Turn: Obstacles which divert an enemy formation toward an avenue of approach which facilitates the platoon's defensive scheme of maneuver.
- Fix: In this effect, obstacles and fires strive to slow the enemy within the engagement area.
- Block: These obstacles stop the enemy along a specific avenue of approach and/or prevent the enemy from passing through the engagement area.

Obstacle effects drive integration within the engagement area, help to focus crew served weapons and rifle squads' fires, focus the obstacle effort, and multiply the effects of firepower within the engagement area

(MCWP 3-17). During the planning phase, the platoon commander should focus on determining which obstacle effects he/she wants at specific locations on the battlefield, not on specific obstacle construction.

By providing the attached engineer support with the overall commander's intent and the desired obstacle effects in relation to the engagement area, the platoon commander can facilitate decentralized execution, accomplishing concurrent tasks, as well as engineer logistics planning. Engineer attachments can also conduct reconnaissance with security from the platoon to provide the commander with information on the best location for obstacle to achieve the desired effect.

Obstacles must also take into account the platoon commander's counterattack plans. While the obstacle plan seeks to limit the enemy's ability to maneuver within the engagement area, the platoon commander must ensure that the obstacle plan does not inhibit friendly schemes of maneuver.

The two categories of obstacles are existing and reinforcing. Existing obstacles include natural and cultural obstacles, while reinforcing obstacles include examples such as mines, wire, early warning devices, ditches, and log cribs.

Wire obstacles are classified in three categories:

- Protective: Wire obstacles which are designed to protect friendly fighting positions. They are designed to disrupt the enemy's final assault and should be placed just outside of hand grenade range from the enemy.
- Tactical: These wire obstacles are constructed to achieve the desired obstacle effect for a given location. For example, wire obstacles may be constructed forward of the engagement area to turn the enemy into the engagement area. Wire obstacles can also be designed to fix the enemy in the engagement area in front of machine gun FPLs and/or PDFs.
- Supplementary: Supplementary wire obstacles are designed to conceal tactical wire obstacles. These obstacles prevent the enemy from determining the platoon commander's desired obstacle effects before they come under to effects of the platoon's fires.

  (For specific wire construction, see MCWP 3-17A Engineer Field Data)

The principals of obstacle employment should be applied at all times during the planning, preparation, and execution phases of the defense.

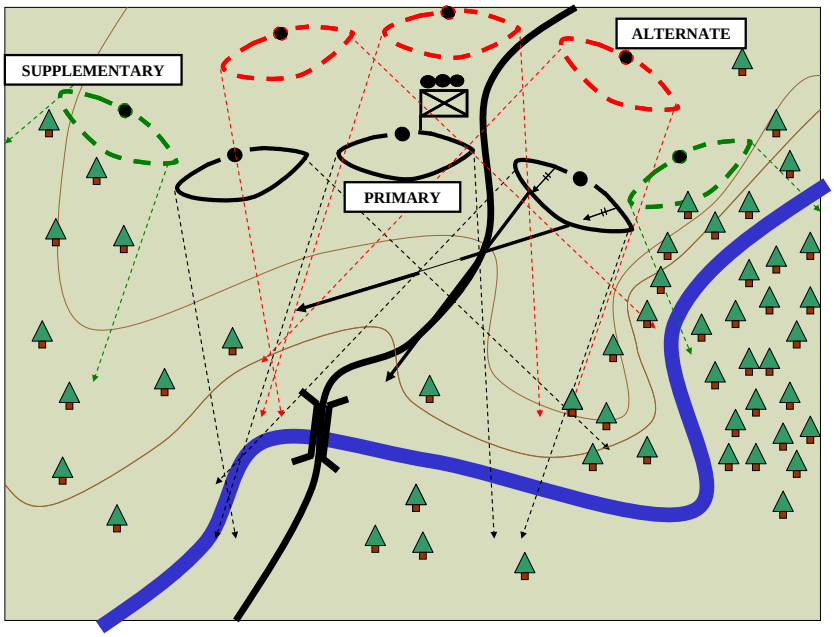
(For more on principals of obstacle employment, refer to B3L0485 Engineers in the Offense and Defense)

d. Offensive planning in the defense – Flexibility:

While the defense is the stronger form of combat due to the defenders' ability to choose the ground from which to defend, prepare an engagement area, and utilize terrain to his advantage, the defender must actively seek opportunities for offensive action. The platoon commander plans for flexibility in the defense, maintaining the ability to react to the enemy's scheme of maneuver. Flexibility in the defense is accomplished in several ways.

Types of Positions:

Primary Position: The primary position is the best available position for an individual or crew served weapon to accomplish the assigned mission. When the platoon occupies the defensive position, the primary positions are first to be occupied.
Alternate Position: Alternate positions are located so that individuals and crew-served weapons can continue to accomplish the assigned mission when the primary position becomes untenable or unsuited for carrying out the mission. These are normally located behind the primary positions.
Supplementary Position: These positions are prepared to guard against attack from directions other than those from which the main attack is expected, such as the flanks. A supplementary position is a secondary position and does not cover the same sector of fire as the primary and alternate positions.
Subsequent Position: These positions are fall back positions that can provide depth for the unit through the main battle area. They can consist of primary, alternate, and supplementary positions of their own.



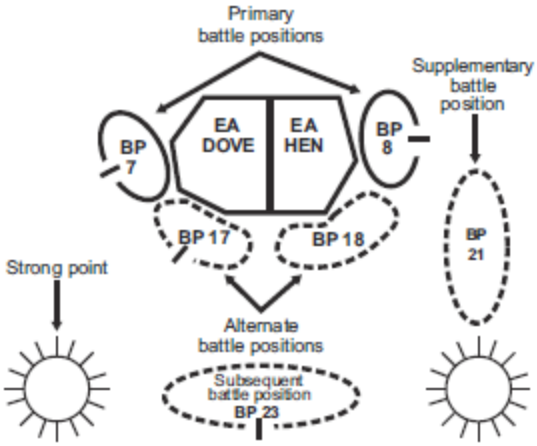


Figure 7-5. Battle Position Types.

Least engaged unit:

Company level and above units utilize a reserve. At the platoon level, the least engaged unit allows the platoon commander to incorporate offensive action in the scheme of maneuver once the enemy has committed his force in the engagement area. The least engaged unit is the unit which is under minimal enemy influence when the engagement begins based on their placement in the platoon's position. The least engaged unit can move to supplementary positions to protect the platoon's flank, or conduct a counterattack based on the commander's plan.

While the platoon commander can plan for the employment of the least engaged unit, it cannot be tasked to a specific unit in the platoon operation order. The enemy determines which element is the least engaged unit in the defense. During the planning phase, the commander must develop an employment plan for the least engaged unit and ensure that all squads know their respective responsibilities should they be designated as the least engaged unit.

Annex C: Leader's Recon and Occupation Considerations

The platoon commander conducts his/her leader's reconnaissance to validate (confirm or deny) the assumptions made about the enemy and terrain during his/her estimate of the situation, as well as to put the measures in place to facilitate a smooth occupation. The platoon commander must maximize the efficiency of the leader's reconnaissance due to the time compressed environment on the battlefield. The platoon commander develops a priority of reconnaissance prior to conducting the recon. This prioritized list of tasks provides focus to the reconnaissance element and assists in maximizing the recon's efficiency. **The number one priority for a defensive leader's reconnaissance is to identify/confirm the engagement area, where the platoon commander plans on killing the enemy. All other aspects of the defense will be based on the specific selection of an engagement area.**

The platoon commander issues an order to all Marines going on the leader's recon patrol. At a minimum, this order needs to include EMLCOA, the scheme of maneuver for the patrol, the fire support plan, immediate action drills, priorities of reconnaissance, security plan for patrol will platoon commander is gathering recon information, lost Marine plan, and casualty evacuation plan. The senior Marine remaining with the main body of the platoon, most likely the platoon sergeant, should also be at the order and completely understand the patrol's plan. This will enable the main body to support the patrol should the leader's recon come under fire The platoon commander leaves a five point contingency plan (GOTWA) with the platoon sergeant prior to departing on the reconnaissance (refer to B2H0369, Scouting and Patrolling Operations).

