

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics



Tactics are of the utmost importance before and after the battle as well as during the battle. Proper tactics before the battle can give a warrior a critical edge when the fighting starts and poor tactics could cost him his life. Good tactics after a battle can prevent the enemy from counter attacking effectively. It can also keep the good guy from getting killed by a bad guy he/she missed or failed to notice during the battle. For example, if a warrior walks through a large empty field with short grass he is begging to be shot. When the firing does start he will have no cover and while he cannot see that every possible hiding place is empty the enemy will have no problem spotting him in the open. If the hero goes around the big open field and sticks to cover he will have someplace to hide if someone starts shooting at him. Tactics is almost always common sense and this is where most amateurs make their mistakes, they don't think things through. Tactics begin with the individual and the military doctrine of his nation or military branch. In reality, the individual is more concerned with survival. First (in most cases, not all) is the individual's survival, then (if he likes them) his comrades survival. National survival is not always at the top of his list. A nation's doctrine on the subject is oft en a matter of the type of government. A democratic government is more likely to encourage the soldiers to survive first and foremost. Dead soldiers make bad public relations because that soldier has a mom, dad, brother or sister somewhere who can raise a lot of hell for the government. A more oppressive nation tries to teach that survival of the state is more important than the individual and the lowly soldier should be more than willing to die for his country.

This is drilled into the soldier until he is almost brainwashed in some cases.

Regardless of national doctrine however, most militaries do not want their troops to drop like flies when fighting the enemy. A nation wants its military to win gloriously. When a military designs its doctrine, it must consider what kind of troops it uses. Are they smart, resourceful and tough or are they perceived as rugged, dimwitted peasants. Are they conscripts or volunteers? With this in mind unit tactics are devised to maximize those advantages and minimize the disadvantages. Next, technology needs to be considered. Then maybe logistics and capabilities. Finally, the tactics must be able to mesh with all the weapons available so the maximum effect can be imposed on the enemy. A machine gun is a weapon that can lay down a high volume of fire on enemy positions. This makes the enemy put their head down so riflemen can advance on enemy positions and enter them or throw in grenades. Machine guns are the backbone of the infantry. The disadvantage of the machine gun is often the weight and ammunition required. For this reason not every infantryman is armed with a machine gun. The key to winning a fire fight is often fire

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superiority. Whoever has it, wins because they have outgunned the enemy. Fire superiority does not necessarily mean a higher volume of fire. Fire superiority means that one side has forced the other side to seek cover; in effect fire superiority is fire intimidation. This can be accomplished by using a high volume of fire, or accurate fire. For example, a Marine named Carlos Hathcock gained fire superiority over an entire North Vietnamese company with only a sniper rifle. The enemy could not effectively return fire and Hathcock kept them suppressed because they knew that if they were to show themselves they would die. The entire Vietnamese company was eventually wiped out by this sniper, his spotter and the use of a radio.

Individual Tactics

Tactics at the individual level are as complex as tactics at higher levels. The individual usually has little say in whether or not combat is initiated and is more concerned with not getting killed, killing the enemy is secondary.

Firefight

Individual tactics, more than any other level of tactics are extremely common sense. If the enemy doesn't know you are there he's not likely to shoot you. If he does know you're there and is firing at you, he can't hit you if there is something in the way that his bullets can't go through, unless of course you stick your head up to shoot back. If you don't stick your head up and shoot back he is going to move into a position where he can shoot around your cover or throw a grenade at you.

This is what it is all about and it is amazing how commonly people mess it up. Amateurs (like Rambo) will stand out in the open (believing they are bullet proof?) and try to mow down the opposition. What usually happens is that one of the bad guys takes aim from behind cover and ventilates the 'hero.'

Some other common mistakes an amateur makes are taking cover behind something that does not stop bullets. Plywood does not stop bullets, neither do leaves and bushes. Leaning up against a wall is a bad thing too because bullets will ricochet off it and travel along the wall, about one to six inches parallel. Bullets do not ricochet off objects in perfect angles. Lying on concrete is not a good idea for this reason. Another thing that amateurs do is keep sticking their head up to fire from the same spot. Eventually the enemy gets a chance to aim and when the amateur does get predictable and stick his head up again he gets shot because the enemy was waiting for him. A professional will vary his firing location and he will look around cover instead of over it because it is easier to silhouette yourself by looking over something.

It is never easy to figure out where the enemy is when he is shooting at you because nine out of ten times he is shooting from cover or concealment and you are trying to avoid getting hit rather than finding the enemy. A muzzle flash is not very visible in the light but at night it is a good indicator of where the enemy is. Bullets cannot be seen as they fly overhead; the human eye cannot track something that fast. Bullets do make a crack as they zip by because they are breaking the sound barrier. This crack can sometimes be mistake for the firing of the weapon. At longer ranges this can make things confusing because a crack can be made by shooting past a large hill. This makes the target thing the shot came from that hill.

It is very difficult to pinpoint one single shot (which is why snipers prefer firing only once) and the more shots the easier it is to figure out which direction the shooter is in.

Also, despite what most people see on the movies, bullets do not make cute little explosions when they hit something. If they don't penetrate the object and leave a little hole, they ricochet, usually unpredictably. Although they lose much of their velocity when they hit an object and ricochet, they can still be very deadly.

The movies are usually pretty good about having the good guy leap behind cover made of dry wall and receive protection. Dry wall does not protect against bullets. A trailer, in a trailer park is unlikely to stop bullets; some of the furniture inside probably will but usually not the walls, floor or ceiling. Concrete stops bullets, along with heavy metal. The type of round is also important, an armor pierced will very likely go right through a car door which will stop a lesser round but an armor pierced will also punch a hole in the bad guy that is much smaller and less dangerous than another round.

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Another important aspect of individual tactics is presenting as little a target to the enemy as possible. This is one reason for crouching, or lying prone. An amateur will show a lot more of his body than a pro when firing from cover. For instance, when a pro fires around the right side of a corner, he/she places his right foot at the corner and leans over; this presents a very small target area for the enemy. An amateur will step to the side exposing everything from his head to his foot. Ricochets make it easier to hit this type of amateur.

When an individual fires it is usually his intent to hit and kill the enemy. This is not done by 'throwing bullets' at him, aiming is the most effective way of hitting the enemy. Aiming is also best accomplished when the weapon is braced. Anyone who has handled a weapon and used the sights will have noticed that the sights don't sit still on the target. Even something as little as breathing will cause the aim point to keep moving. This becomes even more important at longer ranges when the target is smaller.

Consider the size of everything. Bullets are very small, even a 30mm cannon round is small when you compare it with the area it is being shot at. Bullets do not home in on living targets; they go where they are aimed at and where gravity helps guide them to. This means that it is much easier to miss a target than hit it, unless the target is close enough to count pimples.

That is why professionals do not run and fire at the same time, even with a machine gun. If the weapon sight is wavering when the shooter is motionless and concentrating, it is going to waver a hundred times more dramatically when the shooter is moving. Even slowly walking forward and aiming it is difficult to keep the weapon aligned on a target at further than fifteen feet. Try aiming sometime with a toy gun and you will see how difficult it would be to hit a target at about fifty to sixty feet. Rifles are easier to aim and have a longer range, pistols are the worst and anything beyond twenty feet is usually a waste of ammunition. Pistols are good for close range where speed and ease of movement is important. A pro is going to aim his weapon, even a machine gun, an amateur is going to spray and pray. Machine guns put out more rounds than a regular rifle, they are not more accurate. The advantage of a machine gun is that by firing a larger number of bullets at the enemy the shooter is more likely to hit OR force the enemy to take cover.

If the enemy takes cover he can't fire back effectively because it takes time to aim, time he no longer has. Of course the spray and pray practitioner might get lucky but chances are he won't. Spray and pray was the method preferred in Vietnam and thousands of bullets were expended to just get one single hit, and that was not always fatal. Explosives and shrapnel scored most of the kills. Another reason a person will get in the prone, or behind something is because he/she can then brace his/her weapon and fire more accurately. Fox holes usually have the edge of the hole carved out to brace their weapon and expose as little of the shooter to the enemy as possible. Fox holes (or fighting positions as the Marines call them) are not just holes in the ground, when properly built they provide cover, concealment and a brace for their weapon so the shooter can kill the enemy with a minimum of personal danger. Firing from the hip is also stupid, even firing a machine gun from the hip is something only an amateur will do. Some machine guns, however, have too much kick to fire from the shoulder and must be fired from the hip in an emergency.

When Rambo mowed down all the bad guys with an M60 machine gun in one hand I realized that the producer had no clue as to what he was doing. Hip firing is not accurate at all and is a great way to waste ammo. The only way it might be accurate is if the gunner 'walked' his rounds into the target by observing where they hit and adjusting his hold. Walking rounds into a target is only effective if the shooter has all the time in the world and the target is not firing back. Machine guns come with bipods and tripods for this reason, they are not meant to be firing without being braced on something solid.

Moving under fire is also important. The shooter wants to get closer to this target because it is easier to hit him. Running across the open is stupid, the runner is a big target and very hard not to see. Running is fast however and is most effective when the individual has to cover a small distance. Crossing a long distance (like thirty or more feet) is suicide unless the individual's buddies are keeping the bad guys from looking. Zigzagging is good when running toward the enemy and he is aiming at you, it only makes you move slower when you are running across his front. Zigzagging can also be bad if you are zigging or zagging in

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front of a buddy behind you who is trying to provide covering fire, he might accidentally shoot you in the back.

It is always important to move unpredictably when the enemy is firing at you because he will try to anticipate your movement and aim at where you will be. Shooting at a moving target is not as easy as it sounds, especially at longer ranges; don't forget the bullet is very small compared to the target area. Another thing that is important about movement is the person should know where he is going before he moves and it shouldn't be far away. Solid cover should be chosen before the person even gets up.

On Patrol

When a unit is on patrol people do not just blindly follow the person in front of them. Everyone has a job and everyone has a sector to cover. When an individual is on patrol it is in his better interest to assume that the enemy will start firing at him any moment. For that reason a professional will carry his weapon ready to be fired, and will continuously be looking for cover and concealment (in addition to looking for the enemy.)

Each person in a patrol is responsible for a certain arc that overlaps with another person. Before the patrol everyone should know their area of responsibility because they will be responsible for watching that area for enemy activity. The point man is not the only one looking for the enemy because an enemy patrol can stumble into the center of a patrol, and a point man can miss an enemy ambush.

There are three types of ready positions that a pro can use. One is the pro holds the weapon near his right shoulder and pointing down toward his left foot (but not AT his left foot) so he can bring it up, into his shoulder, quickly and fire accurately. Another ready position is to have the butt stock in or near the right arm pit and the weapon pointing off to the right of the right foot. Again this allows the shooter to bring his weapon up quickly into an accurate firing position. One variation of the first method is the weapon is not brought into the shoulder but is placed near it against the chest, below the firer's eye. This helps with accuracy and the shooter is trained to fire with both eyes open. The third method is to have the butt stock near the hip and the muzzle up near eye level. The trooper would then be looking over the muzzle and wherever he looked he would be looking over the muzzle. When he sights a target the muzzle juts forward at the enemy and the buttstock comes out and into the shooter's shoulder. This method is best for urban combat because the shooter will most likely be firing over something and the muzzle is already over the object to be firing over. The disadvantage is the muzzle sticks out and can tip off the enemy if he see's the muzzle coming around the corner, also the shooter is likely to fire high initially and it is always better to fire low (because of ricochets).

The first method is the best because it is quick, efficient and during long patrols, the easiest to maintain. The second method can be awkward for long periods of time. Another important factor when carrying a weapon in the ready is the finger is completely OFF the trigger. The other hand, holding the rifle, has the trigger finger pointing down the barrel. This helps because all the shooter has to do is point at his target with his finger and so will the barrel, this is a very helpful method because it is more natural for a person to point his finger at something than to point a weapon.

Professionals are also trained to point their weapon wherever they are looking. This makes accurate fire quicker, if you are looking at your squad leader; however, this is not a good thing.

In a potential firefight the weapons is kept in the shoulder and aimed slightly down (and the finger OFF the trigger) until a target is spotted and then the muzzle comes up, the thumb engages the safety (if not done already), and the finger pulls the trigger. It is usually better to bring the weapon up to the target instead of down because the shooter will be more likely to shoot low, remember ricochets can kill or scare the enemy, rounds passing by overhead are much less intimidating.

