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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. ARMY VIETNAM

Reg Mail 9198 Rec 18 July 70
Rec 1 by Action SEC of ARVN
Info



COMBAT LESSONS BULLETIN

NUMBER 5

11 MAR 1970

THE SHOTGUN TECHNIQUE OF AREA SATURATION (U)

(U) GENERAL (U)

An effective area saturation technique called the "shotgun" has been developed by the 1st Inf Div for use in relatively pacified areas which permit small unit operations. The technique is especially useful against NVA/VC small scale infiltration, supply and liaison operations.

(U) CONCEPT (U)

A rifle company is used to execute the "shotgun". The unit is organized to give maximum coverage of the selected area, normally about 12 square kilometers. The area selected may include a trail network in the vicinity of a village or hamlet or a well known enemy infiltration route. Detailed intelligence coverage of the area is made to include aerial photos and preparation of trail overlays. After the area has been thoroughly studied, ambush sites are selected to insure complete coverage of the most likely points of enemy contact. Ambush sites are selected to complement each other, usually about 700-1000 meters apart to permit mutual support and reinforcement. Landing zones are selected in close proximity to the ambush site to facilitate ease and rapid movement to the position. The ambush team prepares the positions using a complete range of weapons to include the mechanical ambush.

(C) AMBUSH ORGANIZATION (U)

The infantry company selected for the shotgun operation organizes 13 ambush teams; each platoon provides 4 teams of 6 men each and the company headquarters composes the 13th ambush team, a heavy team. The headquarters team has eight men from the HQ group and two six man 81mm mortar squads for a total of 20 personnel. Each team has either an M-60 machine gun or a 90mm recoilless rifle with AP rounds. Each team carries a PRC-25 radio, some of which are obtained from another company which is standing down (this enables each subordinate team to report to its platoon leader by radio, who in turn reports to the company commander). One man in each team is given supplemental medical training and extra medical supplies. Some teams are augmented with snipers and additional night observation devices. In addition, each man carries two claymores, one LAW, extra hand grenades and ammunition, plus C-rations and water to last for the duration of the operation.

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(C) EXECUTION (U)

After completion of the detailed planning and rehearsal phases the operation is initiated by aerial insertion. A schematic diagram of a typical company size "shotgun" ambush is shown at figure 1.

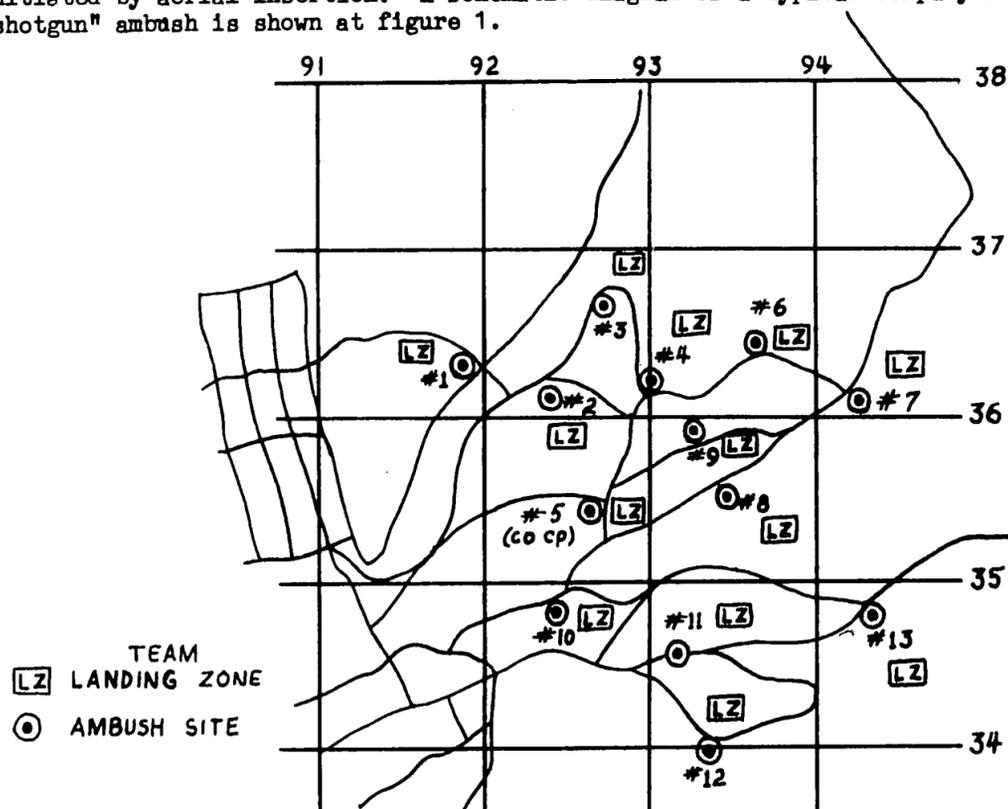


FIGURE 1

No preparatory fires are used in support of this operation. Landing zones are marked with smoke from a LOH and helicopter gunships fly cover during the insertion phase in case unexpected enemy contact is made. Upon landing, each team conducts a brief but detailed reconnaissance of its surrounding area and establishes the ambush position. They remain in this position for the entire operation. Each team employs one or more mechanical ambushes (a detailed explanation of the mechanical ambush concept is found in USARV Combat Lessons Bulletin No 3 dated 20 Feb 70).

Two members of each team are always alert and on guard. The company CP team with the two 81mm mortars is located near the center of the ambush system, where it can support each team ambush. 81mm defensive fires are plotted within the ambush area and 105/155 defensive fires are plotted outside the ambush network. If contact is made, the teams can be supported by either mortar or artillery support if necessary, or they can be reinforced by a nearby ambush team. Illumination from the company 81mm mortars is available on request. Should a team's position be compromised in any way, the company commander can reposition them elsewhere on the trail network.

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(C) CONCLUSION (U)

The 1st Infantry Division has found the shotgun technique of area saturation to be an effective ambush technique. An infantry company can successfully deny up to 12 sq KM of contested terrain to the enemy for extended periods of time. In addition to denying access to the enemy, the operation places great responsibility on the small unit leader, increases self-confidence and trains the individual soldier in patrolling, ambush, and search techniques. Excellent results have been attained using this technique of operation.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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