CHAPTER 4

RECONNAISSANCE

Scout platoons conduct reconnaissance to provide their commander with information that has tactical value concerning terrain, the enemy, and the effects of weather within an area of operations. Scouts reconnoiter the terrain to determine movement and maneuver conditions. When they find the enemy, they determine his strengths and weaknesses. The scout platoon provides the information necessary to allow combined arms forces to maneuver against the enemy, strike him where he is most vulnerable, and apply overwhelming power to defeat him.

Reconnaissance is conducted as part of all scout missions and is performed both mounted and dismounted. Scouts conduct dismounted reconnaissance to gather detailed information, to enhance security, and to move with stealth or in rugged terrain. Mounted reconnaissance allows the scouts to maintain the fast tempo of combat operations and to make maximum use of the optics, firepower, communications, and protection of their scout vehicle. Scouts conduct mounted reconnaissance when time is critical and they need to cover a large area quickly.

Scouts must thoroughly understand how the enemy deploys his reconnaissance and security forces, as well as the sequence and timing of their entry into battle. The scouts' accurate and timely reporting of enemy locations and strength makes the difference between winning or losing the main battle. It is very important that scouts do not lose sight of their reconnaissance priorities and become involved in battles that invariably wear down reconnaissance forces.

Section I. PURPOSE AND FUNDAMENTALS

PURPOSE

Based on their commander's intent and guidance, scouts conduct reconnaissance forward of other friendly forces to provide current, accurate information about the terrain, resources, and enemy within a specified area of operations. This provides the follow-on forces with an opportunity to maneuver freely and rapidly to their objective. Scouts keep the follow-on forces from being surprised or interrupted, and they prevent these forces from losing men and equipment along the way to the objective. Scout platoons perform three types of reconnaissance: route, zone, and area.

FUNDAMENTALS

Six fundamentals are common to all successful reconnaissance operations. All leaders should keep these fundamentals in mind during the planning and execution of reconnaissance missions.

- **Use maximum reconnaissance force forward.** In reconnaissance, every scout and every pair of eyes makes a difference. Do not keep scouts in reserve. This does not mean scouts must be on-line and oriented forward; rather, all available scouts must be employed executing reconnaissance tasks.

- **Orient on the reconnaissance objective.** The platoon's scheme of maneuver is focused toward a specific objective or set of objectives. The objective may be a terrain feature, a specific area, or an enemy force; it may be designated by an NAI, checkpoint, or objective symbol. The platoon must maintain its orientation toward the objective, regardless of what it encounters, until the mission is complete. For the battalion scout, the objective for a mission will normally be found in the commander's PIR, the R&S plan, or the commander's intent portion of the OPORD. The cavalry scout's objective will be discussed in paragraph 3 of the troop commander's OPORD. It is critical that the scout leader completely understand the mission focus before beginning his planning.

- **Report all information rapidly and accurately.** Commanders base their decisions and plans on the battlefield information that scouts find and report during reconnaissance. Information loses value over time. Scouts must report all information exactly as they see it and as fast as possible. They must never assume, distort, or exaggerate; inaccurate information is dangerous. Information that the enemy is not in a certain location is just as important as where the enemy is.

- **Retain freedom to maneuver.** Scouts must be able to maneuver on the battlefield. If the enemy fixes them, scouts must free themselves; otherwise, they can no longer accomplish their mission. Scouts must continually maintain an awareness of tactical developments. They must employ the proper tactical movement and react appropriately to unexpected situations. When contact is made, the platoon leader must seek to develop the situation at the lowest possible level, retaining the initiative, the ability to continue the mission, and the ability to maneuver his other elements.

- **Gain and maintain enemy contact.** Scouts seek visual contact with the enemy on favorable terms. They employ sound tactical movement, target acquisition methods, and appropriate actions on contact to see the enemy first and thereby retain the initiative and control of the situation. Once scouts find the enemy, they maintain contact using all available means (sensors, radar, sound, and visual) until their commander orders them to do otherwise or as required by their specific instructions.

- **Develop the situation rapidly.** Whether scouts run into an obstacle or the enemy, they must quickly determine what they are up against. If it is the enemy, the scouts determine the enemy's size, composition, and activity. They find the enemy flanks. They find any barriers or obstacles surrounding the enemy position and find out if any other enemy forces can support the position. If the scouts encounter an obstacle, they find and mark a bypass or, if appropriate, execute or assist in a breach. This all must be done quickly, with a minimum of guidance from higher. Time is the scout's most precious resource; he cannot waste it if he is to achieve mission success.

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Section II. RECONNAISSANCE METHODS

Scouts employ reconnaissance methods that achieve a balance between the acceptable level of risk and the security necessary to ensure mission accomplishment. Often this is expressed as a tradeoff between speed and security. The faster the reconnaissance, the more risk the scout takes and the less detailed the reconnaissance he conducts. Scouts must use all available resources in the conduct of their mission. A scout's primary tools for reconnaissance are his five senses; his equipment supplements and complements those senses. The following are some examples of what a scout must be able to determine about the enemy through the use of his senses.

Sight. A scout looks for—

- Enemy personnel.

- Enemy vehicles and aircraft.

- Sudden or unusual movement.

- Smoke or dust.

- Engine exhaust fumes.

- Unusual movement of farm or wild animals.

- Activity of the local populace.

- Vehicle tracks.

- Signs or evidence of enemy occupation,

- Recently cut foliage or vegetation.

- Lights, fires, or reflections.

- Muzzle flashes.

Hearing. A scout listens for—

- Running engines.

- Track sounds.

- Voices.

- Metallic sounds.

- Gunfire sounds (by type of weapon).

- Unusual calm or silence.

- Dismounted movement through brush or woods.

Touch. A scout feels for—

- Warmth of coals.

- Freshness of tracks.

- Age of discarded food or trash.

Smell. A scout smells for—

- Cooking food.

- Vehicle exhaust.

- Burning petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL).

- Age of discarded food or trash.

- Human waste.

To reduce their vulnerability on the battlefield, scouts use reconnaissance methods that they have trained and rehearsed in detail. They take every opportunity during peacetime and on the battlefield to hone their skills. Scouts, by the nature of their mission, cannot achieve perfect security and still accomplish their mission; however, thorough knowledge of the various reconnaissance methods and their employment, combined with an understanding of a mission's particular METT-T requirements, allows the scout leader to mix and choose the reconnaissance methods that maximize security and mission accomplishment.

This section discusses several reconnaissance methods that scouts can employ. These methods have proven effective in a variety of situations and form a foundation for how to conduct reconnaissance. Scouts must use their experience, professional judgment, and common sense to analyze a given situation and employ the appropriate method. Usually, a mission will require that these methods be applied using a variety of techniques, combinations, and variations.

MOUNTED RECONNAISSANCE

Mounted reconnaissance is one of the most frequently employed methods. It allows scouts to conduct fairly detailed reconnaissance while maintaining speed and momentum in an operation. It is used when—

- Time is limited.

- Very detailed reconnaissance is not required.

- Enemy locations are known,

- Minefield and obstacles are not expected.

- Enemy contact is not likely.

