

## CHAPTER 11

### FINDING A LOST TRACK

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#### 65. Last Definite Sign

As explained earlier, the track following drill has been evolved not only to assist the visual tracker when following a track, but to prevent him from walking into an ambush or a booby-trap. It is also designed to prevent him from losing the track. Step two of the track following drill emphasizes that the visual tracker must remember his last definite sign, and that when in doubt he should have a definite mark not more than 3 to 5 meters away where he can re-establish the track. Because of the many different deception tactics which can be used to lose a tracker, a visual tracker should always be conscious of the fact that losing a track can be a matter of only taking one or two steps in the wrong direction. He knows that human nature can lead him astray by letting himself "think" he is following a track that is not there.

#### 66. The Initial Cast

A visual tracker always remembers his individual signs. He never moves farther than the last definite sign without another definite sign in front of him. If what appears to be a definite sign turns out to be false or incorrect upon closer inspection, the visual tracker must stop and go through the track following drill again. If no definite sign can be found, he must return to the last definite sign and start again.

#### 67. The Drill

Carry out the track following drill from this location. If no track is found, return to the last definite sign and carry out the track following drill again. If the track still cannot be found, the initial cast must be made.

#### 68. The Initial Cast Drill

Move back along the track from the last definite sign for 10 to 15 meters. The tracker and his coverman will move off alone, walking in a small circle 20 to 30 meters in diameter around the

point of departure. The visual tracker's aim here is to cut across the enemy's track. Whether the visual tracker moves off to the left or the right is optional. He will be influenced by the general direction of the enemy, and his own idea of which way the enemy may have gone.

a. If the tracker comes across a track he must make sure that it is the enemy's track that he has found. He will check the track for age and number of people, to establish the track as the one he is following. He then checks backward to see if the track connects with the known track and then checks forward to see if the track he has found is an enemy deception. He then completes the circle in case of an enemy split. It is possible that the visual tracker and his coverman will be in sight of the patrol leader. While the tracker is moving, the coverman travels a little apart and to the rear of the visual tracker. He must be alert at all times, facing the direction of possible danger, listening intently, and alert for any sign of the enemy's presence.

b. Before the visual tracker and his coverman move off on the initial cast the patrol leader moves forward and positions himself at the starting point of the cast. He remains in this position and awaits the return of the visual tracker and the coverman. He must make sure that all the members of the patrol know the direction the cast started and the direction from which the visual tracker and the coverman will return. During this period the members of the patrol will move off track and take up all-round ambush positions. Silence is of the utmost importance during this period, as the visual tracker and the coverman are extremely vulnerable at this point. The patrol is warned to hold their fire until positive identification is made. (It has happened that visual trackers and covermen have been fired upon by their own patrol.) When the visual tracker and coverman return they give all information to the patrol leader as to the status of the track. The patrol then moves off

with the visual tracker and coverman in the lead. The visual tracker then insures that the track connects with the track found. The time it will take for the visual tracker to carry out the initial cast may vary from 15 to 60 minutes, depending on the suspected nearness of the enemy, terrain, and difficulty of tracking conditions.

### 69. The Extended Case

On the return of the visual tracker from the initial cast, if no track has been located, the patrol leader may order an extended cast. If available, a secondary visual tracker and coverman will be called forward. The visual tracker and coverman will remove packs and equipment, which will be handed to patrol members for safe keeping. They will carry weapons, ammunition, and water.

a. Start the drill by moving back 50 to 60 meters from the last definite sign. One visual tracker and coverman will circle outward and forward from the left of the track, and one visual tracker and coverman will circle outward and forward from the right of the track. The visual trackers will now be moving in a semi-circle from the last definite sign. The visual trackers will meet approximately 50 meters out in front of the last sign. If a visual tracker comes across the track, he will confirm it and then continue checking the ground until he meets with the other visual tracker. During this period the members of the patrol will have removed their packs and be in an all-round defense position. As in the initial cast the patrol leader will be at the last definite sign. The time taken for the visual trackers to carry out this drill may be from 1 to 2 hours.

b. A quick reaction section will be on standby to move out immediately if firing is heard, indicating that a visual tracker and his coverman are in contact with the enemy.

c. Once the track has been found and the visual trackers have returned, the follow up will continue as before. If the track has not been found the patrol leader may order a box search.

### 70. The Box Search

If both the initial cast and extended cast fail to locate the enemy track, the box search becomes necessary. It will be seen that the visual trackers have covered the ground on two occasions with circles of 20 to 30 and 50 to 60 meters in dia-

meter. These casts have been time consuming (up to 3 hr). By ordering a box search the patrol leader recognizes that they will have to stay in the area for at least another 4 hours. At this stage, and before starting a new search, both visual trackers and covermen will need a short rest. The patrol leader will order one third of his patrol to conduct the box search. The patrol leader must also consider the time of day before ordering the box search.

### 71. The Drill

Ideally, four 3- to 4-man patrols are formed, each patrol with a track recognizing ability. From the area of last definite sign, the patrol leader will decide on an azimuth and instruct the patrols to move out in opposite directions to a distance of approximately 500 meters, i.e., two patrols move north and two patrols move south. These patrols will split and begin their independent searches for tracks and sign of the enemy. All four patrols will be working to an azimuth and set distances.

a. Each 3- to 4-man patrol will cover one quadrant of a square 1,000 by 1,000 meters. To prevent the patrols from meeting each other head on, and to avoid the possibility of mistaken identity and shooting, a verification method can be employed in the box search.

b. Each patrol moves out on a cardinal azimuth to the required distance and completes its search of the required quadrant. The azimuths are important to insure that the patrols cross an outward path on which to return to the last sign. If only two patrols are available they will have to cover twice as much area and the search will take much longer.

c. An alternative to the box search is to use the "Fan Method." Composition and number of each individual patrol will depend on availability of personnel. This method tends to be more time consuming, although it will give a greater coverage of ground. This type search can take up to 7 hours. If no track turns up after this search the patrol leader may order the fan search to be conducted again with larger distances from 100 to 200 meters, or he may choose another method such as:

- (1) The base line method.
- (2) The stream line method.
- (3) The cross-grain search.
- (4) The likely area(s) probe.

## 72. Additional Search Methods

All searches so far have centered on the last definite sign. With the *base line method*, *stream line method*, and the *cross grain search*, larger areas are covered and the *tools* are increased in number. These searching patrols, now working closely restricted limits and boundaries, are searching for signs of the enemy's presence in the area. All track information will be reported and the patrol leader will decide where and when to continue the follow up if the enemy is sighted or his track found. Finally, the *likely area probe* can be mounted before the other three if the patrol leader feels that it will be more successful in locating enemy tracks. The following factors will be considered before the patrol leader orders this type of search:

a. The possible task and intentions of the enemy being followed.

b. Age of track and time of day when the enemy was at the place where the last definite sign is located.

c. By close study of the map, he will question the possibility of the enemy splitting up and moving to populated areas.

d. Weather conditions at the time the track was made and after the track was lost (i.e., has it rained heavily and continuously since the enemy was at last known position?).

e. Having due consideration of the above factors, the patrol leader may now direct his 3- to 4-man patrols to move forward and check for sign at the following locations:

- (1) River banks.
- (2) Areas of track junctions.
- (3) Areas of steep gradients.
- (4) Areas of likely campsites.

(5) Any other area(s) where the patrol leader feels that the enemy may have gone, or where there is a good chance of picking up sign.

**PART 2**  
**TRACKER DOG AND TEAM TRAINING**

**CHAPTER 12**  
**TRACKER DOG TRAINING**

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**Section I. GENERAL**

**73. Mission of the Combat Tracker Team—  
Employment of Tracker Dog**

The team's mission is to establish contact with

the enemy by following scent tracks over terrain that does not hold visual signs (fig 14). (The dog handler and dog are considered a "team" within the "combat tracker team.")



*Figure 14. A five-man combat tracker team.*

#### 74. Dog's Capabilities

The ability of a tracker dog team to complete a track successfully is dependent primarily upon the distribution, quantity, and life of the scent being followed. This, in turn, is influenced by the climate, terrain, and age of the track concerned. Normally, a well-trained tracker dog can be expected to track the quarry until he is caught or until such time as all scent dissipates or is hopelessly mingled with other odors. Given suitable tracking conditions, it is reasonable to expect a tracker dog team to follow the natural wanderings of single or multiple quarries for at least 5,000 meters over rugged and varied terrain, on a scent track that is at least 12 hours old. While tracking, the dog is also capable of alerting its handler to the presence of tripwires and ambushes.

#### 75. Dog's Limitations

Despite their proven effectiveness, tracker dog teams can fail to complete their mission due to a multitude of tangible and intangible reasons. The most common causes, however, stem from a combination of poor terrain, adverse climatic conditions, and failure to employ the dog team promptly. Other causative factors include—

- a. Lack of followup training.
- b. Poor physical conditioning.
- c. Faulty handler motivation.
- d. Inability to verify the track.
- e. The requirement to track extensively in built-up areas or along hard surfaced roads.

#### 76. Scope of the Training Program

Tracker dogs and dog handlers are trained in preparation for integration into a combat tracker team. Such training includes in-depth instruction on canine behavior as it relates to tracker dogs, animal care and grooming, first aid, the prevention of disease in dogs, kennel management, and those safety requirements that are unique to dog training activities. Before specialized training commences all teams are required to become proficient in basic and advanced obedience exercises, and the animals are accustomed to working under gunfire. Specialized training consists of basic, intermediate, and advanced tracking as well as training designed to condition the animal in detecting boobytraps and ambushes.

### Section II. HANDLER QUALIFICATIONS

#### 77. Essential Traits

Successful care and training of dogs depends, to a great extent, on the personal characteristics of the handler. Experience has shown that the following traits are essential:

a. *Friendly Attitude Toward Dogs.* Any individual selected to train and handle dogs must have a genuine fondness for and interest in them. If this quality cannot be readily identified in prospective handlers, they should be considered unacceptable.

b. *Intelligence.* It has been demonstrated that individuals with less than average intelligence cannot be taught to care for and train dogs successfully.

c. *Patience and Perseverance.* The handler cannot force desired behavior upon dogs, nor can he expect dogs to learn as rapidly as human beings. He must be patient and he must persevere until each exercise is brought to a successful conclusion.

d. *Mental and Physical Coordination.* A good handler must be able to convey his wishes to the dog by body movement and gestures as well as voice. This requires a definite amount of mental and physical coordination.

e. *Physical Endurance.* Not only must the handler be able to show good coordination, he must be able to maintain his efforts as long as necessary. The handler must be able to "outlast" his dog during each training period. This includes being able to swim, since overseas operations include waterborne patrols.

f. *Resourcefulness.* Although training procedures are carefully set forth, it is inevitable that situations will arise calling for action not covered by published guidance. A handler must be able to meet these situations successfully.

g. *Dependability.* The welfare of the dog is entirely in the hands of the handler. Dogs cannot disclose how they are being treated nor can they make reports. Their physical well-being depends primarily on the willingness of the handler to

do such manual labor as is necessary for kennel management, feeding, and dog cleanliness. Failure in these responsibilities means failure of the training program.

### 78. Determining Qualifications

There are no purely objective methods of determining how well a prospective handler qualifies in the desirable traits. Despite this fact, prospective handlers cannot be selected haphazardly. Interviews provide a satisfactory basis for selection if carefully conducted by a responsible

and duly qualified officer. Each candidate should be examined before he is permitted to undergo any training with military dogs. To insure the effectiveness of this procedure, each candidate should undergo a second interview after 1 week of training. At this time the candidate should be able to give a reasonably clear and intelligent account of the instruction he has received, and his attitude toward military dog training should be carefully evaluated. If the candidate is rated unsatisfactory upon completion of this interview, he should receive no further training and should be transferred to another organization.

## Section III. DOG SELECTION CRITERIA

### 79. General

The Labrador Retriever is the breed best suited for military tracking requirements (fig 15). A willing worker that is generally insensitive to

gunfire and other explosive devices, it manifests excellent tracking ability, while its coat and physical structure facilitate ready adaptation to extreme variations in climate and terrain.



Figure 15. Type tracker dog, the Labrador Retriever.

Although the Labrador Retriever is not the only breed of dog capable of performing well as a combat tracker, it has been found that a more competent tracker dog can be produced from this breed than any other that is available.

#### 80. Temperament

Tracker dogs must have a bold, confident temperament that permits them to adjust to changing situations. Sudden movements, or noise, to include gunfire, should not cause them to lose their composure. Although they must be sufficiently aggressive to perform the task required of them, they should be composed and controllable when required to work in close proximity to people and other animals. They should be energetic but not excitable, willing but not fawning, and inquisitive without being distractable. The general impression should be one of energy, vigor, steadfastness, and willingness to work for an intangible reward.

#### 81. Physique

In order to withstand the rigors of extended field exercises tracker dogs must be healthy, sturdy, and agile. Lithe, wiry animals are preferable since heavily-built dogs often do not have the stamina or agility necessary to traverse rug-

ged terrain under adverse climatic conditions. Ability to perform is the primary criterion, however, and heavy-boned, large dogs should not be eliminated for this reason alone. Generally speaking, any dog of good conformation according to the standards of the breed is acceptable as long as it can meet the established performance objectives for combat tracker dogs.

#### 82. Screening Procedures

The term "screening" refers to the procedure used to classify dogs for the type of military service for which they seem best qualified. This classification is based on observation of the physical and psychological traits manifested by the dogs from the time they are given the test on arrival at reception and training centers. Screening continues throughout the basic training period, and even after they have begun specialized training. It is imperative to continue observing the dogs throughout the training program because potentialities of some dogs and inherent weaknesses of others may come to light unexpectedly. The dogs are observed by a classification board consisting of the commanding officer and selected instructors. On the basis of physical and psychological traits manifested, the board may reject a dog at any time during training.

### Section IV. EQUIPMENT USED IN TRAINING

#### 83. General

The basic equipment in the training program consists of the following, and is issued for each dog (FM 20-20):

- a. A feeding and watering pan.
- b. A leather muzzle used when transporting a dog, when the veterinarian is treating or operating on a dog, or in an emergency.
- c. A 25-foot leash of cotton webbing used during obedience training and when a certain distance between the dog and handler is desired.
- d. A 5-foot leather leash used to control the dog during obedience training, and while performing nontracking duties.
- e. A leather leash holder that the handler wears on his belt to hold his dog equipment.
- f. A steel chain, choke-type collar used for obedience training and for controlling a dog when moving from one area to another.

g. A leather collar (1 1/4 inches wide, 27 inches long) is used as required, especially to tie nonworking tracker dogs.

h. A zinc-coated (72- or 106- inch long) kennel chain is used with the leather collar to tie dogs in the field.

i. A comb.

j. A grooming brush.

k. A harness of cotton webbing, used only with tracker dogs when they work a training problem or perform an operational track.