A sample priority of reconnaissance is listed below (This list is meant to be used as a guide and is not all inclusive):

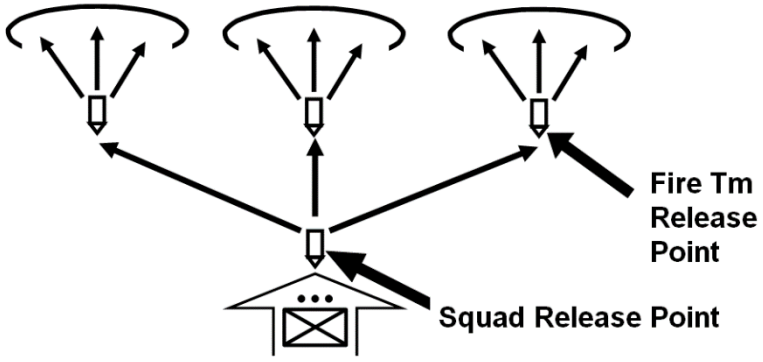
1. Identify / confirm the enemy's most likely avenue of approach and terrain which maximizes the weapons employment of the platoon. **This identifies the location of the engagement area.**
2. Visualize the ways in which the engagement area can be sub-divided into squad sectors of fire. Identify the locations of the squads which facilitate the above the described sectors.
3. Identify crew-served weapons locations. The location of machine guns in the defense should maximize the effects of the weapon system. Machine guns effectiveness can also be increased by integrating the weapons effects with the obstacle plan. (Refer to B3N0511 Machine Gun Employment)
4. Mark the sectors of fire and squad locations, ensuring the squads' representatives on the patrol understand the location and weapons employment considerations from the platoon commander.
5. Confirm and/or refine occupation plan, marking designated release points.

6. Identify command post location. The location should allow the platoon commander to effectively command and control the defense during contact with the enemy.
7. Emplace or leave behind LP/OP(s) to report on situation and assist in providing security for the platoon during occupation.

ENDSTATE: The leader's reconnaissance should validate and/or update the platoon commander's estimate of the situation, leading to the identification of the engagement area, and identify control measures which will facilitate a seamless transition to the defense during occupation.

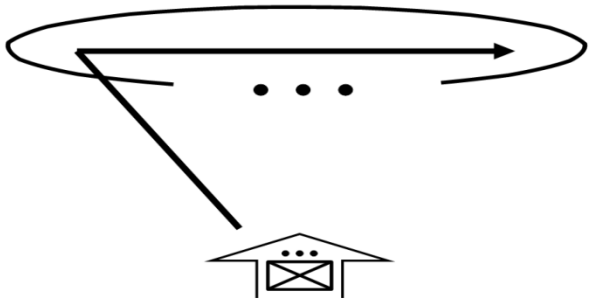
7. Occupation of the position: The platoon commander utilizes occupation methods in order to facilitate control while the platoon moves into position. Also, a poorly planned and orchestrated occupation will make the platoon vulnerable to enemy attack due to a low security posture. There are three techniques which can be used to occupy a position:

Crow's Foot: This technique utilized squad and fire team release point to move units into position while the units are oriented in the direction in the enemy. The advantage of the Crow's foot is the forward security posture which each element maintains during occupation, allowing for immediate reaction to premature enemy contact. However, due to the multiple release points, this technique is more difficult to control and demands that unit leaders at every level know the exact location of all release points. Using guides and marking release points can increase the control when using this method.

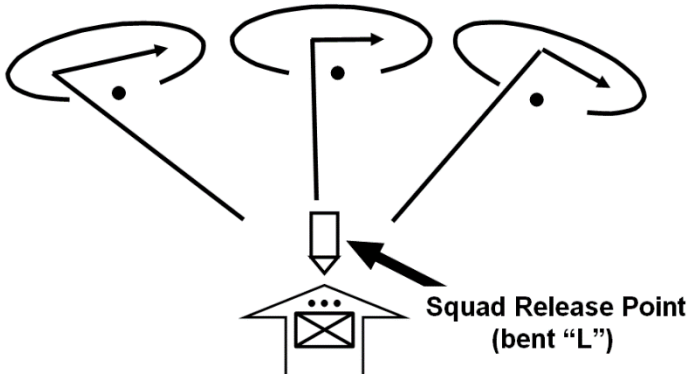


Bent L: This technique allows the platoon to remain centrally located throughout the occupation of the position. Utilizing an anchor point, the platoon moves in a column until the location of primary positions, then turns perpendicular to the direction of enemy approach and moves into position. The bent L technique increases the direct control

by the platoon commander. However, the platoon is more vulnerable to attack until all elements have reached their primary positions.



Combination: The combination technique uses a hybrid of both previous techniques to achieve a balance between control and security. Release points are identified until a certain point where the units move into position using the bent L.



The platoon commander must choose the occupation technique, which facilitates the best control and deployability based on the enemy situation and terrain.

Annex D: Fighting Position Development

Once the primary positions have been occupied, the platoon commander, along with the squad leaders, should confirm the sectors of fire developed during the leader's reconnaissance. Once confirmed, all fire teams and above can begin to develop the positions which cover their respective sectors of fire. At the individual level during an enemy attack, the maintenance of sectors of fire is adhered to through sector limiting devices, namely sector bags. While sector bags are being filled or during a hasty defense if sand bags are not on hand, limiting stakes can be used to delineate sectors of fire.

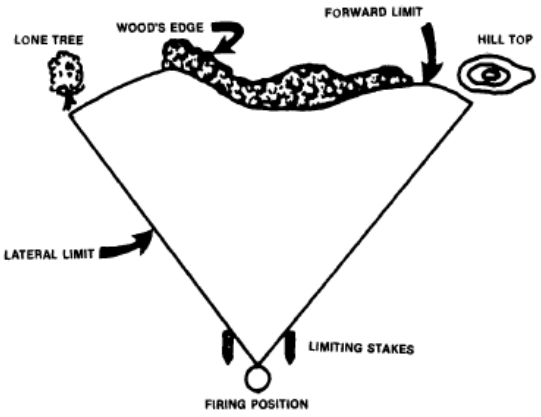


Figure 5-1. Sector of Fire.

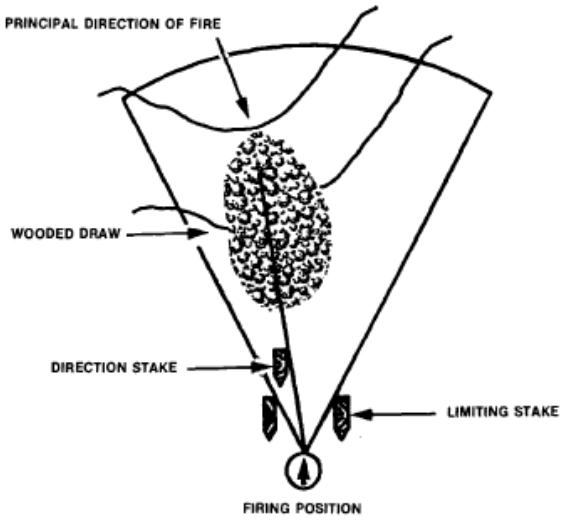
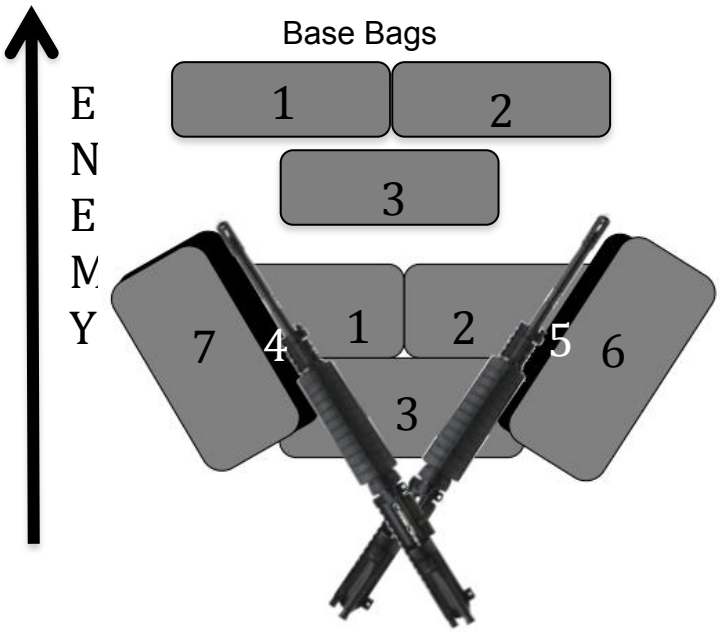


Figure 5-3. Principal Direction of Fire.

