

STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES
NO 1

AMBUSH PATROLS

I. GENERAL

- A. Purpose. This SOP is published to standardize routine ambush patrols conducted by units of this battalion and to provide guidance for leaders in training for and conducting ambushes.
- B. Definition. An ambush is a SURPRISE attack from a concealed position on a moving or temporarily halted enemy.
- C. Mission. Ambush patrol missions will be directed by the battalion commander and will be written on the daily operations overlay. Units will receive their ambush requirements a minimum of 24 hours in advance. In extreme cases an ambush mission may be directed via radio communications. The mission will include the type of ambush, the location at which it is to be conducted, the size of the ambush, the time the ambush is to be established and the time the ambush is to begin withdrawal from the ambush site. Normally, companies will control their own ambush patrols, however, the battalion commander may exercise direct control over some ambush patrols. These cases will be so designated in the mission statement.
- D. Size. Ambush patrols will generally be squad size (10 men) or reinforced squad size (approximately 15 men) unless otherwise directed. Assignment of duties and organization of the ambush patrol will be left to the discretion of the ambush patrol leader unless directed otherwise by the company commander or this headquarters.
- F. Reports.
1. SITREP: Situation reports (SITREP) will be submitted by each ambush to its controlling headquarters every one half hour on the hour and thirty minutes past the hour. Arrangements should be made between the ambush and the controlling station to send and receive these reports with an absolute minimum of talking. For example, the controlling station may call for the SITREP and the ambush may reply "no change" by "breaking squelch" two times or transmitting a single code word.
 2. Locations. Each ambush patrol will report its location whenever it crosses a major terrain feature i.e., stream, river, road, valley, hill, village, etc. These reports must be prearranged with the controlling station to keep conversation by the patrol RTO to a minimum. To achieve this objective the ambush leader and the controlling station will coordinate the route and agree on prearranged check points along the route for these reports. Under this type of arrangement, the ambush is only required to transmit one word for each location report.
 3. Patrol Report. Each ambush patrol will submit to its controlling headquarters a patrol report at the debriefing or critique. (See Annex C). Companies will forward this report to battalion headquarters with appropriate comments not later than 24 hours after return of the patrol.

- II. ORGANIZATION. An ambush patrol is organized into two main forces, the attack force and the security force (See chart below).

- A. The attack force will be subdivided into two elements, the assault element and the support element. The assault may be further subdivided into a demolition team, POW team, search team, etc. The support element normally consists of a machinegun team or 90mm recoilless rifle team, but in a large ambush it may consist of an entire unit. The attack force is centered on the killing zone and will be led by the patrol leader.
- B. The security force consists of several security elements whose mission is to secure the ambush site and provide early warning of the enemy's approach into the killing zone.
- C. An organization of a fifteen man ambush patrol is listed below:

Order of March	Element	Job on the Move	Position at Ambush Site	Responsibility at Ambush Site	Special Equip	Remarks
1	left security	front security	left most man	flank security & early warning	anti-intrusion device	install break wire anti-intrusion device
2	left security	compass man	left security	flank security operate TA-1	TA-1	install TA-1 & WD-1 wire from CP
3	right security	ass't compass	right security	flank security operate TA-1	TA-1 & wire cutters	install TA-1 to CP
4	right security	pacers	right most man	flank security & early warning	anti-intrusion device	install break wire anti-intrusion device
5	HQS	patrol leader	center	patrol leader	map & compass	
6	HQS	RTO	center	RTO	TA-1 & radio	install wire from rear security
7	assault	pacers	left most assault man	search team	claymore	install claymore
8	support	machine gunner	between right security & assault	fire into killing zone	none	
9	support	asst mach-gunner	between right security & assault	fire into killing zone	claymore	install claymore
10	assault	flank security	left assault	POW team	rope & claymore	install claymore
11	assault	flank security	right assault man	POW team	rope & claymore AN/PSR-1	install claymore install AN/PSR-1 seismic detector

Order of March	Element	Job the Move	Position at Ambush Site	Responsibil. at Ambush Site	Special Equip	Remarks
12	assault	flank security	right most assault man	search team	claymore	install claymore
13	rear security	rear security	rear security	install rear claymore	claymore	medic
14	rear security	rear security	rear security	install TA-1 & wire	TA-1 & wire	ass't patrol leader
15	rear security	getaway man	rear security	rear security	claymore & anti-intrusion	install claymore & anti-intrusion device

The organization listed above is one solution to an ambush that will succeed. There are many various organizations that can be followed, but they must meet the basic requirements of an attack force (usually over one-half the patrol strength) and a security force.

