

## Patrolling - The Warning Order

### Patrolling

It has been over fifteen years since I led a patrol. Those of you who have more recent experience are encouraged to criticize. Virtually all of what follows came right off the top of my head. While trying to write the warning order and patrol order, I realized just how long it had been! I'm sure I have left out some important information just because I can't remember everything. I do remember spending three or four days minimum preparing OPORDS.(Operations Order) That was with the assistance of several others. Each team, ie. demolitions, snatch, river crossing, etc. would prepare their own "annex" to the main order. By breaking up the problem we were able to create very detailed OPORD's. Since I'm working by myself here, and have to earn a living doing other things, I've not spent the time required to do a thorough job on this subject. I would like to get it online, therefore I'll go ahead with it as is, and add to it as I think of things. My thanks to Sgt. Guajardo, who taught my first patrolling class. I hope I can remember most of what he taught me.

To an individual soldier, everything is a patrol. Any movement of a group of men is in essence a patrol. A Patrol Order is just a more specific Operations Order. Either one is just a detailed set of plans that communicates the situation, mission, concept of operation, and specific requirements to the men who will make up the operation. In combat, Murphy's law usually results in death. It is essential that a leader expend extraordinary effort and creativity when he plans a patrol. If you don't plan for a contingency, and rehearse for it, when it rears its ugly head your men may die as a consequence. After you embark on your mission, if ANYTHING happens or changes that was not allowed for in the original patrol order, the leader must prepare a "frag" order. (Depending on the immediacy of the situation of course). The leader will use the same patrol order format to describe the change of plans. Once men in a special op's unit become used to this it becomes second nature. A young Pfc with a Ranger tab will know the instant you have missed something! An easy way to keep your

sanity, and speed communication, is to develop SOP's (Standard Operating Procedure's). If you ALWAYS do something in a certain way, SOP it and have your men rehearse this SOP during normal training excercises. When developing a patrol order, something a leader does a lot of, you will not have to write the section for this common action over and over again. If for example, you will always enter an DC-9 in the same manner, your assault team will have an SOP that they follow for this. If the situation requires you to modify the SOP so be it, but in training you will always do it the same way. This allows your team to develop the speed needed to clear an aircraft of terrorists before the terrorists have time to react. They way we did it was thus:

Man 1 & 2 enter with .45's and begin engaging specific targets, two shots to the head for each.

Right behind them are two men armed with sub-sonic sub-machineguns. They fire over the two point men's head's -- spraying bullets over the passengers heads and down the aisles.

Human nature will hopefully prevail here, meaning that the terrorists will instinctively try to protect themselves first, before trying to detonate explosives. Passengers will instinctively duck, anyone standing up or armed gets taken out. This whole drill, from start to finish takes about three (3) seconds when rehearsed. The terrorists have only three seconds before your team is halfway down the aisle killing anything that stands or holds a weapon. If the terrorists are determined and ready, the first two guys are probably going to go down. Their back-up must be right behind them firing madly at anything that remotely represents a threat. These jobs go to people who are aggressive, motivated, and very good shots! There is no time to reload with the slide locked back. The first two men must instinctively count their shots and reload in a fluid, very fast manner. This takes a lot of practice. They must be able to run in a crouch, make head shots, and keep killing until the terrorists are dead, or they are. If this is done well, there is a very good chance of success.

(Sniper Note: I think the policy of non-negotiation is foolish. It put's a lot of people at risk in hostage scenarios for no other reason than pride. I think terrorists should be given most anything they want (within reason), and when the

hostages are safe. Kill every one of them, or destroy the country that gave them asylum. Why we let international diplomacy considerations affect our decisions is beyond me. If the other guys want to play this game with us, make them pay a heavy price for it)

It doesn't matter whether you are just going on a recon mission, taking out terrorists, kidnapping, or sniping. The things that you do in this business must be planned in excruciating detail if you want to be successful on a consistent basis. (meaning that you want to live, there is no second place in a gunfight).