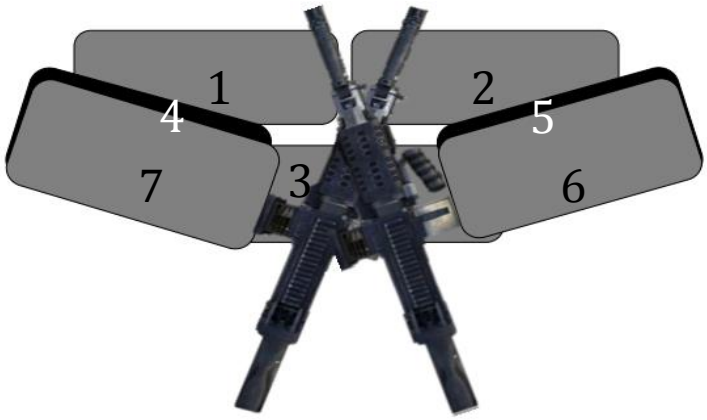
Figures from the MCWP 3-11.3 Marine Rifle Squad. Note the PDF direction stake on figure 5-3. This can assist an automatic rifleman in acquiring and firing their PDF, especially in low visibility conditions.

Sector bags are the preferred means of limiting an individual's sector of fire, and can be seen in the diagram below. Sector bag construction will be covered in more depth at the Defensive Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT).



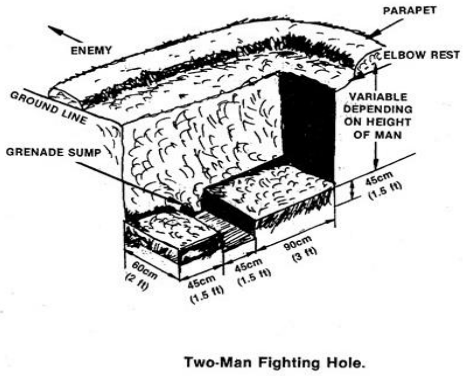
M-16/ M-4 Sandbag Configuration

-Bags are listed in order of emplacement.
-Do not overfill bags.
-Make sure bags 4-7 align with your field of fire (Shoot an Azimuth).
-Continually improve position.
-Leave a space for Bipods

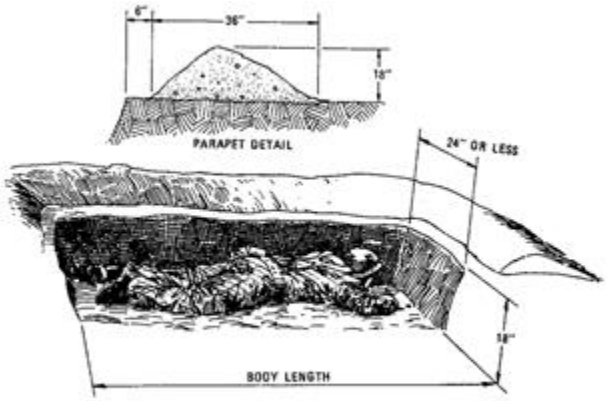


M-249 Sandbag Configuration

Fighting positions enable the defender to capitalize on preparation time, maximizing cover from enemy weapons' effects. A skirmishers trench and two man fighting position can be seen in the diagrams below. Their construction will be covered in more depth at the defensive TEWT.



Two-Man Fighting Hole.



Two-Man Fighting Position **Skirmisher Trench**

Sector bags and fighting positions are camouflaged to conceal them from enemy observation. Concealment should be taken from behind the fighting position so that an approaching enemy is not alerted to the Marine's presence by obvious signs of concealment gathering and entrenchment. Do not disclose the position by excessive or careless clearing of fields of fire.

- Use the same turf or topsoil that has been removed from the area of the fighting hole to camouflage the parapet.

- Dispose of all soil from the fighting hole not used on the parapet.
- Carry the soil away in sandbags or shelter halves. Dispose of it under low bushes, on dirt roads or paths, in streams or ponds, or camouflage it.
- Avoid digging in next to an isolated bush, tree, or clump of vegetation.
- Conceal the fighting hole from observation by the use of a camouflaged cover. Construct the cover from natural materials.
- Replace natural material used in camouflage before it wilts or changes color.
- Avoid creating fresh paths near the position. Use old paths or vary the route followed to and from the position.
- Avoid littering the area near the position with paper, [MRE Trash], and other debris.

From MCWP 3-11.2 Marine Rifle Squad

Camouflage the bottom of your fighting position when there is no overhead cover or concealment to protect against detection from the air. Use natural concealment such as fallen leaves to ensure the bottom of the position looks the same as the rest of the ground. If an enemy ISR platform is overhead, do not look up unless engaging in air defense, as the human face is a distinct and recognizable pattern.

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When conducting the ‘F’ in the SAFE process, clear fields of fire are low to the ground so that the clearing work is not evident to the approaching enemy.

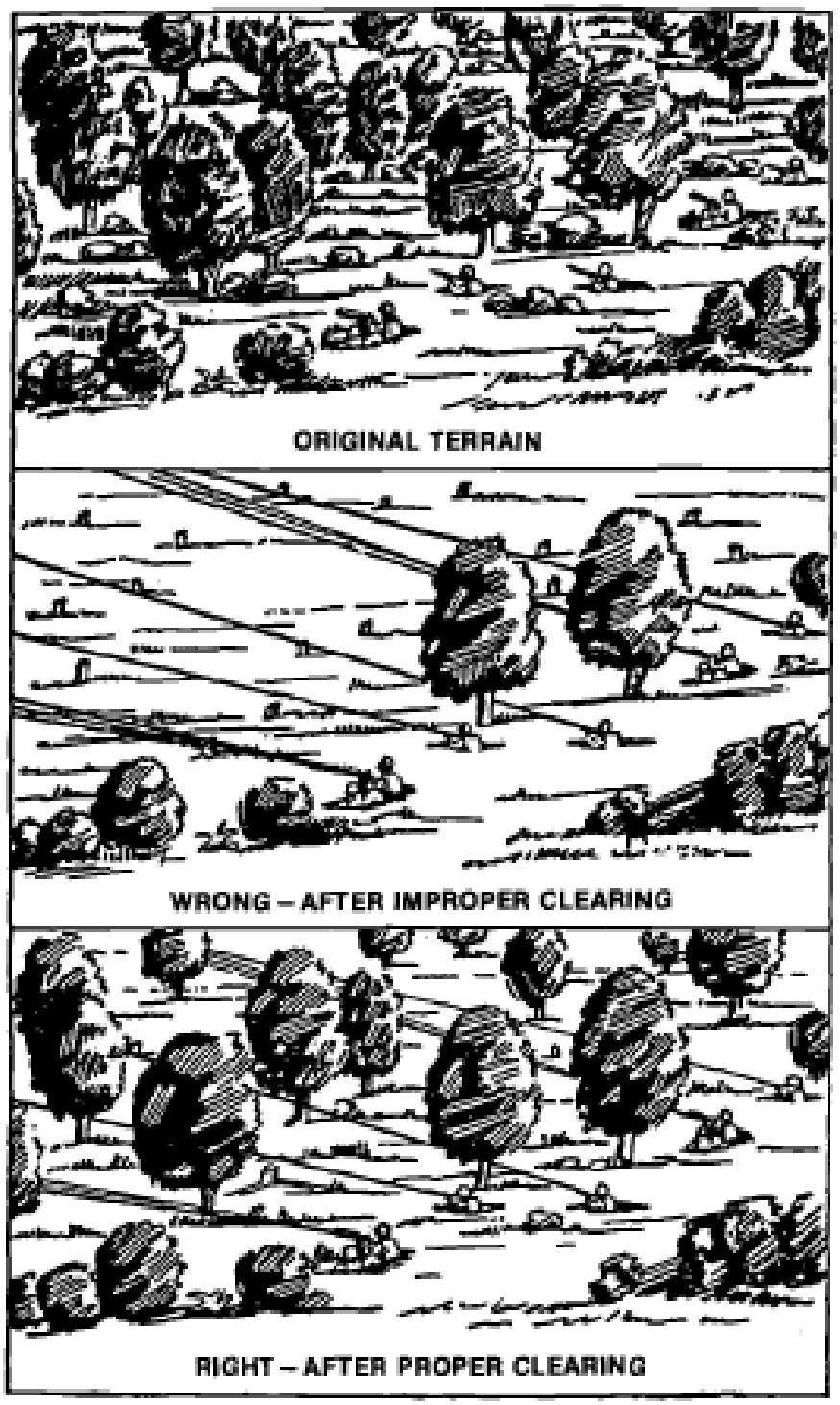


Figure 5-11. Clearing Fields of Fire.

