

**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
FIELD MEDICAL TRAINING BATTALION-EAST  
PSC BOX 20042  
CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA 28542-0042

MCECST

**2401-DEF-1001/2 Defensive Fundamentals**

**TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Given an individual weapon, entrenching tool, limiting devices, and sector of fire, while wearing a fighting load, construct a hasty fighting position to provide cover and concealment. (2401-DEF-1001)
2. Given a fighting position, assigned weapon, while wearing a fighting load, defend a position to repel the enemy assault. (2401-DEF-1002)

**ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Given a list of choices, identify the characteristics of cover/concealment in accordance with reference TC 3-21.75 The Warrior Ethos and Soldier Combat Skills. (2401-DEF-1001a)
2. Given a list of choices, identify characteristics of a sector of fire in accordance with reference MCRP 3-10A.4 Marine Rifle Squad. (2401-DEF-1001b)
3. Given a list of choices, identify the characteristics of the defensive in accordance with reference MCRP 3-10A.4 Marine Rifle Squad. (2401-DEF-1002a)
4. Given a list of choices, identify the elements of fire control in accordance with reference MCRP 3-10A.4 Marine Rifle Squad. (2401-DEF-1002b)

5. Given a scenario, a fighting position, assigned weapon, while wearing a fighting load, demonstrate position defense to repel enemy assault in accordance with reference MCRP 3-10A.4 Marine Rifle Squad.  
(2401-DEF-1002c)

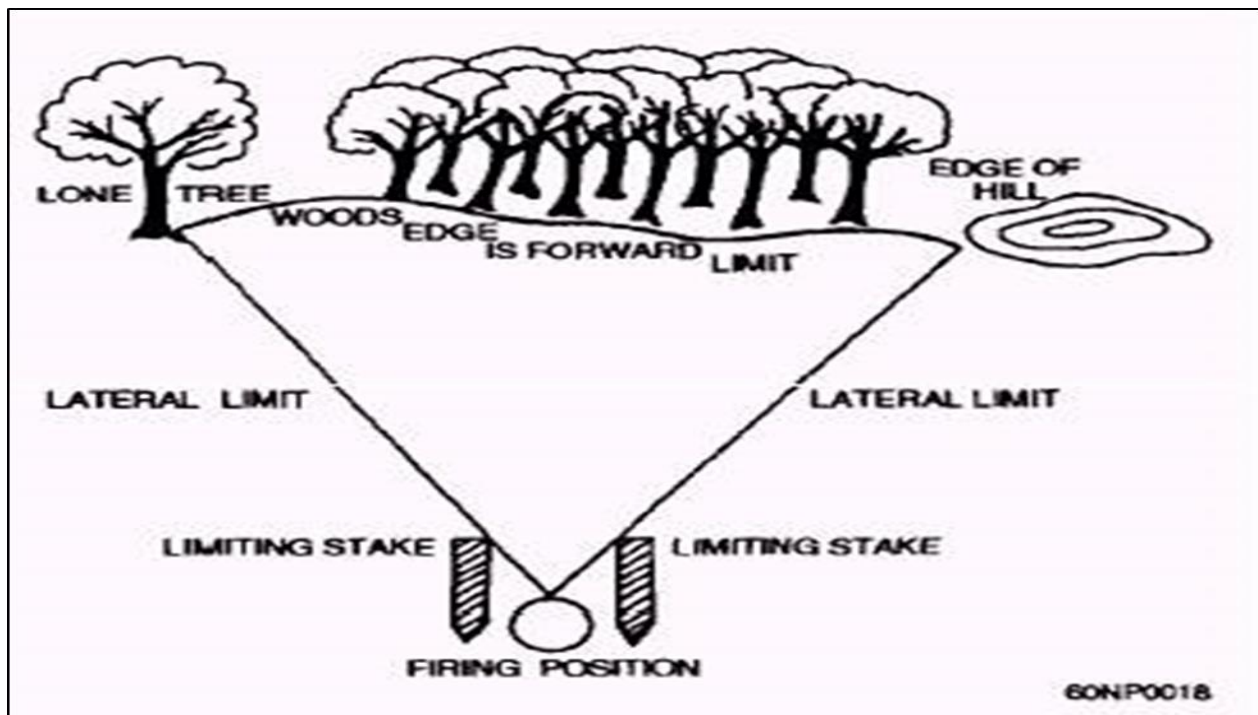
## 1. DEFENSE COMBAT.

a. **The Purpose of Defensive Action** is to retain or control terrain, gain time, develop more favorable action, or to economize forces to allow the concentration of forces elsewhere.

b. **The Mission of Infantry in the Defense** is with the support of other arms, to stop the enemy by fire as he approaches the battle position, to repel his assault by close combat if he reaches the battle position, and to destroy him by counterattack if he enters the battle position.

## 2. DEFENSIVE COMBAT (Definitions).

a. **Sector Of Fire.** A sector of fire is an area, which is required to be covered by an individual, a fire unit, squad or fire team, or a crew-served weapon. It is a pie-shape area enclosed by two lateral limits and a forward limit. A sector of fire is assigned to individual weapons, fire teams, and squads. The squad sector of fire is covered by the overlapping sectors of fire of the fire teams.



b. **Lateral Limits.** Readily identifiable terrain features are selected to indicate the line of sight along each side of the sector. Two stakes, are placed near the position of the weapon and are used to indicate the lateral limits during

periods of restricted visibility. These should be emplaced prior to darkness.