#### 84. Proper Use

The proper use of these items of equipment is of the utmost importance since it is by these means, combined with voice and gestures, that the handler communicates his wishes to the dog and controls and corrects it.

**85. Proper and Comfortable Fit**

If required, all muzzles, harness, and leather collars should have additional holes punched in them so the equipment can be properly and comfortably fitted to any size dog.

**86. Daily Checks and Maintenance**

All equipment should be checked daily for serviceability and maintenance is performed as needed. Clean leather with saddle soap, and when partially dry apply neat's-foot oil to keep it from drying out and cracking.

**Section V. PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS****87. General**

In order to train tracker dogs properly, an unusually high instructor-student ratio is required. Except for obedience exercises, all practical applicatory training concerning tracking must be conducted on an individual basis. This is due primarily to the length and age of the tracks run during training, and the nature of the terrain that the handler and instructor must traverse. For this reason, sufficient qualified personnel must be available to permit the assignment of one instructor and four tracklayers to each dog and handler undergoing training. To provide realism, insure troop safety, and achieve the requisite technical proficiency, this ratio should be followed as closely as possible.

**88. Dog Handler**

Each handler should meet the requirements discussed in section II of this chapter, and he is responsible for the daily care and grooming of his animal and the maintenance of its kennel area. Due to the requirement to establish and maintain a strong bond of affection between the dog and its handler, the concept of multiple handling is not acceptable with respect to tracker dogs. For this reason, each handler should be assigned only one dog, and he should retain that animal until they graduate as a team or until one of them is eliminated from the training program.

**89. Instructors**

Responsibility for conducting tracker dog training should rest with qualified military dog trainers. If possible, all should have previous experience in training dogs to track, to include familiarity with the Labrador Retriever breed of dog. When a shortage of qualified trainers exists, experienced tracker dog handlers may be assigned duties as instructors. This is not desirable, however, as few handlers have the depth of experience necessary to cope with many of the training and motivational problems that inevitably develop in training dogs to track.

**90. Tracklayers**

The availability of tracklayers is a key factor in the successful training of a tracker dog team. Without skilled and highly motivated personnel to lay track for the team to follow, student performance objectives cannot be met, and successful tracking under combat conditions cannot be achieved. Tracklayers are professional quarry that lay scent trails for the dog to follow. Personnel selected for this duty must be expert at this task and capable of following instructions explicitly. In addition to being highly motivated, tracklayers must also be proficient in land navigation, laying tripwires and boobytraps, and establishing and conducting ambushes.

**Section VI. TRAINING AREAS****91. General**

Terrain and climate are important considerations when selecting a site for conducting tracker dog training. Ideally, the terrain and climatic conditions should approximate those in which the team will operate under actual combat conditions. Since this is not always possible, each team should be permitted to acclimatize itself at its new duty station before it is assigned an operational tracking assignment. Humidity, the

mean temperature of the area, the composition of the soil, and the nature of the vegetation all have a direct bearing on the dog's ability to track.

**92. Terrain**

Extensive swamps or marshlands are not suitable for tracker dog training. The same is true of sandy areas where there is little or no ground cover. While tracker dog teams should be exposed

to the problems encountered when tracking in such locations, extended periods of training in these areas is not desirable. This is especially true during the early stages of training. Terrain such as that found in the northeastern part of the United States or Western Europe is particularly well suited to tracker dog training. Rugged country with extensive tracts of timberland, good ground cover, ample vegetation, some pastureland, and moderate rainfall is ideal. Also, if tracking under subfreezing conditions is anticipated, tracker dog teams should be exposed to some track following drills conducted in ice and snow.

### 93. Acreage Requirements

Extensive acreage is required if tracker dog teams are to receive diversified and comprehensive training. During the early stages of training, isolated areas are preferable since extraneous odors from humans and domestic animals must be minimized. As training progresses, however, areas should be selected in which those extraneous odors are habitually present as this conditions the dog to retain its scent picture while tracking under actual field conditions.

## Section VII. TRACKING CONDITIONS

### 95. General

A multitude of factors affect a tracker dog team's ability to follow a track successfully. Many relate to the terrain and climate involved. Others are procedural in nature: such as the effectiveness of notification procedures; the speed with which the tracker dog team arrives at the scene; and the ability to establish a valid starting point. Other variables such as the length of the track, its age and the number of distractions present must also be taken into consideration. In essence, tracking conditions are every bit as important as the technical proficiency of the dog and its handler.

### 96. Favorable Conditions

Rarely, if ever, will tracker dog teams have the opportunity to perform their duties under ideal circumstances. During training, especially during the initial stages, tracking conditions should be as favorable as possible so that the dog has every opportunity to complete the track successfully. This, in turn, permits the handler to study his dog's behavior and learn to read

Training areas should also be rotated frequently to permit the terrain to return to its natural state and allow old scent trails to dissipate. As a result, no single area should be overworked as both dogs and handlers will become too familiar with it and attempt to use past experience, rather than ground scent, to follow up the track. Anticipation by the dog, and a tendency by the handler to track visually, must be minimized; therefore, new and challenging tracking situations are essential.

### 94. Climate

Climatic conditions are an important factor in the success or failure of any tracking exercise. High winds or heavy rainfall will destroy ground scent quickly; so will intense heat. By the same token, arid climates are extremely difficult to track in since a combination of sparse ground cover, high temperatures, and low humidity cause scent trails to evaporate quickly. Because of this, tracker dog training should be conducted in a temperate climate with moderate to high humidity, where extreme variances in temperature and wind velocity will not have an adverse impact upon training.

his animal accurately. After a certain amount of proficiency has been attained, ideal conditions are not as essential, for both the dog and the man must learn to cope with real world situations and adjust to the tracking environment as completely as possible. During advanced training, difficulties should be purposely injected into tracking exercises. The handler should then be evaluated on his ability to overcome these difficulties and optimize the resources available in order to complete the track. The following conditions will have a positive effect on the dog's ability to track, and the extent to which they are present will largely determine the tracker team's effectiveness.

a. Cool, cloudy weather—limits evaporation of scent.

b. Good ground cover, thick vegetation, high undergrowth—restrict the dissemination of scent.

c. Night or early morning—evaporation of scent is less rapid.

d. Lack of surface wind—keeps the scent

close to the ground and permits the dog to track along the actual route followed by the quarry.

e. Rapidly moving quarry—leaves more body scent.

f. Unclean quarry—leaves a more distinctive scent trail.

g. Definite start point—a visual sign or an item of clothing left by the quarry.

h. Fresh spoor—the ability to commence tracking promptly following the departure of the quarry increases chances of success.

## 97. Unfavorable Conditions

a. The following factors will have an adverse effect upon the tracker dog team's ability to follow the quarry. Under certain circumstances, however, dogs will have to track under one or more of these unfavorable conditions. As a result, a tracker dog must be exposed to adverse tracking conditions during training. This teaches the handler to understand his dog's tracking behavior under such circumstances and compensate for it.

b. All dogs do not react in a uniform manner when required to track under adverse conditions. Therefore, some will be more effective than others when confronted with poor tracking conditions. Regardless of this, however, significant loss in technique proficiency can be expected when tracking conditions are less than satisfactory, such as:

(1) Hot sun—evaporation of scent is rapid.

(2) Strong wind—disperses scent and causes the dog to track downwind.

(3) Heavy rainfall—washes the scent away.

(4) Dry ground surface—does not retain scent.

(5) Manure and farmyards—masks the scent of the quarry or distracts the dog from its primary task.

(6) Populated areas—make scent discrimination extremely difficult.

## 98. Tracking Through Water

The requirement to track through water is one

of the most difficult tasks tracker dog team faces. Water is the classical enemy of the tracker dog, for it either stifles scent or carries it away with the current. Limited success may be achieved if the water is shallow or still, especially if vegetation protrudes from it. Running water is an entirely different matter, however, as it quickly dissipates any scent left by the quarry. If possible, the best technique is to identify the point where the quarry exited the water, and recast the dog from that point. Generally speaking, when confronted with a water barrier, visual signs left by the quarry are of more assistance than the dog's ability to discriminate his scent.

## 99. Tracking Through Ice and Snow

Tracking in subfreezing temperatures can be extremely difficult for tracker dogs. The temperature is not, in itself, the major consideration; instead, it is the location of the track. If the track is laid on top of the ice, snow, or frost, tracking conditions will be excellent, since the humidity will cause the scent to cling to the track. If ice or snow is allowed to form over the track and the top cover remains frozen, tracking is almost impossible as there will be little or no scent for the dog to follow. In situations of this nature, however, the track will remain intact at the same age it was when the freeze occurred. If a tracker dog is placed upon the track as thawing begins, it stands an excellent chance of completing the track successfully.

## 100. Tracking at Night

From a scent discrimination viewpoint tracking conditions are excellent at night since scent will generally cling to the ground and surrounding vegetation in a highly concentrated state. Although operational tracking at night is not desirable, it may be necessary under certain conditions. Therefore, tracker dog teams must be exposed to night tracking exercises. This is necessary in order to acquaint the dogs with altered conditions and teach the handler to read his dog under conditions of reduced visibility. Motivation and control are major difficulties, especially in rugged terrain where movement is difficult, and frequent halts are required. Many dogs lose motivation under these conditions. This, coupled with the fact that ambush is much more likely, makes night tracking in combat impractical.

## Section VIII. TRACK PICTURE

### 101. General

a. Dogs have a recognition capability that shapes their existence: the ability to discriminate various scents. Scent discrimination is the olfactory process by which the dog identifies a particular odor. This capability is extremely important, for it is through this process that the dog obtains food, senses danger, and finds a mate. For obvious reasons, this capability is extremely important to the dog, but man, too, has a vital interest in this unique phenomenon.

b. According to scientific studies, the dog's superior scenting ability is primarily attributable to three factors:

(1) A better means of getting air to the sensitive membranes of the nose.

(2) An olfactory area that is sensitive to a wider spectrum of scents than that of man.

(3) A brain that is extremely well equipped to register, interpret, and remember the information its nose brings it.

c. Another important consideration is the fact that, to a dog, the world is a vast panorama of scent; much like a rainbow is to humans. Since a dog lives in a myriad of odors it must have an ability to tell one from another. This is true even though the animal may never perceive an odor in an isolated state. It is highly possible that an odor a man might consider as a single unit is, in fact, a conglomeration of scents each of which is clearly discernible to a dog. It is from this theory that the term "scent picture" is derived. Since this term is applicable to many canine skills involving olfaction, the term "track picture" is more appropriate when referring to a dog's tracking ability.

### 102. Track Picture

For all practical purposes, the track picture is a combination of scents that permit the dog to identify and track the quarry. The track picture stems from ground scent derived from several sources:

a. Individual scent.

b. Reinforcing scents.

c. Scent derived from disturbances in the ecology.

From this it may be concluded that the dog does not identify and track the quarry based upon

a single chemical substance unique to that individual. Instead, the dog relies upon a complex pattern of substances that contribute to the complete track picture (fig 16).

### 103. Individual Scent

With respect to the track picture, individual scent left by the quarry is the most important consideration. Generally speaking, individual scent consists of body secretions that originate in the feet and work their way out through the shoes. Although each region of the body has a distinctive scent, it is the feet that are most important in relation to the individual scent. This is probably due to the large number of sweat glands that are present in the human feet. Human sweat contains a significant amount of butyric acid which, in turn, is easily identifiable by a trained tracker dog. Add to this scent relating to sex and race and a track picture of the quarry begins to emerge.

### 104. Reinforcing Scents

These scents are exactly what the term implies; they strengthen or reinforce the elements of individual scent discussed above. Elements reinforcing scents include the type material used to construct the footwear worn by the quarry, whether or not shoe polish was used, and the fabric used in the socks, trousers, and other articles of clothing. Other scents stem from occupational considerations. If the quarry is a farmer, butcher, baker, or service station attendant, his body and clothing will exude distinct odors associated with that trade. These are all important elements of the total track picture.

### 105. Ecological Scents

Earth scent also plays an important role in the overall track picture. For the tracker dog, the most important factor is scent derived from disturbances in the ecology such as crushed insects, bruised vegetables, and broken ground. These factors are easily discernible, and many experts feel that a trained dog could follow this type scent track alone, even without the presence of individual and reinforcing scents. Some of this scent will obviously adhere to the quarry's feet and assist the dog in tracking him from one type of terrain to another.

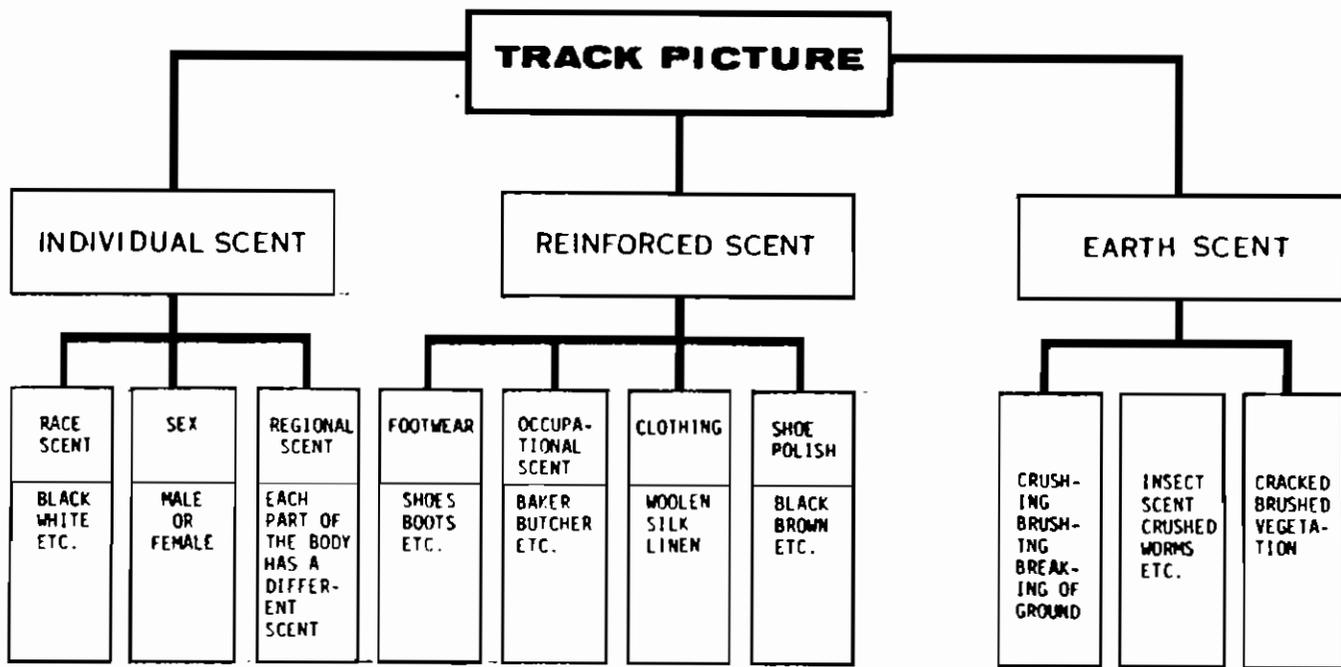


Figure 16. The track picture.