For additional information on basic fighting position construction, see Chapter 5 of the MCWP 3-11.2 Marine Rifle Squad and Chapter 4 of the MCWP 3-17 Survivability Operations.

Annex E: Priorities of Work and Time Management

In the defense, the platoon commander must capitalize on the preparation time allowed. When we are planning the tasks we will assign to our subordinates, we always need to keep in mind that our actions should be based on the enemy's most likely course of action and that we will never have enough time or personnel to accomplish all that we want to accomplish. For that reason it is imperative that the platoon commander constantly prioritizes and reprioritizes his priorities of work as he updates his METT-TC- the ever-changing situation on the ground.

There are numerous tasks, which must be accomplished in order for the platoon commander to effectively prepare for enemy contact. Priorities of work are a list of tasks associated with a timeline that state the order of accomplishment for every Marine in the defense. At the most basic level, the priorities of work begin with SAFE and continue on utilizing every opportunity for position improvement until the defensive engagement. A sample priorities of work is provided below:

- Assign sectors of fire and emplace machine guns on likely enemy avenues of approach. Begin sector bag construction.
- Emplace LP/OP covering most likely enemy avenue of approach for the platoon's defense.
- Verify crew-served weapons sectors of fire, specifically their assigned missions of FPL or PDF. Once verified, begin entrenching positions.
- Verify sectors of fire for all other weapons and emplace sector bags.
- Begin patrol operations.
- Prepare range cards and fire plan sketches.
- Construct primary positions.
- Clear fields of fire for all positions and continue entrenching primary positions until supporting efforts have skirmisher's trenches.
- Establish and register final protective fires.
- Construct supplementary positions on flanks by supporting efforts. Develop skirmisher's trenches.
- Establish and disseminate TRPs, trigger lines, etc.
- Once supplementary positions are at skirmisher trench depth, continue primary position construction.
- Emplace early warning devices on enemy avenues of approach not covered by LP/OP.
- Lay comm. wire and field phones. Bury communication wire.
- Establish rest plan.
- Construct alternate positions to skirmisher trench depth.

- Rehearse least engaged unit movement to supplementary positions.
- Continue supplementary position construction until positions are chest deep.
- Rehearse counterattack and other contingency plans.

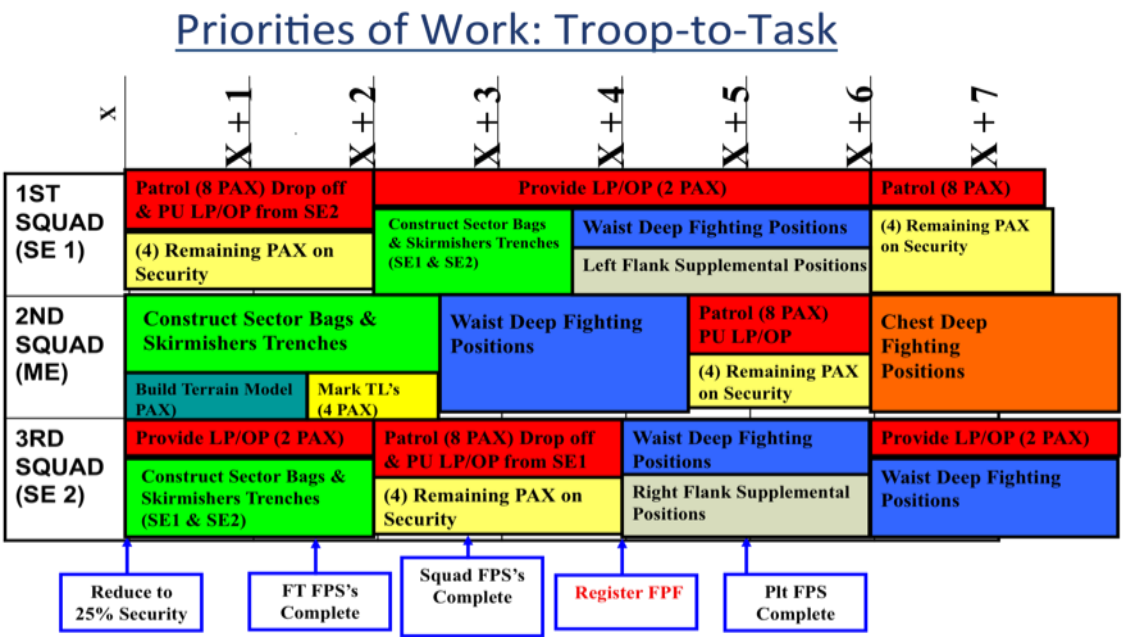
The platoon commander expresses the priorities of work by marrying them to a timeline. The timeline is centered around occupation time, facilitating flexibility within the plan. An example is shown below:

- X : Occupation of position
- X + 15: Initial SAFE conducted. Sector bags begun.
- X + 30: LP/OP emplaced on likely enemy avenue of approach.
- X + 35: CSWs sectors, FPLs, and PDFs verified and confirmed. Position construction begun.
- X + 50: Primary position sectors verified.
- X + 60: 1st patrol departs
- X + 90: Squad fire plan sketches submitted to platoon commander:
- X + 120: Primary position skirmisher's trenches complete.

The timeline continues with the priorities of work described above. The platoon commander will establish a tentative occupation time during the planning process. However, the method described above takes into account events during occupation, which may unforeseeably prolong this portion of the operation. The platoon commander must take a realistic look at the time required for specific tasks and allot the requisite time accordingly. The platoon commander must also continually evaluate and adjust the timeline based on the situation. The platoon sergeant aggressively drives the timeline, maximizing preparation time and allowing the platoon commander to maintain an external focus.

An essential piece to consider when developing priorities of work and timelines are to account for the fact that not every member of our platoon needs to be doing the same task. As stated earlier, there will be more tasks than we can hope to accomplish and further, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the main effort's accomplishment of their mission needs to be facilitated by supporting efforts. For that reason we tie in the notion of concurrent planning to our defensive considerations. Below is an example of a matrix worksheet which accounts for priorities of work, as well as a timeline, but shows their completion in relation to one another and in relation to the platoon commander's overall estimate of the situation.

The Platoon Sergeant: The platoon sergeant enforces the priorities of work the platoon commander plans for. The platoon sergeant must back plan from the platoon commander's timeline, and ensure the Marines are kept on task. For example, if the platoon commanders orders sectors bags and skirmisher trenches are to be conducted by X+2.5, the platoon sergeant back plans and inspects, ensuring that bags are being filled correctly and efficiently so that they do not need to be emptied and refilled, that the trenches are being dug efficiently. If pioneer gear is available, it is being utilized and by the highest priority units; the ME and CSWs. The platoon sergeant ensures there are efficient and quick transitions between priorities of work, so that the Marine's time is properly utilized. When squads return from patrol they conduct a debrief of the patrol, update the platoon commander on any intelligence that have collected, and conduct similar post patrol actions. The platoon sergeant ensures that once these actions are complete, the patrol transitions immediately to its next priority of work. Time is one of the main limiting constraints in the defense, and the platoon sergeant is critical in ensuring it is used appropriately.



a. Rehearsals:

The defensive platoon commander must actively and aggressively seek every opportunity for offensive action. Seizing fleeting opportunities requires seamless transitions by the platoon between executing the priorities of work, conducting stand to procedures, and then adjusting the scheme of maneuver based on enemy activity. Rehearsals facilitate these seamless transitions by ensuring that all Marines involved know exactly what to do and are able to accomplish the specified and implied tasks without continued, direct tasking by unit leaders. In the defense, rehearsals can continue following occupation, concurrent with priorities of work, in order to ensure that the unit is prepared for decisive enemy contact when it comes. Rehearsals must be PRIORITIZED with respect to the ENEMY. These rehearsals include, but are not limited to:

- Stand-to procedures.
- Communication procedures inside defensive position.
- Movement of least engaged unit to supplementary positions (Each element must rehearse actions as least engaged unit).
- Counterattack plans.
- Movement of platoon to alternate positions.
- Actions on contact during re-entry of friendly lines by a patrol.

The platoon commander must balance accomplishing priorities of work and preparing for the engagement with the enemy through rehearsals.

b. Logistics Planning in the defense:

The defense is labor and resource intensive. The platoon commander must put time and thought into the logistical support required and available for his defensive plan. Commanders at all levels must also plan for the ways in which resources will be moved to their primary positions. Platoon sustainment, position construction, obstacle construction, and survivability are just a few of the areas which need attention when conducting a logistical analysis of the platoon commander’s defensive plan. Since the commander rarely knows exactly how long he will be in the defense, detailed and extensive logistics planning is absolutely essential.