It may seem strange that a lot of emphasis is placed on keeping the finger off the trigger until the enemy is actually identified. This is to prevent friendly fire. It doesn't take long to move the finger to the trigger and it gives the shooter a chance to identify his target. Someone who is scared may shoot movement before he can identify it, that fraction of a second might help him avoid shooting a friend. Also, if the shooter falls

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and his finger is on the trigger, he is very likely to accidentally fire and possibly injure himself or others. When getting up to move closer to the enemy the shooter takes his finger off the trigger for this reason. An amateur on the other hand is likely to sling his rifle or carry it over his shoulder like a stick. He might even use it as a walking stick. He will aim it wherever simply because he has little or no respect for what it can do. A pro will NEVER aim his weapon at a friend, even accidentally, or put his hand over the muzzle, unlike an amateur who might do something stupid like use it to scratch his nose. When the firing starts an amateur will waste precious time changing his weapon from the carry to the fire position. Also, while on patrol, a pro will try to keep a low profile, be as quiet as possible and move from cover to cover, always assuming the enemy is watching him and preparing to fire. Amateurs believe they are superior to the enemy and their superior skills or ideology will allow them to defeat the enemy, (or they are simply lazy). Amateurs will also take the easiest route, simply because they have not been fired at by the enemy in a while and are probably getting tired. This is what discipline is about. A highly disciplined warrior will do everything 'by the book' even when he is tired or believes contact with the enemy is unlikely. An amateur makes excuses for poor discipline; the pro may not like doing things by the book but does it anyway. A fire fight never really begins when a person expects it, now matter how keyed up a person is and that first shot fired is almost always a shocker. The transition from surprise to action is the difference between professionals and amateurs. An amateur will waste time trying to figure things out; a pro will be operating on instinct and training.

Something else that can have more importance in a real battle than a 'Hollywood' battle is ammunition. Firearms are hungry beasts and a magazine can be emptied rapidly. Machine guns are even worse. For example, the specs on an M249 squad automatic weapon say it can fire seven hundred and fifty rounds a minute; a belt of ammunition for it only has two hundred rounds. This does not take into consideration that after so many rounds the barrel will turn cherry red and literally begin to melt.

Sooner than later, the combatants are going to have to reload and when they do they will be vulnerable to a quick rush by the enemy. Professionals are trained to reload behind cover where the enemy can't take his time and shoot them. One method used by pros is the last couple rounds in a magazine are tracer rounds. When he fires a couple tracers he knows he is almost empty. Keeping count of ammunition expended is not practical. When a person realizes he is about to run out of ammo he can always change magazines early. This keeps one round in the chamber of the weapon (for one emergency) and he doesn't have to chamber another round. Revolvers are the worst when it comes to reloading. Several FBI agents were butchered in Florida when they had to reload their revolvers and their enemy attacked.

The Battle team

Two men make up a battle team and they will never be far from each other. This is very important on a battlefield. First is the morale factor. A person is much more likely to panic if he is alone. He will feel cut off, in extreme danger and about to die. If someone else is nearby it provides a great deal of support because, if the individual is injured or lost, there is someone to help him or go for help. Other factors come into play also. If someone else is present the individual will attempt to mask his fear and in this way, more easily overcome it. (This is one reason military forces do not readily acknowledge a soldier's fear and encourage the 'fearless' attitude). Another factor is that in 'tight' units that the two (or more) are looking out for and relying on each other. When someone knows that someone else is doing their best to protect him from harm it has a very calming affect.

The battle team is the smallest 'unit' employed for these reasons. When a squad leader does a recon of an area he takes someone with him as 'backup'. Sniper teams usually operate in two man teams; very rarely do they operate alone.

There are exceptions to the 'battle team rule'. If a squad uses flank security than a single man will be put out on either side. However, the flank security people will not be too far from the rest of the squad if they run into trouble.

Firefight

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When the firing starts a battle team should work together very closely. A pair of professionals will continuously be talking to each other. They will inform each other when and where they see the enemy, what kind of weapon the enemy has (especially if it is a machine gun). They will also tell each other when they are reloading or running low on ammo. Whenever a grenade is thrown a warning will be yelled so friendly forces can take cover. Pros will use special code words to prevent the enemy from understanding them. Words like 'fire in the hole' let friendlies know a grenade or other explosive has been loosed and is getting ready to explode. The word 'grenade' is very similar in many languages and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out.

A good team will also talk about their own status, especially if one is running low on ammo and/or needs to reload. This way the other person knows to conserve ammunition and keep the enemy from rushing his partner who is vulnerable. A magazine can be dropped from the weapon and abandoned but usually they are recovered for reuse. Also, if there are a few rounds still in the magazine they can be recovered if worst comes to worst.

A pair of pros working together is also more effective than an individual because while one is moving to a better position the other is forcing the enemy to keep his head down or fire less accurately. This is called different things, leapfrogging, fire and movement or fire and maneuver, depending on the 'school'.

Regardless of what it is called, the basics are the same.

Movement by a battle team is like it is for an individual. Everyone moves from cover to cover and keeps the distance short. Many infantrymen are taught to use the phrase "I'm up, he see's me, I'm down" in order to keep distances short. By the time the trooper has recited it, he has gotten up, moved a few meters and taken cover, fast and furious.

Two troopers working together also increase the chance of locating the enemy. Four eyes are always better than two.

On Patrol

On patrol a battle team is also important. While one man is drinking water, relieving himself, eating or whatever, the other man is covering him. This allows the person to take care of business as quickly and quietly as possible without having to worry about the enemy catching him by surprise.

Two pros working together are also less likely to be surprised because they have different areas to watch for enemy activity. Amateurs might have their attention drawn to a stream or animal or something and everyone might be looking at it when the shooting starts. Regardless of other distractions, pros will try to concentrate on their area of responsibility.

Silent Sentry Take out

Everyone has seen a movie where the good guys sneak up and cut the throat of the bad guy with a knife. This is one of the more difficult methods. Silenced weapons are preferred, bows or crossbows are secondary, and knives are used when nothing else is available (like in most infantry units). A garrote can be used also. Whenever a sentry is designated for 'removal' usually a pair of troopers is assigned the job of removing one or more sentries. One man employs the weapon (usually a knife) and the other man remains ready with his assault rifle (or machine gun) in case things go wrong. More than two people can be used in a sentry removal team but silent sentry removal will be detailed in another section.

Defense

In the defense a two men are usually stationed together. While one man is digging the hole, the other man is watching for the enemy. While one man is sleeping, the other is watching for the enemy (this is called fifty-fifty, fifty percent asleep, fifty percent awake). When one man is placing booby traps or barbed wire, the other is covering him.

When the fight begins the two remain stationary in their holes and if one is injured he has another person present to help him and/or get help.

The Fire team

A fire team consists of three to six men. One member is usually armed with a light machine gun and one is the team leader. In some formations there is also a grenadier with a grenade launcher. In US Marine

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units the grenadier is usually the fire team leader, in some Army units the grenadier is just a team member.

A fire team is usually the smallest unit sent out on patrol and the team relies more on stealth than combat power because of its small size.

A well balanced combat unit, fire teams are designed to be versatile. The fire team revolves around the light machine gun. The team leader insures the machine gun is positioned where it can do the most damage to the enemy. If the machine gun cannot fire at an enemy because of a dip in the land, a crater where the enemy is hiding or whatever, the grenadier can lob grenades into the enemy's location. If the enemy is protected or some reason from the low angle arc of the grenadier the machine gun can provide covering fire while one of the riflemen gets closer and throws a grenade or places a demo charge.

Because machine gunners are a primary target for the enemy the machine gunner is kept as safe as possible (like he does not usually lead an attack). Also, if the machine gunner is injured or killed, the next (or closest) senior man picks up the machine gun and becomes the new gunner. Regardless of casualties, the machine gun is the most important part of a fire team. Without the machine gun the fire team is a whole lot less effective.

The machine gun is also manned at all times. If a machine gunner is digging a hole, eating or relieving himself he gives the machine gun to someone else and takes their weapon until he is done.

In addition to carrying their own ammunition, each member of the fire team usually carries extra ammo for the machine gun. Rocket launchers (like the LAW and AT-4) dramatically increase the effectiveness of a fire team. A long range radio also increases the lethality of the fire team ten fold because if they can't destroy it with their already considerable firepower, they can call in artillery, mortars, strike aircraft or reinforcements.

The Firefight

In battle a fire team, when properly trained and led, is incredibly effective. Armed with machine guns, grenade launchers, anti-tank rockets, hand grenades and a radio a fire team is the most lethal, single unit on the battle field.

When a firefight begins everyone takes cover and fires at the enemy. The fire team leader directs the machine gunner to the best position and directs the fire team to concentrate fire on certain targets (like enemy machine guns or leaders).

If a target cannot be killed by direct fire weapons, the grenadier opens fire.

If the enemy loses the advantage, the fire team leader may direct his team to advance on the enemy.

Depending on the amount of return fire his team is receiving, he may move his team individually or in pairs. He might even move everyone except the machine gunner and once everyone has moved, then he will move his machine gunner (or vice versa).

Basically, anybody moving is supported by accurate fire, whether the person moving is a single person or several, he has people suppressing the enemy while he finds a better position, reloads or carries out some other combat related task.

Unless the fire team leader retains control over movement, (not an easy task!) movement is like it is for battle teams and individuals.

On Patrol

Each member of a patrolling fire team adheres to the basics of individual and battle team patrolling. In addition to those basics, fire teams move in formations. Each formation has a different purpose and is designated anticipating enemy contact. Since it is tiring to move from cover to cover, getting up and down, formations are used. It should be noted that although a formation looks good on paper (or screen) it is not easy to maintain any formation because warriors have to go around objects and don't pay perfect attention to the formation. Also, when the firing starts most units deploy in a line facing the enemy so everyone can fire freely at the enemy without endangering a friend. Every team leader and squad leader is different so there will be variations according to the whim of the leader. In larger formations more can change so all machine gunners are not on one side, ect. In general, the team leader places himself where

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he can best see what is happening and so control the unit.

FORMATIONS

Unit formations are used to control the unit so that firepower is focused more effectively on the enemy. Formations are also used to reduce the confusion and place order on the unit so the commander has more understanding of what is going on. Formations are used by all command levels from fire team leaders on up. All formations are not set in stone and leaders frequently vary them according to the situation or terrain. The easiest formation to control is when everyone is in a line, then the leader only has to worry about the first person is going. When the unit is online, the leader has a much more difficult time controlling everyone because everyone is looking forward towards the enemy so they don't get shot. On line, or skirmisher, formations usually look like wavy lines in practice because of terrain, lack of attention or poor visibility.

FIRETEAM WEDGE: When a fire team is unsure of the enemy's location a fire team wedge is the best formation. It maintains a large amount of firepower to the front and makes it more difficult for the enemy to trap the fire team in a flank position where its firepower is severely limited. The machine gun can be placed on either side of the diamond, as directed by the team (or squad) leader. In the five man fire team the machine gunner is kept in the rear of the formation so he can look over the situation and then deploy to the best location. The machine gunner is never put in front of a formation because the machine gun is heavier and not as easy to maneuver as a rifle. Also the lead man is more likely to come under fire and needs to be more alert, the machine gunner, because of his heavier load, usually tires faster. A tired warrior is not as alert as a fresh one.

FIRETEAM ECHELON: The Echelon is used when the enemy is suspected of being to either side. It can also be used when friendly forces are to the side not being protected against, like when a fire team is providing flank security for a larger unit. This focuses all available firepower to the side. Firepower to the front is only slightly diminished in favor of protecting against a possible flank attack. When proper spacing is employed, this kind of formation allows each warrior to fire directly forward and to the side without endangering a comrade. Individuals are staggered instead of getting in a strait line to avoid getting in line for an enemy machine gun.

Online/Skirmisher: When the fire team is attacking, or knows where the enemy is at, the team leader may deploy the team in a line. This focuses all available firepower to the front but leaves the team vulnerable to its flanks. To minimize the danger to a machine gun getting on a flank and mowing everyone down each individual is staggered. While this diagram looks good in theory practice is not this pretty and a line is never perfect. People take cover behind what is available and try to avoid getting in each other's way.

FIRETEAM COLUMN: A Column formation is used when the fire team is not likely to encounter the enemy. It is also used in thick vegetation or for speed. The column formation is extremely vulnerable to an attack from the front but is well deployed for an attack from either side. Two variations of the column exist. One slightly reduces the vulnerability to a frontal attack so one machine gun cannot kill the entire unit. The other one is best used in very thick terrain or at night so people don't get lost or disorganized. The illustration shows the preferred type of column. On a road for instance the rifleman and Assistant Automatic Rifleman would be on opposite sides of the road. In the less preferred formation, each member is directly behind the other.

In each formation, the fire team members attempt to maintain as much room as possible so one grenade cannot take out more than one person and a machine gun has more space to traverse to target more people. Another side effect of good dispersion is it reduces visibility for the enemy. It is much easier for the

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enemy to see a group of camouflaged men than it is to see one or two camouflaged me. Also by maintaining distance between individuals more ground can be covered. If the team walks into an ambush the dispersion may also mean that fewer people are caught in the kill zone.

The Defense

In the defense, fire team members are deployed in pairs, two to a fighting hole. The machine gunner is carefully placed so that any approaching enemy are more likely to encounter him. Because the machine gunner is the second senior man in the fire team, the team leader mans a different fighting position. This way, if the team leader is killed, the machine gunner can take command and pass his weapon to the person with him. They are separated so one explosion doesn't kill them both.

The machine gun is of critical importance in the defense. Usually it is deployed along the flattest piece of ground so that it can fire farther along that line effectively. This is called grazing fire. The machine gun bullets graze the ground from one foot up to four feet. Any attackers crossing the machine gun's path is vulnerable to this grazing fire, even if smoke or weather obscure the machine gunner's view.

