

# HOW TO CONDUCT A SQUAD AMBUSH

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most commonly conducted missions in the U.S. Army is the ambush. A **Squad Ambush** is a surprise attack on a moving or halted enemy from a covered and concealed position with the intent to engage and destroy the enemy force. An effective ambush will catch the unsuspecting enemies off guard and ultimately reduce their overall combat effectiveness. This type of mission is intended to be simple and can be carried out by anyone who knows the proper steps. All it takes is some discipline, knowledge, and planning.

## BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

A squad typically consists of nine soldiers and breaks down into the following components:

**Squad Leader (SL)** – As the squad leader, you are the soldier in charge of this unit. You are responsible for anything that the squad does or fails to do, including the proper execution of missions. You have the final say on any decisions the squad makes and will initiate the ambush when the time comes.

**Team Leader (TL)** – There are two team leaders per squad. Each one is responsible for three soldiers who make up his fire team. The team leaders' main responsibilities include maneuvering their individual teams and reporting their statuses to the squad leader.

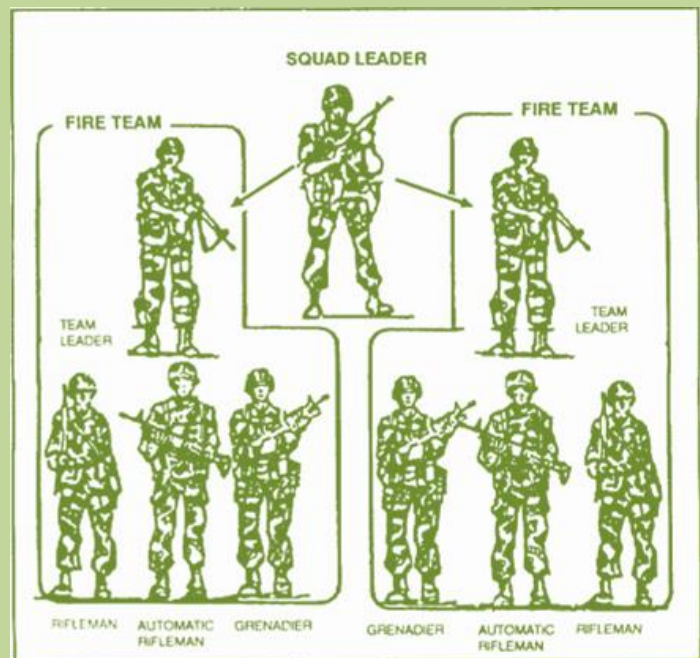
**Squad Member** – A squad member is any soldier that does not hold one of the three traditional leadership positions within the squad. Squad members are the operational component of the squad, whereas the squad leader and team leaders are meant to plan, direct, and supervise.

The squad also breaks into the three essential elements of any ambush:

**Security (SEC)** – establishes left and right security of the ambush site and provides early warning. One member of each team will be in security, so that both limits can be covered.

**Support (SPT)** – places massed fires into the kill zone to destroy the enemy. This element is made up of one fire team.

**Assault (ASLT)** – assaults through the kill zone to destroy resisting enemy fighters. This element also consists of one fire team.



Rifle Squad Image modified from

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/7-8/appa.htm>

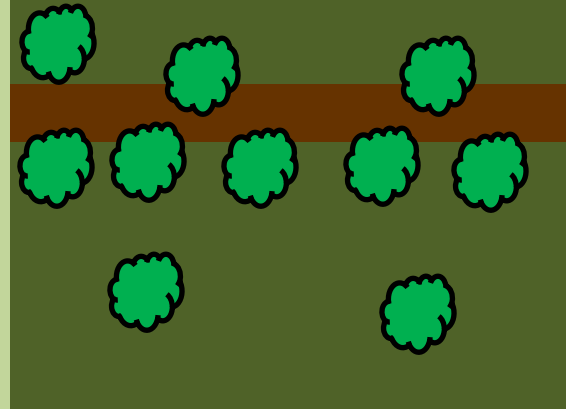


**WARNING:** The safety of your soldiers is always the number one priority in any military operation. This is important to keep in mind when planning and conducting an ambush.