One thing that I found lacking in line units was a lack of information sharing. In order to assure mission success, it is very important for everyone involved in the mission to understand what the mission is, and all of the details. If only one person knows how to signal the slicks for extraction, and that person is killed, how does anyone else call in the extraction? I could go on and on with examples.

Junior officers who have never been in combat are likely to take the attitude that only they understand all of the important stuff, and therefore everyone else's job is to just follow them. Most Lieutenants will give all pertinent info to their squad leaders. If the platoon sergeant doesn't make sure his NCO's get the info to every man under their supervision, the stage is set for tragedy. Patrol Orders are the mechanism for getting everyone's program together. All NCO's are not equal. Some are dumb, incompetent, and lack leadership skills. Special Operations units use only the cream of the crop, and that is why they win engagements with the enemy, and have a much higher kill ratio per man.

#### Navigation Skills

I may add a section on the map & compass. For now, if you don't know how to use them you should learn. Reading is not enough, you have to practice. I have never tried it but I think that orienteering would be a good way to learn these skills. I think those folks do a lot of running on their courses and that is very good training. To call yourself competent, you should be able to run a compass course, only stopping long enough to steady the compass, and then take off again. You must be able to do this at night.

Terrain association is the next biggy. Some people have a real problem with

this. I would call it common sense. But that means many things to different people. You must be able to look at a topo map and relate the elevation contour lines to the physical terrain that surrounds you. This can be difficult in heavy vegetation, or in climates that where physical changes occur faster than the map makers can keep up. Heavy rainfall areas and wind blown deserts are places that can change rapidly. This does not make it impossible to read the map, only harder.

I mention these because on a patrol you have to know where you are going, how to get there, and how to get out. If bad things happen, you must be able to find prearranged rally points, LZ's(Landing Zones), etc.

It is very important that everyone in the patrol unit know how to do this. They must also have all of the information that time allows them to be given. One or two leaders who know everything and a gaggle of soldiers who are just following the guy in front of them is an invitation to disaster.

#### Sniping Patrols

The sniper goes out on patrol. He is accompanied by a spotter (another sniper) and one or two security men. I call them security men because that is their primary role. That does not mean that they are deadbeats whose only job is accompany you and try to protect you. Ideally, your security team will be better than you are. They will be masters of stealth, deception, and camouflage. They will know everything you know and more, they just don't carry rifles with scopes.

#### Patrol

A patrol is a detachment sent out to perform an assigned mission of reconnaissance, combat or both.

The patrol must be tailored to suit the mission. Snipers do not need machine guns, mortars, recoilless rifles, or antitank weapons. You may want to take one automatic weapon. It will provide additional firepower if you get in a jam. When I say automatic weapon I'm referring to an M60 machine gun or maybe one of those new SAW's, not an M16. Small patrols must avoid contact, or make contact when conditions are favorable, as in an ambush.

#### Types of Patrols

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

Combat -- Engages the enemy

Recon - Spies on the enemy, avoids detection at all costs.

Combination - In a way, snipers operate as both. Their mission is to engage the enemy. But they will also record and report everything they see or hear.

Organization of Patrols

Patrols are organized in to elements and teams. Teams are subdivisions of elements.

Recon Patrol Organization (Modified for sniping mission)

Recon and Security Element - Provides early warning enroute to/from and while on the objective. Maintains surveillance.

Point team

Right, left, rear security

special security (far side security on river crossings, etc.)