Speed and momentum are rarely necessary in a reconnaissance operation, but they are often critical to the successful execution of offensive operations that the reconnaissance mission supports (see Figure 4-1). In addition to speed, mounted reconnaissance offers scouts the advantages of their reconnaissance vehicle. These advantages depend on the specific vehicle employed, but they can include firepower, armor protection, increased navigation and communications capability, and thermal optics. The disadvantages of mounted reconnaissance include the loss of stealth due to the visual, noise, and thermal signatures of the vehicle and the loss of some detail because of restricted vision and impairment of the senses of smell and hearing. These disadvantages increase the risk to scouts as they conduct reconnaissance.
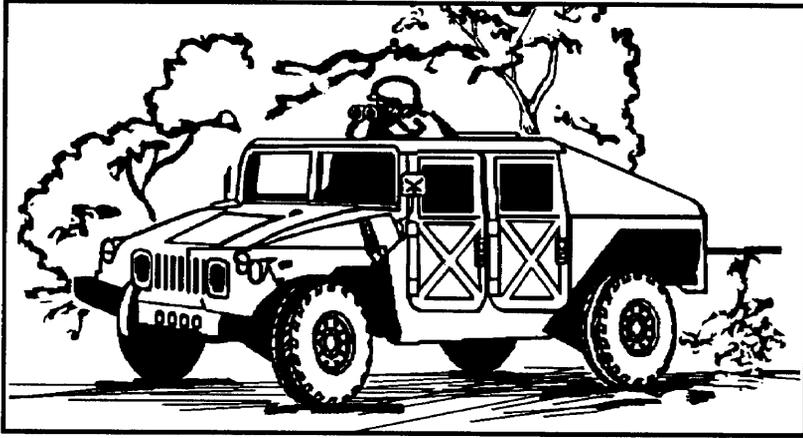

Figure 4-1. Mounted reconnaissance.

DISMOUNTED RECONNAISSANCE

Scouts conduct dismounted reconnaissance when—

- Detailed reconnaissance is required.

- Stealth is required.

- Enemy contact is expected or visual contact has been achieved.

- Vehicle movement through an area is restricted by terrain.

- Time is not limited.

- Security is a primary concern.

The primary purpose of dismounted reconnaissance is to obtain detailed information about terrain features, obstacles, or enemy forces. In addition, scouts dismount and reconnoiter forward of their vehicle to provide security before moving through danger areas such as hilltops, curves, or other blind spots on the battlefield (see Figure 4-2). They also dismount to set up short- or long-duration OPs. Dismounted scouts provide security for each other as they move. Ideally, two scouts work together when operating dismounted. When only a single scout dismounts, he should never move out of supporting distance of the vehicle.
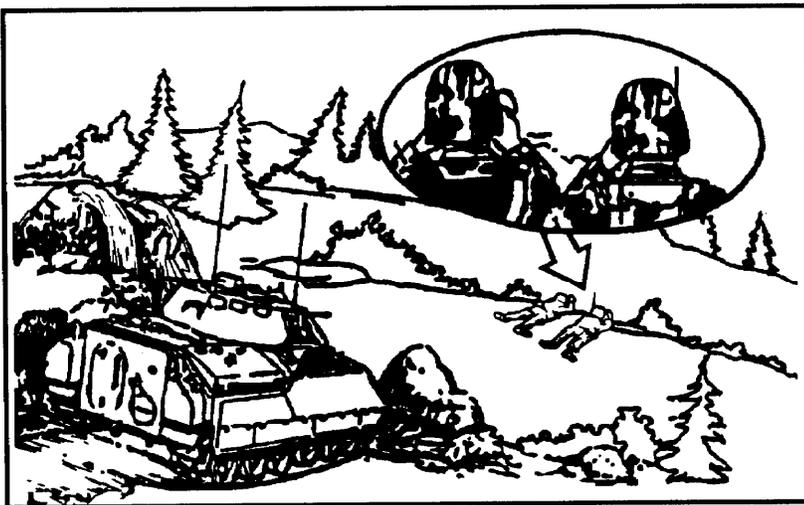

Figure 4-2. Dismounted scouts providing security forward
of a cavalry fighting vehicle.

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As a minimum, dismounted scouts carry—

- SOPs.

- Personal weapons.

- Communications equipment.

- SOI extracts.

- Maps.

- A compass.

- Binoculars (and night-vision devices, if necessary).

- Seasonal uniform and load-bearing equipment (LBE).

This equipment gives the scouts the capability to report information accurately and to call for and adjust indirect fires (see Appendix B for a detailed discussion of dismounted reconnaissance operations).

RECONNAISSANCE BY FIRE

In reconnaissance by fire, scouts place direct and/or indirect fire on positions where there is a reasonable suspicion of enemy occupation; the goal is to cause the enemy to disclose his presence by movement or by returning free. Scouts use reconnaissance by fire when enemy contact is expected and time is limited or when the scouts cannot maneuver to develop the situation. This method eliminates any element of surprise the scouts may have had, and it is likely to give the enemy detailed knowledge of their location. It may, however, reduce the chance of scouts being ambushed within established kill zones. Reconnaissance by fire does not work in all cases. For example, disciplined troops in prepared positions will not react to the scouts' fires. Examples of situations in which reconnaissance by fire may be employed include—

- Presence of a natural or man-made obstacle.

- Existence of an obvious kill zone.

- A suspected enemy position that fits the situational template.

- Signs of recent activity (track marks, trash).

- Bunker complexes that may or may not be occupied.

When such evidence exists, the scouts should maneuver to observe from different directions. When the decision is finally made to use reconnaissance by fire, weapons should be used in the following priority:

- Indirect fire.

- Loose machine gun.

- 25-mm chain gun, MK- 19, mounted machine gun.

- TOW.

Reconnaissance by fire does not mean the indiscriminate use of direct and indirect fires at all woodlines and hilltops in the hopes of causing the enemy to react. The enemy will recognize this for what it is; he will not react to it. This also wastes valuable ammunition.

Indirect Fire

Scouts can employ reconnaissance by indirect fire (see Figure 4-3). This technique provides security for the scouts because they do not disclose their exact position and all scouts are available to observe the effects of the fire.

Figure 4-3. Reconnaissance by indirect fire.

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Reconnaissance by indirect fire has disadvantages as well. Indirect fire requires more coordination and communication than direct fire, and it is less responsive and may be less accurate than direct fire. Indirect fire is subject to considerations beyond the control of the scout platoon such as the supporting unit's Class V supply status, counterbattery threats, and command approval. Additionally, the effects of indirect fire may obscure the scout's vision.

Direct Fire

Scouts can use their organic weapons to place accurate direct fires on suspected enemy positions. This technique is likely to provoke a rapid enemy response, but it discloses the scouts' position. Direct fire is limited by the maximum effective range of the weapon used and by the limited supply of ammunition. Scouts must work together when employing direct fire. The scout who fires is not in the best position to observe because of obscuration and the necessity to move to a covered position after firing. Another scout, in another position, must observe for an enemy reaction. The observing scout remains undetected and can accurately report enemy information. When using direct fire, the scout platoon leader should also plan to place indirect fires on suspected positions for use as suppression if the enemy responds in strength.

AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE

Aerial reconnaissance is not normally available to ground scouts except in division cavalry organizations. When available, however, aerial reconnaissance can be employed to complement and augment ground reconnaissance; therefore, the ground scout must understand the capabilities and limitations of this reconnaissance method. Aerial reconnaissance, as conducted by air cavalry elements, is the fastest form of reconnaissance. It is also terrain-independent and thus able to access areas that may be difficult or impossible for ground scouts to reach. Aerial reconnaissance is limited by weather conditions, the night-vision capability of the particular aircraft's sensors, fuel requirements, ADA threats, and the detail with which terrain can be observed. Generally, aerial reconnaissance will not identify stationary enemy elements smaller than platoon size or moving elements squad size or smaller, although this can vary widely depending on the terrain and equipment. (See Chapter 7 for further details on air/ground reconnaissance integration.)

