

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
Marine Corps University  
Corporals Noncommissioned Officers Program

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STUDENT HANDOUT

Troop Leading Steps

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- a. TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Given a leadership scenario, with the aid of and in accordance with the references, apply the troop leading steps to accomplish the mission. (CPL 8.3)
  
- b. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE (CE): Without the aid of and per the references, identify the following:
  - (1) Purpose of the six troop leading steps. (CPL 8.3a)
  - (2) Six troop leading steps. (CPL 8.3b)
  - (3) Subparagraphs of the five paragraph order. (CPL 8.3c)

OUTLINE

1. PURPOSE OF THE SIX TROOP LEADING STEPS: The purpose of the troop leading steps is to provide you a structured format to help you develop plans. With the structured format, you are less likely to leave out any steps -- it helps you formalize your thought processes. SMEAC, the Five Paragraph Order, is actually part of one of the troop leading steps, and will be covered in this lesson as such. The troop leading steps are used at all levels of command, but to varying degrees. During this lesson we will address the troop leading steps as they will apply to a small unit leader. In planning and preparing for a combat operation, you will receive an order from your squad leader. In many situations, he will give you time to prepare your own plan and issue it to your team. Many aspects of your plan will come from your squad leader's order. The acronym we use to help us remember all of the troop leading steps is BAMCIS. These troop leading steps help you to prepare for and to execute assigned missions. They help you to make the best use of time, facilities, and personnel. All the steps should be considered, but depending on the mission and time available, the degree of consideration for each varies.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIX TROOP LEADING STEPS: The six troop leading steps can be best remembered with the use of an acronym BAMCIS which stands for:

- (B)egin planning.
- (A)rrange for reconnaissance and coordination.

- (M)ake reconnaissance.
- (C)omplete the plan.
- (I)ssue the order.
- (S)upervise activities.

NOTE: The troop leading steps will be discussed in detail below:

a. Begin Planning (B): An order to conduct an operation does not just materialize out of thin air. Orders to conduct operations are initiated and developed at higher level commands. Depending on the command structure and the nature of the conflict, the order might originate from a theater level command, such as happened during Operation Desert Storm. The plan for the operation to liberate Kuwait was developed and passed down the chain of command. Each commander in the chain then developed their plan on how their unit would accomplish their part of the operation. Division commanders developed plans that they passed to their regimental commanders. They, in turn developed plans that they passed down to their battalion commanders. Eventually, fireteam leaders developed a plan on how they would carry out their part of the plan. There are other situations where relatively small units will operate independently, such as when a battalion conducts a NEO (Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation). Regardless of where the order was originally developed, your squad leader will give you his order. When he does, you begin the troop leading process for your fireteam.

(1) Plan Use of Available Time: Once you receive the order from the platoon commander, plan the proper use of available time. Use a planning sequence called "reverse planning." This means that you start with the last action for which a time was specified and then work back to when you received the order. For example, the squad leader said to be ready to begin the operation at 1430. The following is how you might plan your time:

- 1430: Begin the operation.
- 1415: Inspect assembly area.
- 1400: Inspect your squad.
- 1315: Issue the operation order to your team.
- 1300: Finalize the fireteam operation order.
- 1200: Make a reconnaissance with the squad leader.
- 1100: Arrange for a reconnaissance with your squad leader.
- 1030: Issue the warning order to your fireteam.
- 1000: Receive the warning order from the squad leader.

This sequence helps ensure that you allow time for all necessary action. From this, formulate a preliminary plan of action for accomplishing the mission. This preliminary plan is only tentative. You may need to change it.

(2) Warning Order: Your second step in Begin Planning is to issue a warning order to your fireteam. This permits them to use their time wisely by giving them time to begin preliminary preparations for conducting the operation while you finish the troop leading steps. The warning order format is as follows:

(a) Situation: This includes only the information the fireteam needs in order to prepare for the patrol. The complete situation is given in the patrol order.

(b) Mission: This is a brief and clear statement of what the operation must accomplish. It must tell who, what, when, where and why.