Special recon elements

Sniper Element -- Engages the enemy at the objective

Headquarters - Mentioned only because there will be some chain of command, Patrol Leader (PL), Assistant Patrol Leader (APL), RTO (Radio Telephone Operator), and medic will usually be the HQ element. If your patrol has attached people such as ASA (Army Security Agency), CIA, FAC (Forward Air Controller), or other special purpose people they will normally be in the headquarters element, close to the PL during movement, and in the CP (Command Post) during halts and patrol bases. These folks are not usually trained in the art of clandestine patrolling and must be watched carefully to insure they don't screw up. The men on the patrol must be told to respect and protect these guys. They are important to the mission or they wouldn't be there. Your men don't like these guys along because they usually have to babysit them. They are more apt to make noise, step where they shouldn't, and remain standing when everyone else drops. If you make contact, they will not instinctively do the right thing. As a patrol leader you should assign each special member of your patrol to another man. Instruct him to do whatever your man does, walk where he walks, stop when he stops, get down when he does, and run the direction he does.

## Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

This is a sample formation for seven men. The APL doubles as rear security. When the formation closes up during conditions of limited visibility it will resemble a file formation. Files are dangerous when visibility is good because a gun in enfilade position can fire down the patrol hitting everyone very quickly. A good sniper with a self loading rifle can hit 5 men in under three seconds at 900 meters! A machine gun in the hands of a good gunner can hit everyone in the patrol two or three times.

The smaller your patrol is, the easier it is to travel silently, and control is greatly enhanced. One man can effectively control up to 5 other men directly. When you have more than this you will need to organize your patrol into multiple 'maneuver elements'. In this manner the PL can direct multiple elements by directly controlling the element leader. Each element leader then controls up to five men under him.

Crew served weapons should be located near the PL in a formation (small patrol). It makes it easier for the PL to direct the fire of the gunners when he does not have to crawl around under fire trying to get his gunners in action.

A good patrol leader leads by example. In a fire fight the men in the patrol look to the leader for direction, and sometimes courage. If the PL inspires and motivates his men, by displaying courage, leadership, and audacity in the face of the enemy, the patrol members will respond favourably and take the fight to the enemy when it's needed. A patrol leader who is indecisive, hides under fire, and fails to LEAD, will cause the fighting effectiveness of his patrol to collapse.

In a fight, the patrol leader, with the assistance of the APL, must constantly redistribute ammo and give encouragement to his men. This means crawling under fire from position to position, inspiring the men, and insuring that each has a constant supply of ammo. Some men fire more often than others. If the enemy is hitting you on the right then your men on the right will expend ammo faster than those on the left. You cannot just move every one online because the enemy could flank you, or come around behind. Amidst the roar, fury, and smoke of combat, good leaders distinguish themselves by this type of conduct under pressure. Some

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

leaders rise from the most unlikely places in the "ranks". A good patrol member must always be ready to take command when the PL /APL is unable to do so (dead or wounded). The patrol leader must always display unselfish courage so that when he does go down, Pfc Joe Rag Bag will step forward, and do as he has seen his leader do under fire.

Patrol leaders never eat, or drink, until the men have been fed and watered. This is a rule that should NEVER be violated. The mission, and men, in that order, always without exception.

A patrol order is always preceded by a warning order.

Warning Order

The warning order is a statement issued by some higher authority that authorizes the patrol, states the mission, and the required time frame.

This is an example warning order.

Signal intelligence units, recon satellites, and information from other intelligence sources indicates that the enemy has established a headquarters area in grid square ZZ1044. The enemy is using the road running east-west through the area to move equipment and supplies. All road junctions and trails are under enemy control and the entire area under surveillance. Your mission is to get in there and recon the area without being caught for a period of not less than 48 hours.

You must find their HQ. On 22 November 1995 you will set your sniper team in the best position you can find, kill as many officers or key personnel as you can, and get the hell out. You will let your relay station know when you are on your way out. They will launch your slicks to the LZ. Intelligence indicates that this is a Regimental HQ and the probability of at least Field grade officers is very high.

There will be a full S2 briefing in 1 hour at Battalion. You will be able to meet afterwards with the Air Liaison. The area is 125 miles north and well beyond artillery support. The enemy has extensive sig intel capabilities and you can expect artillery or rocket fire within 2 minutes of any radio transmissions.