AGGRESSIVE VERSUS STEALTHY RECONNAISSANCE

In executing his mission, the scout uses methods that reflect the approach to reconnaissance appropriate to the particular mission or reconnaissance element, The approach the scout takes can be generally characterized as stealthy or aggressive. A stealthy approach is time-consuming and emphasizes avoiding contact with and engagement of the enemy. To be effective, a stealthy approach must rely on dismounted reconnaissance and maximum use of covered and concealed terrain. Aggressive reconnaissance emphasizes rapid identification of the enemy's combat power. It is characterized by mounted reconnaissance and reconnaissance by fire. Because of the nature of their organizations, HMMWV scouts will tend more frequently to take a stealthy approach to reconnaissance, while CFV scouts are more likely to take an aggressive approach. Regardless of the type of scout platoon, scouts must be familiar with all the reconnaissance methods and become expert at applying them on the ground.

Section III. OBSTACLE/RESTRICTION RECONNAISSANCE

One of the high-frequency tasks associated with reconnaissance missions is location and reconnaissance of obstacles and restrictions that may affect the trafficability of a particular route or axis. Obstacles and restrictions can be either natural or man-made. Doctrine associated with the former Soviet Union emphasizes the use of man-made obstacles to reinforce natural obstacles and of restrictions to slow, impede, and canalize friendly forces. These obstacles and restrictions include the following:

- Minefields.

- Bridges.

- Log obstacles such as abatises, log cribs, stumps, and posts.

- AT ditches.

- Wire entanglements.

- Defiles.

- Persistent agent contamination.

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The scout platoon's ability to deal with an obstacle or restriction is somewhat limited. It has the capability to clear small obstacles. This is generally limited to point obstacles that are not integrated into the enemy defense and are not covered by enemy fire and observation. The scouts' most important function is reconnaissance of deliberate obstacles, including supporting enemy positions and possible breaching sites. When scouts encounter obstacles that support an enemy defense, they have the capability to assist in breaching. Another important reconnaissance task for scouts is to locate bypasses around obstacles and restrictions.

THE STEPS OF OBSTACLE/RESTRICTION RECONNAISSANCE

How the scout approaches obstacle and restriction reconnaissance is highly dependent on METT-T factors. In general, however, the process of conducting this type of reconnaissance can be reduced to five steps that undermost METT-T conditions will ensure an organized and efficient operation:

- Detection.

- Area security and reconnaissance.

- Obstacle reconnaissance.

- Selection of a course of action.

- Recommendation/execution of a course of action.

Detection

During reconnaissance operations, scouts must locate and evaluate mines, obstacles, and man-made and natural restrictions to support the movement of their parent unit. Detection of obstacles and restrictions begins in the planning phase of an operation when the S2 conducts IPB. The scouts combine the S2's work with the reconnaissance conducted during the troop-leading process (normally a map reconnaissance only) to identify all possible obstacles and restrictions within their area of operations. The scouts then plan their reconnaissance based on the orders they receive, the S2's IPB, and their own map reconnaissance.

The scouts use visual and physical means to detect mines and obstacles while conducting their mission. They visually inspect terrain for signs of mine

emplacement and reinforcing obstacles, They also must be alert to dangerous battlefield debris such as bomblets from cluster bomb units (CBU) or dual-purpose improved conventional munitions (DPICM). Mines and other types of obstacles can be difficult for mounted scouts to detect; therefore, they must also conduct obstacle detection while dismounted. They may need to dismount their vehicles several hundred meters short of a suspected obstacle and approach the obstacle on foot to conduct their reconnaissance. Scouts look for disturbed earth, unusual or out-of-place features, surface-laid mines, tilt rods, and tripwires. They can incorporate their vehicle-mounted thermal sights into the search to help detect surface-laid mines.

Physical detection methods include detonating, probing, and using a mine detector. Detection occurs when a vehicle, soldier, or countermine system physically encounters a mine. This method does not indicate the boundaries of the obstacle. The scouts must probe or conduct additional visual inspection to define the extent of the minefield.

Area Security and Reconnaissance

Enemy forces cover their obstacles with observation and fire. Whenever scouts encounter an obstacle, they must proceed with their reconnaissance assuming the enemy can observe and engage them. The scout element that detects the obstacle or minefield establishes overwatch before it proceeds with the reconnaissance. The scouts in overwatch look for signs of enemy forces in and around the obstacle or in positions that allow observation of the obstacle. They visually search the dominant terrain on the far side of the obstacle for evidence of enemy positions or ambushes. Once they confirm the enemy situation from the near side, the scouts not in overwatch move mounted and/or dismounted to find bypasses around the obstacle. If they find a bypass, they move around the obstacle and establish OPs on the far side to provide 360-degree security of the obstacle. If the scouts are unable to find a bypass, they must conduct their reconnaissance from the near side under the security of the overwatch elements.

Obstacle Reconnaissance

Once security is established, scouts then move dismounted to the obstacle. The scouts must be cautious when reconnoitering the obstacle. Tripwires or

other wire may indicate the enemy is using booby traps or command-detonated mines to prevent friendly forces from determining—

- Location and orientation of the obstacle.

- Types of mines in the minefield or types of obstacles.

- Length and width of the obstacle area.

- Existence of enemy coverage, including enemy strength, equipment, and fire support.

- Breaching requirements.

The scout reconnoitering the obstacle prepares an obstacle report with this information and forwards the report through the platoon leader or PSG to the commander.

Choosing a Course of Action

The scout platoon leader analyzes the situation and the factors of METT-T to determine what course of action to select. He has a choice of four courses of action: bypass; hasty breach; support of a deliberate breach; or continuing the mission.

Bypass. A bypass is the preferred method when it offers a quick, easy, and tactically sound means of avoiding the obstacle. A good bypass must allow the entire force to avoid the primary obstacle without risking further exposure to enemy ambush and without diverting the force from its objective. Bypassing conserves breaching assets and maintains the momentum of the moving unit. If the platoon leader decides to bypass and his commander approves, the scouts must mark the bypass and report it to their commander. They maybe required to provide guides for the main body if the bypass is difficult to locate or visibility conditions are poor.

NOTE: In some cases, bypassing is not possible and breaching maybe the best, or only, tactical solution. These situations might include the following:

- The obstacle is integrated into a prepared defensive position and the only available bypass canalizes friendly forces into afire sack or ambush.
- The scout platoon mission specifically tasks the platoon to clear the original route for follow-on forces.

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- The best available bypass route will not allow follow-on forces to maintain their desired rate of movement.

- Improving the bypass may require more time and assets than breaching the primary obstacle(s).

Hasty breach. A hasty breach of an obstacle significantly degrades the platoon's ability to maintain the momentum of either the reconnaissance or the follow-on forces. Obstacles within the scouts' hasty breaching capability include small minefield, simple wire, hasty roadblocks, craters, and similar point-type obstacles. For other types of obstacles, the scouts can support the breaching effort. See Annex E, covering operations other than war, for more information on hasty breaching.

Support of a deliberate breach. When the scouts locate a large obstacle that cannot be easily bypassed, the alternative is to support a deliberate breaching operation. Scouts perform additional reconnaissance and security tasks in support of a deliberate breach. These tasks include determining the assets and time needed to breach the obstacle and location of the best breach site. The commander may have engineers move with the scouts to determine much of this information if he expects to encounter large obstacles during an operation. The scouts' reconnaissance effort focuses on the following features:

- Trafficable routes to the breach site and routes from the far side leading to the objective.

- Fighting positions for support force weapons on the near side of the obstacle.

- Fighting positions on the far side once a foothold is established.

- Dispersed covered and concealed areas near the breach site.

- Work areas on the near side for breach assets of the breach force.