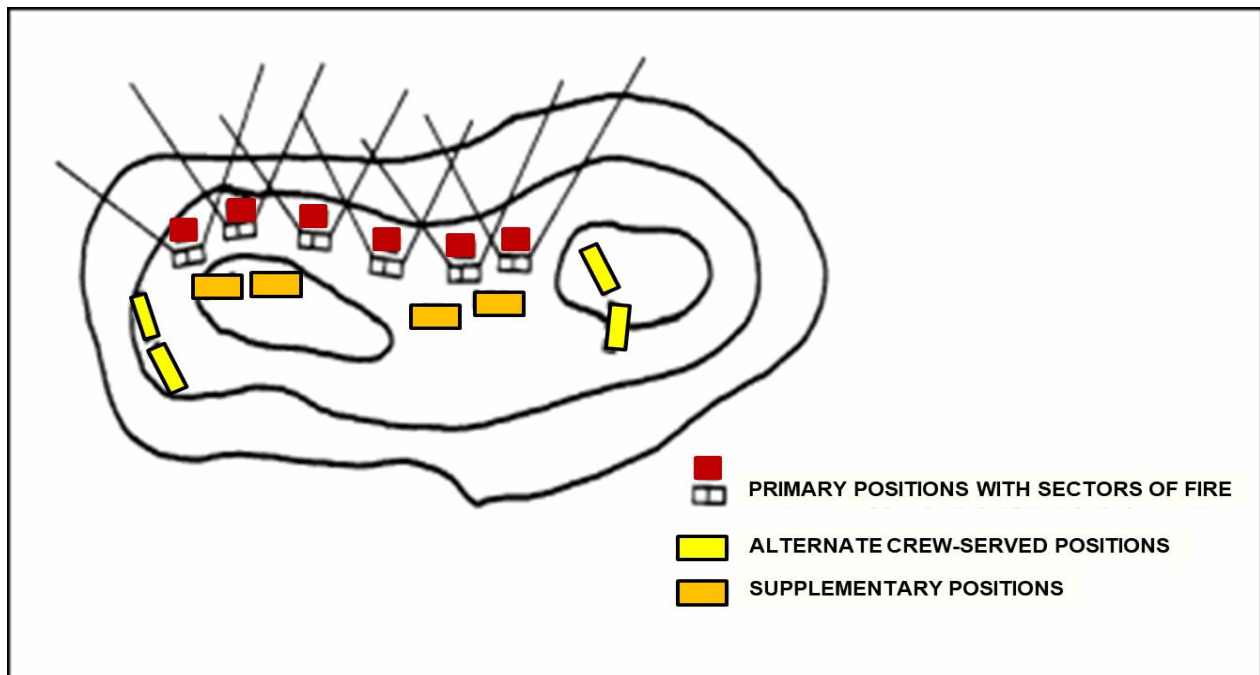
c. **Forward Limit.** The forward limit is established at the range at which the weapon will open fire. For rifles and automatic rifles, this may extend up to their maximum effective ranges. When possible, a terrain feature is selected to locate the forward limit.

d. **Fighting Position.** A fighting position is a location on the ground from which fire is delivered by an individual, a fire unit (squad or fire team), or a crew served weapon. Three distinct fighting positions are as follows;

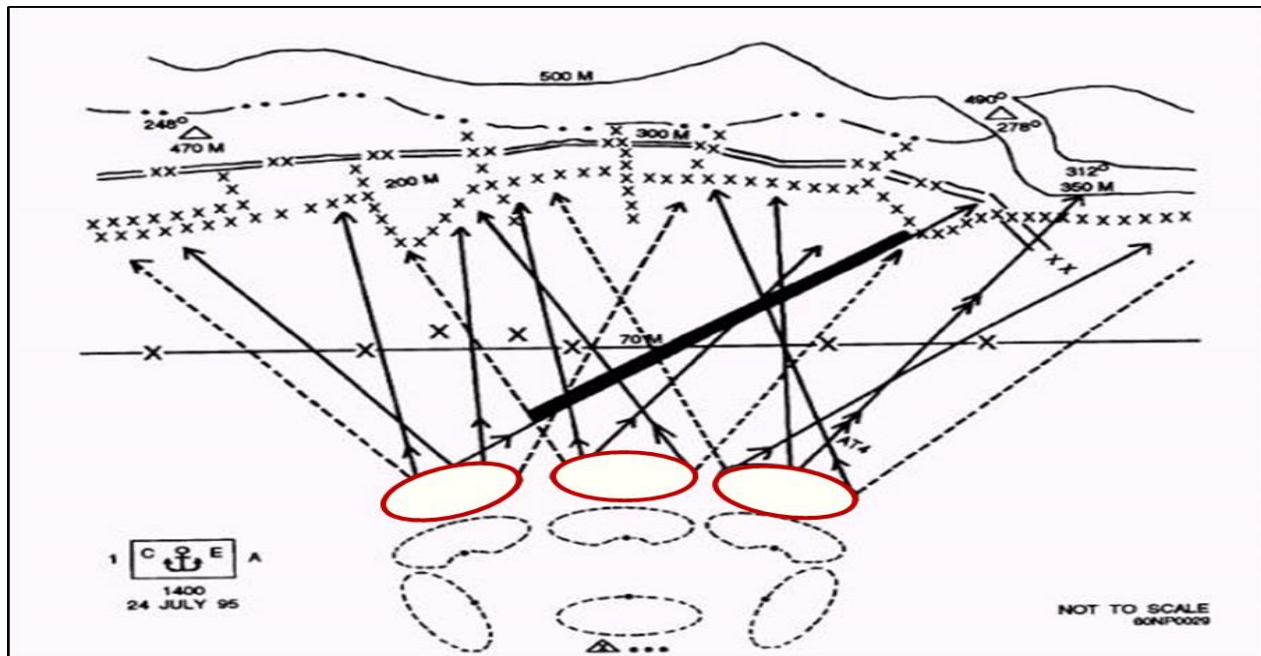
(1) **Primary Fighting Position:** the best available position from which the assigned sector of fire can be covered.

(2) **Alternate Fighting Position:** primarily used by crew-served weapons if the primary position becomes untenable or unsuited for carrying out that mission.

