

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS: **PATROL!** **Tactics in the Raw** by Jon-Dane Lukas

When in the Army, I found that there were several courses that were good for a laugh: Geneva Convention, Military Justice, VD training, to name a few. But after basic, the training got much more specific and Squad Tactical Training was my favorite. STT was the highest expression of the infantryman's art (I stole that phrase). *Patrol!*, even more than *Sniper!*, seems to express that art in a clear and precise manner, as well as being quite realistic. So, being addicted to tactics on this level, and conflict simulations in and of themselves, I found that *Patrol!* has become my favorite game. However, like any 'artform,' squad tactics have some very general rules (flexible to be sure) which allow maneuver and mission accomplishment to occur with a minimum of loss. I will endeavor to express these and give some organizational and weapons data which SPI has omitted.

TACTICS

Looking at *Patrol!*, the wargamer notices that he commands not a division, brigade or battalion, but a squad, sometimes reinforced, of five to fifty men. Each counter is one man, variously armed. The fact that he has only one unit of infantry should lead to this conclusion:

Sacrifice of men in the course of a mission is (with only a few exceptions) detrimental to the accomplishment of the mission. (Obviously, trading one for a tank or loaded APC is one of these exceptions.) However, the loss of a single man could mean the loss of the game (if you've had your only satchel charge carrier shot down in clear terrain where a WE is unlikely, you know what I mean). Therefore, conservation of elements should be of prime concern. This is accomplished by:



1. *Terrain*: The lay of the ground is far more important in this sport tactical game than in any other format. A battalion caught in the open in *Wurzburg* is far more secure than Amov two hexes on the wrong side of a slope. The battalion may only have to retreat; Amov is at least wounded (distance is secondary, see how little an MG decreases over range). So:



a) Stay behind slopes as much as possible. They protect without prohibitive movement costs. Except for a grenade tossed over the top (something which may be prevented) the members of your squad may, with impunity, prepare for the assault which carries the

field. This applies for all situations; slopes are the best cover.

b) If slopes are inconvenient (too far, too near) the next best terrain is Rough Nr. 2. Remember, however, that the Movement Point costs are often prohibitive, and that the men in fire-effective (i.e., outer fringes) positions are not immune to fire.

c) The best that can be said for Rough Nr. 1 is that it will do in a pinch.

d) Clear terrain is no-man's land, except for brief passage (preferably at great distance). This brings me to the second element of the squad's environment.

2. *Movement and Posture*: Move! As the training NCO's at Ft. Polk say: "They can't hit what they can't see, but if they have to see you, move around." However, if they can't move, a prone man has a greater Defensive Strength than an erect one.

3. *Distance*: By this I mean distance between elements of your squad. The "fireteam file with point," which is forced upon the Player in the Patrol Situation, is by far the worst formation. The line of men one behind the other is an excellent target for enfilading fire (EF). If this formation is used in an Ambush Situation, your opponent will usually let your point-man through, and beat the hell out of your column, leaving the point-man to go home and tell the sad story.

In a Recon, Assault or Raid Situation, all of your firepower is to the sides when it is needed at the front.

The two best formations (relatively) are the open wedge and the open skirmish line. Placing a five-element wedge as the point, with enough distance between elements to prevent or minimize grenade blast effects, and following that up with a second open wedge in an Ambush, Raid or Recon, will always give you a minimum of 50% of your force to fight back. The average distance between wedges should be about 25-35 meters (5-6 hexes).

The open skirmish line in an Assault Situation speaks for itself. It allows maximum fire to the front, and minimizes EF and blast effects. A third-best formation is the open (2-5 hexes) fireteam file with point (6-10 hexes in front). This applies only to Ambush Situations (Patrol, also, if your opponent agrees to free formations).

4. *Artillery*: The Designer's Notes mention that there might be a tendency among gamers to maneuver into their own barrage... the type of person that does this is one who asks if he is allowed to "ram" in *Dreadnought*. To those of a gentler persuasion, here are some hints on its use:

Never drop your entire barrage on the same Turn. Break them into several "sticks;" after all, a round stuns even if it doesn't kill; it gives you valuable time.

Target at least two rounds per barrage per pillbox. If luck is with you, you'll crack that shell.

Smoke should be dropped in the last stick. This gives you a minimum of one or more maneuver Turns. A favorite trick is to break a 20-round barrage into five 4-round sticks, falling on Turns Two to Six, the last stick being smoke.

Called artillery is another problem. Usually, it is given to the defender in an Assault Situation. Since you really don't know where your opponent will be, it is good practice to target your rounds for the general area of your own positions (as close as you dare) and hope that he doesn't daudle. In one Scenario, I was facing an opponent far more capable than I, so I targetted my rounds for my own positions and held him off as long as I could. The result was a draw.