- Positions on both sides of the obstacle that could provide enemy observation of the breach site.

- Trafficability and soil conditions near the breach site.

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- Width, depth, and bottom condition of wet and dry gaps.

- Bank height, slope, and soil stability of wet and dry gaps.

- Water velocity of wet gaps.

- Wind direction for obscuration of the obstacle.

Determining the information necessary for a deliberate breach can be made much easier if engineers are working closely with the scouts. If large obstacles are anticipated during a mission, the scout platoon leader should request an attached engineer squad or, as a minimum, an engineer NCO to serve as a technical advisor.

After the scouts report the necessary information to the commander, they maintain security of the obstacle and serve as guides, if necessary, for the breaching assets. The information they provide is used by the commander and his engineers to prepare the suppression, obscuration, security, and reduction (SOSR) plans for the breach. The scouts maintain security during the breaching operation and call for and adjust indirect fires, as necessary, in support of the breaching effort. The scouts must be in position to move rapidly through the obstacle once the breach is complete so they can continue their mission.

Continuing the mission. When the scouts encounter a restriction, such as a bridge or defile, they may find that the restriction is not an obstacle to movement and is not covered by enemy fire or observation. Scouts may also discover dummy minefield or obstacles that are incomplete and easily passed through. Under these conditions, the scouts' course of action maybe to report, then continue their reconnaissance mission.

Recommending/Executing a Course of Action

Once the scout has determined the course of action best suited to the situation, he either executes it or recommends it to his higher headquarters for approval. Generally, the scout will execute a particular course of action without specific approval if it is addressed in the OPORD he received from higher or in his unit SOP. In such a case, the scout will execute and then inform his commander of his actions. If the situation the scout discovered is not covered by previous guidance, he determines the best course of action and recommends it to his commander prior to execution.

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EXAMPLES OF OBSTACLE/RESTRICTION RECONNAISSANCE

The following examples illustrate reconnaissance of obstacles and restrictions in two tactical situations. They are organized using the five-step process.

Reconnaissance of a Restriction (Not Covered by Fire or Observation)

Figure 4-4 illustrates this situation.

Detection. The scout team detects a bridge when a dismounted element observes it from an overwatch position (see Figure 4-4A, page 4-18). The bridge was expected because it was also identified during the scout's map reconnaissance. The dismounted scout confirms the bridge is there and is intact.

Area reconnaissance and security. The dismounted scouts bring the team's vehicles into covered and concealed overwatch positions; the team establishes near-side security of the bridge. A dismounted patrol is organized and conducts reconnaissance up to the bridge, overmatched by the vehicles (see Figure 4-4B, page 4-18). The dismounted element reconnoiters for both mounted and dismounted bypasses. The dismounted team must determine quickly if it is possible to bypass the bridge through the use of a ford in the local area. The platoon leader monitors the situation and may direct other teams to assume the mission of locating other bridges or fords to serve as bypasses, if necessary.

If the water obstacle can be forded, the dismounts use the ford to move to the far side. On the far side, they reconnoiter the terrain that dominates the bridge. They establish far-side security on terrain where they can observe enemy approach routes to the bridge. Once the far side is secure, the team is ready to reconnoiter the bridge itself.

If the water obstacle cannot be easily forded in the local area, the scouts may have to cross on the bridge itself. Before attempting to cross, the dismounted scouts visually examine the bridge for structural damage and rigged explosives. If the bridge appears intact, the dismounted element then crosses the bridge one scout at a time. The scouts move quickly to the far side and take up covered and concealed positions that provide local security on the opposite approach to the bridge. Once the entire dismounted element is secure on the opposite side, it continues beyond the immediate bank area to secure the far side.
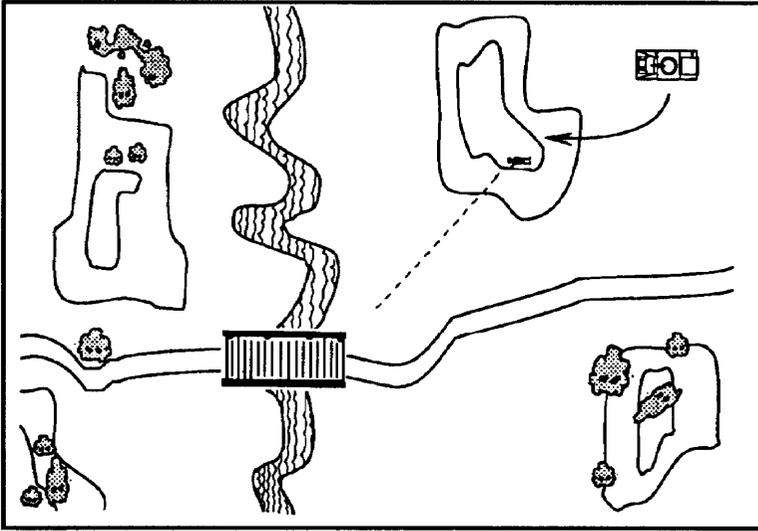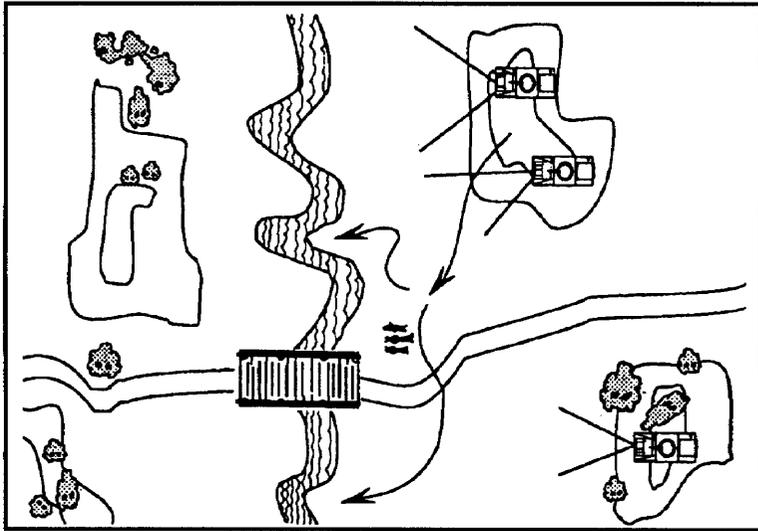
Figure 4-4. Reconnaissance of a restriction.

Obstacle reconnaissance. Once the area has been reconnoitered and secured, a dismounted element moves to the bridge under the supervision of the senior scout and does a detailed examination of the bridge (see Figure 4-4C, page 4-20). The scouts examine the bridge to—

- Ensure the bridge is cleared and free of demolitions. This requires examination of underwater pilings and the underside of the bridge for hidden explosives. In addition, the scouts should take a detailed look at the far side to find any electrical cables or wires connecting the bridge to the shore.

- Find any structural damage. The scouts look for obvious signs of enemy destruction efforts as well as for less obvious signs of structural damage, including cracks or fractures in stringers or supports and twisted or untrue alignments of stringers or supports.

- Conduct a hasty classification of the bridge. The scouts determine if it will support the largest vehicle in the unit.

The team leader consolidates all appropriate and relevant reports (for example, the bridge, ford, and bypass reports) and sends them higher.

Choosing a course of action. Based on the results of the bridge reconnaissance, the team leader determines that the restriction is secure, that he can safely move the team across it, and that he can continue his mission.

Recommending/executing a course of action. In accordance with the platoon SOP, the scout team leader now moves the remainder of his element across the bridge. The lead scout vehicle moves across the bridge, overmatched by the other vehicles (see Figure 4-4D, page 4-20). The vehicle crosses with only the driver on board. The crossing is observed by the team leader, who watches for any signs of damage or stress on the bridge.