# PROCESS

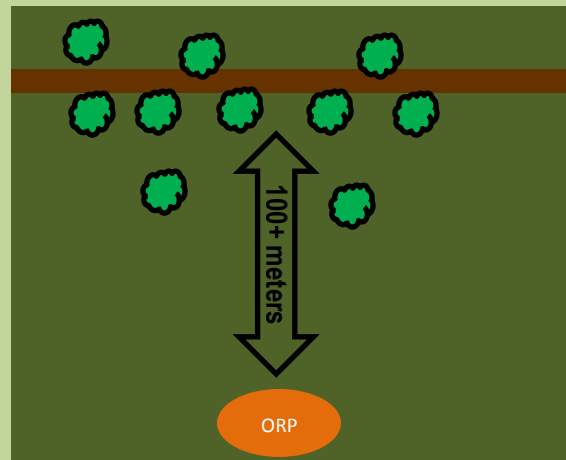
## 1. Identify the location of the Ambush site

The key to a successful ambush is having a good location. Many times, as a squad leader, you will know the route that the enemy is traveling, but it is up to you to determine where exactly the ambush will take place. An acceptable location is an area along the enemy's route that provides good cover and concealment for the squad to execute the ambush and withdraw safely. Along a tree-lined road or path is a common example.



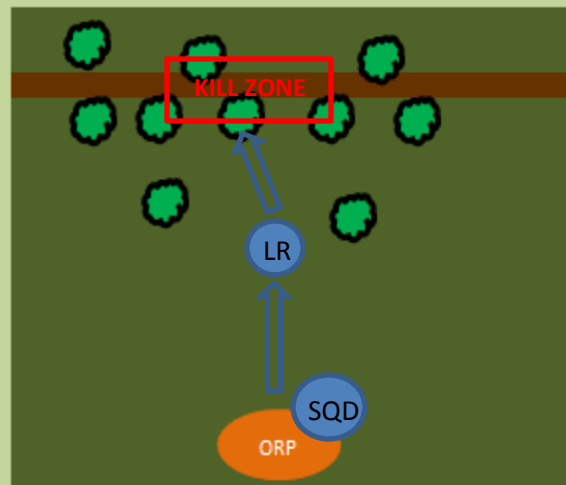
## 2. Occupy an Objective Rally Point

Before conducting an ambush, you must set up an Objective Rally Point (ORP). The ORP should be located at least 100 meters away from the Ambush site and out of sight and sound of the enemy so that he cannot detect you. You set up the ORP so that your squad members have time to organize themselves and prepare for the mission while you conduct a reconnaissance on the Ambush site. The ORP is also the location that you return to after actions on the objective are conducted in order to reconsolidate your squad.



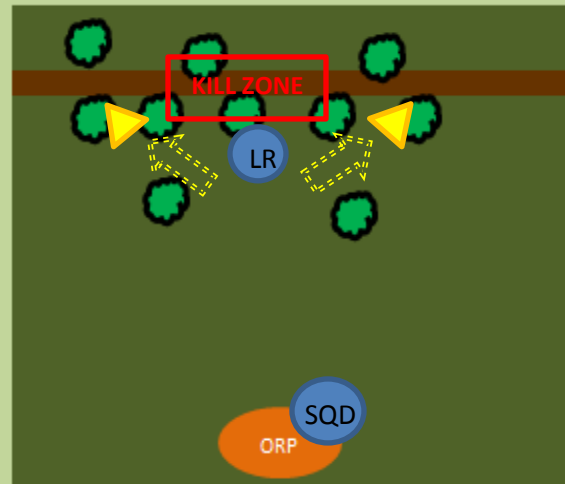
## 3. Conduct a Leader's Reconnaissance

The purpose of the leader's reconnaissance (LR) is for you to conduct the final planning components of the mission while being physically present at the site. You should take one team leader and a security element, typically two squad members, with you. The rest of the squad will remain at the ORP until you return. The location of the kill zone is the first thing that you should identify upon arriving at and confirming the ambush location. The kill zone is the area that will be covered completely by the squad's fires and is the location in which the enemy force will be when the ambush is initiated. Next, you determine the ideal locations to emplace your support and assault elements. Cover and concealment, as well as a good vantage point on the kill zone, will factor into your considerations.