Well, you heard it. The AO is crawling with [insert expletive here]'s. You have one hour to get your team together. Since the AO is hot, you will need a good 3

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

man security team just in case you get into trouble. They'll have to be cool heads though, the last thing you want is to be compromised 120 miles behind enemy lines.

You will need helo extraction standing by 24 hr. a day through out the operation. Hopefully good weather will prevail. You'll find out all about that at the S2 briefing. For Now, Pick your spotter and three good LRP men.

#### S2 Briefing

Often this is done when the initial warning order is given. In this example, I only set it apart because a bunch of officers aren't going to drop what they are doing to put on a dog and pony show for a sniper team. There probably won't even be an officer at your briefing, and that's just as well.

This is the most important part of the warning order. Anything that the briefer does not cover you must ask about. Don't assume it's because they don't know. If you piss them off with a lot of questions they'll let you know.

#### Enemy Forces

Identification - Unit name/numbers, commanding officer, XO, political advisors, etc. Pictures if they are available.

Strength/Size - All elements including fire support, air assets, mobility.

Equipment -- Individual, heavy weapons, vehicles, markings on vehicles

Training - Are they well trained?

Discipline - Are their combat forces in the area? Are they guarded by military police, etc.?

Expected reactions if you are discovered -- What will they do? Do they have the resources to mount a major search and destroy?

#### Indigenous Personnel

Customs, dress, traditions, life styles.

Will we be there during a holiday?

Do they work? Where? Farmers?

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

Are they friendly? How have they been treated by the enemy?

Do we have a contact in a partisan group we can use if necessary? Can they be trusted?

Do they keep dogs?

Do they have electrical power? Vehicles?

We could write a book on this subject and we won't.

Preferably everyone on your team should be able to speak the local language and should already have received some training on the religious and cultural customs of the population.

Friendly Forces

Locations of all adjacent friendly units.

Frequencies to use on the days in question to contact them.

Inter-unit call signs and passwords.

CEOI codes.

Weather

All major weather systems.

Forecast - Rain is the soldiers best friend -- It will limit air support, but who counts on those guys anyway? Rain softens the sounds of your movement. It allows you to move silently and hide. It also keeps you from being spotted from the air. Heat will have an adverse effect. It will make you consume more water.

Wide fluctuations in temperature can be expected in mountainous or desert terrain. It will make sentries sleepy, extreme cold will drive undisciplined soldiers indoors or into sleeping bags when they should be alert and watchful  
Effect on terrain, infantry and vehicles -- tracked and wheeled.

Sunrise and Sunset

Moon Rise and set. Moon Phase

Before morning and early evening nautical twilight

#### Maps and Aerial Photos

If they are available, each member of your team should have their own map. Aerial photos can help with locating vegetation densities like forests, fields, etc. To identify and fix enemy resources you will need assistance from the photo interpretation guys. By using stereoscopic lenses and overlays, they can identify vehicles, positions, structures, etc. that you cannot see looking at a flat two-dimensional aerial photo. These photo's must be used to markup maps. You will need an extra set of maps with plastic laminates to mark on with grease pencils. You must never mark a map you will carry on your operation. We will use this information to build our sand table.

After the warning order you must find out what assets you will have to work with. If air transport and TACAIR are available, make arrangements with the liaison officers to meet with you after you have worked out your patrol order. It won't do you any good to plan for choppers or a fly over if none are available. Find out what you will have to work with first. Incorporate the air assets into your patrol order, then meet with your liaison to give them all of the details. Do this early enough so that if they have a problem with something you want to do, you'll have the time to work it out. Hopefully, your chain of command has a good relationship with the rotor heads so you won't have a problem getting the priorities your people need.

In the warning order given above, a fly over might be inadvisable. You don't want the enemy to think you might know where he is. Use maps and aerial photos to find your insertion point.