Once the lead vehicle is across, it moves to link up with the dismounted element and assists in providing far-side security. At this point, the overwatch vehicles can cross the bridge, and the team can continue its mission. The team leader also advises his platoon leader that he is continuing his mission.
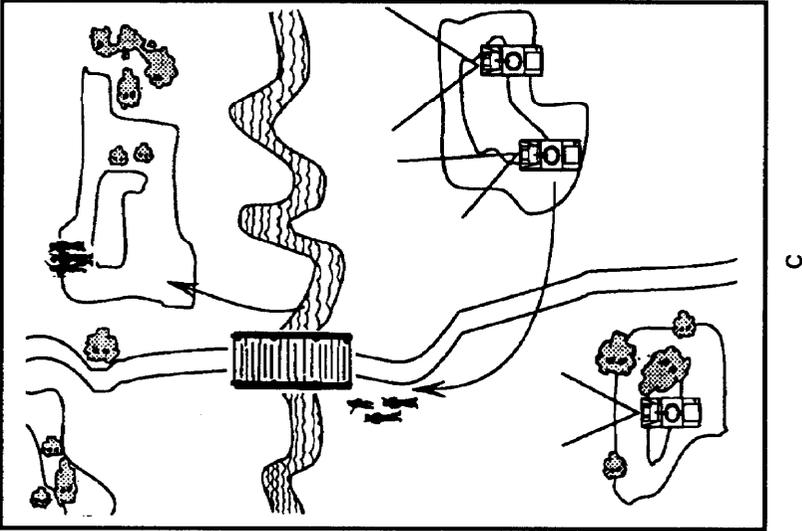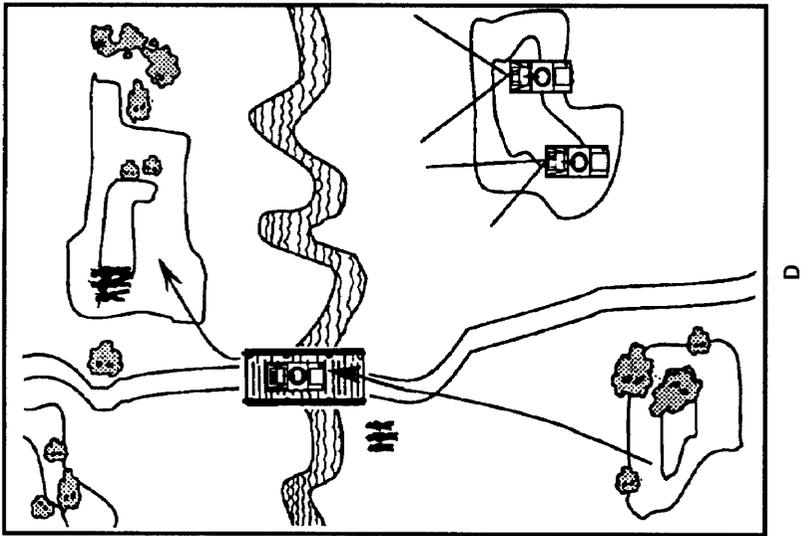
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Figure 4-4. Reconnaissance of a restriction (continued).

Reconnaissance of Deliberate Obstacle (Covered by Fire)

Figure 4-5 illustrates this situation.

Detection. Dismounted scouts detect an extensive wire obstacle from a covered and concealed position. From its vantage point, the scout team cannot determine any additional details.

Area reconnaissance and security. The scout team brings its vehicles up to covered and concealed positions to overwatch the obstacle. The team then organizes a dismounted element to attempt to locate a bypass and secure the far side. Because of the size of the obstacle, the team also informs the platoon leader that it will take considerable time for the team to reconnoiter the obstacle by itself. In the process of executing the patrol, the team discovers that the left flank of the obstacle is tied into an impassable swamp (see Figure 4-5A, page 4-22).

Based on this initial evaluation, the platoon leader attempts to increase the speed of the reconnaissance by sending two additional teams to find a bypass around the right flank of the obstacle. One team moves to a dismount point and sends a patrol around the right flank. The patrol is engaged by enemy machine guns. The overwatch vehicles suppress the machine guns and then are engaged by enemy vehicles in defensive positions. The team reports that it can maintain contact with the enemy but can no longer maneuver (see Figure 4-5B, page 4-22), The remaining team finds a position where it can observe into the rear of the enemy; it reports a company-size element in defensive positions over-matching the obstacle. It also reports that there are no trafficable routes around the right flank of the enemy (see Figure 4-5C, page 4-23). At this point, the platoon leader determines that he does not have the combat power to secure the far side of the objective. He also determines that the only trafficable bypass is covered by enemy direct fires. He now must conduct a detailed reconnaissance of the obstacle before he can recommend a course of action to his commander.