A stake is also used to designate the machine guns FPL, or final protective line. When the enemy is about to over run the unit, the FPF (Final Protective Fire) command will be given. This means the machine guns especially will create a wall of bullets across the unit's front. Anyone crossing this line will be in severe danger from the machine gun firing as fast as it can. When two or more machine guns use interlocking fields of fire it creates a near impenetrable wall of fire. This makes it doubly important that machine guns be manned.

When barbed wire is used, a roll can be deployed along the machine gun's path. This way any enemy soldiers who run into the barbed wire will be stopped temporarily in the path of the machine gun. Another strand will discourage enemy troops from getting within hand grenade range of the machine gun position. The grenadier is placed so he can fire into places the machine gun cannot.

Communication in the defense is just as important as in the attack.

The Squad

A squad consist of two to three fire teams, with two being the average. Some militaries, like the French and British call a squad a section. Not all squads are broken down into fire teams.

A squad usually has a massive amount of firepower at its disposal. However, some squads are little more than a bunch of soldiers following their squad leader. Some militaries discourage squad leaders, or any non-officer from displaying initiative. Sometimes even officers are discouraged from showing initiative. For the purpose of this book I will talk about two and three fire team squads. With all fire teams armed with grenade launchers and machine guns a squad is not something to trifle with. The reason a squad has two or more fire teams is because it gives a squad leader a great deal of flexibility. If one fire team makes contact with the enemy and engages in a firefight, the squad leader can send the other fire team around to flank the enemy. With his squad already divided into teams, the squad leader doesn't have to reorganize or assign a leader, it's already done. Furthermore, the team is well balanced as far as weaponry goes. When rounds are flying a leader doesn't have time to say "You, Jake, Mike, Kevin and Eric go attack their right flank. You might as well take Jason with you because he has a machine gun. . ."

Organizing a squad into fire teams also dramatically increases the squad leader's ability to control the squad. Instead of directing six or more people, he only has to direct two or three, and team leaders in turn only have to control two or three men. This insures more senior soldiers are in charge, more control is displayed and more initiative is displayed.

Breaking down a squad into fire teams is not always practical for militaries. If the troops are conscripts and only serve for one to two years breaking them down into fire teams may not be as effective because they will not gain nearly as much experience to be very effective. Of course there are always exceptions to this rule.

Another point to note is that in some formations, like US Army or British, the squad leader might lead the first fire team and the assistant squad leader might lead the second. Other units, like the US Marine Corps, will usually have a designated team leader for each fire team.

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When the firing starts one fire team can lay down a base of fire while the other fire team gets closer. Instead of having one man cover another man while he rushes, the squad leader can have fire teams cover each other. With three or more fire teams, a squad leader can direct one fire team to assist another, thereby doubling the firepower at any one point.

Firefight

When a firefight erupts it usually escalates as combat elements make contact with each other along the battle line. Only in the desert or other open terrain can two large units suddenly start firing at each other. In the woods, jungle, hills or whatever, usually fire teams start fighting and more units are committed to the battle as the commander makes his decisions. Of course there are exceptions to this rule. If a unit is crossing an open area and comes under fire they will have to adjust. A firefight can quickly escalate from an individual firing at the enemy to a battalion, or regiment firing at the enemy if the two face each other in a line.

When a squad makes contact with the enemy the squad leader has to make several quick decisions. These decisions are based on the mission and the squad's capabilities. He must evaluate what kind of force the squad is facing. Sometimes this can be determined by the how many enemy rifles are being heard and how much of an area those weapons are occupying. A lot depends on the situation. If the squad has been ambushed and has taken casualties he can't extract safely, he might order an attack. What kind of attack varies on the terrain and situation? Most likely he will order a fire team to try and flank the enemy, or he might bring up the other fire team to help suppress the enemy while casualties are extracted.

Of course he might order everyone to run for their life. As explained above fire teams are independent units and have a great deal of firepower. It is the squad leader's mission to deploy his fire teams in an effective manner against the enemy. With all the yelling, screaming, gunfire and confusion, a squad leader has a very difficult job controlling his squad and maneuvering it effectively. A squad leader can't always see his entire squad, or even his team leaders. Squad radios are a god send to a squad leader and allow him to receive reports and give orders. If the squad doesn't have radios the squad leader has to yell or use hand arm signals. Usually yelling is of limited value because of all the noise and hand arm signals down work very well unless people are looking at him or it is night time. What ends up happening is he has to run around from team leader to team leader giving directions or receiving reports. Of course yelling sometimes works but not always.

This is why standard operating procedures are so important to a squad. SOP's cover most situations and help overcome much of the confusion. For example, if the SOP calls for first fire team to lay down a base of fire when they make contact and for second fire team to envelope (flank) then everyone knows what is going to happen when the shooting starts. First team will automatically move up so they can fire on the enemy and Second team will look to the squad leader for directions on which way to flank the enemy. Overall, the team leaders have a great deal of control and can spell the difference between victories or defeat if they and their team are properly trained.

Some squads are organized around medium machine guns. For instance, not so long ago British squads were organized with eight men. One had a medium machine gun and the other seven had regular assault rifles.

When the firing began, the machine gunner and his assistant would lay down a base of fire while the six riflemen advanced. When the squad leader was ready for the machine gun to advance, all six riflemen would fire to cover the gunner's advance.

Regardless of organization, poorly trained (or led) squad would operate as one big mob directed by the squad leader. The squad might have a great deal of firepower in the form of machine guns and rockets, but there would often be a lack of initiative among the troops.

The Soviets were a prime example of this. All tactics were based on battle drills or standard operating procedures. The advantage of this method was that everyone knew what was going on and what was expected of them. Only squad leaders knew how to read a map or a radio. If something unexpected happened then the battle drill could rapidly fall apart. To overcome the Soviets used waves. When wave

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one fell apart then wave two would move in, or wave three. Eventually, one wave would succeed and the waves that failed could regroup and reorganize. This method of combat was great for the Soviets who relied on quantity over quality.

Soviet soldiers were not encouraged to think or act on their own. In a Soviet type military, the squad leader would be nothing more than a fire team leader with a lot more men and weapons than usual. The platoon commander, an officer, would be the real decision maker and even then he would always defer to a higher authority.

A Soviet style squad is heavily armed with automatic weapons. Usual doctrine calls for the squad to deploy on line and while standing or crouching, advance on the enemy. As the squad advances a high volume of fire would be maintained so that the squad would have fire superiority and their enemy would be forced to seek cover. With fire superiority, the Soviet squad would advance on line with their weapon in their shoulder or at their hip. When a soldier fired he would 'walk' his rounds into the target, adjusting his aim according to where his rounds hit.

Of course the Soviets did not always do it this way. They would take cover and use finer tactics, but because they didn't trust their soldiers they preferred to keep things as simple as possible and trained their troops accordingly. Most of their soldiers were conscripts and didn't want to be there anyway. This is also a reason nearly all Soviet weapons had the automatic fire capability.

Patrol

A squad is organized very well for a patrol. It has enough organic firepower to hold its own and is small enough to move with some degree of stealth and security. Patrol organization will be covered in another section as this is a primary mission of an infantry squad.

The Defense

A squad in the defense can be a powerful force. A squad leader, as directed and assisted by the platoon leader is assigned a specific area to cover. In turn, the squad leader assigns his fire team leaders specific areas to cover and they assign individuals specific areas as described in Fire team Defense.

The squad leader makes sure the machine guns are properly placed and can fire across the squad's front. The squad leader also insures all areas of the squad's front are covered by one or more weapons. More details on the Defense will be covered in another section.

Formations

A squad only uses dedicated formations when it is moving to the attack. During patrols it may use formations but due to the fact patrols usually cover large amounts of area formations are not always practical except in certain situations. The squad uses many of the same formations as a fire team, with one additional one.

Inside the squad formation, the fire teams are in their own formations. Sometimes the squad leader dictates which formations the fire teams will use but not always. For instance in a squad wedge, the lead fire team might be in a fire team wedge and the fire teams on either side might be in echelons.

Squad Wedge: When the squad leader does not know where the enemy is he will likely deploy the squad in a wedge formation. This gives him protection to the front and flanks. It only works with three fire teams however. If a squad leader does not have three fire team he may employ an echelon, or have the lead team form a wedge and the second team follow in a column. Like the fire team wedge, this formation is easier to control because nearly everyone can see the lead rifleman and adjust off him.

Squad Echelon: When the squad leader is expecting an attack from the side he will likely deploy the squad in an echelon facing the possible enemy location. This concentrates firepower in that direction and provides protection to the front as well. The squad echelon can be used when protecting a larger unit's flank. Individual fire teams will most likely deploy in echelons to support the squad formation. The lead fire team may deploy in a team wedge or a skirmishers formation.

Squad Skirmisher/On line: When the squad leader knows his right and left flanks are covered and he knows the enemy is to his front he will deploy his squad on line (also called a skirmish line). This allows him to concentrate firepower to the front but leaves him vulnerable to the flanks. Deploying the squad on

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line is also a good way to search an area. Fire teams will likely deploy in skirmisher formations, wedges, or echelons depending on the perceived threat. The on line formation is usually very hard to control even under the best circumstances and is used only when contact is imminent or searching an area. At night this is a nightmare because people usually can't see the person to either side very well.

Squad V: The squad V is a reverse of the wedge. This is used primarily to protect the rear of a larger unit's column. Firepower is concentrated to the rear and flanks. One variation of this is to have the two lead fire teams close together. When contact is made, the first two fire teams will lay down a base of fire and the trailing fire team flanks the enemy.

The Column: The column is used when the squad is more interested in speed. It is always easier to follow the guy in front of you than to make your own trail. At night the column formation keeps people from wandering off and getting separated. The column is also quieter since one person is making a path and everyone else is following instead of making their own. The disadvantage of a column is firepower to the front and rear is severely limited and the squad is vulnerable to attack. Firepower to the sides is good however.

Whenever a squad makes contact with the enemy it usually tries to deploy in a line facing the enemy. This way more squad members are able to fire at the enemy and not risk shooting another squad member. When the unit is on line it is very difficult to control and this is where the team leaders play a big role. If the fire team leaders are incompetent and not paying attention to the battle they may fail to support another fire team or be completely ineffective against the enemy.

The Reinforced Squad

Most infantry squads are usually composed of riflemen and a few light machine gunners. Companies usually have a special platoon of special weapons like medium machine guns, rocket launchers and mortars. A battalion will have anti-tank missiles and heavy machine guns in a special company.

What usually happens is a company commander will assign each platoon so many machine guns and rocket launchers depending on the missions and availability. The platoon leader in turn, may assign these units to squads for special missions. There may also be other specialists assigned to squads, like engineers, local guides or translators, scout dogs, sniper teams, anti-air missile team and so on.

A machine gun squad (usually assigned to a platoon) has three gun teams, each one with a medium machine gun. The number of men in each machine gun team can vary from three to five people.

When a squad leader receives such attachments it increases his combat effectiveness a great deal. The squad is then generally reorganized to take advantage of the attachment. Like a fire team leader deploying his machine gunner, the squad leader deploys the special attachment where it can do the most damage to the enemy. In most cases the attachment leader is intimately familiar with his weapon and can advise the squad leader. This is one reason specialists train separately. For instance a rocket gunner training with other rocket people learns more than if he was detached and training with a regular unit.

Depending on what weapon is attached to his squad depends on how it is deployed. For instance a medium machine gun is not the best weapon for a rapid, moving assault. A medium machine gun is best employed from an over watch position where it can provide covering fire while the squad advances. A rocket launcher might be held in reserve until a bunker or some other hard target is encountered. An engineer team might be sent forward to clear a route through a mine field while the rest of the squad provides covering fire.

In general the squad leader remains in command of the unit until the specialist's abilities come into play. In good units the squad leader (or platoon leader) will let the specialist do his job and provide what support he can. In bad units the commander will attempt to supervise the specialist and will refuse to rely on the specialist's abilities.

A US Marine squad leader usually commands up to thirteen men. In a combat environment with attachments he can command up to twenty, or in rare instances, more.

The Mechanized Squad

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A mechanized squad operates like a regular infantry squad in many ways. The biggest difference however, is the armored personnel carrier (APC) or Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV). The IFV is usually a lightly armored, well armed vehicle that provides a great many advantages on the battle field. It is important to note that the armor of the IFV is not considered the primary advantage. The IFV can transport troops around the battlefield more quickly and safely than if they were on foot. The IFV also provides an impressive amount of firepower to support the infantry squad. IFV's also allow a soldier to enter combat more lightly equipped because he can leave his non-critical gear, like food and supplies aboard the vehicle. An armored vehicle also provides some protection from enemy artillery and mortars. It makes a big target for enemy attack aircraft and anti-tank weapons. Most anti-tank weapons were designed to take out main battle tanks and IFV's have nowhere near the amount of protection a tank has. Mechanized infantry were mechanized so they could keep up with tanks. Without infantry, tanks are extremely vulnerable to enemy infantry.

Doctrine frequently varies from military to military, however, when combat occurs infantry almost always dismount from their vehicle. Some IFV's have gun ports so the troops inside the IFV can shoot out. This looks real good on paper; in practice it is nearly worthless. Visibility from inside an IFV is very poor and by nature, IFV's give the troops a false sense of security. IFV's may be bullet proof but one missile can kill everyone inside. Outside their IFV troops have a much better chance of survival.