Now you must prepare a plan for your patrol. You will give your own people the warning order all over again, with a few additions.

#### Study the mission

Plan use of time and prepare time table

Study terrain and situation, prepare sand table

Organize the patrol

Select men, weapons and equipment

Issue Warning Order to your men

Coordinate - (Continuous throughout)

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

Make reconnaissance if possible, if not use maps and photos  
Complete detailed plans  
Issue Patrol Order  
Supervise, Inspect, Rehearse  
Execute the mission

Example

We are going to plan on being in position 1 day sooner than required so we can scope out the situation, and move to a better site if necessary. That means we will move into our hide on during the night of the 20th. Scope the sit out on the 21st, make our shots and air strike on the 22nd, move to the LZ and get out. Lets back up from there

Sample Time Table

Action	Date	Time	Equipment/Pers.
Debriefing	22 Nov.	1700	All Personnel
Extraction	22 Nov.	1500	All
Call Choppers	22 Nov.	1400	All
Make Shots	22 Nov.	1400	Snipers
On Objective	21 Nov.	0200	All
Movement to OBJ	20 Nov.	2000	All
Dissem. Intel	20 Nov.	1800	All
Sleep	20 Nov.	0600	All
Split-up/Recon	18 Nov.	0600	All
Sleep	18 Nov.	0100	See patrol base annex
Movement to A017	17 Nov.	2100	All
Parachute Jump	17 Nov.	2030	All
Takeoff	17 Nov.	1930	All
Board Aircraft	17 Nov.	1830	All
Sleep/Eat	17 Nov.	1030	All
Move to Airfield	17 Nov.	0930	All
Final Inspection	17 Nov.	0830	All/APL to conduct
Draw Ammo	17 Nov.	0700	All but PL

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

Chow17 Nov.0600All  
Sleep16 Nov.2200All  
Night Rehearsals16 Nov.1800All - Excercise  
Chow16 Nov.1700All  
Patrol Order16 Nov.1400All - Classroom  
Command/Control16 Nov.1200All PL to conduct  
Chow16 Nov.1100  
Air Reqt's Turned In16 Nov.1000Patrol Leader  
Fire Support Overlays16 Nov.0900Patrol Leader  
Extraction Class16 Nov.1000Everyone else  
Danger Areas Class16 Nov.0900Everyone else  
Fire Missions Class16 Nov.0800Everyone  
Chow16 Nov.0700All  
Sleep15 Nov.2300All  
Night Compass class15 Nov.1800All, 1 MRE, LBE, Compass, Map, NB&Pencil  
Chow15 Nov.1700All  
Patrolling15 Nov.1300All  
Chow15 Nov.1200All  
Patrolling15 Nov.0800All  
Inspection15 Nov.0700All  
Chow15 Nov.0600All  
Sleep14 Nov.2300All  
Photo Intel Class14 Nov.1900All - S2 NCO conducts  
Patrol Order Development12 Nov.1000All  
Warning Order 12 Nov.0900All

Well, we are back to the 12th and have a few days to work with. We should probably move everything back a day to allow more recon time, and another day to allow everyone one full day to sleep and eat. this patrol will take a toll on everyone. We want to be well rested and fed when we board the choppers. Our ass holes will be so tight you couldn't drive a 10 penny nail up them with a sledge hammer. We will need the extra sleep and food. If things go bad we could wind up without a ride home and be forced to escape & evade the 120 miles back to

Patrolling-The\_Warning\_Order\_2004.txt

friendly lines. We want a lot of good food in our system, vitamin supplements, high energy foods, foot powder and socks.

Looking back over the time table I can see that I have allowed too much time for some things and not enough for others. It is important that all personnel know what they are doing so that you can cover the basics quickly and use the rest of the time to develop the operations order. As we shall see, all of the details will be planned for and included in our OPORD.

Back to HQ, Continue Patrolling