

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

FIELD STARTS, 3d Brigade Joint Airborne Division (Airmobile)
APO San Francisco 96303

AVGB-R8

13 February 1970

SUBJECT: Tips of the Trade/Lessons Learned

TO ALL RECON PERSONNEL

I Introduction:

Keep an OPEN MIND when you read these tips of the trade/lessons learned on training, your weapon, harness, rucksack and patrol. You may disagree with some of the statements, but what might not work for one team or individual when used with his tactics and plans may very well work for another. The point is this: "DON'T KNOCK IT IF YOU HAVEN'T TRIED IT". These tips of the trade/lessons learned are being published for your use and reference.

II Tips of the trade/lessons learned:

1. Take your time and think, tired men get careless. Keep control.
2. If you show confidence, your team will have confidence.
3. Don't be afraid to take advice.
4. Always have an alternate plan. Think ahead.
5. If the team leader loses his temper, it will effect his judgement.
Keep your cool and plan ahead.
6. No one or team can practice and/or train too much or too often.
7. Realism must be injected into all phases of training, to include zeroing of weapons, such as zero at targets in the jungle.
8. Use live training aids, team members during POW snatch and ambush practice. Be rough because as you practice so will you do for real.

9. Team work is the key to success and that only comes through constant practice and training.

10. Team members that have a good physical training program have fewer personnel catching colds and getting sick in the field.

Tips on your weapon M-16/Car 15

1. Tape the muzzle of your weapons to keep out water and dirt. Leave lower portion of the blits open for ventilation.

2. It's not a bad practice to use one magazine full of tracer during infiltration and exfiltration. Reason: If taken under fire on infiltration or exfiltration the tracer can show door gunner/direct gunships to area from which patrol is receiving fire.

3. Last three rounds in each magazine should be tracer to remind the firer that he is nearly out of ammo in that magazine.

4. Replace the cartridge in the chamber of your weapon each morning "quietly". Condensation may cause a malfunction.

5. Oil the selector switch on your weapon daily and work the switch back and forth especially during rainy season. This will prevent the common occurrence of a stuck switch.

6. Always carry a small vial/tube of lubricating oil for your weapon.

7. Always carry your weapon with the selector switch on "safe".

8. To improve noise discipline, tape all sling swivels or remove them from your weapon.

9. Do not fire weapons from helicopters during extraction, once clear of the LZ. Reason: A gunship may be passing under you without your knowledge.

10. Do not bother to retrieve your first expended magazine during contact, because it will slow you down when the time is of the essence.

11. Check all magazine's before going on operations, to insure they are clean and properly loaded.

12. Never take for granted that your weapon is clean enough on operation.

CLEAN YOUR WEAPON DAILY.

13. Place magazines upside down with bullets pointed away from your body in the ammo pouches. This will keep dirt and water out of them and if rounds go off from enemy fire, you won't be injured from your own ammo.

Tips for your belt and harness.

1. Be sure that all snaps and buckles are taped. Do not use paper tape.

2. Fold paper tape through the rings of grenades and tape the body of the grenade.

The paper tape will tear for first use, where plastic or cloth tape will not.

Also it keeps the ring open for your finger, stops noise and prevents snagging.

3. Tie a string or lanyard to your M-79 and to your belt so that you can drop it after firing and grab your M-16, without losing the M-79.

4. Keep your URC-10 secured to your harness during use. If lost with the beeper on, it will negate all other signals on that frequency until the battery runs down.

5. Camouflage smoke, CS, and WP grenades with black or OD spray paint.

6. Do not bend the pins on the grenades flat. The rings are too hard to pull when needed.

7. Do not carry grenades or smoke on the upper portion of your harness.

Reason: The enemy will shoot at them trying to inflict several casualties with one shot.

8. Place triangular bandages (in original containers) in the ammo pouches.

It makes it easier to remove magazines.

9. Cut the front corners of ammo pouches $1/2 - 3/4$ of an inch to aid in making it easier to remove magazines during the rainy season. Also have magazines with pull tabs in each pouch.