Annex F: Platoon Defensive OpOrd example

Mission Statement: 1st Platoon, you are the company ME. NLT 1400, block the enemy platoon south, in the vicinity of the Rawah Bridge, in order to prevent the enemy from interfering with the Bn ME attack to the north.

Example Defensive Scheme of Maneuver:

On order, we will conduct an area defense using the platoon battle position method in the vicinity of Hill 265 with one main effort and four supporting efforts. The defense will be oriented to the northeast. The ME will occupy the center of the battle position, SE 1 will occupy to the left of the main effort, while SE 2 occupies to the right of the main effort. SE 3 and SE 4 will provide direct fire and obstacle support for the platoon battle position.

The platoon will cross the Line of Departure in a platoon column. Order of movement will be the Main Effort followed by SE 1, SE 3, SE 4, then SE 2. The platoon will pass through Checkpoint 27 before consolidating in a 360 at the ORP. In the ORP, the ME will orient from 10-2, SE 1 from 6-10, and SE 2 from 2-6, with 12 o'clock being our direction of movement. In the platoon ORP, SE 3 and SE 4 will remain in the center position of the 360. Departing from the ORP, the leader's reconnaissance patrol will conduct the reconnaissance in accordance with the priorities stated in coordinating instructions. Upon the return of the leader's recon, I will pass any refinements in the scheme of maneuver to the squad leaders. O/O the platoon will proceed to the SRP in a platoon column, with the ME followed by SE 3, SE4, SE 1, then SE 2. At the squad release point, the platoon will execute a combination of the Crow's Foot and the Bent "L" to occupy the BP. Once beyond the SRP, the squads will execute individual Bent "L"s from left to right into their positions. The ME will occupy the primary positions first. Once the main effort is in position, SE 1, SE 2, and SE 3 will depart the SRP and will occupy. SE 4 will occupy last behind the ME. Upon occupation, all elements will stand-to. O/O squads will go to 25% security and begin to execute priorities of work. O/O, SE 1 will provide the first patrol and SE 2 will provide the first LP/OP. Once priorities of work begin, the ME's first priority is construction of their primary positions. O/O, SE 4 will also commence the implementation of the obstacle plan. O/O, the platoon will execute stand-to within the BP. O/S, the platoon will fire its FPF. O/S, the least engaged unit will occupy supplementary positions. The platoon will be prepared to occupy alternate positions.

Example Fire Support Plan:
The purpose of my fire support plan is to neutralize the enemy in Engagement Area Reaper in order to prevent the enemy from interfering with Bn ME attack to the north. (In this example, 1st Platoon has priority of fire from the company 60mm mortar section) I have four pre-planned targets:

AE 5202 (UT 1234 5678). Suspected enemy avenue of approach. Suppress the enemy IOT turn the enemy platoon towards Engagement Area Reaper. The LP/OP will

be the observer and will contact L 3/11 over the artillery conduct of fire net when the enemy's lead elements cross trigger line red. L battery will fire HE/PD.
AE 5203 (UT 1242 5657). Likely enemy overwatch position. Suppress the enemy IOT prevent the enemy from observing their approach into Engagement Area Reaper. The LP/OP will be the observer and will contact the 81mm mortar section over the battalion mortar net when the enemy is spotted IVO of TRP 2. 81mm mortars will fire HE/PD.

AE5204 (UT 1258 5795). Enemy avenue of approach into Engagement Area Reaper. Suppress the enemy as they enter the engagement area IOT prevent the enemy's effective command and control during the engagement. I will be the primary observer and will contact the 81mm mortar section over the battalion mortar net when the enemy's lead squad crosses trigger line white. 81mm mortars will fire HE/VT.

AE5205 (UT 1210 5605). Final Protective Fire. Neutralize enemy assault elements IOT prevent the enemy from assaulting through Engagement Area Reaper. I will be the primary observer and will contact the company 60mm mortar section over the company tac net when the enemy crosses trigger line blue. Company 60mm mortars will fire HE/VT.

Patrol leaders will submit a list of targets ISO their patrol routes to me during forward unit coordination for approval prior to departure.

Example Tasking Statements:

1st Squad: You are the ME. NLT 1200, block the enemy south in the vicinity of the Rawah Bridge in order to prevent the enemy from interfering with the Bn ME attack to the north. You have one assault squad attached effective immediately.

2d Squad: You are SE 1. NLT 1200 block the enemy south IVO of Rawah Bridge from the east of 1st Squad IOT prevent the enemy from exploiting the eastern flank of the platoon's main effort. You will provide Marines for the first patrol to depart friendly line approximately 30 minutes after occupation. BPT assume the mission of the main effort. BPT assume the role of least engaged unit.

3d Squad: You are SE 2. NLT 1200 block the enemy south IVO Rawah Bridge from the west of the 1st Squad IOT allow the main effort to fix the enemy in Engagement Area Reaper. You will provide Marines for the first LP/OP, which will be inserted during the leader's recon. BPT assume the mission of the main effort. BPT assume the role of least engaged unit.

MG Squad: You are SE 3 and in general support of the platoon. Refer to B3N4478 Machine Gun Employment

Engineer Team: You are SE 4. Utilizing wire and existing obstacles, turn the enemy into Engagement Area Reaper IOT deny the enemy freedom of movement. Also, fix the enemy in Engagement Area Reaper IOT prevent them from closing with the platoon's primary positions. Priority of obstacle construction goes to obstacles in the engagement area, obstacles forward of the engagement area, and then to supplementary wire and other dummy obstacles. Actively seek opportunities to employ existing obstacles into

the plan to maximize our resources. Coordinate with me throughout the course of the operation for security support during obstacle construction.

Coordinating Instructions (Not an all inclusive list):

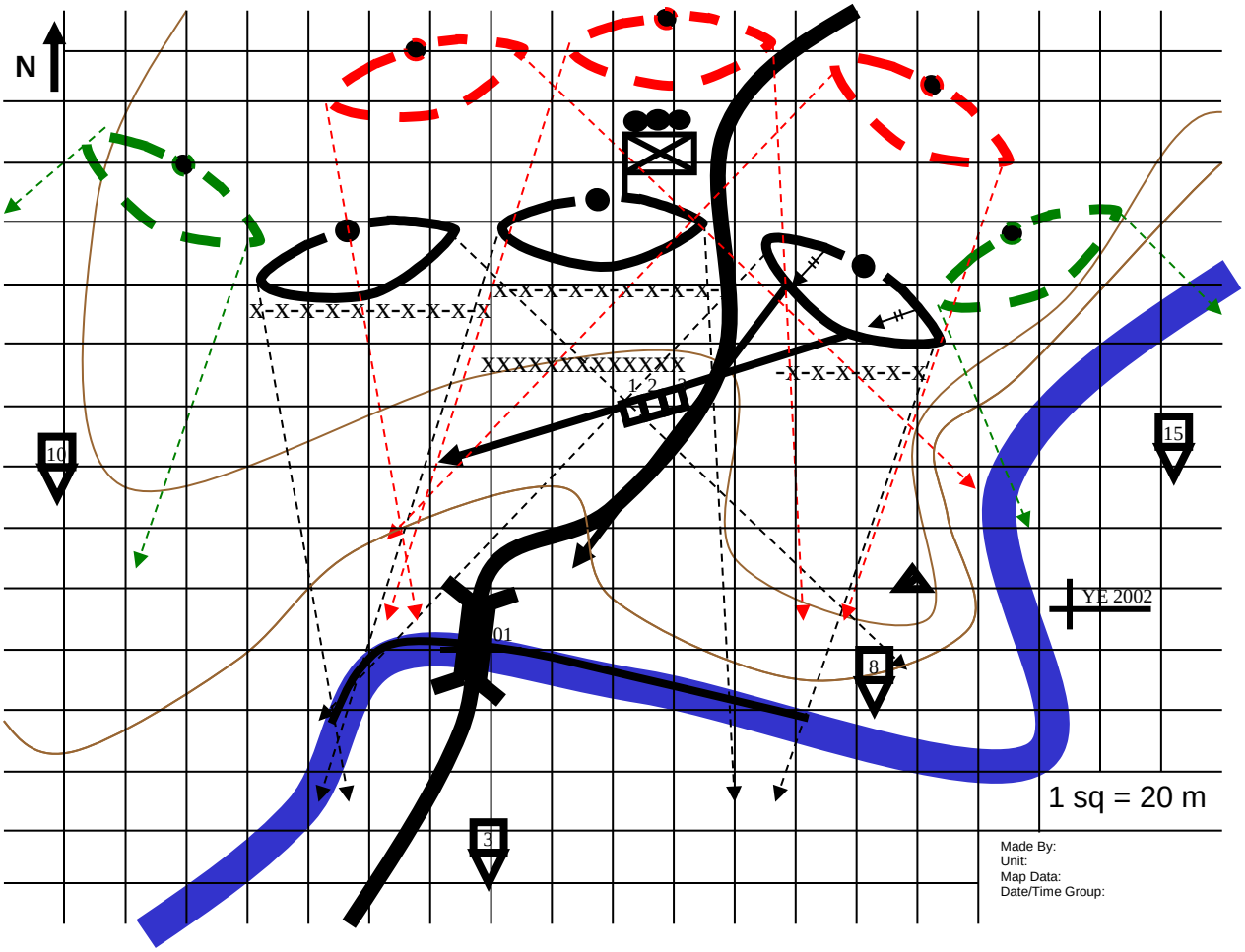
Timeline
Leader's Recon Patrol task organizaiton
Priorities of Reconnaissance for Leader's Recon
Method for Marking
    Squad Release Point
    Squad BPs
    Command Post
    Casualty Collection Point
    Enemy Prisoner of War Collection Ponit
    Latrine
Priorities of Work
Security Plan
Patrol Plan
Obstacle Plan
Target Precedence
Engagement Criteria
Immediate Action Drills
- Actions on enemy contact during occupation
- Actions on enemy contact during departure / re-entry of friendly lines by a patrol.

