



PATROL PLANNING IN AN IED ENVIRONMENT

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A patrol leader, whether mounted in a combat platform or making his way on foot, has always applied a pre-operational checklist to his actions to help ensure he hasn't forgotten something. Every little detail that can be addressed helps increase the odds of success. After a decade of combat in a variety of environments against a constantly evolving opponent, the patrol leader has developed a keen sense of needs to be addressed before going "outside the wire." The issue in today's battlefield comes from the flood of improvised explosive device (IED)-related enablers and procedures to apply to increase a patrol's security and assist in mission success.

In February 2012, the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) drafted what is really a two-stage checklist — Stage 1: Checks to be conducted prior to departure and Stage 2: Checks and actions to take during the patrol. These pre-combat checks and operational reminders are not device/"widget" specific, but address capabilities that will support both mounted and dismounted patrol leaders.

These simple checks will help synchronize the many counter-IED (C-IED) enablers available to the warfighter in theater and help address where a new widget fits in the planning process based on its capability.

Pre-Patrol Checks:

1. The element leader conducts a detailed mission analysis for their area of operations (AO) to determine C-IED enabler requirements.

a. Requests intelligence data on the route and area of operations from the company intelligence support team (CoIST)/S2.

b. Performs a detailed map and imagery reconnaissance of the route/AO to identify vulnerable points (VPs) and vulnerable areas (VAs), and areas with historical IED employment.

c. Reviews the most recent pattern analysis for explosive hazards and attack sites to determine the relevancy of named areas of interest (NAIs) and targeted areas of interest (TAIs) to include VAs and VPs.

I. Identifies locations for placement of crew-served weapons, small kill teams (SKTs), snipers, and both mounted and dismounted optical platforms (ex: Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System [LRAS3], Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Systems-Combined [BETSS-C], Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment [RAID]) to support maneuver in and around VP/VAs. (Remember to clear support-by-fire (SBF) positions before occupation.)

II. Identifies likely target reference points (TRPs) to support maneuver in and around VP/VAs while limiting possible civilian casualties (CIVCAS).

III. Identifies any host nation partnering or expected civilian interaction to develop appropriate "green on blue" prevention measures (ex: Guardian Angels).

d. Requests an overflight by available air assets to provide daily intelligence updates.

e. Executes a detailed threat assessment taking into account the enemy intent, enemy capabilities, weather, and location/terrain.

f. Analyzes all honesty traces from prior patrols in the AO (use in conjunction with Step b).

g. Identifies the locations of all known minefields in the AO.

2. The element leader selects trained and qualified operators for all C-IED enablers and conducts rehearsals (ensure multiple operators are qualified for each C-IED enabler).

a. Practices isolation drills for NAIs and TAIs to include VPs/VAs.

b. Rehearses standard operating procedure (SOP) for safe lane and explosive hazard (EH)-marking techniques. (Ref: Step 3 e).

c. Rehearses actions for an EH find.

d. Rehearses actions for an EH detonation.

I. Casualty extraction

II. Medical evacuation (MEDEVAC)

III. CIVCAS

e. Rehearse "hot swap" routine for battery-powered systems.

Note: Perform rehearsals in accordance with current tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs); SOPs; and rules of engagement (ROE).

3. The element leader verifies available C-IED equipment is operational; determines power requirements and material load for sustained operations; and identifies potential interoperability conflicts between all employed C-IED enablers and coalition partners.

a. Identifies battery consumption requirements for your systems (electronic warfare [EW], counter-radio-controlled IED electronic warfare [CREW]) based on anticipated duration of mission.

b. Identifies battery consumption requirements for handheld detectors (HHDs) based on anticipated usage during the duration of mission.

c. Identifies additional sustainment needs for canine teams.

d. Formulates order of movement and standoff requirements (interoperability) for the various HHDs and vehicle-based CREW/EW suites.

e. Ensures adequate safe lane-marking materials are available for all elements.

Checks During Patrol:

1. The element leader employs available aerial intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities to extend tactical reach, negate the effects of terrain, and identify enemy threats and likely IED engagement areas.

2. The element leader employs mounted and dismounted CREW systems to protect against any radio-controlled IED threat.

a. Leader determines the number of suites required to provide adequate coverage for his entire element.

b. Leaders determine the effects and impacts of vehicle-mounted CREW on any dismounted operations.

3. The element leader employs portable radio direction finders to detect enemy ground-based radio emitters which could indicate the presence of enemy command and control nodes, observation posts, and spotter positions. (Refer to pre-patrol item #3).

4. The element leader employs available off-leash capable explosive detection dogs to provide standoff detection of EH. (Refer to pre-patrol item #3.)

5. The element leader employs available unmanned ground systems (e.g. robotics) to aid in the detection, investigation, interrogation and/or neutralization of EH, IEDs, and IED components.

6. The element leader employs available ground-penetrating radar (GRP), command wire, and high/low metal handheld detection equipment to locate buried EH, IEDs, and IED components.

7. The element leader utilizes visual equipment (sniper optic, vehicle-mounted systems, etc.) to detect, and investigate EH, IEDs, and IED components.

8. The element leader employs explosive linear charges in high-threat EH areas to assist in the location, destruction, or disruption of IEDs and IED components, while staying within the ROE and limiting the effects on civilian routine/infrastructure.

9. If warranted during interactions with the local populace, the element leader will utilize available biometric equipment to enroll or verify an individual's identity in



Photo by LTJG Andrew Carleen, U.S. Navy

Soldiers practice using their CREW devices during an electronic warfare course in Afghanistan.

support of attack the network activities. (Refer to pre-patrol item #1-C-III.)

10. If warranted during interactions with the local populace, the element leader will utilize available trace and/or vapor explosive detection equipment to check personnel for explosive contamination.

11. If bulk fertilizer is encountered during dismounted operations, the element leader will utilize explosive precursor detection kits to determine if the fertilizer is legal to possess and confiscate any illegal fertilizers.

WARNING: At no time will untrained personnel attempt to collect samples of suspected homemade explosives or precursors for testing purposes. Personnel

encountering suspected homemade explosives or precursors will immediately back out of the area and call explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).

For more information, contact LTC Haimes A. Kilgore at (706) 545-5989 or haimes.a.kilgore.mil@mail.mil (include "Dismount Checklist" in the subject line of your correspondence.)

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