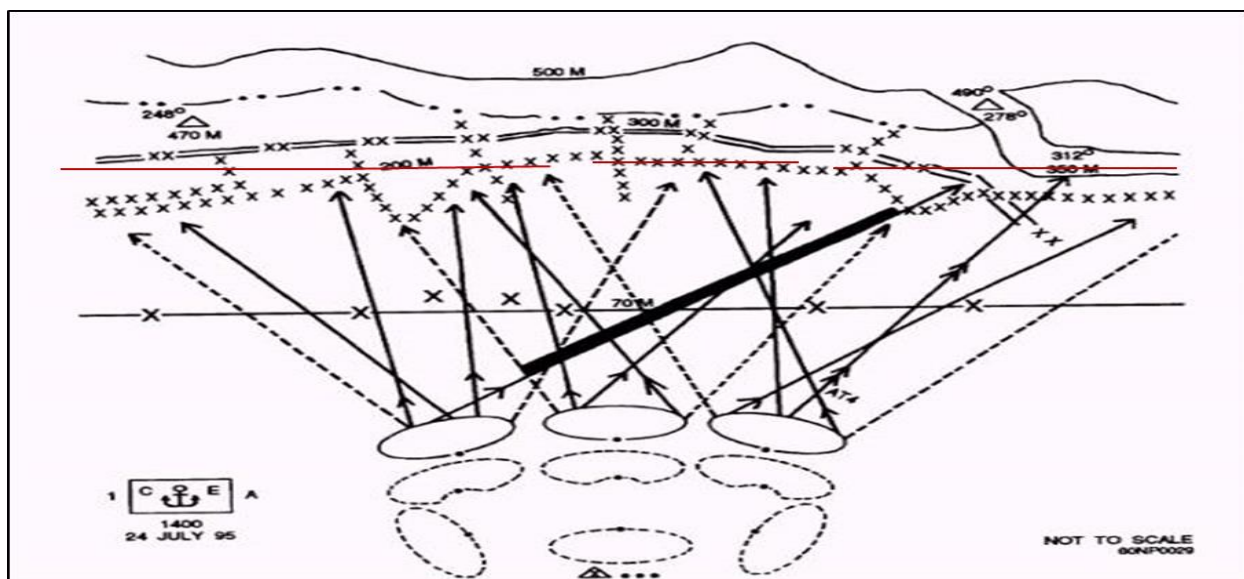
(3) **Supplementary Fighting Position:** a secondary position, prepared to guard against attack from directions other than those from which the main attack is expected and does not cover the same sectors of fire as the Primary Position.



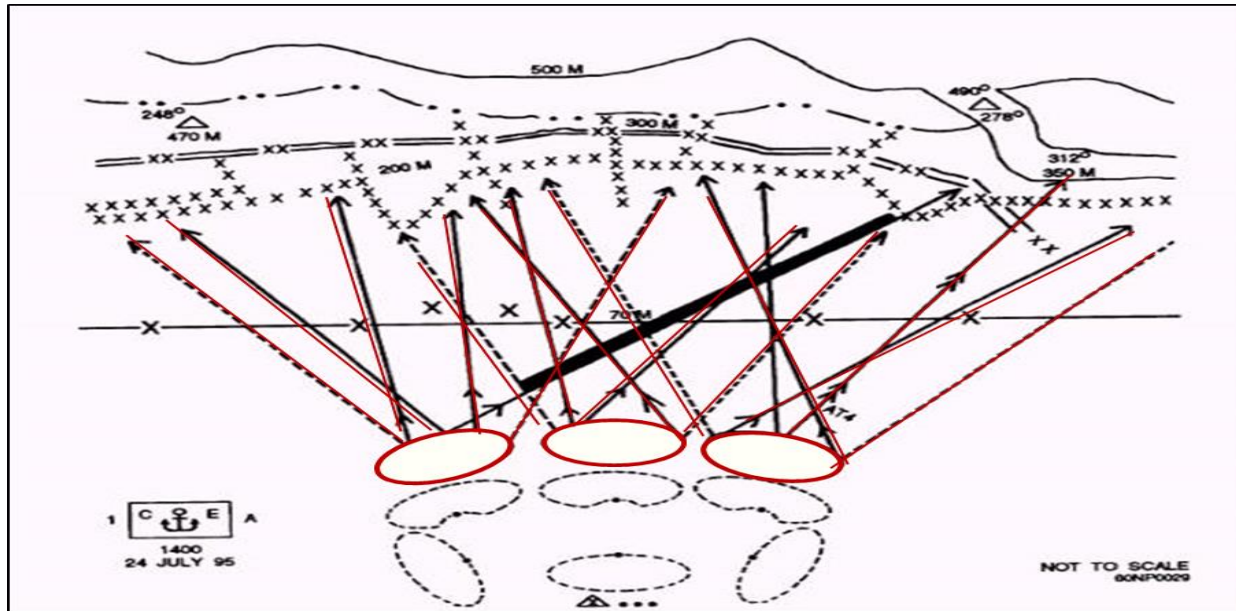
e. **Battle Position.** Can be described as a position on which the main effort of the defense is concentrated. Battle positions can be assigned to Battalions, Companies and Platoons.



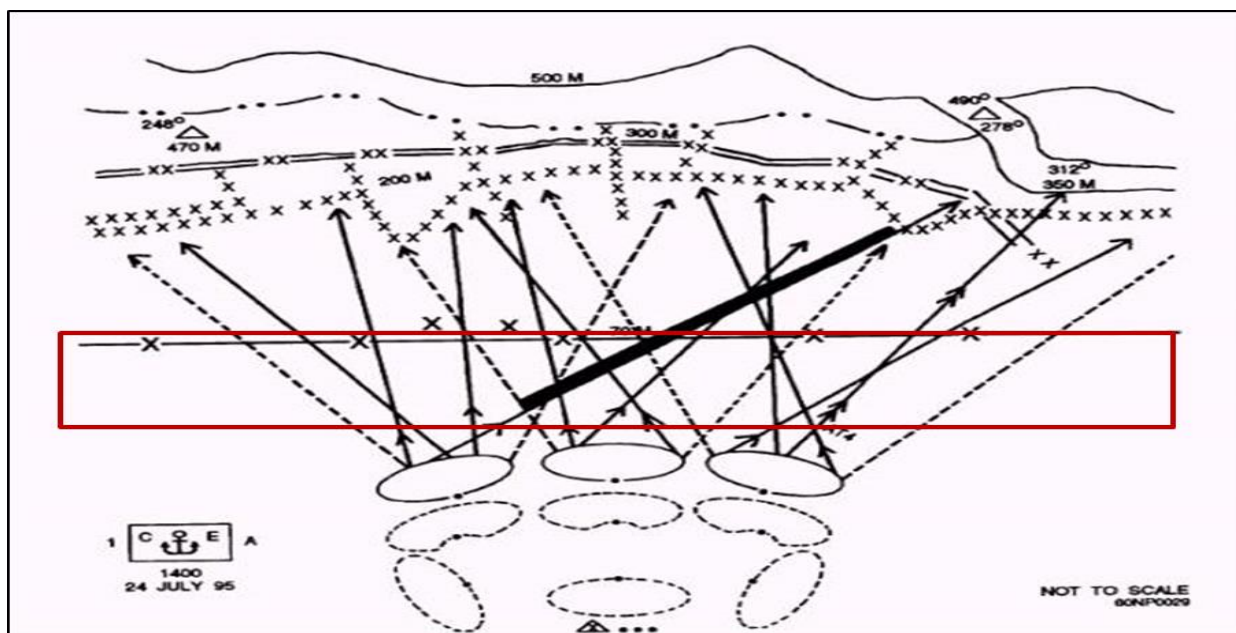
f. **Forward Edge Of The Battle Area Or (FEBA).** Is defined as the foremost limits of a series of areas in which ground combat units are deployed. The FEBA is a control measure that divides the security area from the main battle area. The FEBA need not be physically occupied, but it should be controlled by friendly fire.