When attacking an objective, tactics usually vary on whether or not IFV or infantry lead the way. With the proliferation of anti-tank missiles and rockets it is becoming standard for infantry to lead the way. The IFV will either follow the infantry or take up a position and use its heavy firepower to suppress the enemy and support the infantry attack.

If the enemy is known to have few or no anti-tank weapons, then the IFV's will usually lead the way. When moving or patrolling, a platoon of IFV's will often use many of the same formations as fire teams but will not have designated riflemen or automatic riflemen. The Wedge, Skirmisher, Echelon, and Column are all used by vehicle platoons (which consist of three to four vehicles). Companies will move like infantry squad formations. All basic infantry formations can apply to vehicles because the formation is about focusing power without endangering other friendlies.

Tracked and wheeled vehicles are often more restricted in their movement because of terrain. In a thickly wooded area or the jungle for instance, vehicles are more of a liability and can only operate on roads. Large trees can stop tanks cold for instance and in some areas (like a swamp) the tank will sink into the muck. Just because a vehicle is amphibious does not mean it can go anywhere. Many vehicles need a gradual slope to safely enter and exit the water otherwise they might capsize or get stuck.

Another important aspect to remember when dealing with mechanized units is they frequently expect to encounter other mechanized units. This means that there will be a higher number of anti-tank weapons organic to the platoon and squad. They are also able to carry more ammunition and equipment than a regular line infantry unit.

The Platoon

The infantry platoon usually consists of two to four squads, three or four being average. The platoon is usually commanded by a junior officer, or if none are available, a senior sergeant. If a platoon is lead by an officer then he will always be assisted by the platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant will act as the second in command of the platoon and assist the lieutenant in commanding and controlling the platoon. The platoon sergeant will also be responsible for many of the administrative functions of the platoon. A platoon usually has an incredible amount of firepower and the platoon leader almost always has a long range radio and a radio operator. In addition to what a platoon leader (or in the Marines a platoon commander) has in his regular squads, the company commander may assign special units to him. These units are usually medium machine gun teams and rocket teams. They might also include anti-tank or anti-air teams.

Sometimes the platoon commander will keep these units under his direct control but sometimes he will assign them to squad leaders.

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In combat, a well trained and led platoon is very dangerous. Aside from the organic weapons, the radio allows the platoon commander to call for artillery, mortars, close air support or reinforcements. In effect, if the platoon cannot destroy a target with its regular weapons (or even if it can!) it can lay waste to a target area by accurately calling in supporting fires.

The Firefight

When the shooting starts the platoon commander frequently deploys his squads like the squad leader deploys his fire teams. In my opinion the platoon commander has one of the most difficult jobs on the battlefield. The platoon is too large for him to control it from a central location so he must move around giving orders and receiving reports. In addition he must move around and try to figure out what is going on and how he can exploit any advantages. He must also be willing to lead his men from the front. What this boils down to is the fact the junior officer moves around a lot under enemy fire. To make matters worse, officers are a prime target for enemy shooters. Moving around a lot while the enemy is firing at you tends to be fatal. Trivia devotees will note the very large number of junior officers that did not survive in Vietnam. Platoon commanders usually had a very short life span when the shooting started. Deploying squads is not like deploying fire teams. For starters a much larger area needs to be considered and in rough terrain, the lieutenant is unlikely to see everyone in a squad, just smaller portions of it. This means the lieutenant has to build a mental picture of the battle field and what is occurring. Frequently this mental picture is slightly flawed because of all the confusion. If a squad leader doesn't know exactly what is going on, how many of the enemy there are, where the enemy is at, he can't pass on that information to the platoon leader. As more information becomes available the platoon commander begins to get a better grasp of what is going on and how he should deal with it.

Then, when he thinks he has figured out what to do, he has to let the squad leaders know so they can carry it out. The best method is if everyone has radios, otherwise he has to find the squad leaders, while they are moving around directing their squads, avoid getting shot and issue his orders. The platoon sergeant can help a great deal by going after one or two squad leaders.

Fire teams almost never separate, squads do so only rarely. In a battlefield environment, with units remaining dispersed, squad members may not see their buddies in another squad for hours, maybe days, even though they are not really far apart.

Platoon Basics

I learned from personal experience that while in garrison NCO's and Officers may have several advantageous perks but on the battle field they more than earn those perks. While most of the squad members are sleeping, the NCO's and officers are planning, briefing each other or checking on their people.

Usually, the platoon leader will try to keep at least one squad in reserve until he knows what is going on. If he doesn't keep one squad back from all the firing he will not have anybody to protect the flanks or attack the enemy's flank. Nor will there be anyone to reinforce a squad that is being overrun.

The radio operator usually stays close to the platoon commander. When the shooting starts higher headquarters needs to be notified. An experienced radio operator can pretty much figure out what is going on and report it but usually the platoon commander has to make the report, in addition to figuring out what is going on, give orders and avoid getting shot. The enemy also likes to target radio operators because the radio can call for all manner of lethal unpleasantness like artillery and reinforcements. Because of his many responsibilities the platoon commander, like the squad leader, usually does not have time to shoot at the enemy. To the enemy, a platoon commander can be compared to a duck target at the shooting range that goes back and forth until you shoot it down.

platoons like squads, have standard operating procedures (usually) so everyone usually has some idea of what to do in a given situation. However, figuring out what the situation is can often lead to confusion and errors. For instance, if the SOP calls for first and second squad to lay down a base of fire when the shooting starts, while third squad envelopes the enemy everyone knows what is happening. If third squad tries to envelope and runs into an enemy force that is enveloping then everyone is probably going to start

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wondering where third squad is until third squad sends back a report. At that time the platoon commander has some decisions to make. Sometimes the platoon commander will lead the flanking maneuver.

Pulling back troops that are under fire is never an easy proposition. The enemy will be happy to shoot the troops in the back as well as in the front. Furthermore, if the enemy sees their targets retreating they are likely to assume their targets are running away and pursue them. This can open up another squad's flank to an aggressive enemy and that can lead to disaster.

A platoon commander will also (in most cases) have special attachments like machine gun teams and rocket launchers. Again this makes his job more difficult because he has to deploy them so they do the most damage to the enemy. By assigning them to a squad leader he lightens his work load, or the platoon sergeant can take responsibility for them.

If (or maybe when) the platoon commander becomes a casualty the platoon still has to figure out he has become a casualty. If one fire team sees the officer go down, they still has to pass it up the chain of command. This can take time and during that time the enemy is not going to be sitting still just returning fire.

The platoon sergeant is the next in the chain of command to lead the platoon. If the platoon sergeant is on the ball and knows what is going on the fight can continue effectively. In formations where NCO's are not encouraged to display initiative the loss of an officer can bring the attack to a grinding halt if it doesn't already have orders.

Unit morale comes into play here. If the unit is composed of unwilling conscripts they will likely remain in place and return fire, or more likely run away if there is nobody to stop them. Soldiers with high morale or conscripts who really believe in their cause will usually be more aggressive and willing to stand and fight. Well trained and motivated leaders will be aggressive and use every little advantage to get the drop on the enemy.

For example. A good fire team leader may notice a ditch leading into enemy lines that is not covered by enemy fire (maybe because the team leader directed his team to take out the person guarding it). He will notify his fellow team leader or squad leader if possible and then lead his squad as they low crawl through this ditch and into enemy lines. With a fire team popping up among them the enemy will have to readjust to the new threat and more gaps will open in their battle line, gaps others can exploit. The fire team leader could also have his saw gunner cover the rest of team while they crawled into enemy lines. A squad leader might send in his whole squad. This is one way major firefights can be won by aggressive action. During one of the World Wars a German squad managed to fight its way across a river and breach the French lines. Because the squad leader continued the attack instead of waiting for reinforcement, the French (Battalion or Regimental?) Commander feared the Germans had penetrated his line in force and retreated when he could have held the line.

A poor unit might notice the route into enemy lines but would be unwilling to try and exploit it because of the many dangers. They might also mistrust their fellow's ability to provide covering fire. Unmotivated troops would find a great many reasons not to exploit such a weakness, like 'it might be booby trapped, what if someone else is guarding it, it is too exposed, ect.'

It is a well know fact that warfare is about risks. Nothing is ever risk free and usually, the bigger the risk the bigger the gain. Sometimes the risk is greater than anticipated and sometimes it is less than anticipated. Either way, someone must make the decision and carry it out. If the person is an unwilling participant in the war he will be more interested in survival than anything else and getting such a person to take risks will require more than kind words.

A combat officer is usually more educated than his troops. Officers are usually heavily indoctrinated to believe in the cause (like the Soviet military), or they are dedicated professionals. Most militaries have a combination of the two. Either way, the officer is responsible for commanding his troops. If the officer is good he will motivate his troops, whether they are conscripts or not, and encourage them to fight well. If the troops really like the officer they are more likely to take risks for him. If the troops dislike the officer they might 'have an accident' that insures he does not survive the fight.

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In a platoon, the lieutenant has, perhaps, the greatest impact on his troops. He is with them almost constantly. The troops will see him inspecting their lines, talking with their leaders, and giving orders. Company commanders and up are frequently little more than voices on a radio, especially on a battle field. It is the platoon commander that frequently gives his troops morale courage because he is the most visible authority figure.

As a marine I served under good lieutenants that I would die for and at least one lieutenant I wished would die. While a company commander might be highly visible in garrison, it was the Lieutenants that would have the most impact on a platoon. As the most senior man, all NCO's would defer to him (even if he was younger and less experienced than them). As professionals the NCO's would enforce his rules and regulations regardless of how they felt about it. As the mouthpiece of higher ranking officers, if the troops didn't like the lieutenant anything he said would not be trusted and that mistrust would extend up the chain of command in most cases. Troops would not be willing to go that extra mile that could often spell success or defeat on the battlefield.

Loyalty is a two way street. Not all officers (or NCO's) realize this. If the troops are not taken care of they will not strive to maintain anything other than minimum standards. NCO's are people too, and if they are poorly lead they will frequently lead their troops poorly (but not always!)

This is one reason it is so important to have good, quality officers. Good officers can train good NCO's and good NCO's can train good troops.

A great deal goes on at the platoon level. Combat platoon commanders are frequently junior officers, fresh out of training. They have a very difficult job and no amount of training in the world can fully prepare them for it, their responsibilities and duties are enormous. Any military with a poor officer corps is bound to be defeated. If it is not initially defeated then it is likely that natural selection will mold the officer corps into an effective organization. Bad officers will end up killed, either by their troops or by the enemy, maybe even their commanders. Good officers will lead their men to victory. Politicians will frequently destroy the military by degrading the quality of its officer corps. Officers, more than enlisted, are more vulnerable to politics, especially as they reach higher ranks. History shows this time and time again, from the Romans to the Russians to the USA.

Because their presence can have such an impact on the regular soldier this is the main reason good officers lead from the front. By willingly shouldering more danger and responsibilities than the regular soldier, the officer earns the respect and trust of his men. By leading from the rear the officer is all but telling his troops they are expendable and he is expending them rather than endanger himself.

Warfare is more about psychology than bullets, especially at the smaller unit levels. Not many people recognize what powerful effect morale has on combat effectiveness. Morale is not a tangible thing and is usually very hard to understand. For instance in Saudi during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield I and many of my fellow Marines believed morale couldn't be any lower. Stuck out in the middle of nowhere with no civilized benefits, we felt like forgotten savages. When the war started however, we couldn't wait to get in there and kick Iraqi butt. Casualties probably would have dampened the mood a bit but we were fired up and anxious for combat despite a poor platoon leader and platoon sergeant, neither of which anybody really respected. The major saving grace was the Company Commander who was viewed as a tactical genius by his men.

The Company

Most companies, whether regular infantry or mechanized, or armored, have an incredible amount of firepower at their disposal. They cover a sizable amount of area when dispersed for battle and can be very versatile in their operations.

Most companies have two to six platoons and are led by an officer; an assistant (usually one grade lower) called an executive officer, and at least one senior sergeant.

Because fire teams, squads and platoons can vary so much, a company in one army can be completely different than a company in another army. For instance, a US mechanized platoon has four vehicles; a Soviet platoon only has three. However, in the big picture the Soviets have many more platoons than the

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US.

A lot of companies do not have certain organic weapons, like mortars, some do. This means that the availability of certain organic weapons can greatly influence how the company or battalion fights. For example. A Soviet company does not have organic mortars so they must rely on higher authorities to provide support. This forces the company to rely on orders from the higher authority and can reduce the effectiveness of that company by discouraging initiative.

A US Marine Corps company does have mortars. Usually three of them. This allows the company to exploit an advantage without having to rely on higher authorities. It also allows the company to operate more independently and effectively on its own. While three mortars is not a lot of firepower, it is dedicated to the company and can provide immediate support until higher authorities can authorize additional support. Mortars also allow the company to deploy their own illumination and smoke rounds quickly which can greatly influence a battle.

When a company enters battle the company commander, like the platoon commander, will hold back a reserve. In a three platoon company this means at least one platoon will be held back, maybe two. When an advantage presents itself the company commander will deploy his reserve in an attempt to favorably influence the battle.