Plan for employment of least engaged unit
MOPP Level
ROE
Platoon Insertion Plan (Helos, trucks, AAVs, etc…)
Platoon Extraction Plan (Helos, trucks, AAVs, etc…)
Lost Marine Plan
Missing Marine Plan
Tactical Control Measures
- Assembly Area
- Tentative ORP
- SRP
- Tentative primary defensive position
- TRPs (tentative)
- Trigger Lines (tentative)
- Etc…

Annex G: Step-by-step to create a fire plan sketch

Step	Action
1	Determine appropriate scale required for creation of your platoon fire plan sketch. This means determining the dimensions, in meters, of each box on your graph paper. (remember that the ratio of your scale should grow as the FPS progress from FT to Sqd to Plt).
2	Ensure that you know the length of each squad battle position (pace it off to be exact) as well as the attitude of the position. This will allow you to be precise when you place it on the grid lines. (You can also use a GPS to get the 8-10 digit grid for each position, or the left and right most holes for the fire teams/squads sectors. This info can also be used to place the positions on the grid lines.)
3	Use the grid lines available to orient the grids north. Reference the squad fire plan sketches and, based on the attitude and size (measure both with a protractor), draw your ME and both SE squads' primary positions. Repeat for alternate and supplementary positions as necessary.
4	Draw and label the platoon CP. Your company commander may need this information later on.
5	Use the protractor to measure and draw each squad's left and right limits (Magnetic Azimuths) using a dotted line Primary Positions Alternate Positions Supplementary Positions Write the azimuth for each sector along its associated line
6	Use the protractor to draw: For Plt – MG PDFs and FPLs; do not include M249 PDFs (The platoon commander may choose to include some M249 PDFs based on the M249s' location in the defense and importance in the overall fire plan.) FPLs are depicted with a bold line for grazing fire; where grazing fire cannot be achieved, dead space is shown by a thin line. FPLs have a magnetic azimuth For Sqd – M249 and M203 PDFs for each fire team; M249 PDF has magnetic azimuths M203 has magnetic azimuth and range to target/dead-space in meters Write the azimuth for each PDF/FPL along its associated line

7	Annotate key terrain on the sketch (large fingers or draws, roads, steams and large amounts of dead space. Try not to clutter the sketch. Ensure the terrain matches what you see in front of you. (This portion falls under the art of developing the sketch. The platoon commander must balance the need for detail with avoiding clutter/confusion on the sketch).
8	Draw and number Target Reference Points (TRPs) and trigger lines Are TRPs recognizable? Do they make sense? Do all the Marines know their respective TRPs/trigger lines?
9	Annotate targets (maintain grids to targets on another piece of paper) ensure FPF target is drawn with boxes. Each box is labeled with a number that corresponds to a gun on the gun-line. Annotate whether or not the FPF has been registered.
10	Annotate obstacles. This includes both existing and reinforcing obstacles. (Maintain grids to obstacles on another sheet of paper; this includes early warning devices)
11	Draw Passage Points for patrols Draw Check Points for patrols if applicable Draw LP/OPs
12	Complete the marginal information
13	Create a copy of the fire plan sketch. You will keep one and turn the other one over to your company commander. Ensure to update as required.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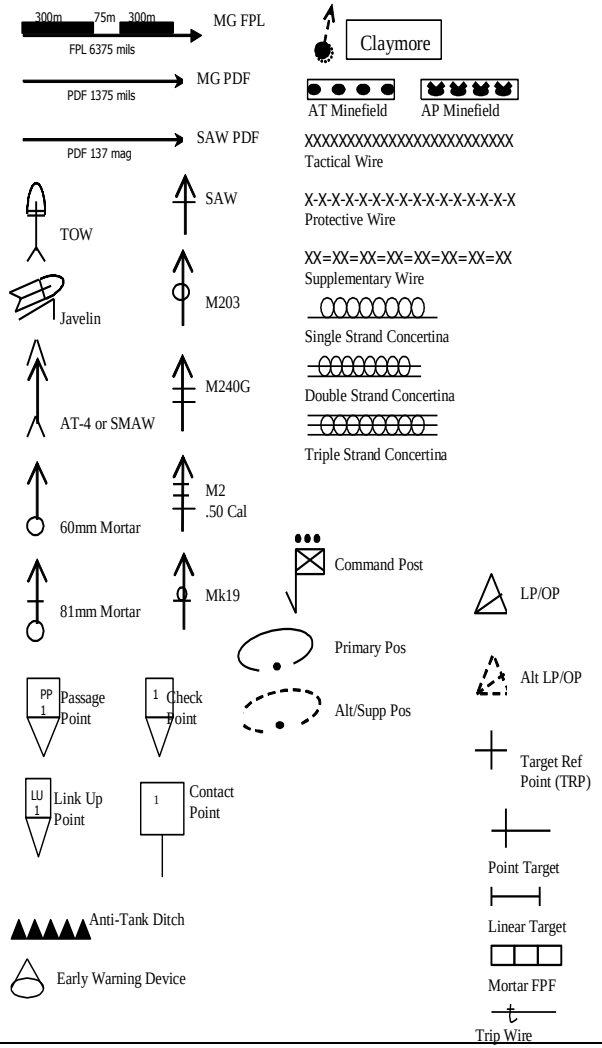
XXXXXXXXXXXXX
-X-X-X-X-X-X
1 2 3
10
15
8
3
01
YE 2002
1 sq = 20 m
Made By:
Unit:
Map Data:
Date/Time Group:

PLATOON FIRE PLAN SKETCH CHECKLIST

1. Significant terrain annotated on the sketch?
   a. Streams?
   b. High Ground?
   c. Trails?
2. Left and Right Grids and Sector Limits for Squads (Magnetic Azimuths)
   a. Primary Positions?
   b. Alternate Positions?
   c. Supplementary Positions?
3. Center Grid for the Squad position?
4. Left and Right Grids and Sector Limits for the Platoon (Magnetic Azimuths)
   a. Primary Positions?
   b. Alternate Positions?
   c. Supplementary Positions?
5. Center Grid for the Platoon positions?
6. Final Protective Fires for MGs
(Principle Direction of Fire – PDF, or Final Protective Line – FPL)
and Rockets/ Missiles (Hot/ Cold Positions)
   a. M249 has magnetic azimuths?
   b. M240G has magnetic azimuths for PDF/FPL?
      i. Length of Dead Space annotated?
      ii. Have you attached copies of the Range Cards to the Sketch?
      iii. Do you have a copy of the Range Card at the CP?
   c. Mk153 hot/cold positions marked?
      i. Have you attached Range Cards to the sketch?
      ii. Do you have a copy of the Range Card at the CP?
   d. Vehicles/other attachments marked?
      i. Grids to positions?
      ii. Sectors of Fire/PDFs/FPLs marked?
      iii. Have you attached Range Cards to the sketch?
      iv. Do you have copies of the Range Cards at the CP?