g. **Main Battle Area.** Extends from the FEBA to the rear. It is here that the decisive defensive battle is fought. The main battle area is organized into sectors of defense that are assigned to subordinate units.

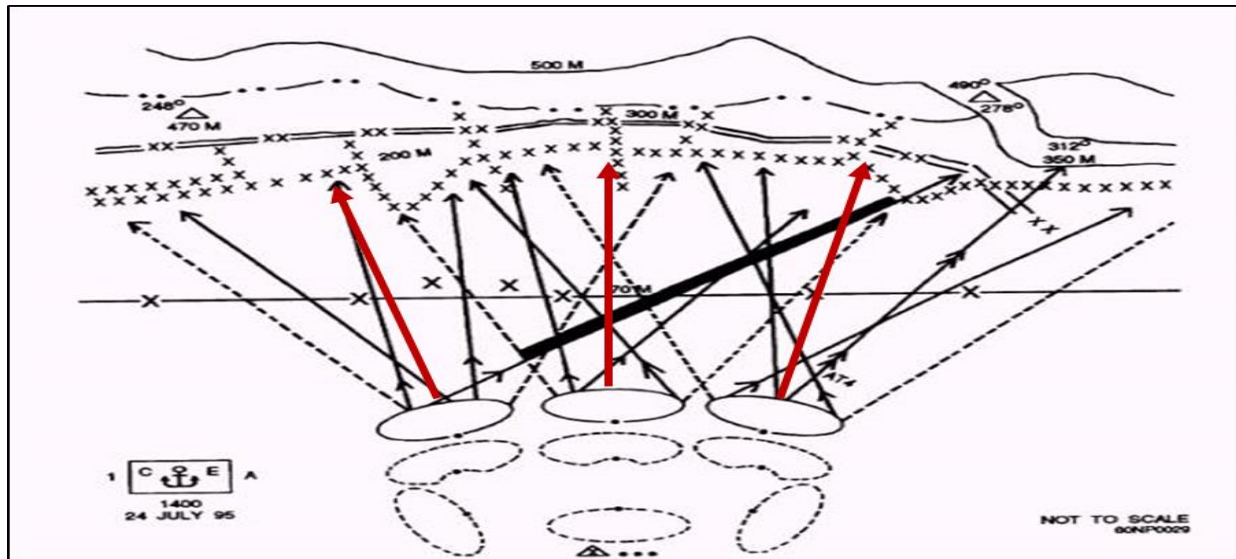


g. **Security Area.** Is located forward of the FEBA. The squad may be assigned as part of a larger security force or may only be responsible for local security in front of the platoon battle position.





g. **Principle Direction Of Fire Or (PDF)**. A principal direction of fire is a specific direction within the sector of fire given to a flat-trajectory weapon and which is designated as its primary fire mission. A principal direction of fire can be assigned to a machinegun crew that is covering a likely avenue of approach within their assigned sector of fire.



h. **Avenues Of Approach Or (AOA)**. Are the routes that are used by an attacking force leading to its objective or to key terrain.

i. **Dead Space**. An area within the maximum effective range of a weapon, or observer, that cannot be covered by direct fire and observation from a given position because of intervening obstacles, the nature of the ground, or the characteristics of the trajectory.

j. **Fields of Fire**. Are areas that a weapon or group of weapons can cover and are essential to the effective employment of direct fire weapons. Fields of fire should be considered both from friendly and enemy points of view.

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3. **THE FUNDAMENTALS OF DEFENSE**. Are applicable to all tactical levels (Fire Team, Squad, Platoon, Company, Etc.). Application of these fundamentals by all unit leaders increases the chances for a successful defense. The Fundamentals of Defense are as follows;

a. **Preparation.** Normally, the defender will arrive at the battlefield before the attacker. Upon his arrival at the position he is to defend, the squad leader must ascertain from the platoon commander how much time is available to prepare his defensive position. If time is available to prepare the position the squad leader must use it wisely; if not, he prepares a hasty defense.

b. **Concentration.** Forces must be concentrated to prepare for attacks at the most likely spots. For the squad leader, this means he will establish his position as directed by the platoon commander.

c. **Flexibility.** At the squad level, flexibility is achieved through the continuous development of various courses of action to meet the enemy threat. The squad leader should be continuously be asking himself, "What do I do if the enemy does this...?"

d. **Maximum Use of Offensive Action.** The squad will normally be tasked by the platoon commander to conduct various types of patrols to maintain contact with the enemy. Additionally, the squad leader must instill in his men an offensive state of mind and aggressive spirit.

e. **Proper Use of Terrain: (KOCOA) .**

- (1) **Key Terrain**
- (2) **Observation**
- (3) **Cover & Concealment**
- (4) **Obstacles**
- (5) **Avenues of Approach**

f. **Mutual Support.** Units and supporting weapons are located and employed so that they can assist on another. An isolated unit is easily destroyed by the enemy. Positions should be located so that when attacking one, the enemy comes under fire from at least one other.

g. **Defense in Depth.** The squad employs everyone online when deployed. The squad engages the enemy at maximum small arms range and continues to fire until the enemy is stopped. If the attacker penetrates the frontline squads, those squads may move to supplementary positions to engage the enemy, or they may be part of a counter-attack to drive the enemy back.



h. **Surprise.** The squad leader must employ every means available to mislead the enemy as to the true location of his positions, his strength, and the disposition of his organic weapons as well as any crew-served weapons located in his sector.

i. **Knowledge of the Enemy.** Since the defense reacts largely to what the attacker does, the squad leader should find out from the platoon commander, the capabilities of the enemy facing him. Having an idea as to what the enemy can do, what weapons he will employ, and what his strength is, will help the squad leader organize his defense to meet that threat.