(c) General Instructions: These are instructions for all members of the fireteam. It consists of:

1. Organization: This explains the general and special organizations, i.e. the elements of the squad if it is different from normal.

2. Uniform and Equipment: This includes uniform and equipment common to all.

3. Weapons, Ammunition, and Equipment: This includes weapons, ammunition, and special equipment needed and who is to carry them.

4. Chain of Command: This is included only if it is different than normal. It is used mostly for patrols. It includes the chain of command within the patrol. Each element leader is assigned a place within the chain of command and they in turn, set up a chain of command within their own elements.

5. Time Schedule: The fireteam leader prepares a time schedule for all upcoming actions. He uses reverse planning sequence to make this schedule. The time schedule helps the fireteam make the best use of their time in planning and preparing for the mission.

6. Receiving the Patrol Order: This is the time, place, uniform and equipment for receiving the order. The fireteam leader tells his subordinates when and where the order will be given, what to wear, and what equipment to bring.

7. Inspections and Rehearsals: This is the time and place for inspection and rehearsals.

8. Specific Instructions to Subordinate Leaders: Instructions are given to special purpose teams and key men for such things as preparing explosives, checking radios, making a map study, etc. This is included when the fireteam may be further broken into smaller teams, such as may happen during patrols or other complex operations.

b. Arrange For Reconnaissance And Coordination (A): During this step you will make arrangements to conduct a reconnaissance of the terrain over which you will be moving and also arrange for coordinating with any units that will be adjacent to you during any part of the operation.

(1) Reconnaissance: There are many ways to conduct a reconnaissance of the terrain that you will be operating on. As a fireteam leader, the only types of recon that you can realistically expect to conduct are a visual ground reconnaissance from a vantage that overlooks the terrain, an aerial photo reconnaissance, or a map reconnaissance.

(a) Visual Ground Reconnaissance: A visual ground reconnaissance confirms, clarifies and supplements information provided by maps, aerial photos and other sources. It can be conducted by actually walking over the terrain that you will be moving on or by going to a vantage point that overlooks the terrain. Remember; however, a great deal of time must be available if you are to conduct a ground reconnaissance.

(b) Aerial Reconnaissance: An aerial reconnaissance can be conducted if aircraft are available and the enemy situation is appropriate. An aerial reconnaissance may be less time consuming than a ground reconnaissance and fulfills many of the same purposes of a ground reconnaissance.

(c) Aerial Photo Reconnaissance: An aerial photo reconnaissance is pictures that have been taken from aircraft of the target area. Obviously, if you are conducting an attack, the enemy is not going to invite you over to look at his defenses; therefore, an aerial photo may be the best way to get current information on the objective.

(d) Map Reconnaissance: A map reconnaissance is simply the act of looking at your map to examine all known information about the terrain. It may include overlays that have been provided by S-2 that gives specific information on know enemy positions, minefields, etc.

(2) Coordination: As a fireteam leader, in most cases, the only time that you may need to coordinate with other units is if you are going on a fireteam sized patrol or if you are operating independently from the squad, such as if you are setting up an observation post that is close to another unit's positions. During your coordination you need to discuss your assigned mission, where you expect to be located, and when you expect to be located there.

c. Make A Reconnaissance (M): During this step you actually conduct the reconnaissance and coordination with adjacent units.

d. Complete The Plan (C): Based on your completed reconnaissance, review your preliminary plan. You may want to change it or add more detail. There is a sample squad sized patrol order in Appendix A. A patrol order can be best described as a five paragraph order. A five paragraph order can be best remembered with the use of an acronym SMEAC which stands for:

(S)ituation.

(M)ission.

(E)xecution.

(A)dministration and logistics.

(C)ommand and signals.

NOTE: The five paragraph order will be discussed in detail below:

(1) Situation: The first paragraph of the order is the Situation, and it is divided into three areas; enemy, friendly, and attachments and detachments.

(a) Enemy Forces: The first subparagraph of the situation paragraph is enemy forces. This is Paragraph (1a), Appendix A. It is further divided into three subparagraphs.

1. Weather and Astronomical Data: Weather is stated as it relates to the duration of the operation. Also included under enemy forces is the astronomical data, which must be stated as to how it affects the operation, such as whether there is going to be a full moon out during a night patrol.