## Section IX. LAYING THE TRACK

### 106. General

a. A properly laid scent track for the dog to follow is absolutely essential for the conduct of effective training. This is especially important when turns in the track are introduced to the dog and when the animal is exposed to tripwires and ambushes. Although tracks will vary in length, age, and complexity, each track is, in itself, extremely important and should never be treated lightly by tracklayers.

b. Except during basic tracking exercises tracks should not follow an established pattern such as adhering to fence lines or known paths. Instead, each track should be laid in a manner that will preclude dogs from developing habits in relation to tracking.

### 107. Scuff Marks

a. During early training a strong, easily discernible scent trail is essential. This is accomplished best by leaving scuff marks along the track. Scuff marks are indentations in the ground cover made when the tracklayer deliberately drags his feet. Normally, scuff marks are approximately 18 inches long and 6 inches wide, and they serve two purposes: first, scuff marks reinforce the

scent picture for the dog; second, they inform the handler of the exact location of the track and allow him to evaluate his dog's progress accordingly.

b. The size of the scuff marks, and the frequency with which they are left along the track, will be determined by the instructor. Their use should be discontinued as soon as possible in order to develop the tracking potential of the dog and increase the handler's confidence in his dog's ability. To expedite training, however, scuff marks should always be left by the tracklayer when he enters and leaves streams, as well as prior to and after crossing roads and trails.

### 108. Scent Pads

Scent pads differ from scuff marks in that they are used only at the start of the track to identify the starting point and enable the dog to develop a scent picture of the quarry. Scent pads are generally a rectangular scuff mark in which the tracklayer stands for a few moments prior to laying the track. Items of clothing or equipment belonging to the quarry may also be used as scent pads. The decision as to when to discontinue the use of scent pads will be made by the in-

structor based upon the proficiency demonstrated by each tracker dog team in identifying the track.

### 109. Turns

a. A tracker dog must be able to follow the natural wanderings of the quarry over varied and rugged terrain. As a result, the ability to negotiate turns in the track is essential. Turns in the track should be introduced gradually, and initially each turn should be identified by a scuff mark (fig 17). Before running the track, the handler should be briefed on its configuration and informed about the general location of the turn and its direction. The angle of the turn should increase gradually until the dog can negotiate at least a 90-degree turn in the track.

b. As soon as possible the use of scuff marks and briefings should be discontinued, so that the team is able to negotiate multiple 90-degree turns without visual assistance. The location of turns in relation to the starting point should be varied. Also, if possible, turns in the track should not always coincide with obstacles or directions that an individual would normally take. During early training, turns should not be laid into the wind, especially if the turn is made close to the end of the track. This is necessary to keep the dog from wind-scenting the quarry and following the scent cone rather than the track. After proficiency develops, however, turns should be made into

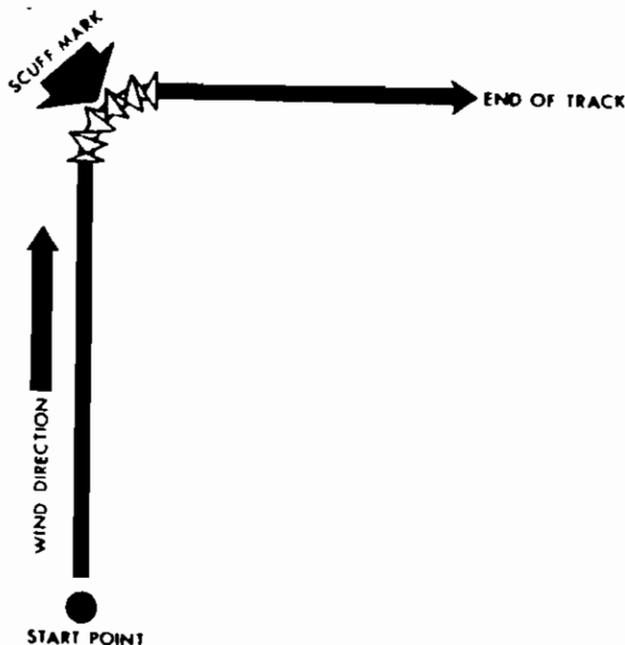


Figure 17. Scuff mark on turn.

the wind in order to test the dog's tracking ability.

### 110. Crosstracks

A crosstrack is a scent track that cuts across the main track and is laid by an individual other than the tracklayer. This is done to test the dog's ability to remain on the correct track. As this is an advanced tracking requirement, it should not be introduced to the dog too early in the training cycle. Initially, all crosstracks should be laid at right angles to the main track, at a point where the track is running straight. Failure to do this will confuse the dog and lead to complications later in training. It is also essential that the location of the crosstrack be clearly marked for the handler so that he will not mistakenly praise his dog if the animal selects the wrong scent track to follow. At the beginning of this stage of training, the crosstracks should not be laid less than 20 minutes before the real track is to be run. This is a significant consideration because the time element makes a difference in the strength of the scents between which the dog must discriminate.

### 111. Wind Direction

As with all aspects of dog training that involve nose work, wind direction is a critical consideration. This is especially true during basic tracking drills when the primary goal is to get the dog to use ground scent rather than wind-borne scent to follow the quarry. For this reason all tracks should be laid downwind from the start point (fig 18). This causes the dog to place

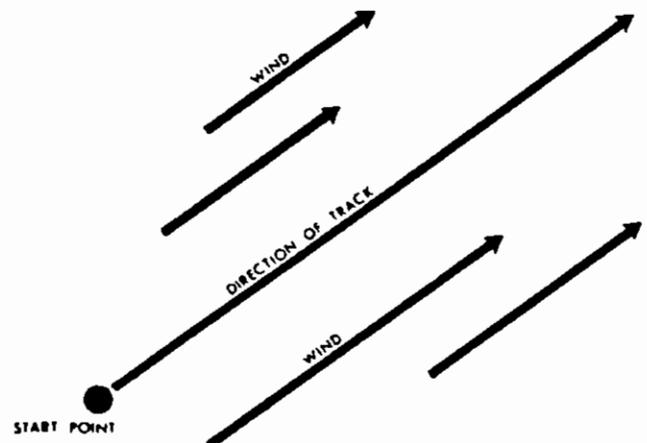


Figure 18. Wind and track direction.

its nose close to the ground in order to find and follow the quarry's scent. Although the animal must ultimately be able to track into the wind it should not be required to do so until the latter stages of training when the tracks are longer and the quarry is far ahead of the tracker dog.

### 112. Track Length

The length of each track should be determined by the instructor before the track laying element moves out. During basic tracking only short, straight tracks are utilized. Later, during more advanced stages of training, tracks will grow progressively longer and turns, tripwires, and ambushes will be employed against the tracker dog team. The length of the track alone is not the primary criterion for assessing a tracker dog's proficiency. It does, however, measure a dog's willingness to track the quarry, and this is almost as important as the dog's technical proficiency in discriminating scent. Track willingness, then,

is an important consideration, and a good tracker dog will track the quarry as long as any scent remains.

### 113. Age of the Track

Of all the factors that affect a dog's ability to follow a scent track, none is more significant than the age of the track itself. Although the weather and terrain can be adverse factors, they can frequently be overcome if the track is fresh. Even with good weather and terrain, however, a dog cannot follow a scent track that has aged too long. Normally, little success can be expected if a track is over 12 hours old at the time a tracker dog is placed on it. Generally speaking, therefore, the fresher (hotter) the track the better. Obviously, then, the most challenging task a tracker dog can face is the requirement to run a long track on a "cold" trail, for this tests its willingness and scent discrimination ability to the utmost.

## Section X. BASIC TRACKING

### 114. Team Performance Objective

By the end of the basic tracking phase the team must be able to track a stranger for at least 500 meters on a straight trail that is 30 minutes old.

### 115. General

a. Most dogs have the physical ability to discriminate scent well enough to track. Few, however, are willing to use this ability routinely. As a result, capability and aptitude are entirely different matters, and a major goal in basic tracking is to test the dog's aptitude for performing this arduous and demanding task.

b. A valid test of the dog's aptitude for tracking cannot be conducted until a strong dog and handler relationship is developed. This should have been accomplished by the time the team completes its obedience phase of training. If meaningful rapport was not established at that time, the basic compatibility of the team should be examined and corrective action initiated.

c. Basic tracking is the foundation upon which all subsequent specialized training rests. Because of this, most dogs that are ultimately eliminated from the program are eliminated during this phase of training. As a result, the goals to be

achieved during this stage of training may be summarized as follows:

- (1) To strengthen existing dog and handler relationships.
- (2) To condition the dog to associate tracking commands with the task required.
- (3) To condition the dog to associate the tracking harness with the requirement to find the quarry by ground scent rather than airborne scent.
- (4) To train the dog to identify a specific scent track and follow it to its terminus.
- (5) To train the dog to discriminate the specific scent of the quarry from among extraneous odors along the track.
- (6) To improve the dog's motivation to follow scent tracks.
- (7) To teach the handler to read and interpret his dog's behavior while tracking.

### 116. Commands Used While Tracking

Five basic commands are used in training a dog to track. Two of these commands will have been used previously during obedience training, but will attain new significance when employed during tracking drills. Essentially, these commands

are used to put the dog on track, keep it there, and control its speed.

*a. Seek, Seek.* This command is given in a high, excited tone of voice and is used only when a dog is attempting to establish the track. Normally used during initial casting, it may also be used to reestablish the track once the animal has lost it, or when the dog becomes confused.

*b. Seek On.* This command is given when the dog verifies the starting point and acknowledges the track. Uttered in a high, excited voice, it may also be used to encourage the dog while tracking.

*c. No, Leave It.* Used when the dog attempts to leave the track for an obvious reason not associated with tracking. An example would be to find shade, examine a strange object, or empty the bladder. This command is uttered in a harsh, disapproving voice and will always be followed by SEEK, SEEK, or SEEK ON whichever is appropriate.

*d. Easy.* This command is used to regulate the dog's speed on track, and keep it from losing the scent picture. It is particularly useful when the dog is struggling through heavy cover and the handler cannot maintain the pace. The command should be given in a soothing tone of voice, and repeated as required in order to regulate the dog's pace.

*e. Stay.* This command, given in an authoritative tone of voice, should cause the animal to cease all movement. It is extremely useful when moving through heavy cover or when a momentary halt is required and it is not desirable for the dog to wander off the track.

## 117. Changeover

*a.* Prior to the start of any tracking exercise the choke chain on the dog must be replaced by a tracking harness. The harness provides the dog with greater freedom of movement while casting for scent, facilitates placing the nose on or near the ground, and acts as a reinforcing stimulus in itself.

*b.* Changeover is accomplished by requiring the dog to sit in the general vicinity of the point where the track begins. The handler then straddles the dog and places the harness on the animal, making those adjustments necessary to insure proper fit. If the dog tries to break position during the changeover, it should be corrected immediately and brought under control before re-

suming the changeover. As soon as the harness is correctly adjusted, the 25-foot tracking leash should be snapped to the D-ring on the tracking harness, and the choke chain removed. Changeover is then complete (FM 20-20).

## 118. Establishing the Track

*a. General.* Nothing is more critical than the requirement to establish the actual track laid by the quarry. During early training this will be done by the instructor who will indicate the location of the scent pad to the dog handler. As training progresses, however, the dog handler will have to find the starting point for himself. This can be accomplished visually by the handler, or by the use of the dog's olfactory senses. In isolated areas this can be accomplished with ease; when working in habitated areas the problem becomes more complex. Despite the problems involved, however, the correct scent must be identified before meaningful tracking can begin.

*b. The Point Method.* This technique is used when the exact location of the track is known. Information of this type is generally gained by visual examination of the area. Footprints, visible breaks in the underbrush, scuff marks, or items of equipment may be available by which the handler may identify the scent of the quarry. Having identified the start of the track, the dog is brought to that point and changed over. If the starting point is identified from a scuff mark or item of equipment, the dog is allowed to smell the scent pad and the handler commands SEEK, SEEK, until the dog acknowledges the track. At that time SEEK ON is given and the animal is allowed to move down the track after the quarry.

*c. The Cast Method.* This procedure is used when the exact location of the track is unknown. It may also be employed to reestablish the track if the dog loses it while trailing the quarry. Casting differs from the point method in that the dog uses its olfactory sense to find the track, because the handler has been unable to do so from visual signs left by the quarry. Since the requirement to cast for scent is extremely demanding, the handler should have some idea where the track begins, otherwise the dog will tire quickly and lose interest. In order to cast the dog, the animal must be already changed over into the tracking harness. Casting in a prearranged pattern may then begin. This pattern is commonly known as the *box cast*. The dog must complete the entire box before the track can be definitely established by the handler. Casting be-

gins when the handler commands **SEEK, SEEK,** and begins moving his dog in a prearranged pattern. Best control is achieved if the handler will use only 5 or 6 feet of his tracking leash while casting (fig 19). He should begin by moving near a location where he suspects the track to be. He should then keep the dog between him and the suspected direction of travel. The dog should always be cast downwind along the direction of movement for about 15 meters before any change in direction is made. If the dog fails to locate the track on the initial cast, the handler should then increase the size of the box by 15 meters (fig 20). Once the dog has located the track and the handler is certain that it is the correct one, the command **SEEK ON** is given.