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#### 4. **DEFENSIVE MISSIONS OF THE SQUAD.**

a. **The Mission of the Marine Rifle Squad** in the defense is, with the support of other arms, to stop the enemy by fire as he approaches the battle position, to repel his assault by close combat if he reaches the battle position, and to destroy him by counterattack if he enters the battle position. Units in the defense are normally broken down into three squads: the front-line squad, the squad as part of the reserves, and the squad as a security element. Each of these squads have their own mission.

(1) **The Front Line Squad.** The squad may defend as part of a front-line platoon. Its mission is to stop the enemy by fire forward of the platoon battle position and to repel him by close combat if he reaches the platoon battle position. The mission requires that the squad be assigned a fighting position and a sector of fire. The squad holds its fighting position at all costs and withdraws or occupies other fighting positions only on orders from higher authority.

(2) **Squad As Part Of The Reserves.** The squad may be part of the reserve platoon during the defense. As part of the reserve platoon, the squad is normally assigned a fighting position to the rear of the frontline units and supports them by fire. The fighting position and sector of fire is assigned to concentrate fire in the rear, on the flanks, or into a gap between frontline platoons. The squad as part of the reserve platoon may also be assigned a fighting position and sector of fire to limit enemy penetrations of the platoon battle position. The squad as part of company's reserve platoon may participate

in a counterattack to expel the enemy from the company battle position.

(3) **Squad As A Security Element.** During the defense the squad may serve as part of the security element located forward of the platoon battle position. The squad's mission in this capacity is to gain information about the enemy and to deceive, delay, and disorganize his advance. An example of a security element would be security patrols.

5. **MARINE RIFLE SQUAD MEMBERS.** The Marine Rifle Squad is comprised of (3) Fire Teams. Each Fire Team Member has a specific priority of work in the defense.

a. **The Automatic Rifleman** - Since the automatic rifles are the backbone of the squad's defense, once the automatic rifle's exact fighting position and principle direction of fire is established, the remainder of the fire team is then positioned around it.

b. **The Assistant Automatic Rifleman** - Normally, the assistant automatic rifleman participates in the defense as a rifleman. He is positioned near or with the automatic rifleman because he must be prepared to assume the duties of the automatic rifleman.

c. **The Rifleman** - The rifleman is positioned so he can cover the entire fire team sector if possible. His position must provide support and protection for the automatic rifleman.

d. **The Fire Team Leader** - Usually the fire team leader's position is at the center of the fire team where he can observe the entire fire team and it's assigned sector of fire.

6. **THE FIRE PLAN SKETCH AND PRIORITY OF WORK.**

a. **The Elements of a Fire Plan Sketch.** A Fire Plan Sketch is a drawing which provides a visual understanding of the Fire Team's combat responsibility, principle direction of fire, assigned weapon positions and sectors of fire. **The required elements of a fire team fire plan sketch are as follows:**

(1) **Primary Position.** Represents the position from which the unit will cover its assigned sector of fire. The numbers indicate the unit. In this case, this is 2nd Fire Team, 3rd Squad.

(2) **Left and Right Lateral Limits.** Readily identifiable terrain features are selected to indicate the line of sight of the sector of fire. Solid lines represent the fire team's left and right lateral limits. Dotted lines represent the individual fire team members' left and right lateral limits. Machine guns are assigned a Principle Direction of Fire (PDF), which are represented by a solid line with an arrow tip.

(3) **Marginal Information.** At a minimum, the marginal information includes the Marine's name, date, and unit.

(4) **Magnetic North.** Indicate the direction of magnetic north in order to orientate the sketch to the terrain.

(5) **Alternate and Supplemental Positions.**

(a) Alternate positions are not normally assigned to individuals or units within the platoon. They are used primarily by crew-served weapons. An alternate position is located so that a crew-served weapon can continue to accomplish its original mission when the primary position becomes unsuited for carrying out that mission.

(b) Supplemental positions are prepared to guard against attack from directions other than those from which the main attack is expected.

(6) **Listening Posts and/or Observation Posts.** An OP or LP is a position from which you watch an assigned sector of observation and report all activity seen or heard in your sector. As OP/LPs are located forward of the battle position, it is important to note their location to help prevent fratricide (Friendly Fire).

(7) **Dead Space.** Dead space is an area within the maximum effective range of a weapon, or observer, which cannot be covered by direct fire and observation from a given position because of intervening obstacles, the nature of the ground, or the characteristics of the trajectory. As such, it is important to note dead space so countermeasures such as M203s, obstacles, and mines can be placed in them to prevent the enemy from using it to his advantage.

(8) **Additional Elements of a Fire Plan Sketch.**

Additional information can be provided to further enhance the effectiveness of a fire plan sketch. These include:

(a) **Terrain Features.** Identifying key terrain features such as hilltops and draws helps the reader orient the sketch to the ground and helps determine enemy likely avenues of approach.

(b) **Landmarks.** Landmarks can be used as target reference points for lateral limits and Principle Direction of fires. They also help the reader better orient the sketch to the ground.

(c) **Obstacles.** In the event that your team is assigned to serve as guides, it is important to know the location of obstacles when leading patrols out or guiding friendly units back in through friendly lines.

b. **Squad Leader and Squad Member Symbols:**

(1) Squad Leader - M4 Rifle with Bayonet



(2) Fire Team Leader/Grenadier - M4 Rifle with M203 Grenade Launcher and Bayonet



(3) Automatic Rifleman - Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) with Combat Knife



(4) Asst. Automatic Rifleman - M4 Rifle with Bayonet










(5) Rifleman - M4 Rifle with Bayonet









c. **Fire Plan Sketch Symbols:** All elements of a fire plan sketch are drawn using military symbols. Military symbols provide a standardized language for the depiction of military plans and situations. Using these standardized symbols reduces the likelihood that another individual may misinterpret the fire team's fire plan.