A company without a reserve can find itself in severe trouble if something goes wrong (and it usually will). The commander will have no one to reinforce a platoon with, or protect a flank that is under attack. For this reason, the bigger the reserve the better. Of course with the presence of a battalion reserve, the company commander may be more willing to commit his own reserve.

During a battle, the company commander must frequently rely on his platoon commanders to tell him what is going on. The company occupies a large area and it is not always practical to go to the front and see what is going on. A good company commander will go to where the action is so he can see for himself what is going on. Still, this area may not be completely visible to one man. The Company Commander and his staff deploy to where they can best control and influence the battle. If a Company Commander is firing at the enemy with his personal weapon he is nothing more than an over trained rifleman so he usually doesn't want to be too close to the front.

In a 'regular' battle a company commander could theoretically command from the rear but more often than not the company commander will get close to the fighting. If the company has a weapons platoon, he is responsible for deploying it so that it will do the most damage to the enemy. This usually means breaking it up and dividing it among the platoons, but not always. For example. If the terrain is relatively open and the company is attacking an enemy on a hill, he might put one platoon and all medium machine guns on another hill so they can fire over the heads of the other two platoons as they attack. The company might even be assigned a few heavy machine guns from a higher headquarters.

The company commander has a great deal of responsibility because he has more troops and assets assigned to him. How he fights often depends on what assets he has and what his mission is.

How Does This Incorporate into Paintball?

Paintball is a game of elimination between two or more parties. There are some basic key principles to consider. SHOOT / MOVE/ COMMUNICATE

Advanced Tactical maneuvers are built upon these basic principles. These are the proverbial ABC's of war. Each requires extensive drills and practice. Shooting is obviously one of the most important concepts. In order to be a good marksman you must hit your intended target. Practice on the range is also complimented by each member knowing their weapon and the capabilities of range/distance and trajectory of flight in order to avoid under-shooting your target.

Movement is the next concept to consider. This is vital in combat operations. You rarely wait for an enemy except in an ambush or defensive posture. Most operations require you seek the enemy out. Therefore combat patrols require a cohesive force operating together as one unit.

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Lastly Communication. Without good communication a team's level of coordination will be compromised regardless of how long you have been playing together. Effective communication requires all members understand ahead of time all hand/arm signals and radio codes used by the team. No easy way around this one it is simply a matter of practice and memorization.

The following tactics are related to assisting each member of the team a basic understanding of maneuvers for each position. Remember you should have a basic understanding of each role, you never know when a combat situation will require you to switch roles in a pinch.

Regardless of the position or maneuver you perform REMEMBER these important concepts when executing any tactic: **SURPRISE, SPEED, & VIOLENCE OF ACTION**

- 1. Surprise the enemy in the very spot where he/she appears the weakest and at the exact point in time when they appear to be the least prepared.**
- 2. Utilize speed to keep them off--a moving target is much harder to hit.**
- 3. Overwhelm them with extreme violence of action; be the most terrifying opponent imaginable.**

Providing a Base of Fire

- When your point man encounters enemy, your squad will respond by building a base of fire and sending flankers. As soon as your point man hits resistance, you should hustle up and join him. Begin trading fire (it's not important that you make a kill at this point) with any known enemy.
- Don't trade fire from a position where there is a substantial threat to you. If your opponents are vigorously returning fire, then you're probably too exposed. Back up a little until your cover improves. If you're taking fire from multiple angles, then you're way too far out. Retreat quickly, turn and bump up until you engage with one angle of fire (only!)
- Even if you don't have a good shot at your opponents, keep up consistent fire. You need to keep their attention locked on you so that your flankers can get around to their side without being noticed.
- Watch your paint supply. While it's important that you keep the enemy engaged, you can't run out of paint in the process. Shoot enough to keep them interested, but not enough to burn up all your paint.
- Establish a code with your flankers so that they can radio and let you know when they need you to step up the covering fire. When they call, you can inch forward and begin to pour it on. Soon, your flankers will open up their own angles of fire and the opposition will be taken out or retreat.

Suppression Fire

- When a teammate is preparing to make a bold move (maybe a rush or a leapfrog forward) they will need suppression fire to cover their advance. By laying paint heavily into a known or suspected enemy position, you put heads down to clear the way for your buddy's push.
- It rarely works to try to suppress more than one angle at a time. You can cover one small bunker or one window of a pillbox. If you agree to cover more, you will probably fail to fully suppress the opposition, and this can get your buddy taken out.
- When you suppress, give it all you've got. Time your fire to match the exact moment when your

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buddy will be making his move. As soon as he's under cover again, let up so you don't run out of paint.

- Watch your buddy's move carefully so that you can pull your stream of paint if he runs into it. Don't stop shooting, just raise your fire or angle it to one side.
- Full-auto is best for suppression fire. If your home field doesn't allow full-auto, try a Firestorm crank. The Firestorm is legal on most fields and it lays down enough paint to make anyone think twice about putting their head up.
- When you're setting up to provide suppression fire, you shouldn't be so far forward that you're a feasible target. You should be firing from the very edge of paintball range. It helps, if you do a lot of suppression fire, to carry a Flatline-equipped Tippmann A-5. The Flatline can out-range most paintball guns by twenty-percent or more. Though the Flatline isn't as accurate as most barrels, you don't need tight accuracy for suppression fire.
- Truth be told, if you're doing a lot of suppression fire, you're probably better off changing over to the Heavy Rifleman position.

Pushing Flanks

- Once your squad has the enemy position engaged and trading fire, the flanking elements are released to one or both sides. To flank, move cross-ways to the enemy and push a little up-field. The idea is to get angles from the side of the enemy shooters. When you begin to pummel them from the side, and your squad's hitting them from the front, you will have them in a cross fire and they will need to retreat or be eliminated.
- When flanking, stealth is key. Don't hesitate to belly crawl. Belly crawling is a great way to spook a shot without exposing yourself to danger. Also, nobody expects you to belly crawl in paintball, since paintballers are typically too lazy to get their cammies dirty.
- Beware of other elements of the enemy force. You may be flanking right into another piece of their ambush. If you do encounter more resistance, radio your Squad Leader and have him dispatch another Medium or Heavy Rifleman to set another base of fire in front of the extended force. Then, begin a new flanking move.
- Remember, if your guys and theirs' are trading fire, you can use the noise as cover. Also, you have the security of knowing that the shooters, at least, are totally focused on their little firefight. You can probably move freely without them noticing. (Just be sure to watch for another ambush!) Paintballers usually scoot to a firefight like moths to a flame. A fully engulfed firefight will draw attention and should give you a clear crawl into side-door position.

Assaults

- When you execute an assault, you will be attacking a static (stationary) enemy position. Maybe you're assaulting a bunker or maybe you're assaulting the flag. In either case, you're moving hard on an entrenched position that has a defensive advantage.
- The biggest key to a successful assault is to put the enemy under fire from multiple angles at once.

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If you're attacking a defensive bunker from only one direction, then you're putting yourself at huge risk by assaulting. Your squad must hit that bunker from two or three sides, at least. You need to make life really, really stressful for the defenders before you go busting ass out there in the open.

- So, the main assault should come after several mini-assaults that buy you all kinds of angles around the defended position. Then, you can have players move in from all sides at precisely the same moment. The Commander will typically call the moment of assault over the radio when all the chess pieces are in place.
- Another key to a safe assault is suppressive fire. You can cover the most dangerous paths of assault, such as pillboxes, by assigning one or more of your squad to supply suppressive fire.
- Don't count on any ONE player to suppress any more than ONE angle. In other words, your suppression dude can cover one small bunker or one window of a pillbox. If you're taking fire from more angles than you have suppression men, then don't make the move. This also applies to enemy shooters who are across the field. When you move in, you have no way of knowing beforehand the angles you're giving enemy players. Make reasonably sure that you've limited the number of enemy players who have a shot at you before you charge in.
- One handy form of suppressive fire is the leapfrog. A two or three man team can trade off hammering a fixed position with suppressive fire while one guy runs past. As soon as the runner is five yards ahead of the suppressive fire guy, he drops and starts his own suppression fire thing while his buddy picks up and runs five yards past him. This routine keeps going – fire, run past, fire, run past – until cover is reached or the bunker is overrun. Leapfrogging is a great way to attack an enclosed pillbox.
- When you assault, don't forget to ask yourself what exposure you'll have once you've overrun your objective. Too often, an assault will take a flag base only to discover that there is an ambush waiting behind the flag. Clear all dangerous angles before going in.

Field Tactics for Heavy Gunner

- You have several main jobs: suppression fire, long-ball barrages, bushwhacking and defense. Sometimes, if there's no Heavy Rifleman around, you might be asked to provide a base of fire for a flanking maneuver, too.

Suppression Fire

- When a teammate is preparing to make a bold move (maybe a rush or a leapfrog forward) they will need suppression fire to cover their advance. By laying paint heavily into a known or suspected enemy position, you put heads down to clear the way for your buddy's push.
- It rarely works to try to suppress more than one angle at a time. You can cover one small bunker or one window of a pillbox. If you agree to cover more, you will probably fail to fully suppress the opposition, and this can get your buddy taken out.
- When you suppress, give it all you've got. Time your fire to match the exact moment when your

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buddy will be making his move. As soon as he's under cover again, let up so you don't run out of paint.

- Watch your buddy's move carefully so that you can pull your stream of paint if he runs into it. Don't stop shooting, just raise your fire or angle it to one side.
- Full-auto is best for suppression fire. If your home field doesn't allow full-auto, try a Firestorm crank. The Firestorm is legal on most fields and it lays down enough paint to make anyone think twice about putting their head up.
- When you're setting up to provide suppression fire, you shouldn't be so far forward that you're a feasible target. You should be firing from the very edge of paintball range. It helps, if you do a lot of suppression fire, to carry a Flatline-equipped Tippmann A-5. The Flatline can out-range most paintball guns by twenty-percent or more. Though the Flatline isn't as accurate as most barrels, you don't need tight accuracy for suppression fire.

Long-ball Barrages

- If your heavy gun is equipped with Flatline barrels, then you have the capability of launching long, arcing shots into clusters of enemy. This is very effective when your team bogs down against an op-force across an open area.
- By giving your shots an insane amount of arc, you can reach over one hundred yards. However, you will have zero accuracy. The paintballs will fall from the sky and splatter around and between the enemy. Even a dropped paintball will break if it hits something firm (like the other guy's head.)
- Bracket your arcing shots to dial them in on the enemy. Begin shooting low and raise your aim steadily until your barrage passes over top of the clustered players. You probably won't be able to see the point of impact, but bracketing is your best way to walk in your barrage. One way or another, it will probably force them to abandon their position (giving your team the open space.)

Bushwhacking

- When the enemy hides behind screens of brush, and nobody is getting through, the Heavy Gunner can often pound through the screen with a liberal dose of paint.
- If you're called up to bushwhack, make sure not to expose yourself to other angles of fire when you hit the brush. Enemy players behind the screen will probably high-tail it when you start blasting away, but you still must be cautious. A big gun doesn't make you impervious to paintballs.

Defense

- How you set your defense will depend on the team's overall strategy. If the team's playing a strong-side attack, then your objective on defense will be to stall and survive for as long as possible. If your team's playing an early game ambush-style strategy, then your objective will be to whittle down the numbers of the enemy before launching an assault.

Survival-style Defense

- A survival-style defense is constructed to hold the enemy off for as long as possible. This gives your assault force the maximum possible time to hit the enemy flag base, take the flag and back-door anyone who's hitting your defense. In a survival-style defense, you will keep back the

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MINIMUM number of defenders that you possibly can and still hold your flag for the entire game time (but just barely.) By keeping only the bare minimum, you free up as many men as possible to hit the opposition's flag. By strengthening the attack force, you speed the end of the game. If the game ends and you still have a big posse of defenders, then you probably held back too many.

- Fire on the enemy when they're at maximum range – this is especially effective when you're shooting a Tippmann Flatline. Making the enemy bunker up way, way out there will buy you more time. Keep them from advancing by popping away at them every time they look ready to move.
- If you have fortress-strong defenses around your flag, then begin and end your game in these bunkers. However, if the defenses around your flag are natural barricades and waist-high bunkers, then you should set a series of staged, fall-back positions. When using a staged defense, you set perimeters of defense where your defenders hit the approaching enemy, then slide back to the next, closer perimeter. By hitting them in mini-ambushes, you will slow their advance to a crawl.
- Don't forget to cover the back routes to your flag. A smart opponent will send attackers around to encircle your flag base from behind. If that happens, you're toast.
- When you shrink the perimeter, take special care to sneak or belly crawl back to the next position unseen by the attackers. Take a few shots, and then slink away unseen. They will spend precious minutes trying to figure out if you're still where they saw you last.
- When your defensive line shrinks, be careful not to leave a teammate out where the attackers can flank him. It's best to shrink the defensive perimeter all at the same time so that everyone covers everybody else's flank. When you lose a player, that's a good time to shrink the perimeter and tighten everything up. Coordinate all of this with liberal use of radio communication.
- On most fields, your last-stand defensive position should be behind the flag (and up against the back boundary, if you can still cover the flag from there.)