7. Target Reference Point (TRP) Grids and Descriptions?
   a. Are TRPs recognizable?
   b. Do they make sense?
   c. Marked in Additional Information?
8. OP/LP positions marked?
   a. Grids?
      i. Primary?
      ii. Alt?
9. Targets annotated on sketch?
Grids to targets?
FPLs noted for all fire support agencies (60mm, 81mm, Arty, NGF)
10. Wire, Natural Obstacles, Claymores, Booby Traps, Trip Flares, etc.?
   a. Annotated on map in relation to terrain?
   b. Grid marked in marginal info?
11. IS IT CURRENT?
Is it updated for new additions to the defense?
Have you changed the date/time group (DTG) to reflect the new changes?
Name, Rank, Unit, and DTG on Margin?



STANDARD RANGE CARD

For use of this form see FM 7-8. The proponent agency is TRADOC

SQD ____
PLT ____
CO ____

May be used for all types of direct fire weapons.

MAGNETIC NORTH

DATA SECTION

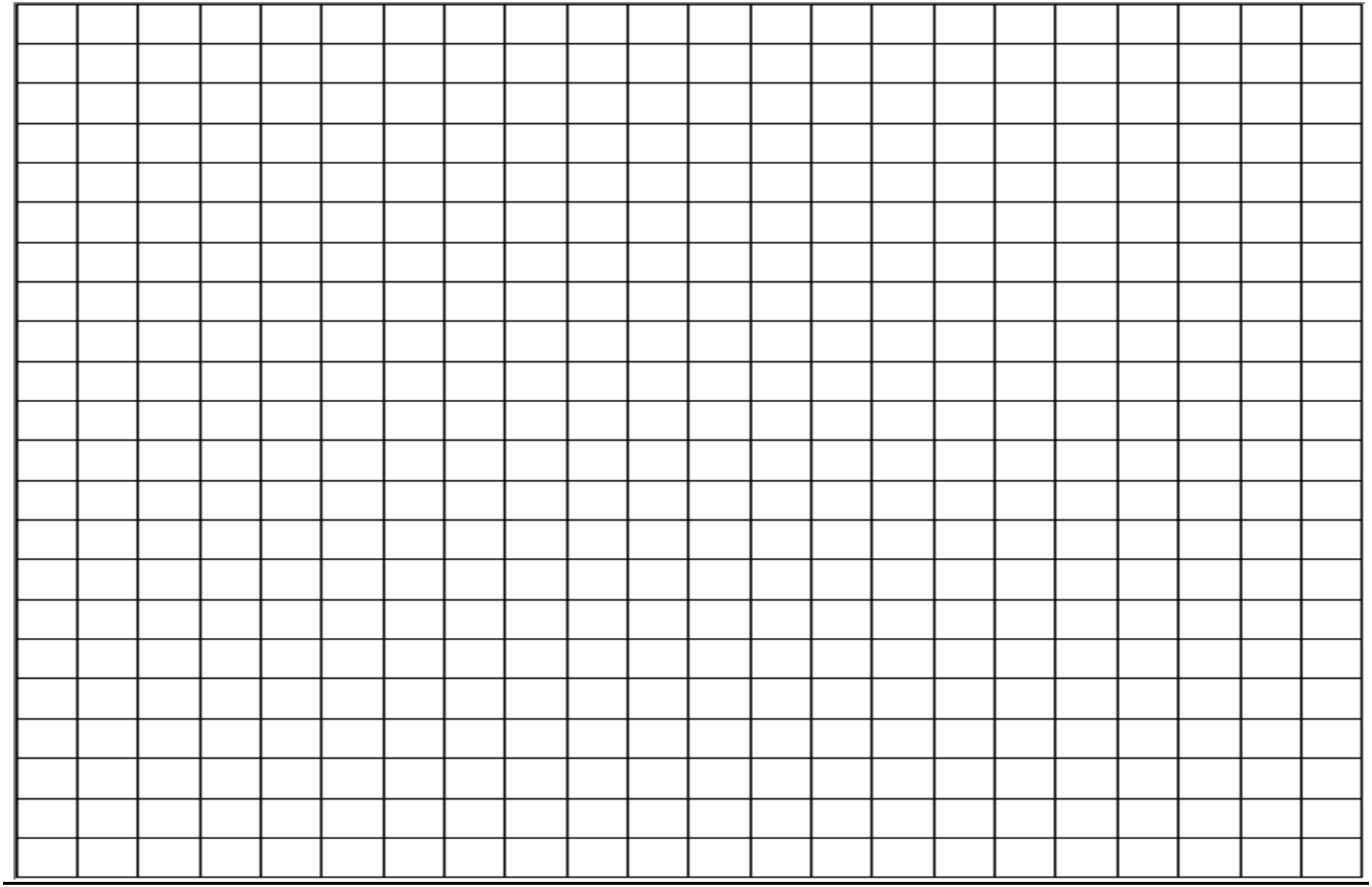
POSITION IDENTIFICATION | DATE

WEAPON | EACH CIRCLE EQUALS _____ METERS

NO.	DIRECTION / DEFLECTION	ELEVATION	RANGE	AMMO	DESCRIPTION

REMARKS:

DA FORM 5517-R, FEB 86



Annex H: Relief in Place

Definition: "An operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit. The responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission are the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. The incoming unit continues the operation as ordered." (MCDP 1-0, Glossary-28 references JP 1-02 *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*)\

"A *relief in place* is an operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit and the responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. (JP 3-07.3)"

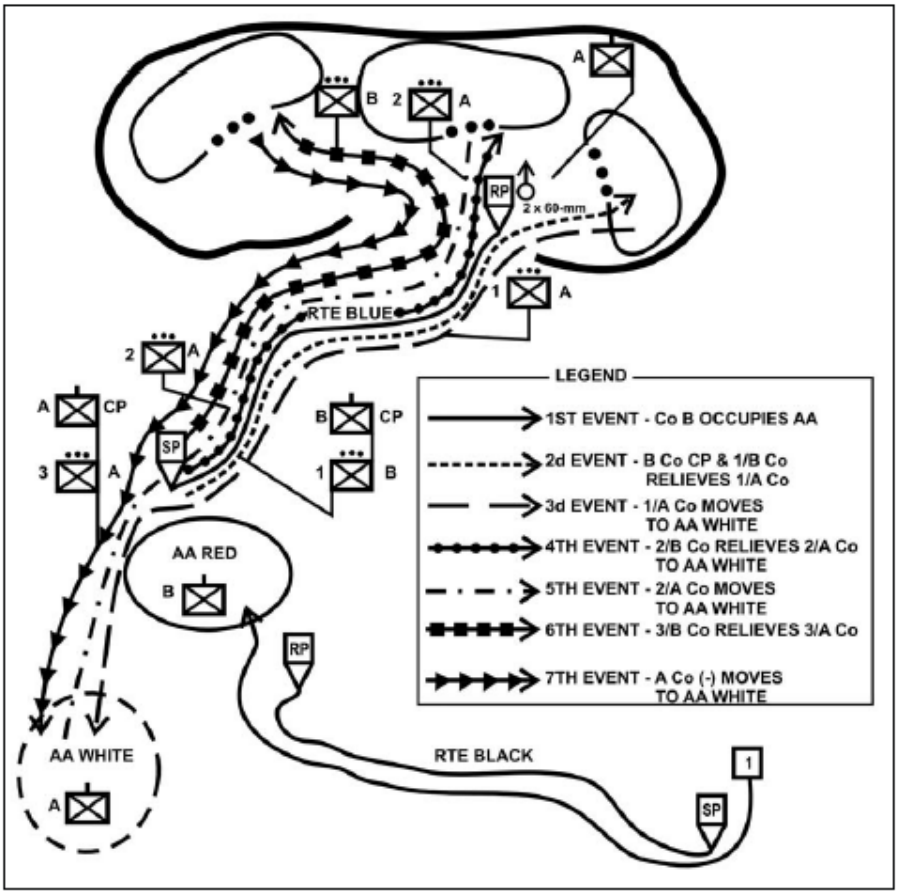


Figure 8-3. Relief in place in sequence.

Can be *hasty* or *deliberate* in planning. A deliberate RIP requires extensive planning, ADVON/Command visits, equipment transfers, etc. Detailed RIP should facilitates shorter execution time by figuring out exactly what must be done.