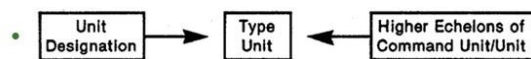
## ○ Types of Units:

- Infantry Unit - 
- Infantry Headquarters - 
- Infantry Observation Post - 
- Armor - 
- Artillery - 
- Engineer - 
- Mechanized Infantry - 

## ○ Sizes of Units:

- Fire Team - 
- Squad - 
- Section - 
- Platoon - 
- Company or Battery - 
- Battalion or Squadron - 

## ○ Unit Combinations:







- Example -  
1<sup>st</sup> Plt., Co. A, 3d Marines







- Example -  
Observation Post, 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Team, 2d Squad, Co. A, 3d Marines








## ○ Location Combinations:

- Fire Team -  
(1<sup>st</sup> Fire Team, 2d Squad) 
- Squad -  
(2d Squad, 3d Plt.) 
- Platoon -  
(3d Plt., Co. A) 
- Squad size position proposed for occupation -  
(supplementary position) 

## ○ Weapons:


- Automatic Rifle -  
showing sector of fire & principle direction of fire 
- 2d Machine Gun Section on the FEBA - Heavy line shows limit of grazing fire on the final protective line. 
- Rocket Launcher - 
- Claymore Mine - 


## ○ Obstacles:

- Antitank Mine - 
- Antipersonnel Mine - 
- Antipersonnel Mine with Tripwire - 
- Concertina, Single - 
- Roadblock (completed) - 

○ **Enemy Positions:**

• Enemy Trenches - 

• Enemy Squad-Sized Position - 


• Enemy Infantry Observation Post - 

○ **Misc. Symbols:**

• Listening Post - 

• Sentinel Post- 

• Trenches - 

• 81mm & 60mm mortar final protective fire (FPF) side by side - 

• Radar Site- 

d. **The Squad Leader and his Fire Plan.** The Squad Leader organizes the fire teams in defense by sectors of fire and principal direction of fire for the automatic rifle. He selects terrain features to indicate lateral and forward limits of the sector of fire. He points out on the ground the general location of the fire team fighting positions to be occupied.

e. **The Fire Team Leader and his Fire Plan.** Based on the Squad Leader's fire plan, the Fire Team Leader formulates the team's fire plan to cover the entire assigned sector. The fire plan includes assignment of individual sectors of fire, individual fighting positions, firing positions and principle direction of fire for the automatic rifle.

f. **Fire Team Priority of Work.** The organization of the ground, or the construction of the defense, begins as soon as the Fire Plan is complete and individual members of the squad have been assigned sectors of fire. Priority of Work contains seven tasks using the acronym **S.A.F.E.- S.O.C.**, **S**-security, **A**-automatic weapons/avenues of approach, **F**-fields of fire, **E**-entrench, **S**-supplementary and alternate positions, **O**-obstacles, **C**-camouflage/continuing actions. These seven tasks are performed in order to properly conduct the defense. The following is a breakdown of the seven S.A.F.E.- S.O.C. Tasks;

(1) **Post Security.** Post securities in order to prevent surprise attacks and deny the enemy information about the defense. All-around security and protection against surprise are gained by:

(a) Posting a sentinel for surveillance.



(b) Enforcing noise and light discipline.

(c) Keeping movement within the squad fighting position to a minimum.

(d) There are times when you may be posted in an observation post (OP) or in a listening post (LP) to watch and/or listen for enemy activity. An OP or LP is a position from which you observe an assigned sector of observation and report all activity seen or heard in your sector.

(e) Observation and listening post are located within small arms range of the defensive line and in the nearest terrain features allowing observation of the assigned sector. They give early warning and observation to determine enemy strength, actions and routes of approach. As the enemy approaches, the Marines should avoid combat and withdraw to the squad defensive position.

(f) Observation posts and listening posts must have the following:

1. Covered and concealed routes to the squad positions.

2. Radio communication with the squad leader.

3. Chow, water, and clothing to keep warm and dry.

4. Listening posts and observation posts should be relieved every 2-4 hours.

(2) Position **A**utomatic Rifles. Automatic rifles are positioned to cover the most likely avenues of approach into the squad area. Their positions should enable them to cover the fire team's sector of fire, provide support for adjacent fire teams, and effectively deliver final protective fires. The squad leader positions the automatic rifleman and the fire team leader positions with the rest of the fire team around them. Automatic Weapons establish a principle direction of fire within their sector of fire, which is directed by the squad leader.

(3) Clearing **F**ields Of Fire. Clear fields of fire forward of each fighting position to allow maximum firepower to be delivered on the enemy entering the battle area. When clearing field of fires the following principles apply:

(a) Start clearing near the fighting position and work forward to the limits of effective small arms fire.

(b) In all cases, leave a thin natural screen of foliage to hide fighting positions.

(c) In sparsely wooded areas, remove the lower branches of scattered large trees.

(d) In heavy woods, restrict work to thinning undergrowth and removing lower branches of large trees, and clear narrow lanes of fire for automatic weapons.

(e) Move cut brush to locations where it is not furnished concealment to the enemy or discloses the squad's fighting position.

(4) **Entrench.** Fighting holes are dug by Marines at their fighting positions. There are two types of fighting holes, one-man and two-man. Both holes have some common characteristics. Both types of holes provide excellent protection against, small arms fire, shell fragments, aircraft strafing and bombing, effects of nuclear detonations, and the crushing actions of a tank.

(5) **Selecting Supplementary And Alternate Fighting Positions.** Supplementary and alternate fighting positions provide flexibility to the defensive line. They are used in the event that the enemy attacks from a different location than that which the primary positions are oriented.

(a) Supplementary positions are oriented in a different direction and have a different mission than the primary positions.

(b) Alternate positions are oriented in the same direction as the primary positions but are located in a different location, and are used for Crew-Serve weapons.