10. Always carry some type of knife on patrol.

○ Snap link should be secured around the shoulder harness, NOT on the cloth loops.

12. Carry smoke grenades in pockets of/or rucksack, NOT on your belt or harness.

They take up space which can be better for CS or frag grenades.

13. All US team members should carry CS grenades on web gear, within easy reach.

Reasons: A. They are ideal in stopping or slowing down pursuit.

B. They will stop dogs during wet weather when CS powder will dis-
sipate due to wetness.

C. CS will stay close to the ground and is more effective during
damp and wet periods.

14. All US personnel should carry a minimum of two WP grenades for psychological effect plus double effectiveness will be achieved when combined with CS.

15. Make continuous daily checks on all grenades, when on patrol, to insure the
primer is not coming unscrewed.

16. Each team should carry one thermite grenade for destruction of equipment,
either friendly or enemy, if the situation or need arises.

17. For survival, recommend each individual carry, in a first aid pouch on the
harness, one tube of bouillion cubes, one tube of salt tablets, and one bottle of
water purification tablets. One bouillion cube in one canteen of water, when
dissolved will last one to two for feed and energy.

Antenna Tips

1. Sew a long slim pocket on the side of your rucksack to accomodate the long
antenna.

2. Insure that the snaplink on your rucksack is snapped through the loop in
the upper portion of your rucksack carrying straps. You won't lose it during

traction if you have to snap it on a ladder or McQuire Rig.

○ Insect repellent leaks and spills easily, therefore isolate it from your other equipment in the rucksack. Also squeeze ~~air~~ air from repellent container and screw on cap firmly.

4. An indigenous poncho and/or ground sheet is sufficient for sleeping along with a jungle sweater and a rain jacket.

5. Use black or OD spray paint on rucksack for camouflage.

6. A claymore bag, sewn onto the top flap of the rucksack is extremely useful for carrying binoculars, extra hand sets, camera or URC-10, prepared claymores or any other special equipment. This aids in easy access while on patrol or when you have to ditch the rucksack.

7. Tie smoke on rucksack between pockets.

8. Always use the water from canteens in or on your rucksack before using water in the canteens on your belt. This will insure a supply of water if you lose your rucksack.

9. Test straps on the rucksack before packing for each patrol. Always carry some parachute cord to repair straps if they break on patrol.

10. Use waterproof bag in rucksack to protect equipment while on patrol.

This is extremely important during the rainy season.

Patrol Tips

1. During breaks, throw nothing on the ground. Put trash in pockets, pack, or bury it immediately after use.

2. If you must cough, cough in your hat or neckerchief to smother the noise.

3. Carry one extra pair of sox, plus foot powder, with you on patrol, especially during rainy season.

4. Notify aircraft before firing pen-flare. They resemble a tracer, therefore never fire one directly at an aircraft. A jumpy door-gunner may give you a short burst.
5. Stay alert at all times. You are never 100% safe until you are back home.
6. Never break limbs or branches on trees, bushes, or palms, or you will leave a very clear trail for the enemy to follow.
7. Do not remove the spare ERC-25 battery from its plastic container prior to use or it may lose power.
8. Never run or turn your back, when you have a much better chance if you return fire and back off.
9. Put insect/leech repellent around tops of boots, on pants fly, belt and cuff to stop leeches and insects.
10. Inspect each team members uniform and equipment prior to departure on mission.
11. Check all equipment before departing FOB with emphasis on strobe lights and all radios.
12. If you use the Hansen Rig, adjust over your harness and webbing before leaving on patrol.
13. Correct any and all team and/or individual errors as they occur or happen.
14. US personnel recamouflage faces and back of hands in the morning, at noon, and at RCN.
15. Recamouflage faces and backs of hands, including the LIDB members, prior to moving into ambush positions. CIDG
16. Never cook or build heating fires on patrol.
17. Check all team members' pockets prior to departing homebase for passes, ID cards, lighters with insignias, rings with insignias, etc., personnel should only carry dog tags for ID while on patrol. Leave everything else with the S-2.