Ambush-style Defense

- When the team plan is to reduce enemy numbers before launching the main assault, you must put up an ambush-style defense. The objective of the ambush-style "D" is to suck the enemy in where they can be methodically wiped out.
- A good ambush defense is more about where you leave gaps than it is about where you position your defense. If you leave one side completely open, for example, the enemy is likely to fill into that side.
- Since the main assault is waiting to reduce the enemy numbers before attacking, you should have a ton of extra players to place in ambush positions. Decide where your gaps will be and place your defenders in a wide "U" shape to encircle the op-force attack elements. Make sure the gap is wide enough for the entire attack squad to fit inside. Otherwise, they will make contact with the tops of your "U" too soon and simply bog down trading shots. Often during capture the flag games, the "U" shape will span the entire field – giving the attackers a huge gap to fill in.
- It's often a good idea to bury the legs of your ambush along the deep side boundaries of your half of the field or along natural boundaries. Then, when the attackers fill into the middle, your side

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players can collapse on them and gain target-rich, side-door angles.

- Ambush D is all about patience and holding your fire until they are in your trap. If you shoot too soon, they will bunker up way before wandering into the kill zone. Unlike a survival-style defense, you want to wait to shoot until you have lethal range.

Providing a Base of Fire

- When your point man encounters enemy, your squad will respond by building a base of fire and sending flankers. As soon as your point man hits resistance, you should hustle up and join him. Begin trading fire (it's not important that you make a kill at this point) with any known enemy.
- Don't trade fire from a position where there is a substantial threat to you. If your opponents are vigorously returning fire, then you're probably too exposed. Back up a little until your cover improves. If you're taking fire from multiple angles, then you're way too far out. Retreat quickly, turn and bump up until you engage with one angle of fire (only!)
- Even if you don't have a good shot at your opponents, keep up consistent fire. You need to keep their attention locked on you so that your flankers can get around to their side without being noticed.
- Watch your paint supply. While it's important that you keep the enemy engaged, you can't run out of paint in the process. Shoot enough to keep them interested, but not enough to burn up all your paint.
- Establish a code with your flankers so that they can radio and let you know when they need you to step up the covering fire. When they call, you can inch forward and begin to pour it on. Soon, your flankers will open up their own angles of fire and the opposition will be taken out or retreat.

Field Tactics for Snipers

- You have three basic choices of sniper style: Ambush Sniper, Ghost Flanker and Longbow Sniper. Each style utilizes different tactics:

Ambush Sniper

- When the team plan is to reduce enemy numbers before launching the main assault, you must put up an ambush-style defense. The objective of the ambush-style "D" is to suck the enemy in where they can be methodically wiped out.
- A good ambush defense is more about where you leave gaps than it is about where you position your defense. If you leave one side completely open, for example, the enemy is likely to fill into that side.
- Since the main assault is waiting to reduce the enemy numbers before attacking, you should have a ton of extra players to place in ambush positions. Decide where your gaps will be and place your defenders in a wide "U" shape to encircle the op-force attack elements. Make sure the gap is wide enough for the entire attack squad to fit inside. Otherwise, they will make contact with the tops of your "U" too soon and simply bog down trading shots. Often during capture the flag games, the "U" shape will span the entire field – giving the attackers a huge gap to fill in.

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- It's often a good idea to bury the legs of your ambush along the deep side boundaries of your half of the field or along natural boundaries. Then, when the attackers fill into the middle, your side players can collapse on them and gain target-rich, side-door angles.
- Ambush D is all about patience and holding your fire until they are in your trap. If you shoot too soon, they will bunker up way before wandering into the kill zone. Unlike a survival-style defense, you want to wait to shoot until you have lethal range.
- The Ambush Sniper should conceal himself on the very tips of the "U" formation, where his concealment gives the trap its greatest chance of success. However, the Sniper must wait patiently, if at all possible, for the entire op-force to enter the trap before picking off players. If the Sniper springs the trap too early, then the enemy attack force will hold up outside of the perimeter and concentrate its efforts on eliminating the Sniper (which is easy to do when the Sniper is alone on the tip of a formation.)
- Any time, in fact, that a Sniper is on ambush, he should wait until the op-force is on its way out of his kill zone. By waiting, the Sniper will have easy shots on the tail end of the attack element and he will have the option of rolling in from behind the enemy. Being fired on from behind is very unusual in paintball and it will thoroughly confuse the enemy – giving the Sniper a prolonged opportunity to execute the entire op-force.
- When the team plays a "survival-style defense," the Ambush Sniper's job is very similar to an ambush-style defense. A survival-style defense is constructed to hold the enemy off for as long as possible. This gives your assault force the maximum possible time to hit the enemy flag base, take the flag and back-door anyone who's hitting your defense. In a survival-style defense, you will keep back the MINIMUM number of defenders that you possibly can and still hold your flag for the entire game time (but just barely.) By keeping only the bare minimum, you free up as many men as possible to hit the opposition's flag. By strengthening the attack force, you speed the end of the game. If the game ends and you still have a big posse of defenders, then you probably held back too many.
- On a survival-style defense, the Sniper ranges out and away from the main area of attack (that usually comes from the center and center-sides.) One of the best natural hides for the Sniper is along the deep sides of the field, around mid-field. From this position, the Sniper can slide behind an attack force without fearing that someone has gotten behind the Sniper. Often, the Sniper buries himself and the Defensive Squad Leader will call him up via radio when the enemy have filled in around the flag and the trap is ready to be sprung.
- The Sniper's side should always be the side that your friendly attack force did not move up. If you fill in behind your attackers, the chances of you seeing any enemy are very slim. Rather, conceal yourself on the weak side of the field so that the odds of an enemy encounter are higher.
- Don't forget to cover the back routes to your flag. A smart opponent will send attackers around to encircle your flag base from behind. If that happens, you're toast. A Sniper might wish to place himself in a position to interdict a flanking maneuver around his flag. Still, the Sniper should wait until the op-force has passed before making his attack.
- If you fire on enemy and they dig in and stop, sneak or belly crawl away, back toward your flag, unseen by the attackers. They will spend precious minutes trying to figure out if you're still where

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they saw you last. You can then slide to another ambush location and reset yourself.

Ghost Flanker

- Once your squad has the enemy position engaged and trading fire, the flanking elements are released to one or both sides. To flank, move cross-ways to the enemy and push a little up-field. The idea is to get angles on the side of the enemy shooters. When you begin to pummel them from the side, and your squad's hitting them from the front, you will have them in a cross fire and they will need retreat or be eliminated.
- A Ghost Flanker spends a lot of the game flat on his belly. Creeping into flanking position is extremely effective since most woods ball TM fields provide plenty of low ground cover. Also, nobody expects a belly crawl in paintball, since paintballers are typically too lazy to get their cammies dirty.
- A very low, slow crawl will get you shooting angles that any other player could only dream of. Practice a slow, quiet creep until you're virtually invisible to observers.
- Beware of other elements of the enemy force. You may be flanking right into another piece of the op-force. If you do encounter more resistance, radio your Squad Leader and have him dispatch another Medium or Heavy Rifleman to set another base of fire in front of the extended force. Then, begin a new flanking move.
- Remember, if your guys and theirs' are trading fire, you can use the noise as cover. Also, you have the security of knowing that the shooters, at least, are totally focused on their little firefight. You can probably creep quickly without them noticing. Paintballers usually scoot to a firefight like moths to a flame. A fully engulfed firefight will draw attention and should give you a clear crawl into side-door position.
- Look for chances to creep all the way around back of the enemy's flag base. Sometimes, this will require that you pass up on kill shots. Getting in behind the flag is worth it. Think hard before you take gravy shots at enemy players. Achieving a superior position on the flag is often more valuable than one or two kills.

Longbow Sniper

- Again, there is no huge ballistic advantage from one paintball gun to another. If there were, we'd sell you that super-long-shooting gun. Anyone who tells you that longer barrels, etc. make your paintball gun shoot like a sniper rifle are dreaming. Longer barrels can give you slight advantages. With that said the Longbow Sniper makes the most out of any ballistic advantage he can wring out of his gun.
- Firing from a tower or high hillside, the Longbow can extend his ballistic advantage to make long hits. Concealment isn't as great a priority for the Longbow, since connecting on long shots requires more tries and makes more noise. It's just harder to hide as a Longbow Sniper.
- Longbow is a good alternate position for a Commander since it gives him a commanding view of the field without the requirements of silence (the Commander needs to talk to his team.)
- The Longbow should carry more paint and air than the other snipers since he'll need shot volume

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to make up for the distances he's shooting. No matter how good you are at shooting, long shots are still very hard in paintball. There's nothing you can do to completely remove some of the variables in long shooting: wind, paint shell imperfections, inexact distance estimations, etc...

Ideal Attributes for Sniper

- Patient and Disciplined. Few paintballers have the will or the patience to play Sniper. Some games, the Sniper won't see an enemy player. Other games, he'll need nerves of steel to allow players to walk within yards of his hide. He's a meticulous person who loves a job well done.
- Decent physical fitness. He doesn't need to work real hard at being a Sniper, but he must be able to spend long periods creeping on his belly without freaking out.
- Iron-will and giant reserves of stubbornness. To out-wit the competition, he must be very committed to winning (his way.) And, yet, he can't be a total lone wolf. The Sniper is useless unless he's part of the team's larger strategy and willing to take direction from the Commander.

Sniper Skill Progression

Basic

Requires at least one paintball day playing Sniper position.

When a player proclaims that he has set his mind to becoming a paintball sniper, he is in for a long learning curve. It takes guts to even consider playing the sniper position, since failure to a sniper can mean point-blank execution when his hiding place is discovered. What's more, woodsball™ is full of yahoos who will tell you that there's no such thing as a paintball sniper. But, if the Basic Sniper has truckloads of patience and discipline, he may have a future in the position. A Basic Sniper begins with the realization that he may get lucky, but more often than not his ambushes will be blown and will produce only a couple of eliminations. The bigger test will be if the novice sniper can wait patiently through the games where he never sees another soul. Playing Sniper is no place for dudes with ADD.

A Basic Sniper gear kit can include virtually any paintball gun. However, good camo is a must. Gun and facemask camo is also a very good idea. Do your best with the gear you have. If the sniper game agrees with you, then a better gun and better gear may be in your future.

So, get on the ground, Sniper, and get crawling!

Field Tactics for Light Riflemen

- You have several key jobs: running point, pushing flanks, quick assaults and flag runs (when playing capture the flag.)

Running Point

- Your main job on point is to draw enemy fire and not get killed. Spook the ambushes and trick the snipers into taking marginal shots at you. Then, dive backwards and bring your squad up to engage the op-force.
- "Spooking" the ambush is an art that you must master. When you're running point, keep behind

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cover as much as possible. Look ahead and assess each possible ambush point, then offer yourself as a target, but a bad target. Get them to shoot at you when the shot's still too long or the shot's through too much brush.

- Once you've spooked the ambush or hit any kind of op-force, you become part of a quick trap that will engulf the opposition. To do this, drop backwards, just a little, the instant you encounter fire. Then, your Squad Leader should send up Medium or Heavy Riflemen to create a solid base of fire. They will trade fire with the enemy and give you (and other flankers) a pivot off of which you can slide to one side and catch the ambush in a side-door cross fire.

Pushing Flanks

- Once your squad has the enemy position engaged and trading fire, the flanking elements are released to one or both sides. To flank, move cross-ways to the enemy and push a little up-field. The idea is to get angles on the side of the enemy shooters. When you begin to pummel them from the side, and your squad's hitting them from the front, you will have them in a cross fire and they will need to retreat or be eliminated.
- When flanking, stealth is key. Don't hesitate to belly crawl. Belly crawling is a great way to spook a shot without exposing yourself to danger. Also, nobody expects a belly crawl in paintball, since paintballers are typically too lazy to get their cammies dirty.
- Beware of other elements of the enemy force. You may be flanking right into another piece of the ambush. If you do encounter more resistance, radio your Squad Leader and have him dispatch another Medium or Heavy Rifleman to set another base of fire in front of the extended force. Then, begin a new flanking move.
- Remember, if your guys and theirs' are trading fire, you can use the noise as cover. Also, you have the security of knowing that the shooters, at least, are totally focused on their little firefight. You can probably move freely without them noticing. (Just be sure to watch for another ambush!) Paintballers usually scoot to a firefight like moths to a flame. A fully engulfed firefight will draw attention and should give you a clear crawl into side-door position.

Quick Assaults

- On a quick assault, you will be rushing the enemy under the cover of your suppressive fire guys. This sounds like a risky proposition, but it shouldn't be that risky, if your Squad Leader sets it up right.
- One key to a safe assault is tons of suppressive fire. Rushing directly into enemy is suicide unless someone is hammering their position with a BUTT-LOAD of paint. Sporadic suppressive fire won't do. You need full-blown, mind-numbing, hurricane-from-hell sort of suppressive fire to ensure a safe run.
- Don't count on any ONE player to suppress any more than ONE angle. In other words, your suppression dude can cover one small bunker or one window of a pillbox. If you're taking fire from more angles than you have suppression men, then don't make the rush. This also applies to enemy shooters who are way across the field. When you go rushing in, you have no way to know beforehand the angles you're giving other players on you. Make reasonably sure that you've limited the number of enemy players who have a shot at you before you charge in.