(6) **Constructing Obstacles.** Obstacles are designed to break up the enemy's attack, canalize him into heavy weapons fire, and disorganize his assault.

(a) Squad members are ordered to construct obstacles such as barbed wire, log, and brush barriers, ditches, and hasty

protective minefields. They are also ordered to improve natural obstacles such as creek beds and riverbanks.

(b) Obstacles are located beyond hand grenade range and are covered by fire.

(c) Extensive use of barbed wire entanglements are constructed depending on their use. The three types of defensive wire are classified as tactical, protective, or supplementary.

1. Tactical Wire. Tactical Wire entanglements are designed to break up enemy attack formations and to hold the enemy in areas covered by the most intense defensive fires. They are sited along the friendly sides of machine gun final protective lines. Tactical wire has a high priority of construction.

2. Supplementary Wire. Supplementary Wire entanglements are used to break up the patterns of tactical wire, thus deceiving the enemy as to the location of the final protective fires. They are used to connect platoon defense areas when gaps exist. Supplementary wire is used in any location to canalize enemy movement into areas covered by intensive fires.

3. Protective Wire. Protective Wire entanglements are located to prevent surprise assaults from points close to the defensive positions. They are close enough to be observed day and night and far enough from friendly positions to keep the enemy beyond normal hand grenade range. Protective wire is positioned 50 to 75 meters from friendly positions.

(7) Camouflage. Concealment from enemy ground and aerial observation is very important in selecting and organizing each fighting position. The squad must take advantage of natural concealment whenever possible. Camouflage measures start from the moment the position is occupied and are continued as long as the Marines are there. The 'C' also stands for "Continuing Actions". You should always be improving your positions, replacing camouflage, etc. in the defense. Specific camouflage measures are:

(a) Do not disclose the position by excessive or careless clearing of fields of fire.

(b) Use the same turf or topsoil that had been removed from the area of the fighting hole to camouflage the parapet.

(c) Dispose of all soil from the fighting hole not used on the parapet. Dispose of it under low bushes, on dirt roads or paths, in streams or ponds, or camouflage it.

(d) Avoid digging in next to an isolated bush, tree, or clump of vegetation.

(e) Conceal the fighting hole from observation by the use of a camouflage cover. Construct the cover from natural materials.

(f) Replace natural material used in camouflage before it wilts or changes color.

(g) Avoid littering.

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## 7. DEFENSIVE PROCEDURES.

a. **Receiving a Defense Order.** Upon receiving the platoon defensive order, the squad leader follows the troop leading steps (**BAMCIS**) to make the best use of time, equipment, and personnel. Utilizing the following steps and satisfactorily completing an estimate of the situation, the squad leader issues his squad defensive order.

(1) **Begin Planning** - The Squad Leader receives the defensive order from the Platoon Leader and issues a Warning Order.

(2) **Arrange for Reconnaissance and Planning** - The Squad Leader must ask himself, "What information am I lacking in order to achieve success?" The Squad Leader must then determine the most effective means of available reconnaissance in order to confirm or deny any assumptions made about his location, orientation, or current tactical activity.

(3) **Make Reconnaissance** - The Squad Leader now acts to answer his questions and validate any assumptions based on current situation and time available.

(4) **Complete the Plan** - The Squad Leader must now take the information gained during the reconnaissance and validate his initial plan made during ***Begin the Planning***.

(4) **Issue the Order** - The Squad Leader verbally communicates the analysis and scheme of maneuver using proper order-issuing techniques.

(5) **Supervise Activities** - The Squad Leader ensures compliance with the details of his plan until the mission is accomplished.

b. **Receiving a Defense Order (Continued)**. The Squad Leader's Squad Defense Order will contain the following information (in five-paragraph order format);

- Information about the enemy
- The mission of the squad
- Fighting Positions, Sectors of Fire & Principle Direction of Fire
- Any additional Assignments of Weapons
- Ground organization, priority of work & squad security
- Supply details, ammunition resupply & corpsman location
- Prearranged signals (pyrotechnics, audible signals)
- The location of the Squad Leader and Platoon Commander

c. **Preparation for Defense** - After issuing the squad defensive order, the squad leader positions his fire teams to cover the assigned sector of fire. The squad leader's responsibilities during the preparation of fighting include;

- Verifying each man's ability to cover the sector of fire
- Assigning each automatic rifleman a principle direction of fire
- Coordinating with any available crew served weapons
- Supervising the preparation of fighting holes
- Supervising the clearing of fields
- Assigning sentinels or observation post as necessary
- Coordinating all security measures with adjacent squads
- Inspecting fighting position camouflage & overhead cover
- Supervise preparation of supplemental positions

- Establishing a system of signals & fire control

d. **Giving a Fire Command** - An **ADDRAC** is a fire command that gives an accurate description of the enemy as well as giving commands to the rest of the unit members. **An ADDRAC contains the following six elements:**

- **Alert.** Alert all members of the unit to be ready to receive further instructions.
- **Direction.** Orient the unit to the location of the enemy.
- **Description.** Give the unit a brief and accurate description of the target.
- **Range.** Give the unit information needed to adjust point of aim.
- **(target) Assignment.** Tell the unit who is to fire on which target.
- **(fire) Control.** Give the unit the command to commence firing. Return fire and gain fire superiority.

e. **Enemy Preparatory Bombardment.** The enemy will normally precede his attack with fire from any or all of the following weapons: artillery, naval gunfire, mortars, machine guns, tanks and aircraft. During this incoming enemy fire, the squad will take cover in its fighting holes, maintaining surveillance to the front, flanks, and rear to determine if the enemy is advancing closely behind their supporting fires.

f. **Opening Fire And Fire Control.** The squad withholds its fire on approaching enemy troops until they come within effective small arms range of the squad's fighting position. Squad members open fire on the approaching enemy on command of the squad leader, or when the enemy reaches a predetermined line, normally the forward limit of the fire team sector of fire.

(1) When the squad opens fire, rifles are fired at the sustained rate. When the enemy enters the range of the M203, the fire team leader delivers grenade launcher fire at the sustained rate. Automatic riflemen normally fire at the sustained rate. The squad leader determines the appropriate rate of fire for the situation.