8. If a person coughs or talks in his sleep, make him sleep with a gag in his mouth.

19. Continually check your ^{point} patrol man to insure he is on the correct azimuth.

Do not run a compass course on patrol, change direction regularly.

20. If followed by trackers, change direction of movement often and attempt to evade or ambush your trackers. They make good POW's.

21. Do not ask for a "fix" from FAC unless absolutely necessary. This will aid in the prevention of compromise.

22. Force yourself to cough whenever a high performance aircraft passes over. It will clear your throat, ease tension, and cannot be heard.

23. Never take your web gear off, day or night. If in an area where it is necessary to put the jungle sweater on at night, never let more than two patrol members do so at a time. Insure the sweaters are taken off the next morning to prevent cold and over heating.

24. If you change socks, especially in the rainy season try to wait until ROW and have no more than two patrol members changing socks at one time. Never take off both boots, always change one at a time.

25. During the rainy season take extra cough medicine and codeine on patrol.

26. The location and proper use of morphine should be known by all team members.

27. Base the number of canteens per man on the weather and availability of water in the AO.

28. A large percentage of patrols have been compromised due to poor noise discipline.

29. Violet and red smoke are the most easily seen from the air.

30. Never set a pattern, such as, always turning to the left when "butt and looking" to ambush your back trail or setting up for you ROW position.

31. When using the URC-10 or RT-10 never point the antenna at the aircraft. The antenna should be parallel to the aircraft.
32. Pilots should identify the color of smoke used by teams on the ground after it has been thrown. The team does not identify the color to the pilots.
33. No more than two personnel should eat chew at any time. The rest of the team should be on security.
34. When team stops for, listen halt, chow or radio contact always check 40 - 60 meters perimeter around stop location.
35. All teams members should take notes while on an operation and compare them nightly.
36. Each man on a team must continually observe the man in front and the man behind and watch for other team members arm and hand signals.
37. A recon team should never place more than one mine, AP or AT, in one small section of a road or trail at a time. If more than one are set out, the team is just resupplying the enemy, because when a mine goes off, a search will be made of the immediate area for others and they will surely be found.
38. If the enemy is pursuing you, you should deploy delay grenades and/or delay claymores of 60 - 120 seconds. In addition throw CS grenades to your rear and flanks. Give the enemy a reason and/or excuse to quit.
39. If a team member or members start to come down with immersion foot during the rainy season, set up in a secure position remove injured person's boots, dry off feet, put powder on their feet, and place a ground sheet or poncho over their feet so that their feet can air out. To keep moving would only make matters worse, insuring that the men would become casualties and halting any further progress of the team.

40. Desenox or vaseline rubbed on the feet during the rainy season or in wet weather aid in the prevention of immersion feet. It will also help if put on your hands.
41. A glove worn on the free hand (left Hand) for right handed personnel, will protect the hand from thorns and aid in holding the weapon when it heats up from firing.
42. Each team should have both primary and alternate rally points which can be LZs when setting up for POW snatches. The team leader is responsible for insuring that each team member knows the azimuths and approximate distance to each LZ.
43. Never take pictures of team members while on patrol. If the enemy captures the camera they will have gained invaluable intelligence.
44. At least two pen lights should be taken by each team.
45. Do not send "same" or "no Change" when reporting team location. Always send your coordinates.
46. When placing claymores around your RON they should be placed one at a time by two men, one man to emplace the mine while the other stands guard.
47. If team places claymores around their RON, they should be placed so that the last from the claymore flanks the team. Insure that the claymore wires do not lead directly from the mines to the team. If the claymores are turned around they will point at the team.
48. Always check around your RON for a distance of 40 - 50 meters before settling down or moving out. Never relax your guard until this is done.
49. All survival equipment should be tied or secured to the uniform or harness to prevent loss if pockets become torn, etc., especially during hasty withdrawals.