Three types of RIPS:

1. **Sequential RIP** – "A sequential relief occurs when each element in the relieved unit is relieved in succession, from right to left or left to right, depending on how it is deployed." (FM 3-90_2, 4-1)
    - **a.** For example: 1st squad on the left flank RIPS, then 2nd squad in the center, then 3rd on the right flank.
2. **Simultaneous RIP** - "A simultaneous relief occurs when all elements are relieved at the same time…Simultaneous relief takes the least time to execute, but is more easily detected by the enemy. " (FM 3-90_2, 4-1)
    a. For example: All three squads RIP at once.
3. **Staggered RIP** – "A staggered relief occurs when the commander relieves each element in a sequence determined by the tactical situation, not its geographical orientation…Sequential or staggered reliefs can occur over a significant amount of time." (FM 3-90_2, 4-1)
    a. For Example: Oncoming unit RIPs out main effort and assumes the primary positions. Supported unit continues to man LP/OPs and patrolling effort. Oncoming then RIPs out the rest of the BP. Once BP is RIP'd, Oncoming takes over for patrolling effort and dispatches a patrol to relieve LP/OPs. "If the relieved unit's forward elements can defend the AO, the relieving unit executes the relief in place from the rear to the front. This facilitates movement and terrain management." (FM 3-90-2

Done for a variety of reasons: Change of mission for stationary force, unit is fatigued or degraded, forces needed elsewhere, etc.

Control Measures: Assembly Area, where the relieving unit assembles to begin the RIP.
Start Point where the movement lane to the RIP location begins, Contact Point where the incoming and outgoing units linkup to guide in to their RIP site

Planning considerations: RIP is tactically vulnerable operation; every effort must be made to conceal RIP from the enemy. RIPs additionally require extensive cooperation and coordination between RIPing units. RIPs should be conducted during periods of reduced visibility such as darkness or fog. The stationary owns the AO (and all forces within it) until the Transfer of Authority has been conducted. Transfer of Authority should be done whenever the Oncoming unit is capable of accomplishing the mission independently (for platoon defense; main effort holes are occupied Passage of Command can begin). Until the Transfer of Authority has been conducted, the original unit maintains command and control of the defensive position; even if the majority of their combat power has left the area.

Sequence of events:

1. Warning Order from Higher: "The warning order designates the time of relief, relieving and relieved units, and sequence of events. It specifies the future missions of the relieved force, route priorities, any restrictions on advance parties, any extraordinary security measures, and the time and place for issuing the complete order."
2. Commander coordination – Commanders should collocate as soon as possible
    a. Recon area of which they are assuming responsibility
    b. Recon movement to unit being relieved
    c. Coordinate
        i. Time, Route, Force laydown, obstacle plan, fire plan etc
        ii. Time/Event that will initiate the Passage of Control
3. RIP Conducted
    a. Using one of 3 methods described above

b. Outgoing unit continues to defend until it is relived; HHQ can deploy additional forces to Screen the RIP out in the security area

4. Passage of Control/Transfer of Authority
5. RIP-TOA Complete

Detailed sequence:

- Warning Orders issued to defenses, RIP orders to oncoming defenders
- Billet holder and 'leader's recon' meet up with guides from defending platoon at AA to L/UP with defending platoon.
    - Platoon remains in AA and conducts refit and prep for combat
    - Guides bring new PC and others to BP
- PCs meet at BP and begin planning. Must cover;
    - Fire Plan Sketch
    - Obstacle Plan
    - Fire Support Plan
    - Security Plan
    - Joint patrol of area/Engagement area
- Finalize RIP planning
    - Type of RIP
    - When RIP will happen
    - What subordinate units will RIP first
- Leader's Recon returns to AA
    - Leave guides from outgoing defense
    - Returns with copies of range cards to give squads
- Frago/RIP SoM Brief
    - **RIP is the occupation method; otherwise it's a normal defensive order.** Focus on the enemy!
    - Things to consider:
        - Orientation: Show BP with its TCMs to build understanding. Also include the RIP TCMs.
        - Friendly Situation: Include unit being relieved
        - Mission: To BLOCK/PROTEC/RETAIN, not RIP!
        - SoM: TCMs for both the RIP AND the defense
            - Walk the dog for RIP and Defense
            - Security plan for patrols and LP/OPs
        - Tasks: Normal defensive tasks: "First squad, you are the ME. NLT 1900 on 21 June 2017, BLOCK N from the center of BP HAVOC IOT prevent the enemy from interfering with FARP GOSHAWK. Conduct a relief in place with the unit currently occupying that position."
            - Detailed walk the dog!
        - Coordinating instructions
            - Priorities of work: Based on your FUC/information you have, what are your priorities to improve the position you are taking over?
- Movement to BP
    - Contact Point with guides at between AA and BP
- RIP Conduct

    - Marine in hole goes over range card with RIPing Marine. Once understood, they displace to a rally point behind the BP. Minimize movement, noise, and number of people on BP as much as possible.
    - CSWs RIP last. Leave tripods in place, give oncoming tripods to outgoing unit. Same with sandbags.
    - If able, RIPing unit provides forward security to prevent enemy interference with the RIP.
- Passage of Control, Transfer of Authority
    - RIP/TOA Complete

RELIEF IN PLACE		
ITEM	ACTION	√
1	Incoming leader recons area	
2	Incoming and outgoing leaders coordinate	
3	Exchange liaison personnel	
4	Coordinate positions of weapons and vehicles	
5	Exchange range cards and fire plans	
6	Exchange relief or organic fire support elements	
7	Coordinate obstacles locations	
8	Transfer responsibility for minefields	
9	Coordinate routes into and out of positions	
10	Coordinate vehicle guides	

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RELIEF IN PLACE		
ITEM	ACTION	√
11	Transfer excess ammo, wire lines, POL, and other material to incoming unit	
12	Coordinate commo for one net during relief	
13	Coordinate enemy situation and intelligence	
14	Coordinate sequence of relief	
15	Coordinate time of change of responsibility for the area	
Notes:		

erences

Reference Number or Author	Reference Title
FMFM 2-7	Fire Support in MAGTF Operations
JP 1-02	Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms
MCDP 1	Warfighting
MCDP 1-0	Marine Corps Operations
MCRP 3-11.1A	Commander's Tactical Handbook
MCRP 3-11.1B	Small Unit Leader's Guide to Weather and Terrain
MCRP 3-11.2A	Marine Troop Leader's Guide
MCRP 3-16A	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Targeting Process
MCRP 3-16C	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Fire Support for the Combined Arms Commander
MCRP 5-2A	Operational Terms and Graphics
MCWP 3-1	Ground Combat Operations
MCWP 3-11.1	Marine Rifle Company/Platoon
MCWP 3-11.2	Marine Rifle Squad
MCWP 3-11.3	Scouting and Patrolling
MCWP 3-15.1	Machine Guns and Machine Gun Gunnery
MCWP 3-15.5	Antiarmor Operations
MCWP 3-16	Fire Support Coordination in the Ground Combat Element
MCWP 3-17	Engineering Operations

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term or Acronym	Definition or Identification
AA	Assembly area
ACE	Ammunition, Casualties, and Equipment
AO	Area of operations
ASAP	As soon as possible
BAMCIS	Begin planning, arrange for reconnaissance, make reconnaissance, complete the plan, issue the order, and supervise
CASEVAC	Casualty evacuation
CFF	Call for fire
COC	Combat Operations Center
COG	Center of gravity
CCP	Casualty collection point
CP	Command post
CSS	Combat service support
CV	Critical vulnerabilities
EA	Engagement area
EMLCOA	Enemy's most likely course of action
EN	Enemy
EPW	Enemy prisoner of war
FEBA	Forward edge of the battle area
FEX	Field exercise
FLOT	Forward line of own troops
FPF	Final protective fires
FPL	Final protective lines
FSP	Fire support plan
IA	Immediate action
IOT	In order to
KIA	Killed in action
LP/OP	Listening post/Observation post
MBA	Main battle area
ME	Main effort
METT-TC	Mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available, time and cultural considerations
MLG	Marine Logistics Group
NLT	No later than
MLG	Marine Logistics Group
OAR	Original, Appropriate, and Redundant
PDF	Principle direction of fire
Recon	Reconnaissance
RIP	Relief in Place
SAW	Squad automatic weapon
SE	Supporting effort
SOM	Scheme of maneuver

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms (Continued)

Term or Acronym	Definition or Identification
TBS	The Basic School
TCM	Tactical control measures
TRP	Target Reference Points
TTP	Tactics, techniques, and practices
US	United States

Notes