2. Terrain: The second subparagraph of enemy forces is terrain. You must analyze how terrain will influence your unit's size, organization, and equipment.

3. Enemy Situation: The third subparagraph is the enemy situation. This is best described by the acronym "salute."

a. Size: What size does the enemy normally operate at? What is the best estimate of the enemy's strength?

b. Activity: What activity has the enemy been engaged in? Has he been defending, attacking, conducting ambushes or raids, or something else?

c. Location: Include the enemy's known location in your area of operation, the areas he favors for movement, and the latest enemy sightings.

d. Unit: What type of enemy unit is operating in your area (infantry, mechanized, support, militia, guerrilla)? If known, mention the unit.

e. Time: What was the time of the last enemy sighting?

f. Equipment: What type of equipment does he have available for use (clothing, weapons, fire support)?

(b) Friendly Situation: When we speak about friendly forces, you should remember the acronym HAS.

1. Higher: The mission of your next higher unit will be, in most cases, the mission of your parent unit.

2. Adjacent: The location and planned actions of adjacent units must be stated. e.g., "First and third platoons continue to man the left and right flank of the company defensive

perimeter." If your operation is a patrol, then include the mission and routes of other patrols operating in your area. Also include security posts in your area.

3. Support: The fire support which is available for your patrol is included. State which units are available to support your patrol and any on-call targets that you have. The on-call targets could be targets that have already been established by someone else or they could be targets that you request. The types of areas that you should have for on-call targets are danger areas, crossroads, avenues of approach that the enemy might use, etc. An example of this subparagraph is, "B Btry 1/12 is in support of our battalion. The 60mm mortars are in general support of the company with priority of fires to our patrol. Our on-call targets are AB 1001 located at the draw at grid 13245678, AB 1002 located at the river ford at grid 12435687 and AB 1003 located at the crossroads at grid 12347865." Remember you are cheating yourself and your Marines if you have support available and don't plan for its use on your operation.

(c) Attachments and Detachments: The last subparagraph of the first paragraph is attachments and detachments. Attachments and detachments relate to units attached or detached from your unit. You must include the effective time of detachment or attachment. As a small unit leader, you will rarely have any attachments or detachments.

(2) Mission: Paragraph (2), Appendix A of the patrol order is the Mission statement. This is a clear, concise statement of the task to accomplish. It should answer who, what, where, when and why. It includes grid coordinates and times.

(3) Execution: In the execution paragraph, you must be as specific, detailed and comprehensive as possible. This paragraph is divided into three major subparagraphs.

(a) Concept of Operation: The first subparagraph (3a), Appendix A is the concept of operation. It includes the overall plan. This is a general overview of how the mission will be accomplished. It includes the basic formations that will be used.

(b) Tasks: The second subparagraph (3b), Appendix A assigns specific tasks, both in and out of the objective area, for elements, teams, and individuals. This is a detailed listing of how each element, team, and/or individual will accomplish their part of the mission. It will include team formations, who is the base of the movements, tasks within the objective area, etc. Each subparagraph of Tasks will be devoted to one specific element of the unit. It will take them from start to finish of the entire patrol before you move onto the next element's tasks. The tasks of the attachments should be covered last. The number of subparagraphs under Tasks will usually be the number of elements that you have in the patrol. For fireteam sized units, you may devote one subparagraph to each member of your fireteam.

(c) Coordinating Instructions: The third subparagraph (3c), Appendix A is coordinating instructions. The following should be covered:

\* Times of departure and return may be stated in general or specific terms.

- \* The primary and alternate route the patrol intends to use for movement to and from the objective.
- \* Checkpoints, which may be assigned by higher authority. They are points on the ground on or near where the patrol must pass.
- \* The actual procedures for departure and reentry of friendly areas.
- \* Formations, which must be planned for movement of the patrol to and from the objective area.
- \* Actions for "Immediate Action Drills."
- \* Actions at rallying points which are places where the patrol can assemble or reorganize.
- \* Where, when, and by whom the debriefing will be conducted. Generally, it is held immediately after the patrol.