50. Each US or key team member should carry maps, notebook, and SOI in the same pocket of each uniform, for hasty removal by other team members if one becomes a casualty.
51. Tape or paint the sides of the strobelight to make it more directional and to prevent illumination from the side.
52. Place a plastic cover on your PRC-25 to keep it dry in the rainy season.
53. If batteries go dead or weak do not throw them away while on patrol. Small batteries can be recharged by placing them in arm pits or between the logs of the body. A larger can gain added life by sleeping with the battery next to the body. Added life can also be gained by placing batteries in the sun.
54. If at all possible carry an extra hand set for the PRC-25 and insure that it is wrapped in a water proof container.
55. If contact is made with enemy and you are in a dense jungle, use WP grenades to mark your location for FAC so he can direct TAC air. Normally the regular red and yellow smoke grenades are not sufficient.
56. During RON each team member should be able to touch each other without moving positions.
57. Take paper matches to the field in a water proof container. Not cigarette lighters. They make too much noise when opening and closing.
58. Do not fire weapons or use claymores or grenades if the enemy is searching for you at night. Use CS grenades instead. This will cause him to panic and will not give your position away. You can move out relatively safely while they may end up shooting each other. If claymores become necessary, use timed delayed ones or time delayed WP.
59. Do not abort POW snatch missions due to one man coughing. Put him in a rear security position and if necessary have him gag himself.

50. Don't let "Clyde" get you pinned down or encircled, if at all possible.
Try to get out and the sooner the better.
61. During POW snatch, place the M79 on the flank of the ambush.
62. A claymore should be set on each flank of a POW snatch if possible.
63. A dead enemy's shirt and contents in pockets, plus pack, if he has one are normally more valuable than his weapon.
64. Keep radio traffic to a minimum.
65. Inform your personnel in what order they will be extracted prior to the arrival of the extraction aircraft.
66. Do most of your moving during the morning hours to conserve water.
67. It's a good idea to place CS in front of RON claymores.
68. Never be afraid to move at night, especially if you think your RON has been discovered.
69. Never do the obvious.
70. Each team member should memorize the trees and bushes around his RON position prior to night fall.
71. When deploying the team for RON place the point man in a position opposite the most likely avenue of approach to lead the team out in case of emergency.
72. Carry emergency rations on your person or in pouches on your harness.
Mucillien cubes are recommended due to compactness.
73. During the dry season, do not urinate on rocks or leaves, but rather in a hole or small crevice. The wet spot may be seen, plus the odor will carry further.
74. When carrying around the M-79 on patrol, use a retainer band around the stock to hold the safety on safe while moving.
75. Never set a pattern.

66. Each team should carry at least one cleaning rod on patrol.

67. Tracer ammo has a psychological effect on the enemy.

78. When crossing streams, observe first for activity, then send point man across to check area. Then cross the rest of the patrol, each getting water as they cross. If it is a danger area have all personnel cross prior to getting water.

79. Treat all trails, old and new, streams and open areas as dangers.

80. When making VR's always mark every LZ within your AO and near it, on your map. Upon return to FOB plan your route of march so that you will always know how far it is to and on what azimuth the nearest LZ is located.

81. If team uses a grenadier, have him to have a crimped cartridge as the first round in each magazine carried. After firing the grenade, he can use the weapon for close-in fighting. When the magazine is empty and a new one inserted the fixer can then quickly fire another grenade.

2. Always carry your map and note book in a waterproof container.

83. Use a pencil to make your notes on operation, not a pen. Ink smears when it becomes wet, whereas lead doesn't.

84. When on patrol, if you move 10 minutes you always listen, at halts, 20 ~~minutes~~ minutes. Listen twice the amount of time you move.

85. Tie panel and mirror to pocket flap to prevent losing.

86. Always carry cleaning equipment on operation. To include a brush and oil.

87. Never cut off too much of your map around your LZ. Always have at least 5 - 10 kilometers around your RZ for running room.

88. All team members should keep a list of tips and lessons learned and add to them after each operation.

89. Take time to analyze, evaluate and justify all planning phases, by doing this, all recon team members will act immediately, aggressively, and positively.