- D. The layout of an ambush site showing distances using the above listed organization is depicted in Annex A.

III. PREPARATION FOR AMBUSH PATROL

- a. Stand down policy. The time allotted for preparation of an ambush patrol is to be used for that purpose and that purpose only. During the daylight hours prior to an ambush, the reconnaissance must be made by the leaders, the orders prepared and issued, the weapons test fired, the men inspected and the mission rehearsed. This does not allow time for administrative processing, time off, or rest until these tasks have been accomplished. A suggested time schedule is inclosed in Annex B. The twelve hours immediately following an ambush patrol's return to a secure area will be used for a critique and the patrol's rest.
- b. Warning Orders. Upon receipt of an ambush patrol mission unit commanders will assign patrol leaders and assistant patrol leaders for each mission. Patrol leaders will organize the ambush patrol at this time and issue a patrol warning order and time schedule to all members of the patrol. (See Annex B).
- c. Reconnaissance. Patrol leaders will conduct a reconnaissance of the objective area and the routes to and from it. Helicopters are available when requested through the battalion S3 air. Air requests must be submitted not later than 0600 hours daily.
- d. Patrol leader's order. A complete patrol leader's order following the format in Annex B will be issued to the entire patrol by the patrol leader.
- e. Inspection. The patrol leader will personally inspect every member of his patrol to insure the following criteria are met.
 1. Each man is well camouflaged.
 2. Each man has the correct amount of ammo.
 3. Each man has the proper equipment.
 4. No one is carrying unnecessary gear.
 5. No one is carrying documents of intelligence value.
 6. Each weapon is clean and functional.
 7. All ammo is clean and all magazines are properly loaded.

8. All men have their gear tied down to prevent loss.
 9. All loose items are taped to prevent noise.
 10. Each man knows his special duties, his order of march, his mission on the move, the details of his job at the objective area, and all signals to be used during the patrol.
 11. Each subordinate leader knows each man in his element and what each man in that element is to accomplish.
- f. Rehearsal. Each patrol leader and his patrol will conduct a complete and detailed rehearsal of all actions that will be taken moving to or from the objective area. A live fire rehearsal of the ambush including all weapons, claymores, grenades, etc., will be conducted at a site chosen by the patrol leader. Whenever possible this live fire rehearsal should be conducted at least once during daylight and once during darkness. Prior to departing for these live fire rehearsals; the site, direction of fire, and time of the rehearsal must be submitted to the battalion TOC for approval. Final clearance to fire must be granted by the battalion TOC five minutes prior to the live fire portion of the rehearsal.
 - g. Final Inspection. A final inspection will be conducted by the patrol leader just prior to departure on the ambush mission.