### 119. Acknowledging the Track

a. While casting his dog, the handler must have a thorough understanding of how his dog reacts upon discovering a track. This is especially important since most tracker dogs will respond to any human scent track they encounter while casting. When the point method is used this consideration is not as critical, since the dog will be placed on the correct scent track by its handler. When casting is employed, however, serious

problems can develop, for once the dog identifies a human scent track it will follow that track if it receives even slight encouragement from its handler. This is why the casting must be completed before active tracking commences. Therefore, if more than one scent track is identified, the handler must decide which track to follow with the dog. Although each dog will acknowledge the presence of a track in a slightly different manner, one or more of the following behavioral patterns usually indicates the presence of a human scent track:

(1) Moving off at an angle and returning across the line of sight before moving forward.

(2) Momentarily dropping its head to confirm the track and then moving forward at a quick pace.

(3) Moving off at a slight angle and ultimately paralleling the known track laid by the quarry.

b. Tracking downwind of the actual scent track usually occurs when there is a strong crosswind. As a result, the distance between the actual track and the position of the dog will depend solely upon the velocity of the wind. A handler should not be alarmed if his dog tracks 5 to 10



Figure 19. Casting.

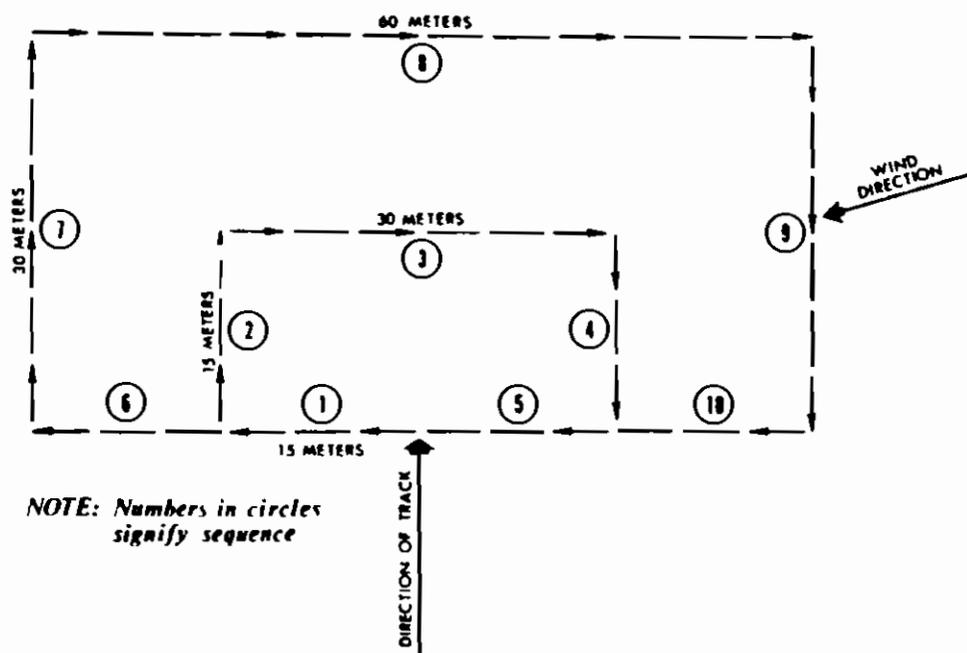


Figure 20. Box cast.

meters downwind of the actual track under such conditions. During early training, however, instructors should monitor wind velocity carefully to be certain the dog is actually tracking the quarry, rather than following another scent track.

### 120. Tracking Speed

a. When tracking human quarry, accuracy is far more important than speed. This is especially significant because of a human's ability to initiate well-planned evasive action. Also, over exceptionally long tracks in rugged terrain the handler cannot keep up with a dog that tracks at a run.

b. Dogs that track too fast tend to miss turns in the track, and frequently fail to alert on tripwires and ambushes. As a result, time lost in recasting the dog negates any advantage gained by a rapid tracking pace.

c. By the end of the basic tracking phase of training each dog should have developed a steady tracking pace that it will follow throughout the remainder of training. Ideally, this pace should be no faster than a brisk walk. Some dogs, however, will track even more slowly, and this should not be discouraged.

d. During early tracking exercises the dog should be encouraged to follow the track as enthusiastically as possible. Generally this will re-

sult in a rapid gait, and this should be permitted until the animal develops its "track willingness" to the point that it will track strangers reliably on short, hot tracks. At that time determined efforts should be made to slow the tracking pace as much as possible without causing the animal to lose interest in the tracking requirement.

e. Tracking speed may be regulated by repeated use of the command EASY and by exerting gentle but steady tension on the tracking leash. In some cases it may be necessary to utilize the choke chain in conjunction with the tracking harness in order to slow the dog's speed on the track.

### 121. Training Procedures

a. *General.* Before basic tracking exercises are begun, it is essential that a strong dog and handler relationship exists. This insures that the dog will actively search for its handler when the two are separated. Several methods may be employed to teach the dog to follow a scent track left by its handler and they are discussed in order of their merit. Once one of these techniques has proven successful, there is no need to employ another method. It must be remembered that the initial goal is to train the dog to track its handler, and the requirement to track strangers should not be introduced until the dog tracks its handler reliably, with enthusiasm.

*b. Seek-Find Technique.* Most dogs respond quite readily to this method and it should be employed initially with all dogs. When using this technique the handler should move his dog to the exact point where the track is to begin. If possible this should be in an open area with ankle high grass that is free of dense vegetation.

(1) The handler should relinquish control of his dog to an instructor and move in a straight line 40 or 50 meters downwind of the dog. While moving he should call the dog and encourage the dog to come to him. At the end of the track the handler should turn and face the dog without any attempt at concealment.

(2) While waiting, the instructor should excite the dog by saying, "Where is he, boy (girl)", and "Watch him, boy (girl)." After waiting for approximately 2 minutes the instructor should effect changeover (para 117) and encourage the dog to move down the track to the handler. Initially the 5-foot leash should be used for better control, as training progresses, however, the 25-foot tracking leash should be introduced to permit more freedom of movement.

(3) Often it will be necessary to place the dog in the down position at the scent pad in

order to get its nose closer to the ground and to help develop the track picture for the animal (fig 21). Also, from the very first track, all tracking commands should be utilized.

(4) When the dog arrives at the handler's location, he should praise the dog enthusiastically. Upon completion of the track, but subsequent to praising, the dog should be changed back into the choke chain. This is important because it informs the dog that the tracking requirement is over.

(5) As training progresses, the handler should continue to lay short, hot tracks, but he should conceal himself at the end of the track. This will increase the dog's anxiety, test its trail willingness, and encourage the animal to rely upon ground scent alone to find its handler.

*c. Seek-Chase Technique.* This method is essentially the same as the procedure discussed above except that the dog is allowed to pursue its handler at the completion of the track. This should not be confused with agitation, for it is not. Instead, it is merely a playful reward for the animal that is used to stimulate its motivation to track. If the dog will not follow the track completely to its handler, the handler may initiate



Figure 21. Dog at scent pad.

the chase by running from the dog and hiding in dense cover. After the dog overtakes its handler, it should receive lavish praise and be changed back into its choke chain.

*d. Seek-Feed Technique.* This method is used only as a last resort after the first two techniques have failed. As the track is laid the handler drops small quantities of food along the track at intervals of 3 to 5 meters. This causes the dog to place its nose near the ground, provides a motivational inducement, and reinforces the track picture. When the dog reaches its handler it should receive additional food and a great deal of praise. As with the other techniques, the dog should be changed back into its choke collar immediately. Food inducement should be removed gradually so the animal will ultimately track for praise alone. If this cannot be accomplished, the dog should be eliminated from the training program. While this technique will work on some dogs, experience indicates that animals requiring this form of inducement rarely develop into truly competent trackers.

## 122. Tracking Strangers

*a.* A major goal that must be achieved during basic tracking is that of motivating the dog to track strangers. This requirement should be introduced after the dog has developed proficiency in tracking his handler for 200 meters on a straight track that is 30 minutes old. Many dogs will totally reject the requirement to track strangers; therefore, this stage of training is critical.

*b.* Initially, all tracks involving strangers should be laid by more than one tracklayer. This increases the strength of the scent trail and facilitates maintenance of the scent picture by the dog. Until the dog develops the requisite proficiency and motivation, all scent trails should be short and hot, with scuff marks every 15 meters along the track. In addition to reinforcing the scent picture, scuff marks assist the instructor in determining whether or not the animal is on the correct track.

*c.* As the dog becomes more competent, the length and age of the track may be increased gradually. Throughout this stage of training it is essential that the dog be allowed to identify the quarry. Therefore, the tracklayers, as well as the handler, should praise the dog at the end of each track.

*d.* Under no circumstances should tracklayers

be allowed to startle the dog or make it apprehensive. Instead, each track should be a highly pleasing experience for the animal. This practice reinforces the dog's interest in tracking and makes the transition to longer, more difficult tracks much easier.

## 123. Increasing Age and Distance

As with other facets of dog training, it is essential that the animal achieve success as frequently as possible. This is particularly important with tracker training. Given favorable terrain and weather the two most important considerations are the length of the track and its age. Therefore, the two should never be increased simultaneously. For example, if the dog has demonstrated competence in 100-meter tracks that are 15 minutes old, the next track may be made more difficult by either making it 150 meters long or 20 minutes old, but not both.

## 124. The Over-Train Theory

In order to stimulate motivation, and develop optimum technical proficiency, minimum team performance objectives should be exceeded throughout the training program. For this reason training exercises should be conducted on tracks that are at least 10 percent longer than required. Known as the over-train theory, this practice increases the dog's interest in tracking by making it more challenging. The length and age of the track should be varied on a daily basis and all tracks should not necessarily be progressively longer and more difficult. Short, hot tracks should be integrated with long, difficult ones in order to develop flexibility in the animal to the greatest extent possible. This keeps tracking exercises exciting and challenging for the dog—an attitude that must be maintained if consistent performance is to be achieved.

## 125. Reading the Dog on Track

Total uniformity of behavior while tracking cannot be expected since each dog has its own individual temperament. Therefore, each handler must be able to read his animal's behavior quickly and accurately. He must know at all times whether or not his dog is tracking and be able to take corrective action if required. The position of the head, the manner in which the tail is carried, and a number of other factors unique to each animal become extremely important with respect to tracking behavior. With practice and intelligent observation, the handler can learn to

read his dog's behavior proficiently. This knowledge will be invaluable when, in a later stage of training, the dog is required to follow a strange scent track on a track that is unfamiliar to the handler. Failure in practical tracking stems more

frequently from handler error than it does from the dog's inability to follow a specific scent track. This shortcoming can be minimized if each handler thoroughly understands his dog's tracking behavior and interprets it correctly.

## Section XI. INTERMEDIATE TRACKING

### 126. Team Performance Objective

To complete the intermediate tracking phase of training, tracker dogs must be capable of following a 6-hour old track for 1,500 meters over rugged and varied terrain. In conjunction with such tracks, they must also successfully negotiate at least one 90-degree turn, detect one booby-trap device, and provide early warning of an ambush.

### 127. General

a. Basic tracking exercises laid the foundation for more realistic and demanding training problems. The basic techniques discussed in preceding portions of this manual still apply in advanced exercises and will not be repeated in this section or in subsequent sections pertaining to advanced tracking exercises.

b. Before entering this phase of training the dog must be proficient in following scent track laid by strangers and demonstrate a high degree of track willingness. The handler, on the other hand, must be able to handle his dog properly while tracking and read its tracking behavior accurately.

c. During intermediate tracking both the dog and handler are required to perform under stress, and their proficiency is assessed continually. To accomplish this, instructors function primarily as lane graders whose main job is to evaluate student performance and insure troop safety. Detailed guidance is provided students only when new training requirements are introduced. In essence, then, the handler must establish the track, control his animal's speed, and interpret its behavior without assistance from an instructor.

d. In order to provide realism and prepare students for operational tracking in combat, all dog handlers will wear full field equipment and carry individual weapons. Tracklayers will require maps, compasses, smoke grenades, blank ammunition, individual weapons, and boobytrap simulators.