Obstacle reconnaissanc. The scout team that originally detected the obstacle is in the best position to do the reconnaissance of it. It organizes a dismounted element to move to the obstacle and reconnoiter it. Because there is enough light for the enemy to visually cover the obstacle, the platoon leader coordinates indirect fire to support the patrol. As the patrol moves out, mortars lay suppressive fires on the known enemy positions, and artillery fires smoke into the area between the enemy positions and the obstacle (see Figure 4-5D, page 4-23).
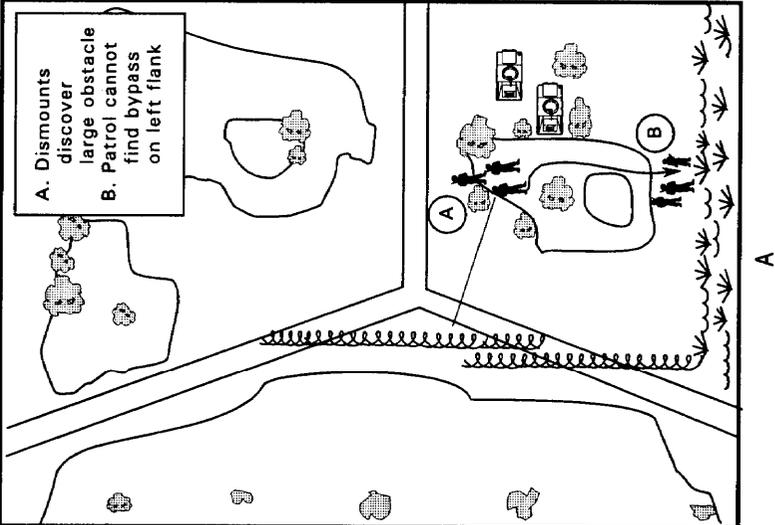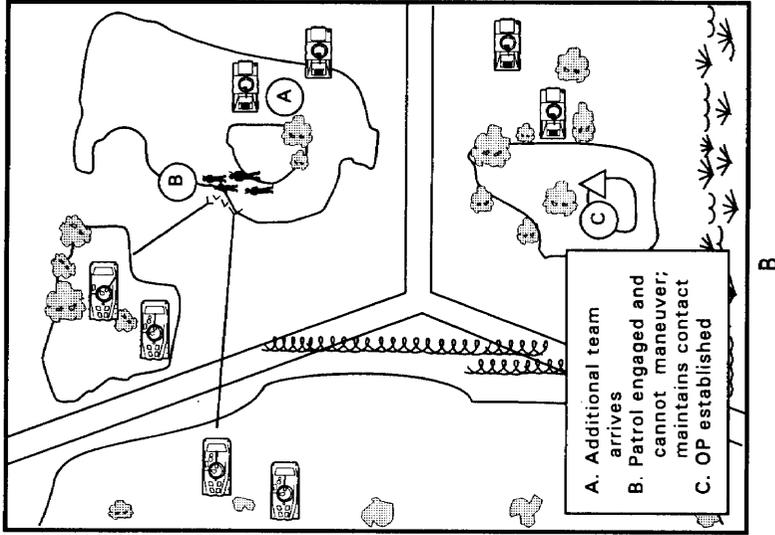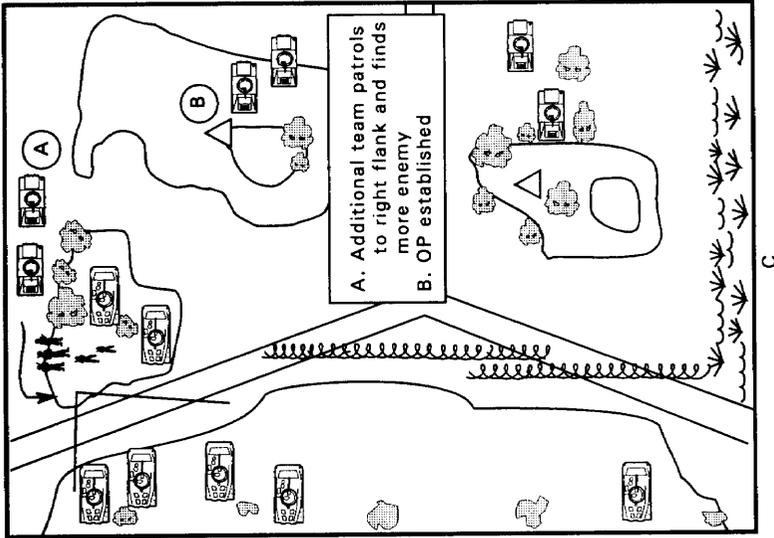
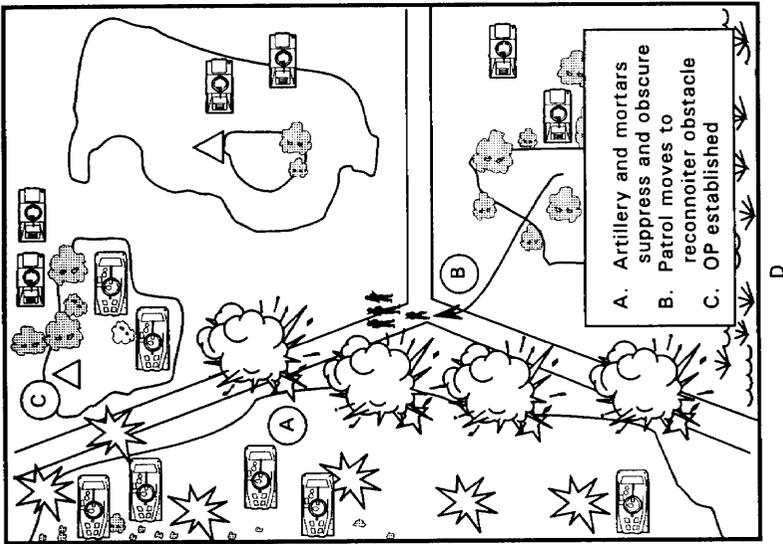**Figure 4-5. Reconnaissance of a deliberate obstacle.**

Within the top illustration, rotated text reads:

A. Artillery and mortars suppress and obscure
B. Patrol moves to reconnoiter obstacle
C. OP established

Within the bottom illustration, rotated text reads:

A. Additional team patrols to right flank and finds more enemy
B. OP established

Figure 4-5. Reconnaissance of a deliberate obstacle (continued).

4-23

The scouts move by covered and concealed dismounted routes to the obstacle; through probing and visual observation, they determine that the wire obstacle is reinforced with buried mines. They are able to determine that there is a mix of AT and tank mines with antihandling devices. The scouts also determine that there is a 30-meter belt on the near side of the wire and another on the far side. Once this information is acquired, the scouts move laterally along the obstacle to determine its length and find out if its composition is uniform. They look for the most favorable breaching location (see Figure 4-5E).
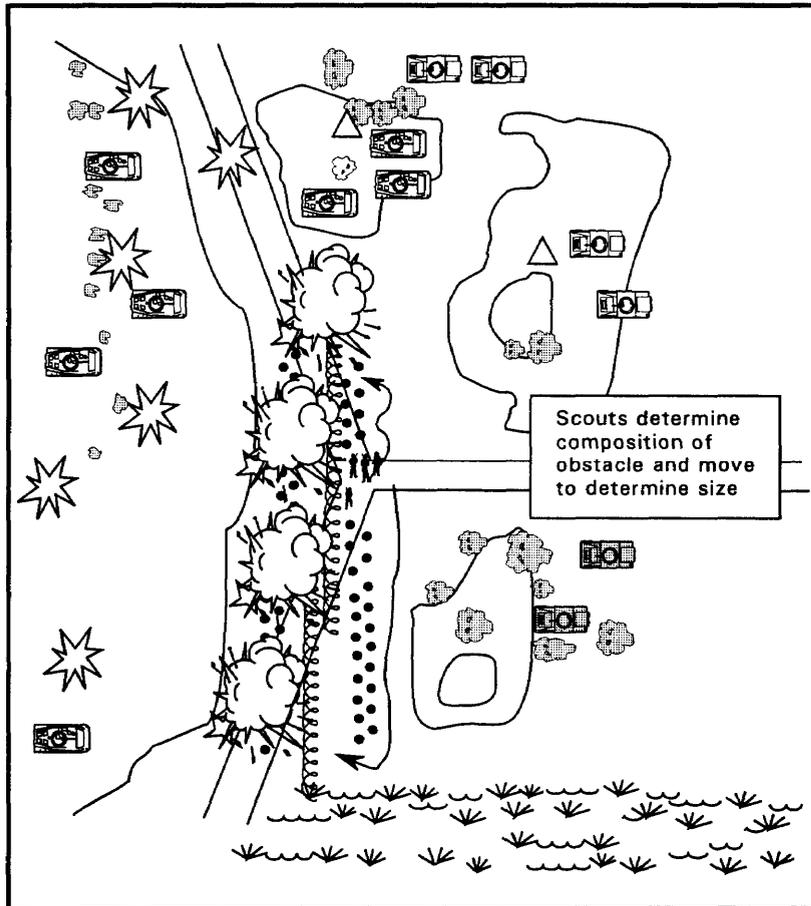
Figure 4-5E. Reconnaissance of a deliberate obstacle (continued).

Choosing a course of action. The platoon leader evaluates the situation and determines that he cannot bypass the obstacle and does not have the capability to breach it. He decides to recommend a deliberate breach.

Recommending/executing a course of action. The platoon leader recommends to his commander that the platoon prepare to support a deliberate breach. With higher approval, he orders the platoon to continue the reconnaissance and security tasks necessary to support a deliberate breach operation. He also begins coordinating with, and passing information to, the element responsible for conducting the deliberate breach operation (see Figure 4-5F).