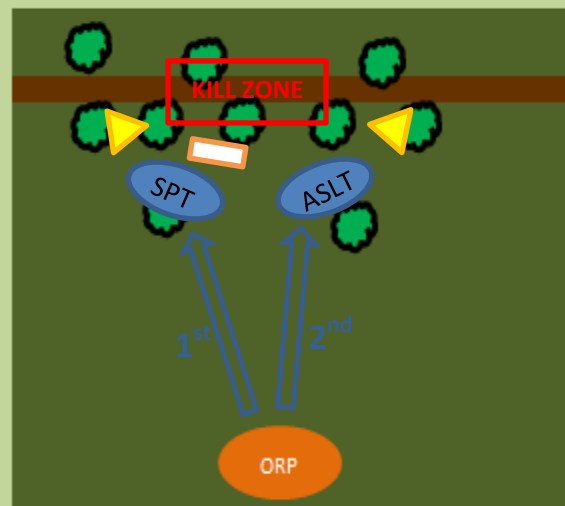
#### 4. Emplace Security

The last action that you will take before returning from the leader's reconnaissance is emplacing your security elements on the far left and right limits of the site. Their purpose is to secure the flanks and provide you with early warning of the enemy approaching. The security remains in place when you return to the ORP from the leader's reconnaissance so that there is continuous security on the ambush site while they wait for the rest of the squad to arrive.



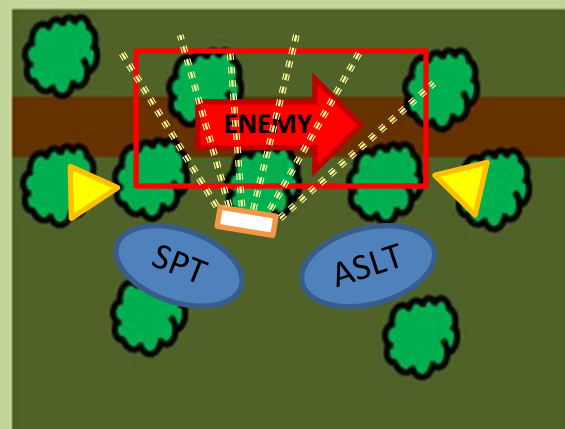
#### 5. Occupy the Ambush site

Upon returning to the ORP from the reconnaissance, you organize your squad and prepare to move to the ambush site. Remember, your security elements did not return with you, so they are already set. When the main body of the squad moves to the ambush site, the support team is placed in position by the squad leader first and provides over-watch on the objective. Then, following close behind the support, the assault element is placed in position. At this time, the support element sets up the claymore mine. (This mine consists of a C4 explosive charge that shoots steel BBs in a 100 degree spread for up to 50 meters.)



#### 6. Initiate the Ambush

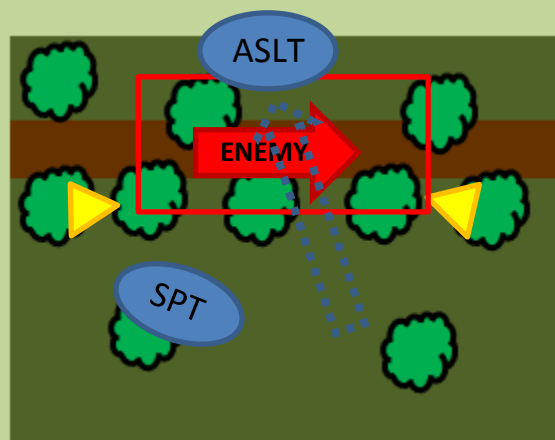
When the enemy is spotted by one of the security elements, he will report his sighting to you. When the enemy unit is completely in the kill zone, you will initiate the ambush. The squad leader is always the soldier to do this. You should always use the most casualty-producing weapon which, in most cases, is the claymore mine. When the blast sounds, the rest of the squad fires into the kill zone for about 1 minute or until movement in the kill zone ceases.



**WARNING:** Maintaining a 3:1 ratio is imperative. It is standard in the U.S. Army to always have three soldiers for every one enemy soldier when initiating contact. This rule ensures that you will have superior firepower over the enemy and will not become outnumbered. You should NOT initiate the ambush if the enemy unit is larger than expected.

## 7. Conduct Actions on the Objective

As the squad leader, when you decide that the enemy has been sufficiently suppressed, you order the assault element to assault through the objective. Upon calling this command, the support element will stop firing and your assault element will charge through the kill zone to ensure that all of the enemies have been neutralized. The support and security elements will stay in place to provide over-watch of the objective.



## 8. Withdraw from the Objective

After the Ambush has been successfully conducted, and you have completed the mission to eliminate the enemy force, you must quickly withdraw from the site in case more enemy forces are in the area. The squad elements will withdraw from the objective to the ORP in the opposite order that they arrived. The assault element moves out first, then support, and lastly security. When your entire squad returns to the ORP, you can debrief the mission and begin to prepare for your next operation.