(4) Administration and Logistics: Administration and Logistics are contained in paragraph four, Appendix A.

(a) Beans: How many rations will be taken on patrol? Who will draw and distribute the rations? When is the next resupply of chow.

(b) Bullets: Are arms and ammunition adequate and appropriate for the mission assigned. How much ammo is being taken. When is the next resupply of ammo expected?

(c) Bad Guys: There has to be a method for the handling of prisoners. Use your unit SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) for handling EPW's (Enemy Prisoners of War).

(d) Bandages: This covers the handling of dead and wounded Marines.

1. Be specific in your instructions concerning the transportation of seriously wounded versus non-seriously wounded in action.

2. Every attempt must be made to take our dead Marines home.

3. If a corpsman is a member of the unit, state his location during movement and the various phases of the patrol.

(5) Command and Signals: The final paragraph, Appendix A of the patrol order is the command and signal.

(a) Command: There are considerations which must be spelled out in the command portion of this paragraph. The chain of command should be as detailed as in the warning order. The location of the unit leader should be stated for each phase of the operation.

(b) Signal: There are various considerations contained in the signal portion of this paragraph.

1. Cover all signals to be used, such as hand and arm, pyro, and audible.
2. State the communications plan with higher headquarters, to include call signs, and primary/alternate frequencies. Reports such as SITREP's, POSREP's, and SALUTE are discussed in this paragraph.
3. State the challenge and password procedure to be used and procedures for departing and reentering friendly lines.

e. Issue The Order (I): Because you give squad orders orally, it is vital that you have the complete attention of your unit before issuing the order. There are four keys to success in issuing a patrol order.

(1) You must insure all unit members are present. Unlike the normal five-paragraph order, every member of the patrol must be present. If you are a squad leader, insure that all fireteam leaders are present, since a squad leader usually does not give an order to all members of the squad.

(2) You should precede the order with an orientation. Some people consider "Orientation" to be part of the Five Paragraph Order, though doctrinally, it is not. None-the-less, its importance can not be overemphasized.

(a) If at all possible, take the unit to a vantage point.

(b) After making a detailed map study, a terrain model can be built. This task can be assigned to a member of the unit.

(3) You should hold all questions until the order is complete. By holding all questions until the order is issued, you prevent interruption in the unit leader's chain of thought.

(4) You should use visual aids to enhance understanding on the part of the unit members.

(a) Unit members should help prepare visual aids.

(b) Utilization of such materials as MRE sleeves, chalk on a poncho, a blanket board and the back of a map are only a few examples of field expedients.

(5) Conclude the order with a time check.

f. Supervise Activities (S): The last letter in BAMCIS stands for supervise. This is the most important of the troop leading steps. You should continuously supervise your team to ensure that your order is carried out as intended. A good plan that is properly supervised is always far better than an excellent plan that is poorly supervised. As you get to know your Marines, you will begin to develop "trust tactics." One element of trust tactics is knowing how much you must supervise each Marine. Remember, each Marine is different. Each Marine earns a different amount of trust



from you based on his past proven performance. For example, some Marines can be trusted to accomplish assigned tasks with little or no supervision, while others require close supervision to do even the most basic tasks. (Do not use trust tactics as an excuse for poor supervision.) At your level, the direct supervision of individual Marines will be the closest. Conduct an inspection and rehearsal before the operation. Rehearsals provide confidence and improve ability. Noise and confusion dominate the battlefield unless each member knows exactly what task he must accomplish in the mission. Inspecting your unit is the last duty to perform before the actual conduct of a tactical operation. The least you should inspect are:

- \* Weapons.
- \* Ammunition.
- \* Mission essential equipment, demolition, starlight scopes, etc.
- \* Tactically prepared uniforms and equipment, proper fit and appearance, loose equipment tied down, camouflage, etc.
- \* Ask/answer questions.

REFERENCES: FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad  
USMC Battle Drill Guide

## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE PATROL LEADER'S ORDER

#### 1. SITUATION

##### a. Enemy.

(1) Weather -- Partly cloudy, clear, raining, foggy, temperature average 55 degrees, wind from the southwest at approximately 10 knots.