5. *Mines*: These things give you the ability to cover terrain that you can't by direct fire. A spread of mines behind a slope will give your opponent pause about using that ridge. If he has an APC or tank, mix them up. In order to discharge passengers safely, an APC has to go to cover. If you've guessed right, that carrier will disable itself and lose a lot of its passengers.



6. *Placement of Static Positions*: A very simple concept. They should deny terrain benefits and give mutual support. The second is by far the most important; if a man with a satchel charge gets into a blind spot, forget it.

7. *Tanks*: A tank is simultaneously an asset and a liability. If your enemy has no anti-tank capability, it may be used with impunity. However, an RL or a couple of satchel charges makes life difficult. If your opponent has AT capability, use your tank as a mobile gun platform. A few devastating light rounds from the main gun, coupled with the devastating MG power of this vehicle will make all the difference in the long run. Keep it opened up, and away from the MG or AT fire of the positions. Cavalry charges are a definite "no-no."

8. *APC's*: An APC will allow you to get through difficult terrain much faster than on foot. However, it is never to be mistaken for a tank. Another thing to remember is that to discharge passengers safely, the APC must "go to ground." This brings up the problem

of mines. If lucky enough to possess both artillery and an APC, use at least one round as an "engineer," clearing a spot in covering terrain to discharge your passengers.



9. *Errata*: Never trade an RL for an FT; the liabilities far outweigh the benefits. Horses, when present, make for quick maneuver, but the cavalry became obsolete by the invention of the rifle; don't charge. Barbed wire is only a minor obstacle unless covered by fire.

These are some general principles which will serve you well if properly applied, but it is now time to get down to...

CASES

Situation 1—Patrol: Run or Fight?

This chance meeting of opposing forces on patrol is, to say the least, hairy. Present US Army tactical doctrine states that avoidance of enemy patrols is second only to the accomplishment of the reconnaissance mission. However, the rules have set it up so that if you run, you lose... so it goes. Therefore, some *extremely* flexible rules should be set down for this situation. [N.B. this section refers to the standard situation without player formation modifications.]

a) Contact in open (enemy in open): Your opponent may well be a conservative player and try to get to cover before opening up; if so, you have him. If not, a draw is better than a loss.

b) Contact in open (enemy in cover, wholly or partially): If you try to get to cover, the enemy will have you; shoot first, get to cover later.

c) Contact under cover, wholly or partially (enemy in open): Use half of your men to fire, the other half, KF then PG. (Running after getting your licks in on first post-contact Turn is a viable option).

d) Contact in cover (enemy under cover): This option leaves much to be desired. If yours is the weaker force, then a quick flurry of gunfire followed by running for your exit edge is an important choice.

Remember, in all sub-situations, the enemy's disposition is the deciding factor. A draw is better than nothing.

Situation 2—Recon: I Know He's There

Although not specifically stated, there is an implication that the Bravo Player must tell the Alpha which sector he is deployed in; *terrific*. Anyway, the problem is very simple. Since there is no time-limit, the best bet is to come in from at least two sides after smoking up the sector. Chances are that one of your men will stumble (literally) upon the pillbox, and give you the game. Keep to cover, and minimize losses. Have at least two men "spot" the target (this maximizes Alpha's chances of getting the extra Points).

If playing Bravo, seldom garrison the Pillbox. I realize that this goes contrary to what I said about utilizing the best possible cover, but... A Player usually places his most effective weapon in a Pillbox (MG or AR). Placing it elsewhere may draw the Alpha Player to the gun thinking 'wheresoever there is the Pillbox, there also is the MG.'



Also, Alpha is not the only Player with smoke. Popping smoke in your own area minimizes visibility and is valuable if there is an 'effective' near the Pillbox, when the Alpha team breaks through the haze.

Situation 3—Raid:

I Shoot You, Then You Shoot Me.

I don't like the Raid Situation. The secret deployment of the Bravo Player puts most of the early game odds in his favor. The Alpha Player literally has to brave a storm of lead to accomplish his mission. The only advantage is numbers. Basically, use smoke, cover and movement to minimize losses. Don't get all psyched up to take prisoners. If the Bravo Player's positions are mutually supporting, this could be very costly indeed.

For the Bravo Player, it is a much simpler matter. Shoot them as you see them, and hope for the best. Amov should be able to shoot into the Bravo position if necessary. Support and concealment are in your favor.

Situation 4—Ambush:

They're Here Somewhere...

