

AIMS AND TYPES OF PATROLS

Patrolling is probably the most important operation in war so far as the infantry is concerned.

Aims of Patrolling

There are three aims of patrolling:

1. To obtain up-to-date and accurate information as a result of which a commander can plan an operation.
2. To dominate the ground between a commander's own unit and that of the enemy, thus making it easier and safer for his own patrols to gather information and more difficult for the enemy patrols to achieve similar results.
3. To destroy and disrupt enemy forces, particularly those which may try to infiltrate the commander's own positions or between neighboring positions.

Types of Patrols

All patrols have the task of providing information. They must also be prepared to fight, either to gain information required or to protect themselves if necessary. There are three main types of dismounted patrols:

1. Reconnaissance patrols.
2. Standing patrols.
3. Fighting patrols.

Reconnaissance Patrols.

These are patrols of a minimum strength for the task, usually one NCO and three cadets, which gain information by observation and operate generally by stealth. They avoid combat except for self-protection or to take advantage of an unusual opportunity.

The roles in which reconnaissance patrols may be employed include:

1. Collecting topographical information on features, tracks and the state of the ground.
2. Obtaining details of enemy minefields and the extent of enemy positions.
3. Locating enemy machine guns and defensive fire (DF) areas, where fire is immediately directed on call in case of emergency.
4. Investigating noises made by the enemy, their habits and patrol routes.
5. Checking our wire and/or minefields at first or last light.
6. Acting as listening posts to give early warning of enemy approach and with the ability to call down fire.

Standing Patrols.

These are patrols of a minimum strength of one NCO and three cadets which gain information of enemy movement and prevent or disrupt enemy infiltration. They move into position as quietly as possible and try to remain concealed and gain their information until they are required to withdraw or, if discovered, fight their way out.

Their main tasks are to:

1. Watch and listen on likely enemy approaches.
2. Watch over dead ground in front of and between friendly localities.
3. Watch over minefields and obstacles.

For these tasks they should have good communications so that they can inform the main body.

Fighting Patrols.

These are patrols organized with sufficient strength and armament (usually a minimum of two NCOs and nine cadets) to accept combat in order to fulfill their role, e.g.

1. Denying enemy patrols freedom of action in No Man's land.
2. Driving in enemy protective patrols.
3. Interfering with enemy working parties.
4. Distracting enemy attention from other activities.
5. Carrying out raids.
6. Capturing prisoners for identification purposes.
7. Tank hunting.
8. Laying ambushes.
9. Protecting reconnaissance and working parties of other arms.
10. Escorting stretcher parties.