(2) Automatic riflemen's priority of fire goes to enemy automatic weapons, rocket launchers, and other crew-served



weapons. Once the squad opens fire, direct control passes to the fire team leaders. The fire team leaders, in accordance with the squad leader's previous plan, designate new targets, change rates of fire when necessary, and give the order to cease-fire when the attack is defeated.

(3) The goal of the squad is to defeat the enemy attack as far forward of the squad fighting position as possible. If the enemy is not stopped and he continues to close on the squad fighting position, the automatic riflemen will continue to increase their rate of fire as the enemy comes closer.

g. **Final Protective Fires.** If the enemy's attack is not broken and he begins his assault, final protective fires are called. Final Protective Fires (FPF) are the final attempt to stop the enemy attack before he reaches the platoon's battle position. When final protective fires are called for, all squad members fire in their assigned sectors.

(1) M16A4/M4 service rifles and M203 grenade launcher's continue to fire at the sustained rate; the automatic riflemen will increase their volume of fire to the rapid rate, if they have not yet reached this rate prior to the calling for final protective fires.

(2) Riflemen engage enemy personnel within the fire team sector; fire team leaders fire the M203 at the largest concentration of enemy personnel within the fire team sector. The largest concentrations are along the PDF's of the automatic rifles if the PDF's were properly positioned.

h. **Enemy Reaches The Fighting Squad's Position.** Enemy infantry reaching the squad's fighting position are driven out by fire, grenades, the bayonet, and hand-to-hand combat. The success of the defense depends upon each rifle squad defending in place. A stubborn defense by front line squads breaks up enemy attack formations and makes him vulnerable to counterattack by reserve units. The squad does not withdraw except when specifically directed by higher authority.

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## 8. **CHARACTERISTICS OF FIGHTING POSITIONS.**

Fighting Holes are dug by Marines at their fighting positions as a means of protection for the individual Marine. Fighting Holes provide excellent protection against small arms fire, shell

fragments, airplane strafing or bombings, the effects of nuclear detonations, and the crushing actions of tanks. The type of fighting hole used is based upon squad strength, fields of fire, size of sector of fire, and morale. There are different types for different purposes. Before you begin constructing your fighting position ensure that you know your sector of fire and make sure security is in place to prevent a surprise attack.

a. **Skirmishers Trench**. The simplest type of dug-in emplacement is the SKIRMISHER'S TRENCH, also known as a hasty firing position. This shallow pit type of emplacement provides a temporary, open, prone firing position for the individual rifleman. In a skirmisher's trench, a man presents a low silhouette to the enemy and is afforded some protection from small-arms fire. The Skirmisher's Trench will also be the beginning of a two man fighting position.

b. **One Man Fighting Holes**. Are as small as practical to allow minimal exposure to the enemy. A One Man Fighting Hole is dug wide enough to accommodate the Marine's shoulders while sitting on the fire step. The hole must be long enough to permit the use of an entrenching tool. In addition, this fighting hole is at least four feet deep to the fire step, allowing the Marine to comfortably aim and fire his weapon.

c. **Two Man Fighting Holes**. The two-man fighting hole consists essentially of two adjacent one-man fighting holes. Since it is longer than the one-man type, the two-man fighting hole offers less protection from tank crossing, bombing and shell fragments. The length of the position is approximately six feet, or about the length of two M16 rifles. The width is about two feet, or the width of two Kevlar helmets. It should be dug at least four feet deep to the firing step, but no more than armpit length of the tallest Marine. Two Man Fighting Hole advantages are;

- Allows continuous observation.
- Mutual assistance & reassurance.
- Occupant ammunition redistribution.

d. **Common Characteristics of All Fighting Positions**. All Fighting Positions share the following common characteristics;

(1) **Limiting Stakes**. Two stakes are placed near the position of the weapon; their purpose is to indicate the lateral limits during restricted visibility. The size of the stakes

should be sturdy enough to stop the weapon during firing, about 18 inches long. The stakes should be kept as low as possible. The placement of the stakes is in the parapet of the fighting position, the weapon should rest against the stake at the forward portion of the hand guards when the weapon is in your shoulder and you are in your firing position.

(2) **Parapet**. Build a parapet around the hole to protect yourself from direct-fired weapons. The parapet is three feet thick and no more than six inches high. Leave eight inches of space from the hole for the elbow rest.

(3) **Elbow Rest**. The elbow rest is at least eight inches wide all the way around the hole. Elbow holes are dug within the sector of fire. This will increase your accuracy by having reference points.

(4) **Firing Step**. The bottom of the hole towards the front of the position becomes the firing step. It is used for a step to allow you to fire over your parapet. The dimensions will vary from hole to hole, depending on the size of the Marine(s) in it.

(5) **Water Sump**. A water sump is dug in the back of the fighting hole to collect water and provide space for the Marine's feet while seated on the fire step. It is 18 inches deep and is sloped downward at an angle of 30 degrees toward the fire step.

(6) **Grenade Sump**. A circular grenade sump is dug into the center, front. The grenade sump is cone-shaped, with the opening measuring as wide as the spade of the entrenching tool, narrowing to about five inches in diameter at the end; it is sloped downward at an angle of 30 degrees; and it is as deep as the Marine can make it.

(7) **Aiming Stakes**. The stake creates a pivot point for the weapon at the small of the stock. The weapon pivots upon the point created by the stake. This ensures the arc of fire created by the weapon is the assigned sector of fire. The aiming stake is referred to as the Yoke stake, and is placed near the edge of the hole in the elbow rest. When the rifle is put into the aiming stake the forward part of the hand guards should rest against both left and right limiting stakes when the muzzle of the weapon is moved across your assigned sector of fire. The "Y" shape in the stake is where the small of the stock of the weapon rests.

e. **Constructing Obstacles.** The squad may be ordered to construct obstacles such as barbed wire, log & brush barriers, ditches, and hasty protective minefields in order to slow the enemy's advance.

**REFERENCES:**

Combat Skills of the Soldier, FM 21-75  
Marine Rifle Company/Platoon, FMFM 6-4  
Marine Rifle Platoon, MCWP 3-11.6  
Marine Rifle Squad, MCRP 3-10A.3