An ambush is one of the most feared occurrences in an infantryman's existence (second only to artillery). Department of the Army statistics show that in a close ambush (20-40 meters, 4-8 hexes) 100% casualties occur within the first five seconds (one Turn). The only thing the Alpha Player has that can offset the disadvantages of a close ambush is *distance*. With this in mind, the Alpha Player should place his men in such a formation, that EF and grenade blast effect are minimized. The open double-wedge is by far the best; the open fireteam file with point is a poor second. After contact, depending upon casualties, the option of running or fighting is left open. If your casualties exceed 50%, run.

The Bravo Player has, by far, the greatest number of options. The type of ambush is up to him. There are several ambush formations:

1) *The Single Line*: Very simply in theory and execution. The men are in a single line in cover, distance between elements is left to the Player's discretion.

2) *The L-Shaped Ambush*: This is a little more difficult, since the Alpha Player must blunder into the area between the arms of the "L." This formation lessens effectiveness if only one of the arms is triggered.

3) *The X Ambush*: This is extremely effective since no matter what the direction of approach, the Alpha Player is in a cross-fire.

4) *The Double-Line*: Effective only if the enemy comes between your two formations. Especially effective in a built-up area (in *Sniper!*).

These are the basic formations for the Bravo Player. The one thing to remember is that you should go for the bulk of the enemy; if this means letting the point-man escape, do so. (Claymore mines can only be minimized; distance, and, to some extent, cover may give Alpha a chance.)

Situation 5—Assault: Over the Top?

For Alpha, cover, grenades, artillery and tanks should be used to the fullest. If lucky enough to have grenade-launchers as well, use them; distance is only slightly minimizing.



For Bravo, mutual support, pillboxes, mines, etc., all should be used. With an RL, don't go for the long shot. Wait until that tank or APC gets a little closer. With satchel charges, drop or place, don't throw (this applies to both sides).

For both sides, keep moving and firing. Grenades and shells are your most effective weapons, followed by the MG and AR.

These basic tactics should give both Players in any situation approximately equal chances. Remember that they are *guidelines*. The Player who does it by the book will lose. The book is written as you go along.

ORGANIZATION

'LEG' INFANTRY

2 AW cum M203 grenade launcher, 2 AR, 7 AW.

'MECH' INFANTRY

1 APC cum cal.50 MG, 1 Driver, 1 Gunner, 1 MG (M60), 2 AW cum M203 GL, 2 AR, 4 AW.

I have a tendency to foam at the mouth when I look at the US squad organization for the 1970's. Several things have been omitted, and the 10 AW given for the squad is, to say the least, inaccurate. First of all, the infantry squad for the Army has two breakdowns... one for leg infantry, and one for mech. Secondly, one very important weapon, and one or two important tactical doctrines for the basic squad, are left out.

The M203 GL is a 40mm weapon which is attached to the M16A1 assault rifle in an "over-and-under" configuration. It is in all ways comparable to the M79 GL, of which it is a bastardization. You see, the army found that giving an infantryman an M79 denied him the use of his basic weapon, the rifle. This not only left him at a loss at ranges of less than 35 meters, but seriously decreased the firepower of the squad. The M203 is a composite. It allows a soldier the use of both weapons without loss of the modern-day "knee mortar." Therefore, it is necessary to designate two members of the infantry squad as grenadiers, the only difference being that

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offshoot of *StarForce*, as both share a common "history." Combat is on an individual level; each Game-Turn represents 15-30 seconds of elapsed time, and each hex equals one kilometer. This large scale is necessary due to the extreme mobility and destructiveness of the units involved, which are assumed to be cybernetic combinations of "man" and machine. The map is full-sized and multi-purpose in order to simulate a range of possible environments. Units in the game will include humans, and the alien race of the Rame, L'Chal-Dah, Xenophobes, and various indigenous life-forms.

Fire and movement are simultaneous within a unusual game sequence, which divides a Turn into two complete halves, with units allocating Movement Points for various functions. This can be either for movement (in ground, nape of earth, or high altitude modes), or for combat (both direct and indirect means are provided for). This is further modified by an Efficiency Rating. Defensively, counter-measures can be applied to thwart an attack. A number of combat situations will be provided as well as a background history and a link game with *StarForce* so that Players can create their own scenarios based on a developing strategic situation. —Tom Walczyk

War in the East/War in Europe

This massive project is finally beginning to enter the home stretch. The 1945 "Battle for Germany" Scenario is proceeding well, and seems to accurately portray the problems faced by all the sides involved. On the Western Front, the Germans may attempt an abortive "Ardennes Offensive," but must otherwise stand fast as they already occupy fine defensive positions. In the East, however, the Axis must retreat before the crushing weight of the Soviet artillery. In Italy, nothing much happens as everyone is trapped in a sea of mud. One rule that has been developed concerns the total cessation of German production (due to bombing and loss of areas by enemy occupation), an event which places the entire German Army out of supply. Also in preparation are the two rules booklets and extensive errata and addenda correcting all the things we said wrong in *War in the West*. —Tom Walczyk