IV. EXECUTION OF THE AMBUSH PATROL.

- A. Movement to and from the ambush site will be by stealth. Covered and concealed routes will be used whenever possible. Planning times for movement must take into account the longer time required to make such a surreptitious move. Rally points will be periodically designated by the patrol leaders at "easy to find" locations along the route. Extreme caution and care will be used in traversing the last one hundred meters to the ambush site. The patrol leader must personally conduct a detailed reconnaissance of the ambush site prior to moving the patrol into the area. Patrols on stayback ambush missions may be helilifted, as a means of conserving troop energy, into an area secured by their parent unit. These helilifts must be prearranged between the controlling headquarters, the CP of the parent unit and the patrol leader. The patrol leader may request helicopter support through his company commander to the battalion S3 air. These requests must be submitted to the S3 air not later than 0600 hours on the day of use.
- B. The objective rallying point (ORP). The patrol will establish security at the ORP while a reconnaissance is conducted of the ambush location. Normally the rear security element will remain at the ORP during conduct of the ambush. After completion of the ambush all patrol members move on order to the ORP to assemble for return to a secure area.
- C. The Ambush. Every ambush will be initiated by the patrol leader personally or on his personal command. Patrol leaders will position themselves within the assault element where they can best control the killing zone. The killing zone should not be entered until the ambush has been executed. The search and POW teams should rapidly sweep the killing zone, search the bodies, seize all weapons and capture any enemy remaining alive. Only on the patrol leader's order will members return to the objective rallying point. NO patrol leader will allow his ambush to withdraw without accomplishing the ambush mission unless the patrol leader has received the battalion commander's approval for the withdrawal.
- D. Communications.
 1. On the move, the patrol should make maximum use of hand and arm signals. Audio signals are particularly effective at night, for example, two taps on a rifle but may mean "halt". One tap signals "enemy sighted" and three taps - "all clear". The snapping of fingers may be substituted for taps. Numerous audio signals are available; however, they must be kept simple to be effective.

Visual hand and arm signals can be used on not too dark nights. Over a distance a small pen light or an issue flashlight with a translucent lens will signal the word or serve as a beacon to guide on.

2. At the ambush sight a length of field telephone wire or string can tie the security to other members of the patrol. A series of tugs is all that is necessary to alert the ambush as to the direction of approach and the number of the enemy. Sound powered telephones (TA-1) connected by a "hot loop" or "T - splice" provide sufficient communications to issue last minute instructions before springing the trap. Communications between the ambush security elements and the patrol leader is an absolute must, therefore, plans must be made to install and operate the system at the ambush location.
3. Communications to the next higher or controlling headquarters will be via AN/PRC-25 on a frequency designated by that headquarters. Reports will be submitted as required by paragraph I.

V. DEBRIEFING. The controlling headquarters will conduct a debriefing and critique of each patrol and require the patrol leader to complete the Patrol Report (Annex 3) in one copy. The immediate tactical application of lessons learned to subsequent patrols is the objective of these critiques. If the controlling headquarters is battalion, the patrol debriefing will be held in the "VIP" briefing bunker upon return of the patrol to the fire base. Patrol leaders will submit their patrol reports at this time. If the company is the controlling headquarters, they will conduct the debriefing at a time and place designated by the company commander. Company commanders will submit one copy of the patrol report to battalion S3 within 24 hours of return of the patrol to the fire base.

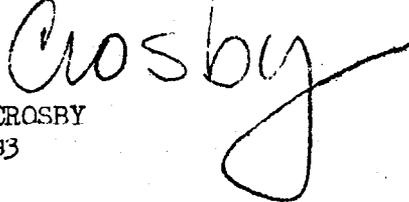
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Annexes: A - Ambush Site Diagram
B - Warning Order, Time Schedule
and Patrol Order
C - Patrol Report
D - Patrol Tips

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PATROL ORDER

1. SITUATION (as it affects the patrol)

- a. Enemy forces: Weather, terrain, identification, location, activity, strength.
- b. Friendly forces: Mission of next higher unit, location and planned actions of units on right and left, fire support available for patrol, missions and routes of other patrols.
- c. Attachments and detachments.

2. MISSION - What the patrol is going to accomplish and the location or area in which it is to be done.

3. EXECUTION

- a. Concept of operation - the overall plan - and missions of elements, teams, and individuals in the objective area.
- b. Other missions, not in the objective area, for elements, teams, and individuals. Included are such tasks as navigation, security during movement, and security at halts.
- c. Coordinating instructions.
 - (1) Times of departure and return.
 - (2) Primary and alternate routes.
 - (3) Departure and re-entry of friendly areas.
 - (4) Organization for movement.
 - (5) Actions at danger areas.
 - (6) Actions on enemy contact.
 - (7) Rallying points and actions at rallying points.
 - (8) Actions in objective area.
 - (9) Debriefing.
 - (10) Other actions.
 - (11) Rehearsals and inspections.

4. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

- a. Rations.
- b. Arms and ammunition.
- c. Uniform and equipment (state which members will carry and use).
- d. Method of handling wounded and prisoners.

5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

- a. Signal.
 - (1) Signals to be used within the patrol.
 - (2) Communication with higher headquarters - radio call signs, primary and alternate frequencies, times to report and special code to be used.
 - (3) Challenge and password.
- b. Command.
 - (1) Chain of command.
 - (2) Locations of leaders at various times - during movement, at danger areas, at the objective.

PATROL WARNING ORDER

THE PATROL WARNING ORDER CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A. A brief statement of the situation.
- B. Mission of the patrol.
- C. General Instructions:
 1. General and special organization.
 2. Uniform and equipment common to all.
 3. Weapons, ammunition, and equipment.
 4. Chain of command.
 5. A time schedule for the patrol's guidance.
 6. Time, place, uniform, and equipment for receiving the patrol order.
 7. Times and places for inspections and rehearsals.
- D. Specific Instructions:
 1. To subordinate leaders.
 2. To special purpose teams or key individuals.

PATROL TIME SCHEDULE (SAMPLE)

- 0900 - Warning order completed.
- 0900-1230 - Patrol leader makes reconnaissance (point and compass men and selected subordinates accompany, if situation permits):
 - makes coordination: completes detailed plans.
 - Asst patrol leader supervises drawing, issue, preparation of equipment, ammunition, rations.
 - asst patrol leader supervises practice of immediate action drills.
 - Special teams rehearse (stream crossing, aerial resupply).
 - Patrol members prepare individual equipment.
 - Subordinate leaders inspect.
- 1230-1300 - Noon meal.
- 1300-1330 - Patrol order.
- 1330-1430 - Patrol members complete preparation.
 - Patrol leader inspects.
- 1430-1630 - Daylight rehearsals.
 - Element and team rehearsals.
 - Patrol rehearsals.
- 1630-1730 - Rest.
- 1730-1800 - Evening meal.
- 1800-1900 - Night Rehearsals.
- 1900-2000 - Final inspection.
 - By subordinate leaders.
 - Spot checks by patrol leader.
 - Questions on plans, signals, use of equipment.
- 2000-2030 - Dark adaption of eyes.
- 2030- - Depart.

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APO 96355, US Army
1 Nov 1967

Annex C (Patrol Report) to SOP No 1.

(designation of patrol)

TO: _____

Maps: _____

A. SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF PATROL

B. TASK

C. TIME OF DEPARTURE: _____

D. TIME OF RETURN: _____

E. ROUTES (Out and Back)

F. TERRAIN

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Annex C (Patrol Report) to SOP No 1.

G. ENEMY

H. ANY MAP CORRECTIONS

I. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

J. RESULTS OF ENCOUNTERS WITH ENEMY

K. CONDITION OF PATROL

L. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Signature)

(Grade/Rank)

(Unit)

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Annex D (Patrol Tips) to SOP No 1.

1. Make a detailed map study of the terrain over which the patrol will pass. Consider selecting the most difficult terrain. Terrain is seldom impassable to a determined patrol.
2. Make a detailed reconnaissance, both ground and air if possible. Take your subordinate leaders, point and compass men whenever possible.
3. Avoid taking weapons requiring different types of ammunition.
4. Make maximum use of grenades and claymores.
5. Individual weapons cleaning equipment should be carried.
6. Carry gloves to protect hands.
7. Carry two of each critical items such as flashlights, binoculars, fuze crimpers, wire cutters, etc.
8. Carry extra batteries on long patrols. Always start with a fresh battery.
9. Carry two ponchos for map checks and to make rafts.
10. Every man should carry a pair of dry socks sealed in a waterproof plastic bag already powdered for use.
11. Consider the use of scout dogs.
12. Tape all items that might rattle.
13. Assign each man a certain area to secure during movement, halts, rally points, etc.
14. Check the camouflage of each man on the back of his hands and neck and behind his ears as well as the obvious areas. Also check the camouflage on weapons and uniforms.
15. Always use two pacers each with a small string keeping count by tying knots. Take the average.
16. Preset your compass before **departing**.
17. Do not mark your maps with routes, friendly areas or enemy locations.
18. Do not take SOI's or written radio frequencies with you. Memorize the information.
19. On night patrols, do not allow cigarettes or matches to be carried. This reduces temptation.
20. Prepare a **checklist** for coordination at friendly positions through which you must pass.
21. Use field expedient radio antennas when greater range is required.
22. Carry several short lengths of rope for POW's and one 50' length to assist in crossing streams.
23. Carry a small grappling hook to dislodge items that may be boobytrapped.