### 128. Turns in the Track

a. Continuous training on scent track that run in a straight line, or track that always follow the path of least resistance, fail to develop the full potential of the dog. This practice certainly will not prepare a tracker dog team for actual field service. For this reason turns in the track must be introduced into training exercises as soon as the dog is proficient in tracking strangers and the handler has become skilled in reading his animal's behavior.

b. The first few tracks involving turns should run straight for about 50 meters before a gradual bend to the right or left is made. After the bend is laid the tracklayer should continue on a straight course for a short distance before terminating the track (fig 22). As with all other

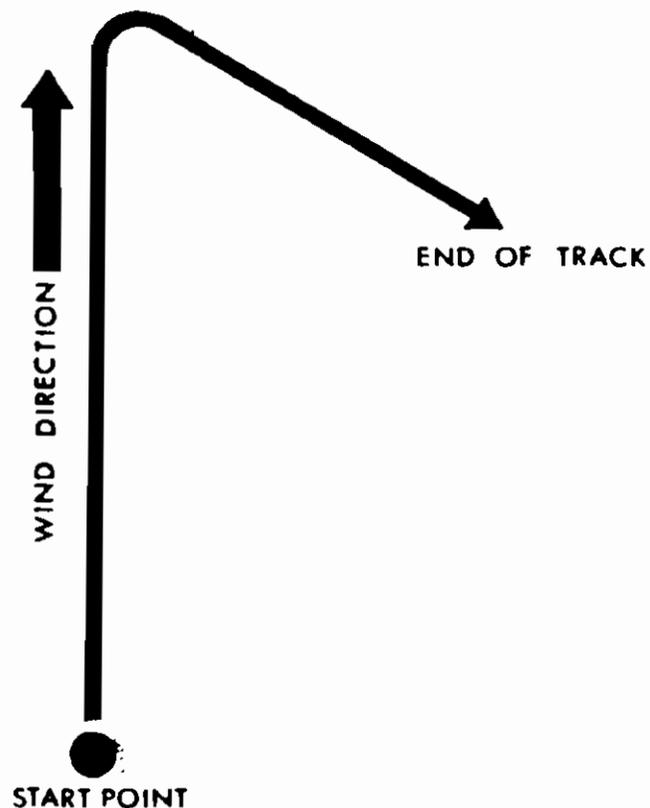


Figure 22. Turn in track.

variations in training, turns should be introduced gradually. While turns should be made progressively more acute until they take a circular shape, instructors must insure that the dog has mastered one type of turn before another is attempted. In order to verify technical proficiency, five types of turns should be employed at random once basic competence is developed (fig 23).

c. General guidance relating to turns was discussed in paragraph 109, and should be followed when laying tracks. Handler requirements are more demanding, however, and must be discussed in more detail.

d. The speed at which a dog tracks is a major factor and determines, to a large extent, the ease with which the animal will be trained to negotiate turns in the scent track. Dogs that track at a rapid pace tend to overrun turns in the scent track and require frequent recasting. Slower moving animals, on the other hand, adapt readily to turns in the track and have to be recast much less frequently. Because of this fact, it is highly desirable that all dogs be steadied to a reasonable pace before turns in the track are introduced.

e. At first the handler must know where the turn in the track is located. This enables him to observe his dog's behavior and assist it in negotiating the turn, if necessary. The handler should

not cue his dog by anticipating the turn and regulate his animal's tracking speed accordingly. Instead, he should permit his dog to follow its normal tracking pace until it reaches or, as often happens, overruns the scuff mark denoting the turn. If the dog negotiates the turn, the animal should be praised and the command **SEEK ON** repeated.

f. When the dog fails to recognize a turn in the track, the handler should slow the tracking pace and observe his animal closely. If the dog becomes confused and starts to search for scent of the quarry, the handler should take no corrective action immediately. It is extremely likely that the dog will cast itself and reacknowledge the correct trail. When this occurs the dog should be praised and told to **SEEK ON**.

g. On the other hand, if the dog fails to re-discover the track within a reasonable length of time, the handler should take the initiative and recast his dog. In this case, however, recasting is designed more to enable the dog to negotiate the turn than it is to find the quarry's scent track. This is obvious since the handler knows where the track is and has already identified the location and direction of the turn. As a result, he should cast in a manner that moves the dog back up wind and across a straight leg in the track (fig 24). Once the animal is back on the track

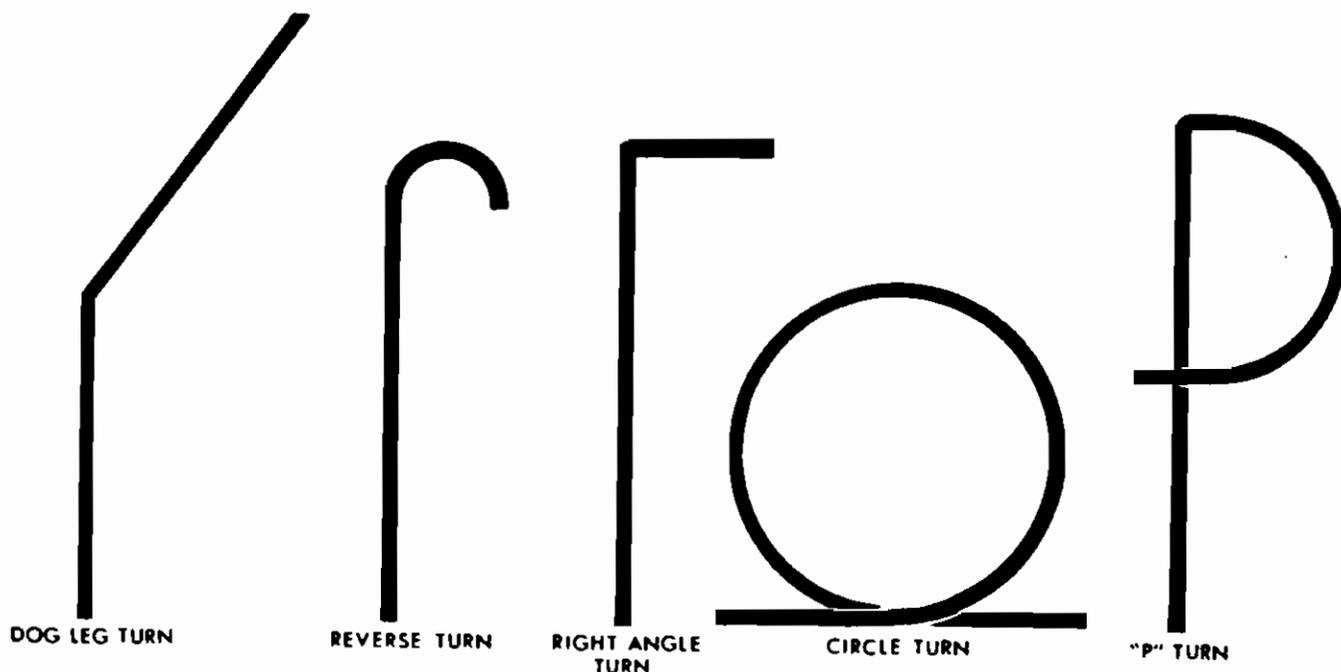


Figure 23. Types of turns.

the dog handler should decrease tracking speed as the animal approaches the scuff mark denoting the turn. When the dog places its nose in the scuff and changes its direction of movement accordingly, it should be praised lavishly and commanded to **SEEK ON**.

a. In cases where both of the above mentioned techniques fail, more positive guidance by the handler will be required. Under these circumstances the handler should follow close behind the dog. It may even be necessary to return to the 5-foot leash during this stage of training. As the dog overruns the turn the handler should immediately command **NO, SEEK, SEEK**, and physically show the scuff mark to the dog and assist it in negotiating the turn. Having accomplished

this, the dog should receive praise and be told to **SEEK ON**.

i. A handler must be able to tell when his dog is confused, distracted, or not tracking; turns in the track are excellent means for accomplishing this. Since the handler will know initially where turns are located, it will provide him with ample opportunity to observe his animal's behavior when it loses the track. The ability to recognize this behavior is essential when the tracker dog and handler must negotiate turns in the track that are not discernible by visual means. For this reason, handlers should overcome the tendency to guide their dogs around turns. Instead, they should study their dog's behavior when it misses a turn, and catalog this information for future

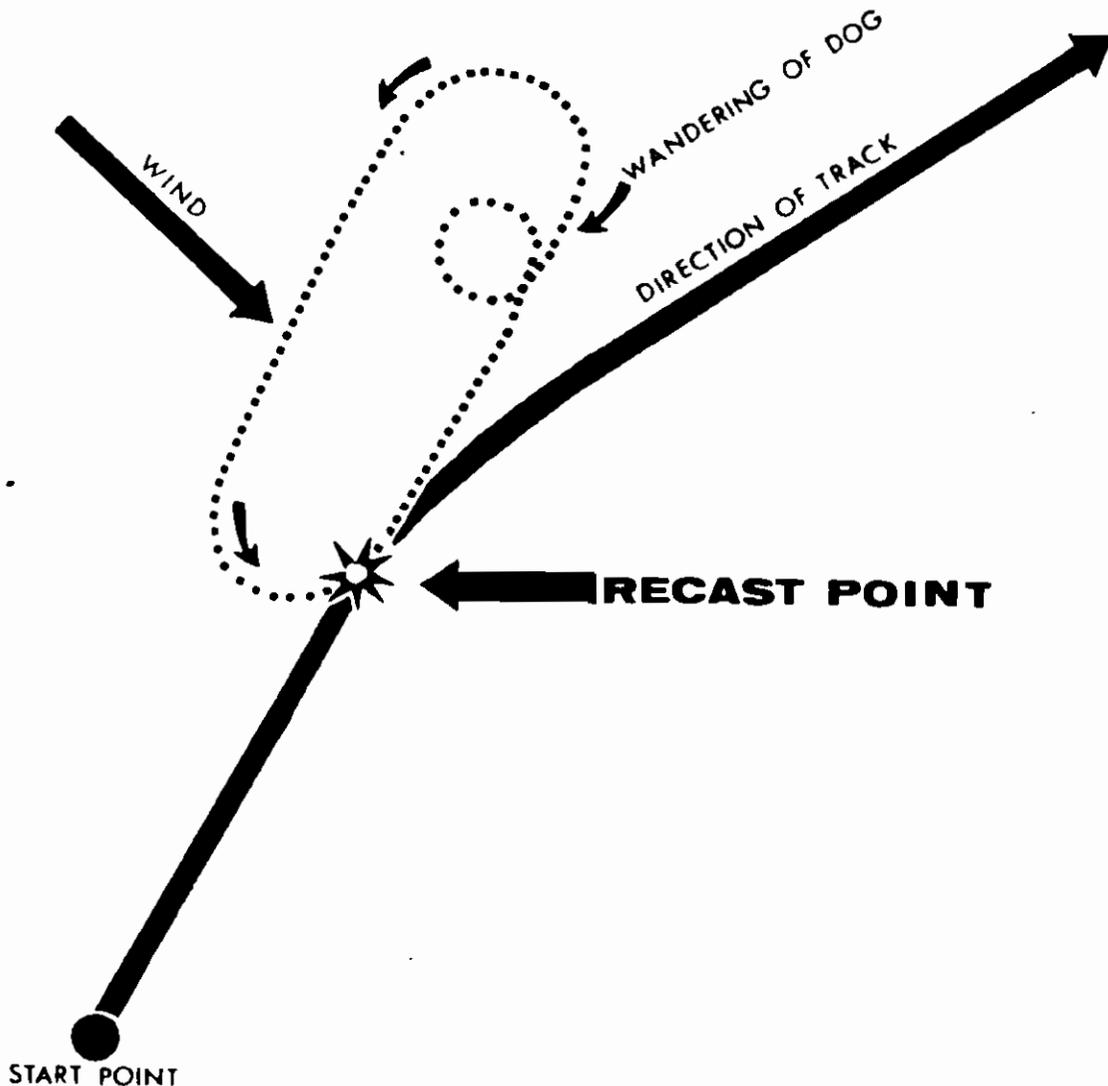


Figure 24. Recasting the dog.

use. Then, when assistance is clearly required, they should initiate remedial action by recasting the dog in a manner that will insure successful completion of the turn.

### 129. Crosstracks

a. Tracker dogs must be able to follow a specific scent track to the exclusion of all others. This is a particularly difficult requirement, especially when tracking through populated areas or locations where numerous game tracks will tend to distract the dog. The use of crosstracks provides a means by which a dog's dedication to a specific scent track may be tested. By the same token, crosstracks are an excellent means of training dogs to ignore extraneous odors that interdict the main track. Before encountering crosstracks, however, the dog must be capable of following scent tracks that are 40 to 50 minutes old.

b. In their purest form, crosstracks are scent tracks laid by someone other than the quarry that cross the main track. In actual practice, however, game tracks and farmyards may be used for the same purpose. In fact, they should be employed periodically to insure that the dog will not leave human scent and follow wild game or domestic animals.

c. As with turns, crosstracks must be introduced gradually, with the crosstrack clearly marked and the handler briefed as to its approximate location. Later in the training cycle, however, dogs should be able to follow the primary scent track and ignore all crosstracks encountered along the way, without the handler having any knowledge concerning the location of the crosstracks.

d. Initially, all crosstracks should be laid in the manner discussed in paragraph 110. Later on, however, crosstracks may be laid at any point along the track, to include on turns. The time element involved may also vary from 5 minutes prior to the dog's arrival, to laying the primary track over old scent tracks that run across the main track.

e. When approaching the crosstrack the handler must be careful not to alter his behavior in any way. He should merely observe his dog's reactions as it encounters the divergent scent track. Some dogs will totally ignore the crosstrack, while others will explore it for a few feet then ignore it and return to the main track. A

few dogs, on the other hand, will follow the crosstrack enthusiastically. Because varied behavior patterns can be expected the handler must note his dog's reactions carefully.

f. Hopefully the dog will disregard the first crosstrack it encounters and will continue to do so throughout training. If the dog investigates the crosstrack, however, the handler should not become unduly alarmed since the dog may be discriminating between the two scents. In this case the handler should halt, say nothing to his dog and merely observe its actions. If the dog decides to ignore the crosstrack and returns to the main scent, it should be praised and told to SEEK ON.

g. When the dog follows the crosstrack it must be corrected in a firm but gentle manner. Harsh corrections must be avoided, as the dog is still trying to please the handler despite its error. A gentle *NO! Leave It!* accompanied by firm but steady pressure on the leash should discourage the animal. The handler should then guide his dog away from the crosstrack and recast it with the command SEEK, SEEK. When the dog resumes tracking the main scent track it should receive praise and the order to SEEK ON.

h. The need for firm but gentle guidance re-emphasizes the importance of knowing where the crosstrack is located. If, through ignorance, the handler encourages his dog to follow the crosstrack irreparable damage could result. Therefore, the employment of crosstracks must be carefully controlled and adjusted as training progresses according to the needs of each dog. After the dog can consistently follow a mile-long scent track, and totally ignore the presence of three crosstracks, it may be considered proficient in this aspect of training.

### 130. Ambushes

a. By virtue of his position within the combat tracker team, the dog handler is extremely vulnerable to hostile fire while tracking. Because of this, it is essential for the dog to become proficient in detecting ambushes. While this is an additional rather than a primary skill it is one that is extremely valuable under field conditions. This requirement is introduced to the student team during intermediate tracking.

b. Obviously, gunshy dogs will not perform well during this stage of training. While some will develop proficiency in detecting ambushes,

few will maintain their willingness to track when repeatedly confronted with contact drills incidental to ambushes.

c. Initially, ambushes should be established at the end of each track. This can be accomplished by one tracklayer, although two or more personnel in the ambush party is more desirable. Regardless of the number of personnel involved, however, the site selected should be realistic and well concealed. As the dog and handler approach, the ambush party must give it every opportunity to alert. If the dog fails to alter its behavior in any perceptible manner, the quarry should fire a burst of 10 to 15 rounds of blank ammunition and detonate a boobytrap simulator or smoke grenade. At this time the tracker dog and handler should assume the prone position and the handler should return fire. Extreme care must be taken to insure that the dog is not injured or unnecessarily frightened during ambush drills.

d. The surprise associated with ambush drills conditions the dog to the fact that excessive concentrations of human scent often lead to unpleasant repercussions. Although scent is an important consideration, cues perceived by sight or sound should also be included into training exercises.

e. During early training the dog must be given every opportunity to alert on the presence of the quarry. Tracklayers can assist in this by laying their ambush upwind from the dog a short distance from a turn in the track (fig 25). If necessary, they may also make subtle noises that will cause the dog to alert. Ultimately, however, the dog must be capable of alerting from scent alone.

f. Until proficiency develops, both the dog handler and the instructor must know the approximate location of the ambush. This allows them to study the animal's behavior to determine whether or not the dog is alerting on the presence of the quarry. Initially, any behavior change, no matter how slight, should be acknowledged by lavish praise from the handler. The normal ambush drill should follow immediately. After several repetitions the dog will develop a clearly discernible method of alerting on the quarry. Most dogs will stop tracking and raise their nose in quest of airborne scent; others will refuse to advance, while some will return to their handler. Any type of alert is acceptable so long as it is consistent and the handler can read it.

g. After alerting behavior has been developed the dog must be taught to assume the down position immediately when the quarry opens fire.