(2) Terrain -- Gentle rolling terrain with heavy scrub, oak, and pine on the high ground. Heavy thickets are also located in the low ground around streams and in the draws. All streams are narrow and fordable. Numerous roads and trails exist that are not shown on the map.

##### (3) SALUTE

Size - The enemy in this area is estimated to be at 155 effective fighting strength.

Activity - Digging in.

Location - Enemy positions are located along the high ground North of Onville, Northeast of MCS #3, and West of MCS #2.

Unit - Enemy is believed to be part of the 1st Irregular Regiment.

Time - This information is good as of this morning.

Equipment - They are armed with small arms, light machineguns, and 60mm mortars.

##### b. Friendly Forces.

Mission of next higher unit -- Our platoon is defending the vicinity of Camp BARRETT.

Location and planned actions of units on right and left -- Company B is defending on line to our right, and the 3d Squad is defending on line to our left. There will be no friendly patrols in the regimental TAOR other than those from our company. Patrol # 4 is working our right flank in GS 4651. I have coordinated with those patrol leaders and our closest point of contact is 400 meters.

Fire support available for patrol -- D Battery, 11th Marines is in general support of our patrol. I have plotted targets along our route out and back that are located at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. The target numbers assigned are AB101, AB102, AB103, AB104, AB105, AB106, and AB107.

c. Attachments and Detachments. One machinegun team attached from the Weapons Platoon.

## 2. MISSION.

Beginning at 0100, our squad will conduct a security type combat patrol in the vicinity of GS 4551 to warn our company of any enemy activity to our front. The accomplishment of the mission has priority.

## 3. EXECUTION.

a. Concept of Operations. We will depart this area and move by foot to the Company B lines, effect passage of lines, move generally northwest to the objective in a tactical column, accomplish the mission, return to the FLOT, effect reentry through our company lines and stand by immediately for debriefing.

### b. Specific Duties.

(1) 1st Fireteam. During movement, you will be in either the front or left of all squad formations. You will provide frontal security during movement. You will provide two men to do a box recon on the other side of all danger areas. These two men will take flank security on the far side of danger areas. You will provide a navigator, and one pacer.

(2) 2nd Fireteam. During movement, you will be in the middle of all squad formations. You are the base of movement. You will provide one flank security on either side of the formation during movement.

(3) 3rd Fireteam. During movement, you will be in either the rear or right side of all squad formations and will follow in trace of the machinegun team. You will provide rear security during movement. At danger areas, you will provide two men to provide security on the near right side. You will provide one paceman who will stay with your fireteam.

(4) Machinegun Team. You will fall in behind 2nd fireteam during movement in a tactical column. In other formations, you will place yourself as I direct you. At danger areas, you will provide security on the near left side.

### c. Coordinating Instructions.

(1) Departure and Return. Depart 0100, Return 0400.

(2) Formation. Tactical column.

(3) Order of Movement. Point, navigator, myself, headquarters group, 1st Fireteam, 2d Fireteam, Machinegun team, 3d Fireteam. The assistant patrol leader will be in the rear third of the patrol.

(4) Route Out.

\_\_\_\_\_ ° for \_\_\_\_\_ meters (\_\_\_\_\_).

\_\_\_\_\_ ° for \_\_\_\_\_ meters (\_\_\_\_\_).

(5) Return Trip.

\_\_\_\_\_ ° for \_\_\_\_\_ meters (\_\_\_\_\_).

\_\_\_\_\_ ° for \_\_\_\_\_ meters (\_\_\_\_\_).

\_\_\_\_\_ ° for \_\_\_\_\_ meters (FLOT).

(6) Departure of Friendly Lines. We will move by foot to the initial rally point behind Company B command post where we will pick up a guide. I will affect final coordination. If there are any changes that affect the patrol, I will return to the IRP and brief the patrol. If there is no change, we will depart the FLOT through a gap in the wire. At the last covered position prior to reaching the wire, the patrol will halt and establish a short security halt under the control of the assistant patrol leader.