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- Another key to a successful rush is to put the enemy under fire from multiple angles at once. If you're attacking a defensive bunker from only one direction, then you're putting yourself at huge risk by rushing. Your squad must hit that bunker from two or three sides. You need to make life really, really stressful for the defenders before you go busting ass out there in the open.
- As you can see, quick assaults are a lot more like surgery than they are like a football blitz. Think it through before you go trucking out into the open.

Flag Runs

- You should never really "rush" for the flag. Before you go wading in after the flag, or other objective, your team should have cleared the defenses around the objective. There's not usually a good reason to "rush" for the flag. You're responsible for flag runs BACK to your base, not necessarily getting the flag into your hands.
- Before you make a run back to your base, you should know exactly what is going on at your base. Remind your Team Commander to radio the Defensive Squad Leader to get the 4-1-1 on the situation back at your flag. If the flag is lost, or is under heavy attack, your Team Commander should leave a substantial contingent in the enemy defenses. If your flag is in good shape, then everyone can head back. Also, when your Commander checks with defense, he should find out where any known enemy are hiding and how to avoid them.
- When you head back to the flag, hold back and let your squad run interference in front of you. It's too late in the game to be running into an ambush.
- Stay clear on the time. You should have a good idea of how much time's left in the game before you begin your flag run. Pace yourself to whatever time is remaining. No need to get sloppy if there's plenty of time left.

Ideal Attributes for Light Rifleman

- Aggressive. To run point and make rushes, the Dagger must have a lust for battle. The biggest challenge will be getting him to dial it back and play smart.
- Excellent physical fitness. This guy is the team runner. He never tires and he's ready to run the flag after a hard game of assaulting. Usually, he's light and fast.
- Good street smarts. A guy with a lot of common sense will begin to see combat patterns (without being able to explain it) and he'll stalk the field like a mountain lion.
- Willing to take orders. Hard-core, type-A guys can't be controlled by a Squad Leader. Too much aggression and hard-headedness in a Dagger just gets him taken out quickly. The commands of a Squad Leader can be the perfect leash for the Light Rifleman – if he'll accept quality coaching.

Field Tactics for Heavy Riflemen

You have several main jobs: suppression fire, providing a base of fire for flankers and defense.

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You might as well know how to assault and flank, too, since you'll sometimes be called on to do stuff not necessarily in your "job description."

Suppression Fire

- When a teammate is preparing to make a bold move (maybe a rush or a leapfrog forward) they will need suppression fire to cover their advance. By laying paint heavily into a known or suspected enemy position, you put heads down to clear the way for your buddy's push.
- It rarely works to try to suppress more than one angle at a time. You can cover one small bunker or one window of a pillbox. If you agree to cover more, you will probably fail to fully suppress the opposition, and this can get your buddy taken out.
- When you suppress, give it all you've got. Time your fire to match the exact moment when your buddy will be making his move. As soon as he's under cover again, let up so you don't run out of paint.

Watch your buddy's move carefully so that you can pull your stream of paint if he runs into it. Don't stop shooting, just raise your fire or angle it to one side.

- Full-auto is best for suppression fire. If your home field doesn't allow full-auto, try a Firestorm crank. The Firestorm is legal on most fields and it lays down enough paint to make anyone think twice about putting their head up.
- When you're setting up to provide suppression fire, you shouldn't be so far forward that you're a feasible target. You should be firing from the very edge of paintball range. It helps, if you do a lot of suppression fire, to carry a Flatline-equipped Tippmann A-5. The Flatline can out-range most paintball guns by twenty-percent or more. Though the Flatline isn't as accurate as most barrels, you don't need tight accuracy for suppression fire.

Providing a Base of Fire

- When your pointman encounters enemy, your squad will respond by building a base of fire and sending flankers. As soon as your pointman hits resistance, you should hustle up and join him. Begin trading fire (it's not important that you make a kill at this point) with any known enemy.
- Don't trade fire from a position where there is a substantial threat to you. If your opponents are vigorously returning fire, then you're probably too exposed. Back up a little until your cover improves. If you're taking fire from multiple angles, then you're way too far out. Retreat quickly, turn and bump up until you engage with one angle of fire (only!)
- Even if you don't have a good shot at your opponents, keep up consistent fire. You need to keep their attention locked on you so that your flankers can get around to their side without being noticed.
- Watch your paint supply. While it's important that you keep the enemy engaged, you can't run out of paint in the process. Shoot enough to keep them interested, but not enough to burn up all your paint.
- Establish a code with your flankers so that they can radio and let you know when they need you to

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics

step up the covering fire. When they call, you can inch forward and begin to pour it on. Soon, your flankers will open up their own angles of fire and the opposition will be taken out or retreat.

Defense

- How you set your defense will depend on the team's overall strategy. If the team's playing a strong-side attack, then your objective on defense will be to stall and survive for as long as possible. If your team's playing an early game ambush-style strategy, then your objective will be to whittle down the numbers of the enemy before launching an assault.

Survival-style Defense

- A survival-style defense is constructed to hold the enemy off for as long as possible. This gives your assault force the maximum possible time to hit the enemy flag base, take the flag and back-door anyone who's hitting your defense. In a survival-style defense, you will keep back the MINIMUM number of defenders that you possibly can and still hold your flag for the entire game time (but just barely.) By keeping only the bare minimum, you free up as many men as possible to hit the opposition's flag. By strengthening the attack force, you speed the end of the game. If the game ends and you still have a big posse of defenders, then you probably held back too many.
- Fire on the enemy when they're at maximum range – this is especially effective when you're shooting a Tippmann Flatline. Making the enemy bunker up way, way out there will buy you more time. Keep them from advancing by popping away at them every time they look ready to move.
- If you have fortress-strong defenses around your flag, then begin and end your game in these bunkers. However, if the defenses around your flag are natural barricades and waist-high bunkers, then you should set a series of staged, fall-back positions. When using a staged defense, you set perimeters of defense where your defenders hit the approaching enemy, then slide back to the next, closer perimeter. By hitting them in mini-ambushes, you will slow their advance to a crawl.
- Don't forget to cover the back routes to your flag. A smart opponent will send attackers around to encircle your flag base from behind. If that happens, you're toast.
- When you shrink the perimeter, take special care to sneak or belly crawl back to the next position unseen by the attackers. Take a few shots, and then slink away unseen. They will spend precious minutes trying to figure out if you're still where they saw you last.
- When your defensive line shrinks, be careful not to leave a teammate out where the attackers can flank him. It's best to shrink the defensive perimeter all at the same time so that everyone covers everybody else's flank. When you lose a player, that's a good time to shrink the perimeter and tighten everything up. Coordinate all of this with liberal use of radio communication.
- On most fields, your last-stand defensive position should be behind the flag (and up against the back boundary, if you can still cover the flag from there.)

Ambush-style Defense

- When the team plan is to reduce enemy numbers before launching the main assault, you must put up an ambush-style defense. The objective of the ambush-style "D" is to suck the enemy in where they can be methodically wiped out.

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- A good ambush defense is more about where you leave gaps than it is about where you position your defense. If you leave one side completely open, for example, the enemy is likely to fill into that side.
- Since the main assault is waiting to reduce the enemy numbers before attacking, you should have a ton of extra players to place in ambush positions. Decide where your gaps will be and place your defenders in a wide "U" shape to encircle the op-force attack elements. Make sure the gap is wide enough for the entire attack squad to fit inside. Otherwise, they will make contact with the tops of your "U" too soon and simply bog down trading shots. Often during capture the flag games, the "U" shape will span the entire field – giving the attackers a huge gap to fill in.
- It's often a good idea to bury the legs of your ambush along the deep side boundaries of your half of the field or along natural boundaries. Then, when the attackers fill into the middle, your side players can collapse on them and gain target-rich, side-door angles.
- Ambush D is all about patience and holding your fire until they are in your trap. If you shoot too soon, they will bunker up way before wandering into the kill zone. Unlike a survival-style defense, you want to wait to shoot until you have lethal range.

Assaults

- When you execute an assault, you will be attacking a static (stationary) enemy position. Maybe you're assaulting a bunker or maybe you're assaulting the flag. In either case, you're moving hard on an entrenched position that has a defensive advantage.
- The biggest key to a successful assault is to put the enemy under fire from multiple angles at once. If you're attacking a defensive bunker from only one direction, then you're putting yourself at huge risk by assaulting. Your squad must hit that bunker from two or three sides, at least. You need to make life really, really stressful for the defenders before you go busting ass out there in the open.
- So, the main assault should come after several mini-assaults that buy you all kinds of angles around the defended position. Then, you can have players move in from all sides at precisely the same moment. The Commander will typically call the moment of assault over the radio when all the chess pieces are in place.
- Another key to a safe assault is suppressive fire. You can cover the most dangerous paths of assault, such as pillboxes, by assigning one or more of your squad to supply suppressive fire.
- Don't count on any ONE player to suppress any more than ONE angle. In other words, your suppression dude can cover one small bunker or one window of a pillbox. If you're taking fire from more angles than you have suppression men, then don't make the move. This also applies to enemy shooters who are across the field. When you move in, you have no way of knowing beforehand the angles you're giving enemy players. Make reasonably sure that you've limited the number of enemy players who have a shot at you before you charge in.
- One handy form of suppressive fire is the leapfrog. A two or three man team can trade off hammering a fixed position with suppressive fire while one guy runs past. As soon as the runner is five yards ahead of the suppressive fire guy, he drops and starts his own suppression fire thing while his buddy picks up and runs five yards past him. This routine keeps going – fire, run past,

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fire, run past – until cover is reached or the bunker is overrun. Leapfrogging is a great way to attack an enclosed pillbox.

- When you assault, don't forget to ask yourself what exposure you'll have once you've overrun your objective. Too often, an assault will take a flag base only to discover that there is an ambush waiting behind the flag. Clear all dangerous angles before going in.

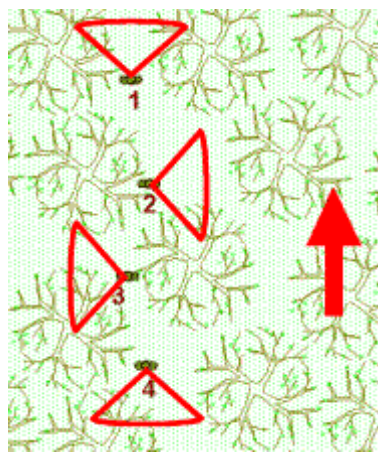
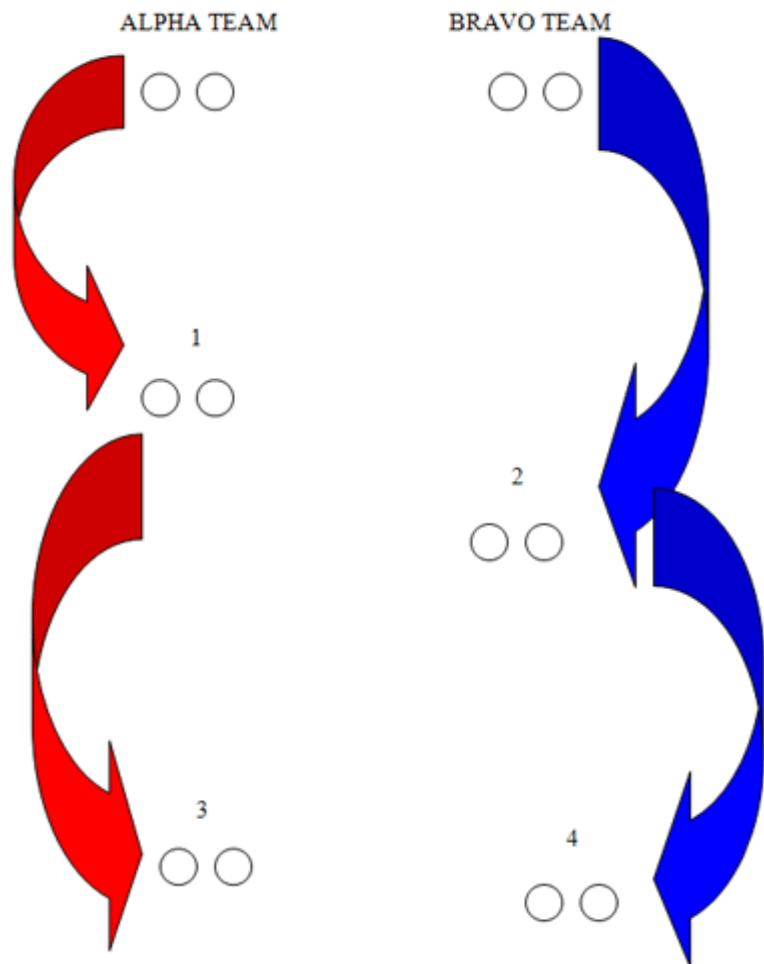
Pushing Flanks

- Once your squad has the enemy position engaged and trading fire, the flanking elements are released to one or both sides. To flank, move cross-ways to the enemy and push a little up-field. The idea is to get angles from the side of the enemy shooters. When you begin to pummel them from the side, and your squad's hitting them from the front, you will have them in a cross fire and they will need to retreat or be eliminated.
- When flanking, stealth is key. Don't hesitate to belly crawl. Belly crawling is a great way to spook a shot without exposing yourself to danger. Also, nobody expects you to belly crawl in paintball, since paintballers are typically too lazy to get their cammies dirty.
- Beware of other elements of the enemy force. You may be flanking right into another piece of their ambush. If you do encounter more resistance, radio your Squad Leader and have him dispatch another Medium or Heavy Rifleman to set another base of fire in front of the extended force. Then, begin a new flanking move.
- Remember, if your guys and theirs' are trading fire, you can use the noise as cover. Also, you have the security of knowing that the shooters, at least, are totally focused on their little firefight. You can probably move freely without them noticing. (Just be sure to watch for another ambush!) Paintballers usually scoot to a firefight like moths to a flame. A fully engulfed firefight will draw attention and should give you a clear crawl into side-door position.