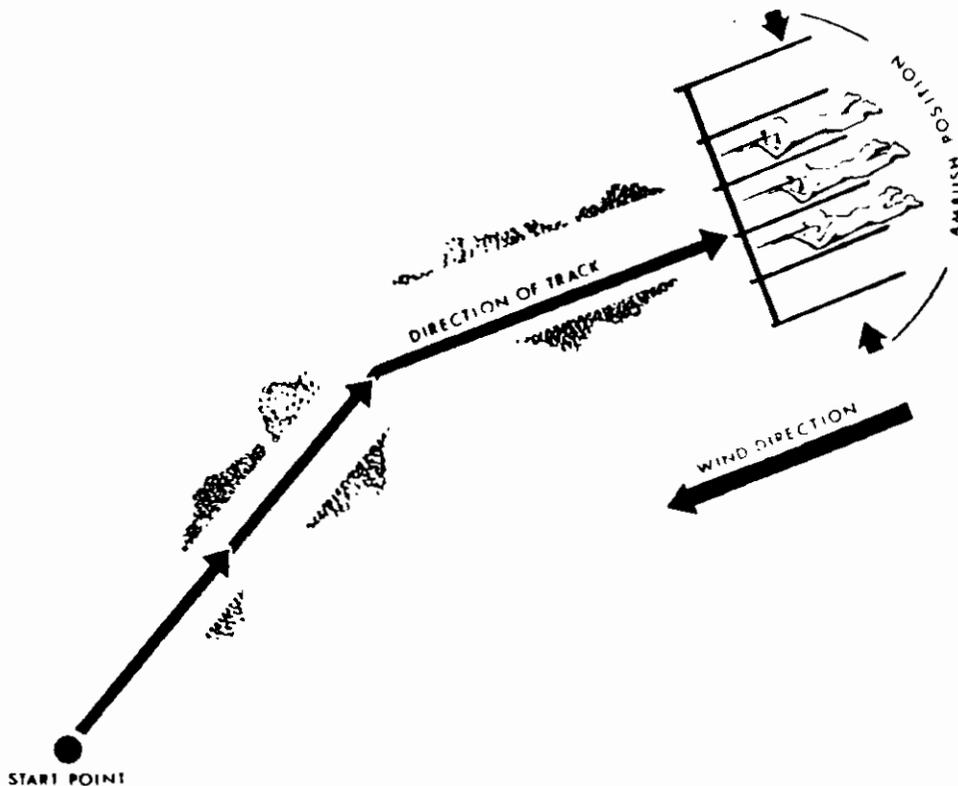


Figure 25. Ambush positions on the track.

This allows the handler to return fire promptly without having to worry about his dog's location or the extent to which it is exposed to hostile fire. Generally, this is easily accomplished by commanding DOWN as soon as the first round is fired by the quarry. Thus the dog is reinforced by the fact that the handler also assumes the prone position and opens fire with his weapon.

h. Ultimately these reactions must become automatic for both the dog and the handler. Because of this, briefings concerning the location of the ambush site should be discontinued as soon as possible. Also, the location of the ambush site in relation to the track should vary from day to day. This will prevent anticipation by either the dog or the handler and permit objective evaluation of the dog's alerting ability.

### 131. Tripwires and Boobytraps

a. The speed with which tracker dogs move makes them extremely vulnerable to tripwires left along the track by the quarry. As a result, extensive tripwire detection training is essential in order to prepare the tracker dog and handler for field service. As with ambush detection, the ability to alert its handler to the presence of tripwires is not a primary criterion for graduation. The primary criterion is, and should remain, the dog's ability to follow human scent tracks. As an additional skill, however, the ability to detect tripwires is extremely valuable and most dogs can be expected to develop considerable proficiency in this area.

b. At first, pyrotechnics should not be used in conjunction with tripwire detection training. Commonly referred to as deadwires, tripwires are used to impede the dog's progress along the track without exposing it to the trauma of an explosion. Communication wire is an excellent device for this purpose.

c. During early stages of training, the dog handler must know the exact location of each tripwire. This is essential if the dog handler is to prevent his dog from developing bad habits such as running into, stumbling over, or playing with tripwires. Since this type of training is extremely tedious, the dog must be afforded every opportunity to locate the tripwire without making physical contact with it. Because of this the person who lays the tripwire should handle the entire length of the wire before securing it in place. This leaves the maximum amount of scent possible for the dog to detect. Experience indi-

cates that trained dogs alert on tripwires for one or more of the following reasons:

(1) An increased concentration of human scent contained on the tripwire, the explosive device, or the terrain near the boobytrap.

(2) A visual observation of the tripwire and/or the explosive device.

(3) A high-pitched vibration caused when the wire is blown by the wind or surrounding vegetation brushes against the tripwire.

d. During the introductory stage of this training, short, hot tracks should be utilized. As proficiency develops, however, more realistic tracks will be required. When exposed to tripwires the dog should be in its tracking harness, and each exercise should involve tracking to some degree.

e. Having been briefed on the exact location of the tripwire, the handler should allow his dog to track until it makes physical contact with the wire. At that instant the dog should be corrected by a firm NO accompanied by a strong rearward jerk on the harness. The dog should then be placed in a sitting position directly in front of the tripwire while the instructor snaps the wire on the dog's nose and the handler gives the command NO and jerks to the rear on the harness. Although corrections should be stern, the wire must not be snapped against the dog's nose in such a manner as to cause injury or extreme discomfort. Having completed the correction, the handler should move his dog upwind around the tripwire. This exercise should be repeated until the dog refuses to advance beyond the tripwire after detecting it.

f. After the dog has developed proficiency in detecting deadwires, pyrotechnics should be introduced into tracking exercises. When errors occur, the resulting explosion will reinforce the dog's aversion to tripwires. This also adds realism to the training exercise, and vividly portrays to both the dog and handler the seriousness of their mistake.

g. Overexposure to pyrotechnics can lead to serious training problems. This is especially true since dogs that detonate an excessive number of explosive devices are not proficient in detecting tripwires and need remedial training. Protracted exposure to pyrotechnic devices will cause many dogs to become track-shy and either refuse to track or become preoccupied with finding tripwires. This can also occur from repeated ambush

drills in which excessive amounts of blank ammunition and explosive devices are utilized.

h. An acceptable control factor is to employ no more than one boobytrap simulator on 40 to 60 percent of the tracks run during intermediate and advanced tracking. On the remainder of the tracks, however, deadwires should be used to test

the dog's proficiency. Controls should also be imposed during ambush drills. Each time contact is made, the tracklayer should expend no more than two magazines of blank ammunition and one pyrotechnic device. When returning fire the dog handler should fire no more than 20 rounds of blank ammunition and no expenditure of pyrotechnics is necessary.

## Section XII. ADVANCED TRACKING

### 132. Team Performance Objective

To complete the advanced tracking phase of training, tracker dog teams must be able to follow a scent track left by a single quarry over varied and rugged terrain for a distance of at least 5,000 meters. The track must be at least 12 hours old at the time tracking commences, and the team must negotiate two right angle turns, discriminate the main track from two cross-tracks, and alert on a minimum of one ambush and one tripwire.

### 133. General

a. This stage of training is extremely demanding upon both the dog and the handler. All exercises are conducted under field conditions in an environment that closely approximates combat conditions. Also, instructor participation is minimal, with their primary concern being to evaluate student performance and insure troop safety.

b. The main burden of establishing and following the track rests with the tracker dog team. Verification of the starting point, initial casting, controlling tracking speed, recasting, and identifying and verifying alerts are all responsibilities of the handler. The animal, too, will receive daily evaluation by instructor personnel. Track willingness, technical proficiency in scent discrimination, the strength of alerts on tripwires and ambushes, distractability, and its general physical condition are all matters of concern to lane graders.

c. Advanced tracking exercises encompass all of the basic procedures discussed previously in this chapter except that they are performed under as realistic conditions as possible. In order to develop optimum efficiency following unknown tracks, tracking on hard surfaces and through populated areas should be emphasized. Training of this type can be accomplished with relative ease, however, if tracker dog teams have mastered the basic principles discussed earlier.

d. Consistently competent performance is the primary concern throughout this stage of training. Erratic performance cannot be tolerated, and should be cause for elimination despite the fact that the team has successfully completed the first two stages of specialized training. If either member of the team fails to cope with its environment, or loses proficiency when working under stress, the team should not be allowed to begin combat tracker team training or be deployed to a field unit.

### 134. Unknown Tracks

a. During advanced tracking the use of scuff marks are discontinued except when requested by an instructor. For the most part, dog handlers should be unaware of the starting point and have no idea where the track will terminate. Starting points are identified by casting for human scent in a particular area or identifying the scent track left by the quarry from an item of equipment or a clearly identifiable disturbance in the terrain. Obviously, unknown tracks of this type place both the dog and the handler under stress; therefore, the length, age, and complexity of such tracks must be increased gradually.

b. At first, unknown tracks should be relatively simple. The age should be slightly below that for which the dog is competent, and no crosstracks should be employed. The handler should be made aware of the general vicinity of the starting point, but should have no idea where the track will end.

c. As each track is mastered, the next should be made progressively more difficult. Training should be programed so that the team succeeds as frequently as possible, otherwise despondency will develop in both the dog and the handler. Instances will arise, however, in which the dog will fail to complete the track. In such cases, the handler should immediately run a short, hot track thereby causing the training session to end on a positive note.

d. Despite the importance of unknown tracks, the advanced stages of training should not be confined to that type track alone. On the contrary, known tracks should be run frequently in order to evaluate the dog's accuracy while tracking. Instructors should brief trackers carefully as to where to start, the direction of turns, proposed sites for ambushes and tripwires, and the terminal point. Frequent utilization of known tracks strengthens the handler's understanding of his dog's tracking behavior, and points out idiosyncrasies unique to each animal. This, in turn, permits objective evaluation of the dog's technical proficiency.

e. During advanced tracking, all tracks, both known and unknown, should be laid in a practical manner. They should run along trails adhere to fence lines, traverse populated areas, cross streams or follow any type route that a person might reasonably use. Only by making training realistic can the team be prepared for field service.

### 135. Tracking on Roads

a. Roads and other manmade surfaces are extremely difficult to track on since they do not retain scent to any significant degree. Poor scent retention is further aggravated by wind, rain, sunlight, and passage of time. Much can be done, however, to improve a dog's ability to track on roads or other hard surfaces.

b. Initially, straight tracks should be used that run along the shoulder of the road (fig 26). As

proficiency develops, tracks should start on the shoulder, then follow the surface of the road for a short distance before returning to the shoulder (fig 27). Training should be continued until the dog is capable of crossing and recrossing the entire road in pursuit of the scent track (fig 28). The age of the track used must be varied on a daily basis to compensate for climatic conditions, or other contingencies that would destroy the scent track prior to the dog's arrival. When tracking on or adjacent to hard surfaces, a great deal of initiative by the handler is required. If the dog loses scent when crossing a road, or becomes confused when it reaches the other side, the handler should recast his dog in a logical manner in order to successfully reestablish the track. Failure to do this promptly will cause the dog to lose interest, and ultimately lead to the unsuccessful conclusion of the track.

### 136. Tracking Through Populated Areas

a. Tracking through populated areas is the single most demanding task a tracker dog team can face. As a result, tracker dogs and their handlers must receive extensive exposure to this requirement during advanced tracking. This may be accomplished by using playgrounds, housing areas, parade fields, farmyards, or any other area in which there is a large concentration of human or animal scent.

b. People, traffic, loud noise, foreign odors, and domestic animals can all create an atmosphere of confusion for the tracker dog. Because of this, handlers must be extremely competent before they

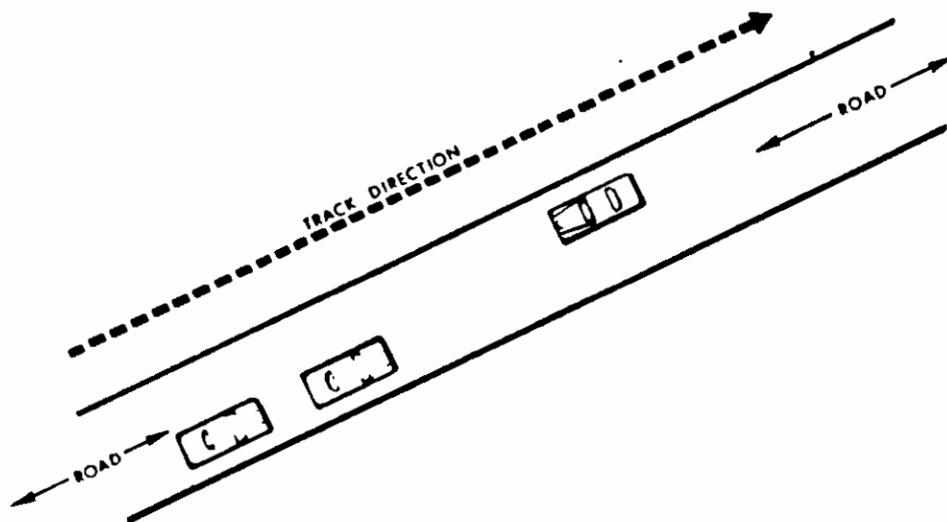


Figure 26. Tracks along shoulder of road.