Patrol returns, establishes OP, and reports
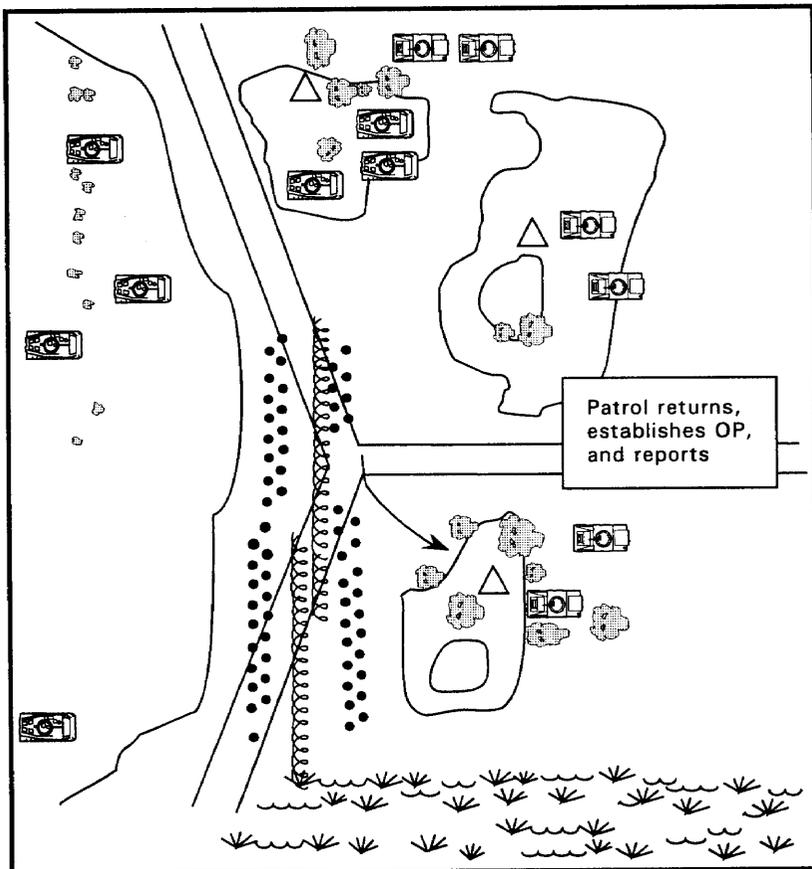
Figure 4-5F. Reconnaissance of a deliberate obstacle (continued).

Section IV. ROUTE RECONNAISSANCE

Scouts conduct a route reconnaissance to gain detailed information about a specific route or axis and the terrain on both sides of the route that the enemy could use to influence movement on the route. A scout platoon conducts a route reconnaissance when the commander wants to use a certain route, but first wants to make sure the route is clear of obstacles and enemy forces and will support the movement of his vehicles.

CRITICAL TASKS

During a route reconnaissance, a scout platoon must accomplish a specified number of tasks unless directed to do otherwise. Based on time available and the commander's intent, the scout platoon may be directed to conduct a route reconnaissance to acquire specific information only. The scout platoon leader must clearly understand the following critical tasks that must be accomplished.

- Determine the trafficability of the route.
- Reconnoiter, to the limit of direct fire range, terrain that dominates the route.
- Reconnoiter all built-up areas along the route.
- Reconnoiter, to the limit of direct fire range, all lateral routes.
- Inspect and classify all bridges on the route.
- Locate fords or crossing sites near all bridges on the route.
- Inspect and classify all overpasses, underpasses, and culverts.
- Reconnoiter all defiles along the route.
- Locate mines, obstacles, and barriers along the route.
- Locate a bypass around built-up areas, obstacles, and contaminated areas.
- Report route information.
- Find and report all enemy forces that can influence movement along the route.

TECHNIQUES

Because of the number of critical tasks that must be accomplished, a cavalry scout platoon can conduct a detailed reconnaissance of only one route. A battalion scout platoon may be able to handle two routes if the reconnaissance is limited to trafficability only. A scout platoon can reconnoiter a route by itself or may operate as part of a larger force such as a cavalry troop.

The following discussion outlines one technique of getting all the tasks accomplished as rapidly and securely as possible. The order the platoon leader receives specifies the route the platoon must reconnoiter and defines the route from SP to RP. Additionally, the order may specify platoon boundaries, PLs, an LD, and a limit of advance (LOA) or reconnaissance objective. These control measures specify how much terrain on both sides of the route the platoon must reconnoiter and where the operation must begin and end. The boundaries are drawn on both sides. They include the terrain that dominates the route, usually extending out about 2.5 to 3 kilometers. This ensures that the scouts reconnoiter all terrain the enemy could use to influence movement along the route. The LD is drawn from one boundary to the other behind the SP. This allows the platoon to cross the LD and be fully deployed before reaching the route. The LOA or objective is placed beyond the RP on the last terrain feature that dominates the route or out to about 3 kilometers (see Figure 4-6, page 4-28).

The platoon leader may add additional PLs, contact points, and checkpoints to the graphics he received from his commander. PLs are used to help control the maneuver of the platoon. The contact points ensure that the teams maintain contact at particular critical points. Checkpoints are used along the route or on specific terrain to control movement or to designate areas that must be reconnoitered.