- Two pieces of luminous tape ($\frac{1}{2}$ " by $1\frac{1}{2}$ ") on the rear of the collar or hat will greatly aid in movement on dark nights.
25. Clean, check and test fire all weapons before departing on the rehearsal.
 26. Check all equipment for proper functioning prior to moving out for the rehearsal.
 27. Always use a sketch or terrain board in issuing your patrol order.
 28. Prearrange and rehearse all signals. Keep signals simple.
 29. Allow time for patrol member's eyes to become "dark adapted" before departing, normally $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.
 30. Explain the terrain of the actual ambush site to the patrol at the rehearsal site when conducting the first "walk through" rehearsal.
 31. Inspect your patrol in detail. Question every man on his job and the patrol actions planned.
 32. Send up the count after each halt or passage of a danger area.
 33. Designate rallying points frequently and at easy to find locations.
 34. Use the point man only for security to the front. Make another man the compass man.
 35. Check navigation frequently. Use your compass every 15 minutes or so. Keep your own pace as a double check.
 36. On long patrols or in difficult terrain change point and compass men occasionally.
 37. Use the battalion password only when meeting other patrols. Use your own password within the patrol or use a number recognition system.
 38. Stay off roads and trails.
 39. Avoid villages and hamlets. The dogs always give you away.
 40. Avoid all danger areas.
 41. Take advantage of battle noise and natural noise when moving.
 42. Call for artillery in a distant area to cover your movement noise.
 43. Fire artillery near your location every so often to give the appearance of H and I's.
 44. Do not move along ridge tops either during daylight or darkness. You may use the military crest because movement is easier but you must stay off the skyline.
 45. Always carry all weapons at the ready.
 46. Cut or disturb wire only after you are sure it is not boobytrapped.
 47. The compass can be used for signaling over short distances providing the luminous dial is charged by light.
 48. Know your location at all times and report it frequently. Prearrange reports with your next senior headquarters to keep radio transmission time and talking to a minimum.
 49. Cross roads, streams and open areas only after a reconnaissance has been made of the other side and security is established.

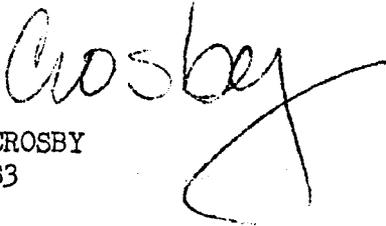
50. Always have the entire patrol ready to support by fire before sending out a reconnaissance element to check the opposite side of a rice paddy.
51. Always bury all trash and camouflage the hole.
52. Prearrange some artillery concentrations along the route to be used as navigational aids.
53. Break contact with the enemy by the "clock system" and fire and movement or by an immediate action drill.
54. Do not talk on patrols. Whisper, and do that only when necessary. Use hand and arm signals whenever possible.
55. When "passing up the word" do not change a single word of the message. Repeat exactly what you were told.
56. Always follow the patrol order format when issuing the order. It will help you cover all points.
57. At rehearsal insist that every man do exactly as he would on patrol.
58. Make every man carry all of his patrol equipment to rehearsal and insure that he is carrying the correct equipment.
59. The rehearsal is the most important part of preparation. Demand it be executed correctly. Repeat it until the action is perfected.
60. Do not allow the patrol to eat their final meal until the rehearsal and inspection have been completed satisfactorily.
61. Carry a spare handset for the radio in a waterproof bag.

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