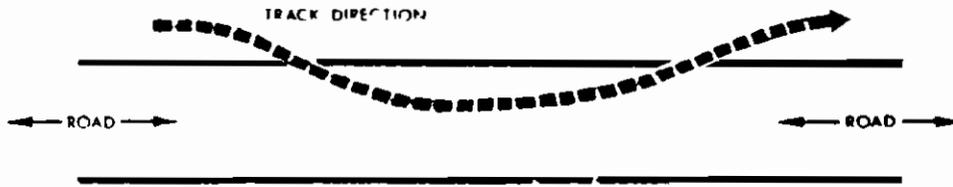


Figure 27. Tracks alternating on and off road.

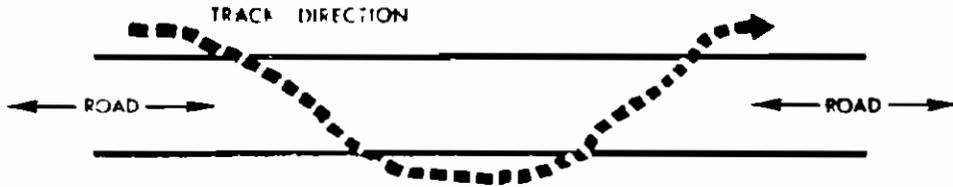


Figure 28. Tracks crossing and recrossing road.

are required, to run a track through populated areas. Obviously, training should commence with short, hot, known tracks on which maximum control is imposed.

c. Maintenance of a vivid scent picture is absolutely essential. To assist in this, three or four tracklayers should be used throughout early stages of this training. Also, the area selected should be only moderately populated so that the dog can achieve reasonable success as soon as possible. The handler should also be given a definite starting point for each track.

d. To provide realism, tracks should be diversified so that they begin in, traverse, or terminate in populated areas in no particular order of priority. By the time training is completed, dogs should be able to track a single quarry through a populated area on a track of reasonable age. Also, if given the scent of a particular individual the dog should be able to establish the correct scent track within a populated area and follow that specific track until the quarry is caught. The dog must also be able to follow a track from an isolated area into a populated area without losing the scent.

e. All animals will not perform in a uniform

manner and should not be expected to do so. The ability to follow an hour-old track through a populated area is reasonable under ideal circumstances. Some dogs will do much better than this; however, they will be the exception to the rule. As a result, the age of the track to be followed must be determined according to the needs of the individual animal.

f. A moderate to slow tracking speed is highly desirable as it allows the dog to discriminate carefully between the scent of the quarry and other extraneous odors in the immediate vicinity. Handlers should avoid recasting the dog too frequently. Instead, the animal should be allowed to work out the scent track, if possible. With suitable encouragement from the handler most dogs will accomplish the task with little difficulty.

g. After the dog has become proficient in running known tracks through a populated area, unknown tracks should be introduced. This should be accomplished slowly, with the length and age of the track corresponding to the needs of each team. Ultimately, tracking through populated areas should be integrated into normal tracking exercises, and teams should be able to encounter such areas with only a marginal reduction in efficiency.

## CHAPTER 13

### COMBAT TRACKER TEAMS

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#### 137. Introduction

a. One of the problems which face security forces during counterinsurgency operations is that of following the enemy after a contact has been made. Only by vigorously pursuing him to wherever he is located will it be possible for the security forces to dominate an area and reduce the activities of the enemy.

b. The combat tracker team evolved during World War II and was revitalized during the more recent United Kingdom Forces Operations in Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, and Borneo.

#### 138. Characteristics and Organization

a. *Requirements.* The main requirements of the team are that they should be—

(1) Highly trained in tracking, woods craft and skill at arms.

(2) Trained as a close-knit team.

(3) Lightly equipped.

(4) Highly mobile i.e., capable of moving by foot, air, road.

(5) Able to remain in the field for 5 to 6 days without resupply.

b. *Organization.* The combat tracker team is divided into three elements.

(1) The command.

(2) The tracking element.

(3) Protection element.

c. *Team Composition.* It consists of a five-man team plus one dog. The composition is as follows:

(1) Team leader.

(2) Visual tracker.

(3) Tracker dog handler with tracker dog.

(4) Radiotelephone operator.

(5) Coverman.

#### 139. Description of the Team

a. The team leader is usually a noncommissioned

officer and his task calls for initiative and practical knowledge.

b. The radiotelephone operator maintains communications for the team and can become a second coverman.

c. The visual tracker is a school-trained visual tracker with a high degree of skill in visual tracking.

d. The dog handler is a school-trained dog handler.

e. The coverman is a school-trained visual tracker who acts as security for the team.

#### 140. Responsibility of Team Members

a. *Team Leader.*

(1) Supervises and plans the training of his team.

(2) Insures that rally points are selected, and that they are easily recognizable and dependable.

(3) Sees that the team members are skilled in first aid.

(4) Relays all information to his support unit.

(5) If the track splits, decides which to follow.

(6) Is sure that his team is in a state of readiness when on standby.

(7) Maintains a high standard of navigation ability.

(8) Insure that antimalarial precautions are taken by team members.

(9) Decides if his team can handle enemy contact.

b. *Visual Tracker.*

(1) Makes sure that team leader gets all available information from the track.

(2) Is responsible for team protection when not actually tracking.

(3) Insures that team members practice tracking regularly.

*c. Coverman.*

(1) Sees that the team leader is given all information when contact is made.

(2) Protects the visual tracker and the dog handler.

(3) Is always alert for the enemy.

*d. Radiotelephone Operator.*

(1) Is responsible for the team's protection.

(2) Teaches all team members to operate radio.

(3) Requests help from the team leader if help is needed to set up radio.

(4) Normal signal duties.

*e. Dog Handler.*

(1) Is responsible for his own protection when not tracking.

(2) Consults the visual tracker when not certain his dog is on track.

(3) Paces the team for the team leader when in reserve.

*f. Weapons and Equipment.* The weapons and equipment carried by the team are in accordance with the individual unit and the team SOP.

**141. Capabilities of a Tracker Team**

*a.* They are a closely knit team used to working together and have a working knowledge of each others duties.

*b.* The team can carry sufficient food and water to operate for 5 to 6 days. Any increase in rations will add weight and slow down the followup. Providing the team can be resupplied, they can operate indefinitely. However, it is advisable to relieve tracker dogs every 48 hours where possible.

**142. Limitations of a Tracker Team**

*a.* It is unable to track at night in a tactical manner through thick jungle.

*b.* Visual trackers and dogs find it difficult to follow a track after a heavy rain.

*c.* To follow a track that is more than 24 hours old is difficult.

**143. The Tracker Dog**

*a. Advantage.*

(1) It is normally faster than a visual tracker.

(2) It can track over terrain that, for practical purposes, has no signs.

(3) It can track at night.

(4) It may indicate when it is nearing the enemy.

*b. Disadvantage.*

(1) When required to work a long track under difficult conditions, its tracking ability deteriorates.

(2) Under difficult conditions it may go off track to get water.

**144. The Visual Tracker**

*a. Advantages.*

(1) He is able to give a verbal account of information.

(2) He can assist the dog handler to find the track if the dog has lost it.

(3) Even when not tracking, his superior powers of observation are invaluable.

*b. Disadvantages.*

(1) He cannot track at night without a light.

(2) He is normally slower than the dog in the followup.

**145. The Scout Dog**

The scout dog is *not* a tracker dog. It is taught to indicate the presence of humans in an area through airborne scent. This type of dog, although not a part of the team, can be of assistance under certain conditions while following the track and especially if the team is used as a reconnaissance patrol.

**146. Tracker Team Ability**

Ideally, it would be best if every subunit was able to follow a track and followup on contact with the enemy. This is not often possible because of the degree of skill and the detailed and continuous training needed to produce a first rate combat tracker team. Therefore, what is needed is a small number of trained tracker teams that can be sent to those units that need them to follow the enemy from a point of contact, and lead the followup forces to the enemy.

**147. Requirements**

The tracker team should be able to fulfill the following requirements:

a. Arrive at the point of contact and lead the followup unit until contact with the enemy is made again.

b. Investigate an area that is believed to contain the enemy and follow tracks that are found.

c. Act as a source of intelligence for the commanding officer.

d. Train section commanders and lead scouts of the units in the art of observation and the principles of visual tracking.

#### 148. Requirements of the Team Leader

a. Supervise and plan the training of his team.

b. Control the three elements of the team on operations.

c. Decide when to use dog or visual tracker.

d. Pass back information to his headquarters.

#### 149. Tactical Employment

The tracker teams will normally be held centrally for reasons of economy, under the control of the commanding officer who will allocate them to specific missions as they arise. With two or more teams at headquarters, it is possible to have a team on immediate standby 24 hours a day. This team will be moved to the point of contact by the quickest means available. The sequence of events are along the following lines:

a. The standby team is called for operational duty.

b. A second team, if available, comes to 1-hour notice to move. It will then be required to—

(1) Take on a fresh mission if the enemy has split up.

(2) Take over for the team already committed, if necessary.

(3) Take on a fresh mission if one should arise.

c. The first team reaches the point of contact and establishes the direction in which the enemy has moved.

d. The first team starts tracking the enemy; it is supported, whenever possible, by an appropriate strength infantry unit.

e. The first team locates the enemy and reports it to the support unit and disengages.

f. The support unit destroys the enemy.

g. The tracker team with its dog handler and visual tracker is not designed to attack and destroy the enemy. This is a job for the infantry support unit. The sole job of the tracker team is to find the enemy. The best form of transportation in jungle areas is by helicopter. However, there are occasions when there is no available landing space close enough to be used. This problem is solved by the use of rappelling gear. With this equipment a man can be lowered through the trees to the beginning of a track, saving time and effort. A special harness is used for lowering the dog.

#### 150. Training

a. *General.* Normal training is carried out by the teams with a special emphasis on tracking and working with dogs.

b. *Visual Tracking Observation.*

(1) The principles of visual tracking are taught to all members of the team. Proficiency at visual tracking can only be maintained by frequent and closely supervised practice and training.

(2) The powers of observation are continually being tested during visual tracking exercises but observation tests should be held weekly in the form of a track with different kinds of enemy equipment hidden on or near the trail. This training is given to the team to help them obtain additional information about the enemy.

#### 151. Tracker Dog Training

This is carried out by the dog handler at least three times a week varying the length and age of each track. The whole team will follow the dog at least once a week.

#### 152. Marksmanship

All team members should practice marksmanship and quick fire shooting exercises at least twice a week or whenever possible.

#### 153. Physical Training

It is important that all team members keep physically fit. This is achieved by dog and visual tracking exercises and also by morning physical fitness exercises. The time that a team can spend on a mission is relative to their physical fitness.

**154. Helicopter**

The basic drills are rehearsed continually and descent by rappel is practiced as often as possible.

**155. Signal Training**

Every member of the team is instructed in the use of any radio sets used by the team. They all must be proficient in operating the sets and should practice to this end.

**156. Training, General**

If the enemy is to be hunted after his tracks have been found, tracker teams with trained trackers and dogs are essential, otherwise contact is unlikely to be gained. Furthermore, it is vital that no time be lost in reaching the point of contact so the track will be as fresh as possible. It is essential that friendly troops interfere with the enemy tracks as little as possible and mark the advance of the enemy, if possible. If the team is committed early, the combination of the visual tracker and dog (with a small support unit plus command element) can furnish the commanding officer with an important weapon in his search for the enemy. The team needs constant and regular training to improve its tracking and experience and thus increases its chances of success. The commanding officer must bear in mind that while the team can defend itself and may even take limited defensive action, it is not a hunter-killer group and is only designed to find the enemy, not fight him.

**157. Operational Employment of a Combat Tracker Team**

Sequence of events:

a. Standby team is alerted. Replaced by second team.

(1) Team commander briefed on—

- (a) Where to go.
- (b) Reason for callout.
- (c) Method of transportation.
- (d) Whom to contact on arrival.
- (e) Radio details.
- (f) Other friendly forces in area.
- (g) Details of support unit.

(2) Team leader briefs team.

(3) Team moves to contact location.

b. When teams arrive at contact location—

(1) Team leader is briefed by local commander.

(2) Radiotelephone operator establishes radio contact with support unit.

(3) Remainder take up all-round defense.

(4) Information secured on—

(a) Present grid reference.

(b) Details of enemy:

1. Time last seen.
2. Number, estimated.
3. Number seen.
4. Weapons carried.
5. Equipment.
6. Dress.

(c) Limits of movement of own troops.

(d) Weather at time of incident and before incident.

(e) Details of friendly, enemy troops in the area.

(f) Whether friendly forces in area have been warned that a tracker team is in the area.

(g) Strength and composition or support unit.

(h) Signal operating instructions (SOI) to be used.

(5) Visual tracker and covermen briefed.

(6) Visual tracker to go to limit of local movement and search for enemy sign. Make sure friendly forces are informed.

(7) Remainder of team is briefed.

**158. When Visual Tracker Returns With Information**

a. Visual tracker's information is compared with that obtained on arrival at contact point.

b. Additional briefing for team and support unit, if necessary, is given.

c. Team and support unit move off on track, led by the visual tracker.

d. Team leader replaces visual tracker with dog when he considers it appropriate.

**159. Order of March**

There are two orders of march for the tracker team. They are for either open country or close country.

a. Close Country.

(1) When dog leads:

- (a) Dog.
- (b) Dog handler.
- (c) Coverman.
- (d) Team leader or visual tracker (interchangeable).
- (e) Radiotelephone operator.

(2) When visual tracker leads:

- (a) Visual tracker.
- (b) Coverman.
- (c) Team leader.
- (d) Radiotelephone operator or dog handler and dog (interchangeable).

*b. Open Country.*

- (1) When dog leads (position on track):

\*DH  
 CM  
 VT                      TL  
 RTO/CM

- (2) Visual tracker leading (position on track):

VT  
 CM  
 TC                      RTO/CM  
 DH

**160. Resting/Radio Communication**

The team must keep the headquarters element informed of the situation.

- a. The team leader selects a tactically acceptable area and halts the team.
- b. Leading tracker (dog or visual) moves forward.
- c. Team in all-round defense position.
- d. Routine situation report—maximum interval, 3 hours.

- (1) Grid reference.
- (2) Time arrived.
- (3) Number of enemy being tracked.
- (4) Age of track.
- (5) General direction taken by enemy.
- (6) Planned time of departure.