FEEDBACK RESULTS, MOVES 26

Rank	Article	Rating
1.	Designers' Notes	7.22
2.	Basic Wargame Library	6.78
3.	Oil War	6.63
4.	Forward Observer	6.62
5.	Mech War Scenarios	6.51
6.	Battle of Nations	6.32
7.	Friday Night Follies	6.31
8.	Opening Moves	6.24
9.	Footnotes	6.17
10.	Third Reich	6.12
11.	Fast Carriers	6.11
12.	Playback	6.08
This issue (overall)		6.67

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while the rules for the M79 apply, they are never unarmed since they still have rifles. They may fire their GL's, then fire their rifles in the next Turn, or reload the GL, but while their launchers may be in an unloaded condition, they are never unarmed.

The next changes are a matter of doctrine. The infantry squad has (ideally) eleven and *not* ten members. All members of the squad are taught to fire their AW's on semi- rather than full-automatic, with the exception of two "automatic riflemen" who are to use their weapons on fully automatic at all times. Therefore, they would be faced with the same problem as the BAR man of an earlier period; i.e., they may run a clip out without realizing it. Although the men are carrying M16's, they should be designated AR with all of the advantages and liabilities.

You perhaps have noticed that the "mech" squad contains eleven men. "Aha," you say, "you only can fit ten in an APC." Wrong! The M113 is designed to carry a *full* squad. Obviously, this means a small modification of the APC rules when the M113 (or M59) is used.

The squad is also armed with the LAW (minimum, two; maximum, as many as can be carried). This is a single-shot, HEAT round capable of engaging a tank, APC, pillbox, etc. at 200 meters. Therefore, when dealing with the US squad, the RL is a single-shot and reverts to an RF(AW) unless designated as carrying more than one LAW.

The unit breakdowns above are accurate, although they show an ideal situation. Since *Patrol!* represents such a situation, I believe that they will add to the realism of the game without added paperwork.

FEEDBACK RESULTS, MOVES 25

Rank	Article	Rating
1.	Designers' Notes	7.16
2.	Sterling Persons, Inc.	6.65
3.	World War I Profile	6.53
4.	Forward Observer	6.39
5.	Game Design Seminar III	6.34
6.	Footnotes	6.31
7.	Playback	6.11
8.	Opening MOVES	6.01
9.	Complicating Blue & Gray	5.84
10.	Sorcerer Scenarios	5.74
This issue (overall)		6.41

NOTE: The Feedback Results for MOVES 25 as published were **in error**. The above are the correct results.

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unit, however, will not keep the Allies out. You will have to allocate three transports and one battalion. This operation has a 50% chance of success. The operation is not without its risks; if unsuccessful, you will lose four air units and a battalion.

Division headquarters are crucial to the German operation. Without headquarter units, stacking restrictions will limit the Germans to about 15 Combat Strength Points in a hex, whereas with the headquarters, two full divisions can be in the same hex. A division without a headquarters becomes relatively useless to the Germans, and headquarters are frequently lost in transit. To prevent the loss of these units, they can be transported by air, while the other units of the division come in by sea transport.

You will find yourself fighting your way along the railroad from Oslo to Trondheim on about Turn Four. The Allied Player will be trying to delay you as much as possible with the tactics discussed earlier. You can speed the advance by using motorized units to move after combat, capturing ground that ordinarily would be defended on the next Turn. Mountain units can move quickly through the mountains between the two rail lines, cutting off Allied retreats and making possible a two-front attack. The basic secret here is to attack any available unit; the nature of the Allied defense will keep defending forces small, practically assuring six-to-one odds on any unit you can attack.

Keeping units in supply may present a problem to the inexperienced German Player, but after realizing the potential value of his air units for this purpose he will have no difficulty in overcoming it. All Ju52 transports are capable of dropping supplies anywhere on the map. There are eighteen Ju52's capable of providing supplies for up to six attacks.

Transports not carrying supplies can airlift units. The German forces at the Trondheim airfield can be reinforced by this procedure. All types of units may be airlifted, including artillery and armor.

German bombers can disrupt units on the ground, break rail lines (which can be useful to keep Allied units out of supply), and bomb ports. The Ju88A bombers, stationed at the Trondheim airfield, can neutralize any airfield on the map. This proves to be very useful when the Allies launch an air attack on Narvik, using the Bardufoss airfield for a base. Fighters, although some have bombing factors, are most useful for intercepting or deterring Allied air attacks.