(7) Reentry of Friendly Lines. We will halt at least 200 meters from our reentry point and establish a long security halt. I will radio battalion of our position and request reentry permission. Once the friendly lines are alert to our position, I will move forward and gain contact with them. Once contact is established the patrol will move forward through the lines. I will verify and count the patrol through.

(8) Rallying Points. IRP -- trail junction behind Company B Command Post. Tentative enroute rallying points -- Coordinates \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. (Illustrate.)

Actions at Rallying Points. Ranking man set up all-around security and wait for 45 minutes or until 60 percent of the patrol is present. After 45 minutes, reorganize patrol, establish a chain of command, redistribute equipment, weapons, and ammunition and move to the ORP and accomplish the mission. If you arrive in the rallying point and the patrol has already departed for the ORP or FLOT, move to the ORP or FLOT, and contact the patrol there.

(9) Actions on Enemy Contact.

(a) Counterambush Drill. The verbal designation "ambush right" or "ambush left" will be the signal for the patrol to move 90 degrees to the right or left and assault the ambush position. Any member can give this command. If a large portion of the patrol is not in the killing zone, that portion will envelope. Positioning will be rehearsed.

(b) Immediate Assault. The verbal designation "contact front," "contact right," or "contact left" will be the signal for the patrol to move on line. The patrol member giving the command will fire a well aimed shot at the enemy. All teams will assault through the enemy for 100 meters unless given orders to the contrary by me. (Illustrate by visual aids.)

(c) Immediate Ambush. If we see an enemy patrol and they do not see us, we will set up an immediate ambush. On the signal of an approaching enemy patrol, we will deploy right or left of our direction of movement and occupy a linear type ambush position. (Illustrate signals and procedure.)

(d) Breaking Contact. If I desire to break contact we will break by the clock system. Direction of initial movement is 12 o'clock. I will designate a rendezvous point by giving you a time, direction, and distance. Fireteam #1 will provide covering fires for 15 seconds and withdraw to the rendezvous point. (Illustrate.)

(10) Rehearsals. Rehearsals will be conducted immediately following initial inspection in this area by the assistant patrol leader. Priority of rehearsal will be action at objective, action on enemy contact, action at danger areas, control, security, and passage and reentry of FLOT. Intrapatrol communication check will be held prior to the initial inspection. The assistant patrol leader will ensure that the patrol is ready for my inspection and rehearsal 15 minutes after the termination of the patrol leader's orders.

(11) Debriefing. Debriefing will be held here immediately on our return.

#### 4. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS.

a. Rations. One ration meal per man will be carried, but will not be eaten.

b. Arms and Ammunition. No change from Warning Order.

c. Wounded. Administer first aid and continue patrol if wound is not serious. If ambulatory, but nonserious, we will carry him to a rallying point, leave him there, and pick him up on return. If seriously wounded, we will evacuate him to the FLOT or call for a helicopter evacuation. The corpsman will be located with the 2nd Fireteam.

d. EPW's. Prisoners will be tied and blindfolded when approaching and effecting reentry of FLOT. The 2nd Fireteam will guard the EPW's.

#### 5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL.

a. Signal.

(1) Daylight.

(a) Arm-and-hand (halt, down, up, forward, long security halt, enemy sighted).

(b) Rallying point \_\_\_\_\_.

(c) Danger area \_\_\_\_\_.

(d) Clear to cross \_\_\_\_\_.

(2) Call Signs.

(a) Patrol-- \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Company tactical net: \_\_\_\_\_, primary frequency \_\_\_\_\_, alternate frequency \_\_\_\_\_

(b) FSCC: ASH CAN, Primary frequency \_\_\_\_\_, alternate frequency \_\_\_\_\_

(5) Reports.

(a) Checkpoints

(b) Enemy contact

(c) Mission accomplishment

(d) WIA-KIA-PWs

(6) Challenge and Password.

(a) Unit--HAPPY VALLEY

(b) Inter--Number combination adding up to 21

(c) Intra--Number combination adding up to 11

b. Command.

(1) Chain of Command. Same as warning order.

(2) Location of patrol leader - I will be right behind the 1st Fireteam during movement.