**161. Night Stop**

a. In order to make up time on the enemy and maybe catch them when they have halted for the night, the team must track on until the last possible minute, that is, until it is too dark for the visual tracker to see signs. The time of day

\*Abbreviations:

DH	.....	Dog handler.
CM	.....	Coverman.
VT	.....	Visual tracker.
TL	.....	Team leader.
RTO	.....	Radiotelephone operator.

that this occurs will vary according to weather and the amount of cover overhead.

b. The team leader halts at selected areas and informs support unit.

c. Team tracks on to insure that the enemy is not in the area.

d. The limit of their forward movement is noted and they return to the security area. By this time it will be 20 to 30 minutes before dark.

e. All personnel in the support unit must be up in time to pack and move forward to the point where the team stopped and be ready to follow the team as they resume tracking in the morning. The time to start is as soon as the visual tracker has enough light to read signs.

**162. Meals**

a. While pursuing the enemy there will be no set time for meals. Meal breaks will be up to the team leader.

b. The halt for breakfast should not be made until it is obvious that it is too late in the day to contact the enemy in his overnight area.

**163. Action if the Track is Lost**

a. As soon as the tracker dog handler suspects that his dog is not on the track, he must stop and inform the team leader.

b. The team leader will then decide, according to circumstances, whether the dog handler should cast his dog, or a visual track is to be used.

c. If the visual tracker is to be used, the normal procedure is:

- (1) Personnel search (first step of the lost track drill).
- (2) Retrace, checking back along the track.
- (3) Extended personnel search, if the previous methods fail.
- (4) Box search or another area type search until track is reestablished.

**164. Team Locates the Enemy**

a. Either—

- (1) The dog alerts on the near presence of the enemy.
- (2) A coverman sees the enemy.
- (3) Very fresh sign is found (crumbling

footprints, burning cigarette butts, smell of food or fire).

b. Visual tracker, coverman, and team leader search forward.

c. Visual tracker and coverman remain; team leader returns to team.

d. Team leader and support unit commander make their plan by radio and dog handler moves back.

e. The enemy is attacked. (The team may be used as a blocking force or as a support group.)

f. If the rear of the enemy party is seen, and they do not know that the team is on their tail, it is usually best to shoot them immediately. If the teams halts to form a plan, the enemy may have moved to an unknown location.

### 165. After the Attack

a. Clear and definite enemy area.

b. Prepare a situation report.

c. Establish limit of movement of own troops.

d. Box search by visual tracker and coverman.

e. Make followup plan, after visual tracker and coverman have reported the results of their searches.

f. If all enemy personnel have not all been accounted for, tracking restarts.

### 166. Danger Area

A danger area is any area which requires increased or additional security precautions. The track is not to be abandoned for a danger area. The tracker team must remain on the track when reaching a danger area. Unlike ranger or long range reconnaissance patrol teams, tracker teams cannot always completely avoid potential danger areas. Keeping on track is their primary mission and all danger areas cannot be completely avoided.

### 167. Action at Danger Area

a. *Trails, Roads, and Streams.* When the visual tracker or dog handler determines that a trail, road, or stream is a danger area, he will pass back the silent signal that means obstacle or danger area ahead. Every member of the team will pass the same silent signal back. The rear security coverman and radio operator will pass

the same signal forward to the team leader to let him know that they got the signal and are aware of the obstacle or danger area. The visual tracker or dog handler will then pass back the silent signal that means team leader forward. This silent signal is also passed back to the rear security coverman and back up to the team leader. This is to let every member of the team know that the team leader will be moving forward with the visual tracker and the team will be at a halt until the team leader gives the order to move out. The visual tracker will explain to the team leader what type obstacle or danger area it is. The team leader will decide how he will cross the obstacle or danger area. When the team leader approaches the visual tracker, the coverman will take up a good tactical position either left or right of the visual tracker. When the team leader decides how and where he will cross the obstacle or danger area, he will take up a good tactical position and have his visual tracker and coverman to check left and right 50 to 75 meters for signs of the enemy and to see if the enemy moved up or down the trail, road, or stream, or if they crossed the trail, road, or stream. If the team leader sees that he needs more support before he moves his team out, he may call the supporting unit. Gunships or any supporting fire he has may be used to support the team. If the track goes across the trail, road, or stream and the team leader sees he has to cross, he will have one man cross at a time. The visual tracker and coverman will move close to the edge and stay under cover if possible. The visual tracker will check the other side of the trail, road, or stream for possible enemy position and preselect a good fighting position for himself to advance across the trail, road, or stream as a lead scout, not as a visual tracker. The coverman will take up a good fighting position and cover the visual tracker while he crosses. After the visual tracker is in position he will check the area again for a possible enemy position. After he has checked the area and determined that the area is clear, he will pass the silent signal that means OK back to the coverman. Remember, every silent signal that is given is passed to every member of the team and back to the team leader. After the visual tracker has passed back the OK signal, the team leader will take up a good fighting position where he can advance across the danger area and provide cover for the coverman while the coverman crosses the danger area. The radio operator will move up and take up a good fighting position close to the danger area.

The rear security will also move forward and take up another good fighting position. After everyone is in position the coverman will preselect a good fighting position across the danger area and move across the danger area. When he gets into his new position he will check the area for a possible enemy position. When he determines that the area is clear he will pass back the signal OK to the team leader. At this time the radiotelephone operator will move close to the edge of the danger area, keeping under cover, so he can cover the team leader while the team leader crosses the danger area. The rear security will also move close to the danger area. After everyone is in position the team leader will preselect a good fighting position across the danger area, and move across. After the team leader is in position he will check the area for possible enemy position. After he determines the area is clear, he will pass back the signal OK. The rear security will move close to the edge of the danger area. The rear security will face to the rear. After everyone is in position the radiotelephone operator preselects a good fighting position and moves across the danger area. Once the team leader is in position and checks the area for possible enemy he will turn around and face to the rear so he can provide security to the rear while the rear security crosses the danger area. At this time the radiotelephone operator will pass the OK signal back to the rear security. The rear security will preselect a good fighting position, and move across the danger area. Once he is in position he will turn and take up security to the rear. The radiotelephone operator will then turn and face to the front. The team leader will have his visual trackers and coverman confirm the track; the team leader, radiotelephone operator, and rear security will stay in position and apply security for the visual tracker and the coverman while they confirm the track. Once the visual tracker confirms the track he gives the OK or confirm signal. The team will move out on track. If the track goes up or down a trail or road the team will move along beside the trail, or road, and the visual tracker will check the trail or road every 50 to 75 meters to make sure the track is still on the road.

*b. Open Areas (Fields, Open Terrain).* When the visual tracker approaches an open area he will halt the team and pass back the obstacle or danger area silent signal. He will then pass back the signal for the team leader to move to his position. The coverman will move left or right

and take up a good tactical position. The team leader will decide when to move his team across the danger area, he may want more support to cover his team while they cross the danger area. When the team moves through an open area they will go into an open formation. They will still keep in visual contact with each member of the team. Every member in the team has to be able to see the signal that the team leader has selected to gain the team's attention.

*c. Logs.* When they approach a log the visual tracker will pass back the obstacle or danger area silent signal. This signal is passed back to every member of the team and then back to the team leader. The visual tracker will move to the log and stay. The coverman will take up a good position where he can cover the visual tracker. The visual tracker will move across the log and take up a good position and check the area for possible enemy presence. Once he determines the area is safe he will give the signal OK. The coverman will then move across the log. Once he is across he will move to the visual tracker's position and let the visual tracker know he is across. The team will move out on track. The visual tracker and will slow the pace so the remainder of the team can cross the log. The team leader, radiotelephone operator, and the rear security will cross the log the same way as the visual tracker and coverman. The radiotelephone operator will cover the team leader once the team leader has moved across the log and sets up a good fighting position; he will cover the radiotelephone operator while he crosses the log. Once the radiotelephone operator gets across the log he will let the team know he is across. The team leader will move out. The radiotelephone operator will turn and face to the rear and cover the rear of the team while the rear security moves across the log. Once the rear security gets across the log the radiotelephone operator will move out, and the team will move back to the normal pace.

*d. Path or Small Trails.* When the team approaches a path or small trail, the visual tracker will pass back the danger area silent signal. The visual tracker and the coverman will move to the edge of the path or small trail and check the area for possible enemy presence. When they determine the area is clear, they will move across. The visual tracker will slow down the pace for the remainder of the team to cross. The team leader will move to the edge of the path or small trail and check for possible enemy presence, once

he determines it is safe, he will cross. The radiotelephone operator will go through the same precautions as the team leader. Once the team has crossed the path or small trail they will move at a normal pace.

*e. Native Villages.* When approaching a native village the visual tracker or dog handler passes back the danger area silent signal. After the signal has been passed back to the team leader, the visual tracker will pass the silent signal for the team leader to move to his position, and he will signal the coverman to take up a good fighting position; he will cover the front. It is left up to the team leader to make the decision how the team will approach this danger area.

*f. Minefield.* When the team approaches a minefield, the visual tracker or dog handler will pass back the danger area silent signal. After the signal has been passed back to all members of the team, and back to the team leader, the visual tracker or dog handler will pass the signal for the team leader to move to his position. The coverman will move away from the visual tracker or dog handler and take up a good fighting position where he can cover to his front. The team leader will decide what action he will take to get his team across the minefield.

*g. Enemy Position.* When the team approaches an enemy position the member of the team who sees the enemy position first will stop the team by using a silent signal; after the team has stopped and taken cover the member who saw the enemy position will signal the team leader to his position. He will point out the enemy position.

The team leader will determine where he will have the visual tracker and coverman check the position for information; or whether to have the team to pull back to a safe area and ask the support unit to check the area, or call in an artillery fire mission, or gunships, or an Air Force strike.

*h. Boobytrap.* When the team approaches a boobytrap, the visual tracker or coverman will pass back the silent signal that means boobytrap and stop the team. After the signal has been passed back to the team leader, the visual tracker will pass the signal for the team leader to come to his position. Once the signal is passed back to the team leader the coverman (or dog handler) will move left or right and take up a good fighting position. The team leader will check the boobytrap or have the visual tracker, or coverman, check. At no time will the team blow the boobytrap. The team leader will determine where to step over the boobytrap or go around. Once the team moves out the visual tracker and coverman will slow the pace down so the team can step over or go around the boobytrap. The team leader points out the boobytrap to the radiotelephone operator; once the radiotelephone operator crosses or goes around the boobytrap he will point out the boobytrap to the rear security coverman. If the team has a support unit following them, the team leader will inform the support commander and give the location of the boobytrap and mark it. If the team is on a recondo patrol they will not mark the boobytrap; they will leave the boobytrap in place and call back its location to their headquarters.

## CHAPTER 14

### VISUAL TRACKING COURSE

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#### 168. General

The visual tracking course will be divided into four phases with each phase after the first being more difficult.

#### 169. Purpose

The purpose of the course is to give the students practice in all aspects of the team jobs of lead scout and visual tracker or a member of a tracker team when searching for and following the enemy.

#### 170. Outline of Exercise

The distances are suggested and are used as examples. Course personnel will be divided into groups to act as patrols searching a given area for signs of the enemy.

#### 171. Day I—From Start Point to Camp A

Course personnel will be given an azimuth to work to and instructed to move through the area checking for signs of the enemy in the area. They are to report by radio all information gained. They are to mount a limited followup of any fresh tracks found in the area (maximum 500 meters). They will engage the enemy if located. Finally, the team is given a grid coordinate to be at by darkness that day. From this grid coordinate there will be a 500-meter fresh track to an overnight campsite where rations and overnight sleeping equipment is located. There should be specific situations set up for the students to cope with.

These are—

- a. Fresh track leading to ambush position of five men.
- b. Fresh track leading to old five-man camp.
- c. Fresh track leading to tunnel.
- d. No tracks. Five-man ambush of patrol.
- e. Fresh track leading to where two wounded were tended.

f. Fresh track deception tactic.

g. Fresh track leading to sleeping sentry.

h. Fresh track leading to freshly dug grave.

i. Fresh track leading to small food dump.

j. Fresh track leading to overnight base camp and evening meal.

#### 172. Day II—From Camp A to Camp B

a. Head-on clash with noisy enemy patrol.

b. Wood chopping in enemy base camp.

c. Lone enemy moving towards patrol.

d. Fresh tracks leading to boobytraps.

e. Fresh track leading to occupied ambush position.

f. Fresh track, easy to follow deception of split track, enemy to circle and attack patrol from rear.

g. Talking, coughing, and cooking noises to lead patrol into an ambush.

h. Fresh track with enemy rear coverman firing one shot and then withdrawing.

i. Fresh track leading to boobytrapped food dump.

j. Fresh track leading to main overnight base camp and evening meal.

#### 173. Day III—From Camp B to Camp C

a. Head-on contact with silent and alert enemy patrol.

b. Sniper fire from trees.

c. Sniper fire from bunker.

d. Fresh track leading to well-concealed and camouflaged ambush site.

e. Immediate counterattack of above ambush site after withdrawal.

f. Fresh track leading to well-concealed boobytraps.

g. Fresh track leading past camouflaged tunnel-air vents.

h. One enemy to follow up patrol and snipe during lunch break.

i. Fresh track leading to boobytrapped, small food dump.

j. Fresh track leading to overnight base camp and evening meal.

**174. Day IV—From Camp C to End of Track**

a. Enemy track laid along full length of patrol's azimuth.

b. Boobytraps along track.

c. Ambush, side/front.

d. Ambush, rear.

e. Final head-on contact where it is expected that the patrol will eliminate enemy group.

**175. Administration Instructions**

a. Safety vehicle and driver for duration of exercise will be available. All surplus food and equipment will be carried on this vehicle to the next base camp area.

b. Radios and operators for course personnel use and as a link to training course headquarters unit. To remain with and move with the safety vehicle.

c. Medical team and vehicle also moves with safety vehicle.

**176. Equipment**

Normal sleeping equipment, boobytrap simulators, blank cartridges, and radios.

**APPENDIX A****REFERENCES**

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**Field Manuals (FM)**

(C)5-31	Boobytraps (U).
20-20	Basic Training and Care of Military Dogs.
20-32	Landmine Warfare.
21-6	Techniques of Military Instruction.
21-11	First Aid for Soldiers.
21-26	Map Reading.
21-50	Ranger Training and Ranger Operations.
21-75	Combat Training of the Individual Soldier and Patrolling.
21-76	Survival, Evasion, and Escape.
24-18	Field Radio Techniques.
30-5	Combat Intelligence.

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