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Additional tactics utilizing the entire squad also include the following:

Forward spread formations:
(AKA BOUNDING)



DELTA 5

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics

Picture Below is an example of buddy leapfrog movements while performing your V-Formation

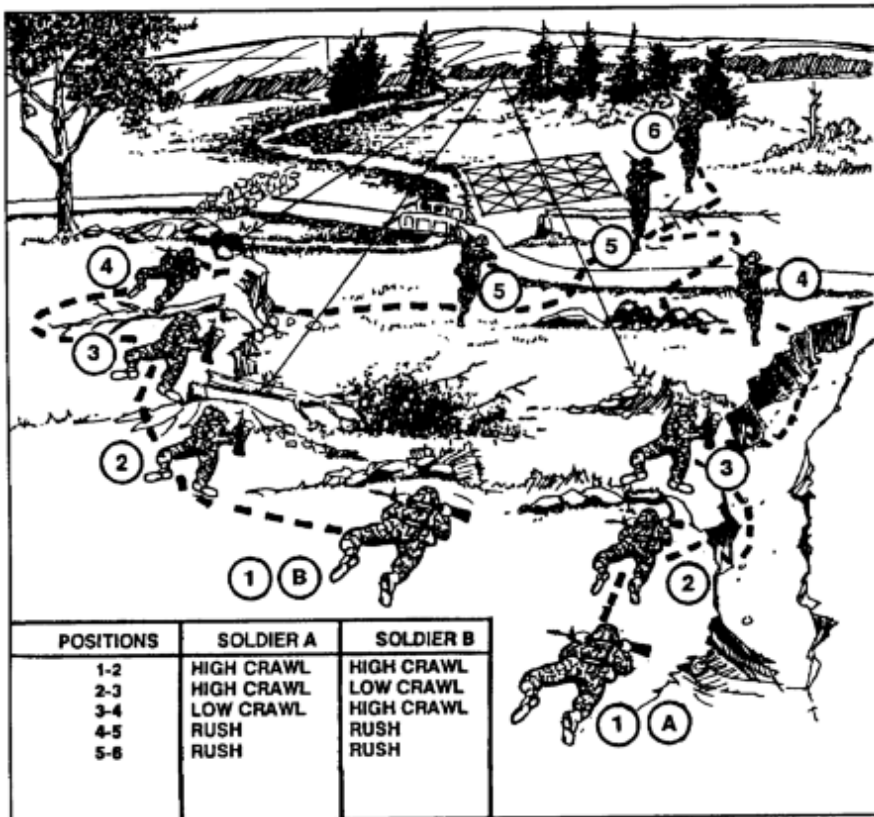
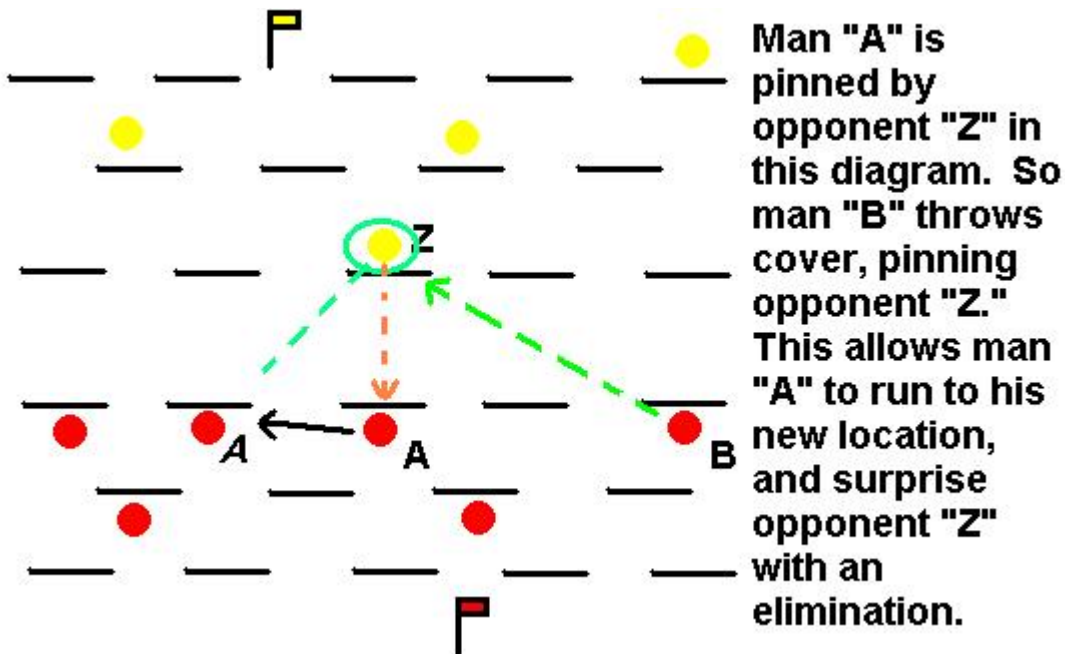
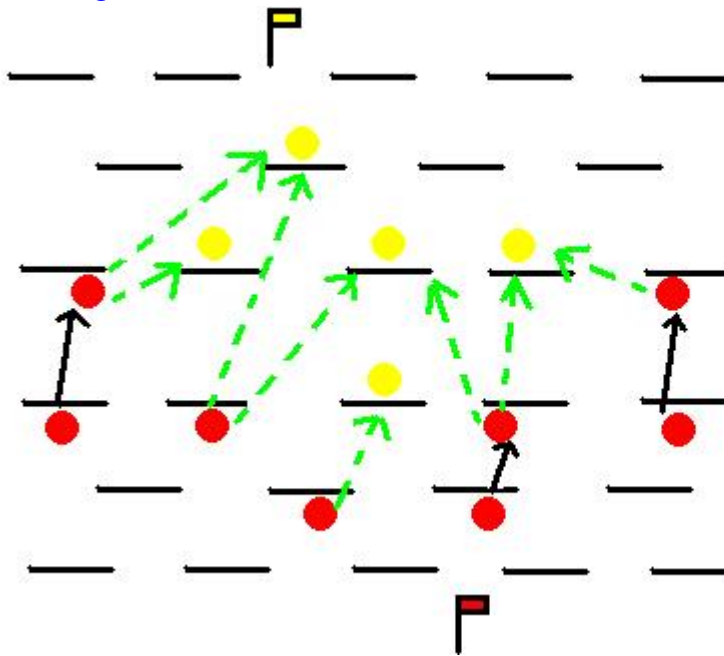


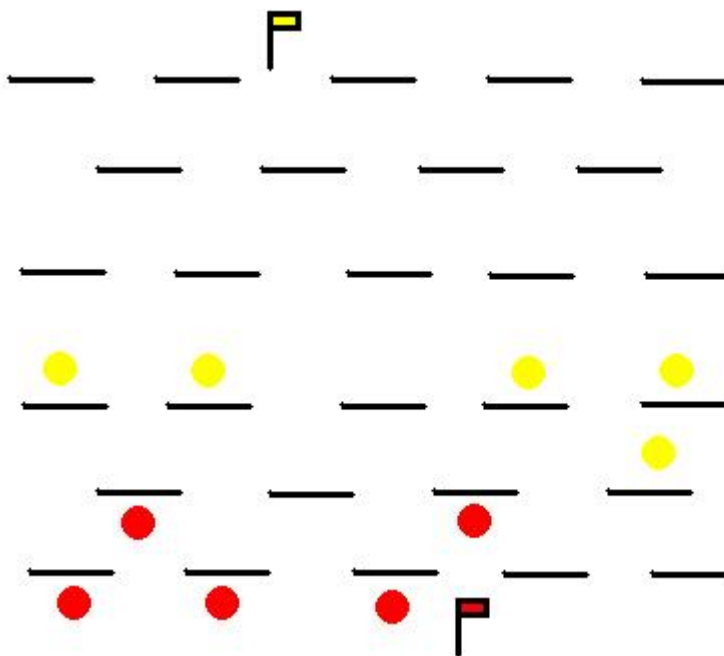
Figure D-2. Example individual/buddy team movement lane.



Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics

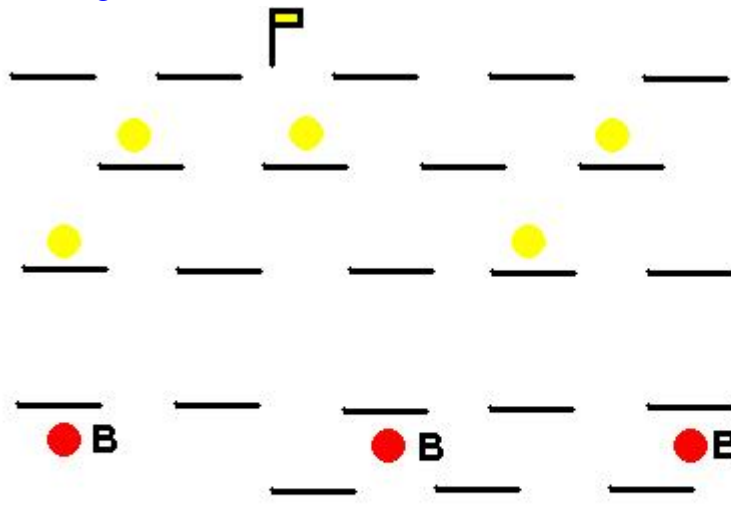


This diagram shows the yellow team crowding in the middle of the field. Because of this, the red team is able to advance and encircle them, creating a crossfire which almost always end in a win for the advancers.

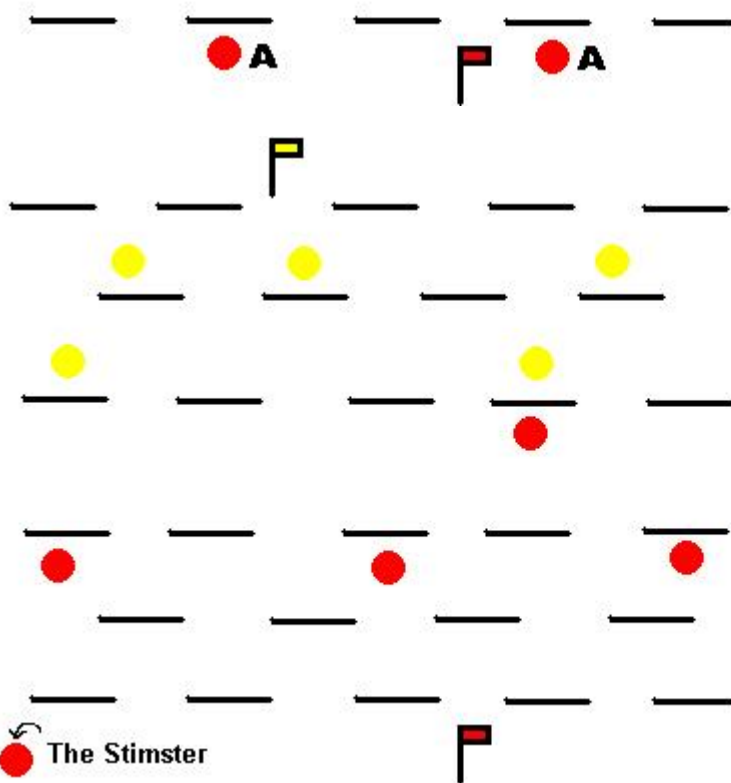


In this diagram, the red team is way too crowded together. They are in eachother's line of fire, and they allowed the yellow team to advance to their weak side. You **DO NOT** want to do this.

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics



This diagram illustrates a good way to spread out. The "A" men stay back to call out locations and throw cover. The "B" men take the shots and move on the opposition.



This is just a humorous diagram of a kid we play paintball with, nicknamed, "The Stimster." Even when the rest of his team is advancing, he cowers in the corner. He also claims to take out 50% of the opposition.

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics

Cobra 1 close quarters column entry



Cobra 3 Breach Entry



Last Man in formation = First to breach

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics



Close quarter urban combat is one of the most dangerous types of fighting and requires total attention to detail and complete player focus the entire time. Remember your “POINTS OF ANGEL” and remain within 3ft of your squad while in Cobra 1 forward motion.

Hand Signals



Enemy Seen



Disperse

Team Fugazi Position Field Tactics



Cease Fire



Get Down

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Head Count



Freeze DON'T MOVE

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Scout



Sniper

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Rally Around Me



Door