In coordination with the FSO, the platoon leader plans artillery targets on known or suspected enemy positions and on dominant terrain throughout the area of operations. The platoon leader evaluates the factors of METT-T to select a platoon organization. He must ensure that at least one team has responsibility for reconnoitering the route. The three-team organization is usually the type best suited to reconnoiter one route. Team A reconnoiters the terrain left of the route, Team B covers the terrain on the right side of the route, and Team C reconnoiters the route and controls the movement of the other two teams. In this organization, the platoon leader's team has specific responsibility to clear the route. (See Figure 4-7, page 4-29.)
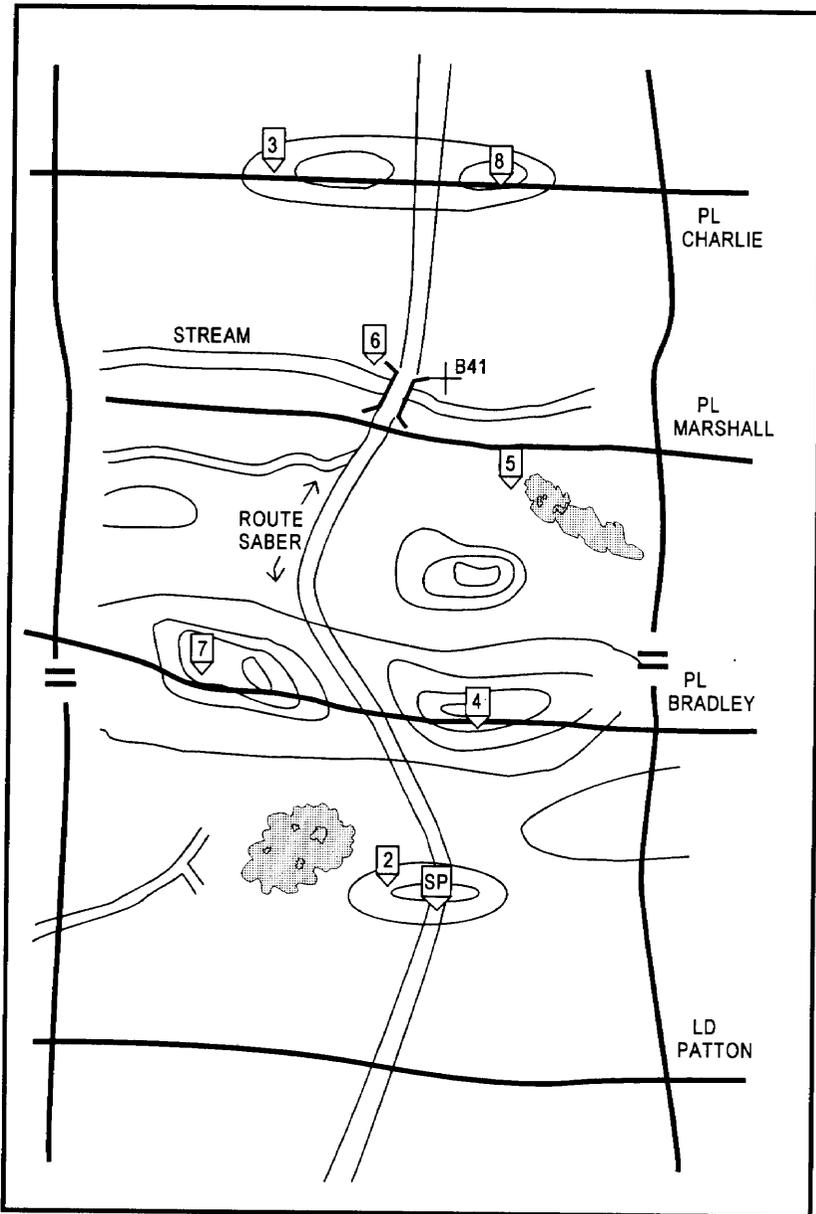
4-27
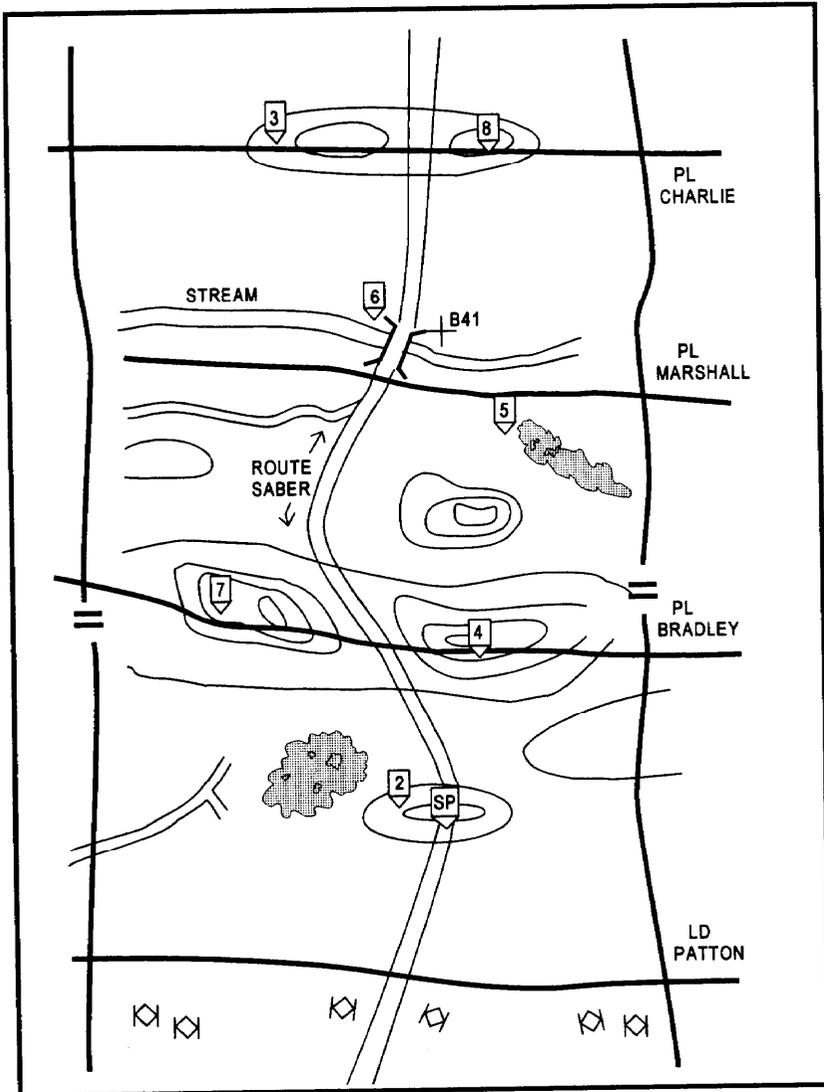
Figure 4-6. Control measures.

Figure 4-7. Conducting a route reconnaissance.

EXAMPLE OF A ROUTE RECONNAISSANCE

The following example of route reconnaissance is for a cavalry scout platoon. Figure 4-8 illustrates this situation.

When the scout platoon conducts a route reconnaissance, it often deploys in a vee formation because of the very focused nature of this mission. Team A is positioned to the left of the route, Team B to the right, and Team C in the center of the zone along Route SABER. The platoon should deploy into the formation prior to reaching LD PATTON so that it crosses the LD at the specified time. The platoon leader reports crossing the LD when the first element crosses it (see Figure 4-8A).
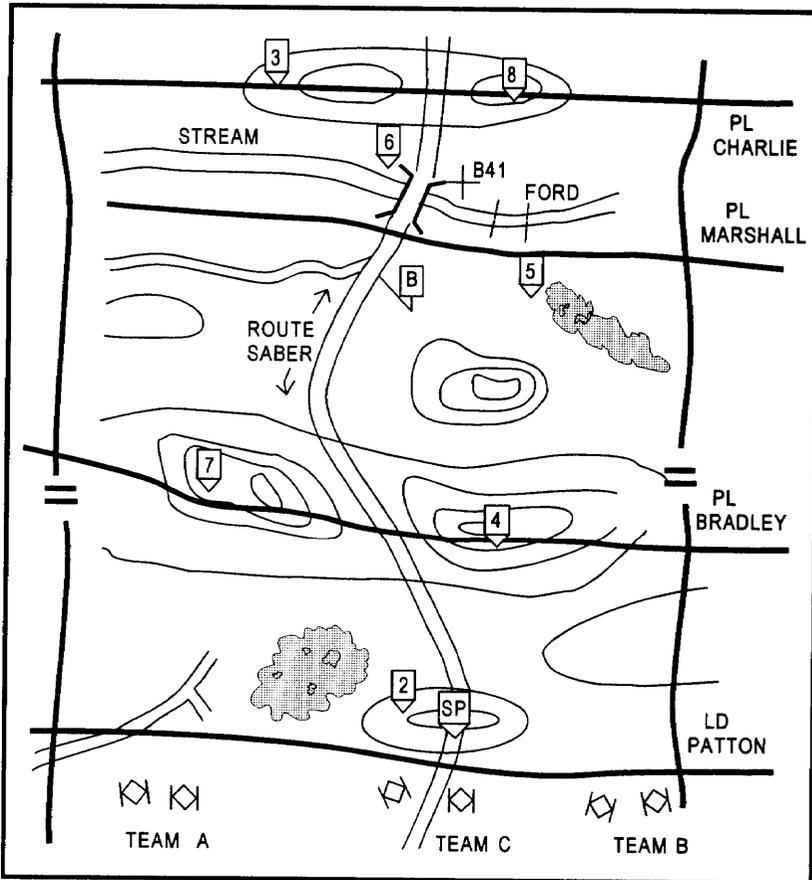
Figure 4-8A. Route reconnaissance.

The platoon leader is responsible for the scout platoon's movement through the sector. He uses checkpoints to control the movement and to focus on key terrain or features that may influence movement along the route.

4-30

Team C should be positioned along the route so it can observe the route, and one element of the team must physically drive the entire route. Unless the sector is very small or very open, the platoon will move as individual teams. As the sections move to the checkpoints, they maneuver in a zigzag pattern to clear the sector and accomplish all critical tasks of a route reconnaissance. The lead teams on the flanks must observe the route and report any restrictions or obstacles that may restrict movement along the route. Visually clearing the route before Team C travels it provides for better security and allows Team C to concentrate on the critical reconnaissance tasks. As the teams maneuver toward the checkpoints, they maintain visual contact with the route (see Figure 4-8B).
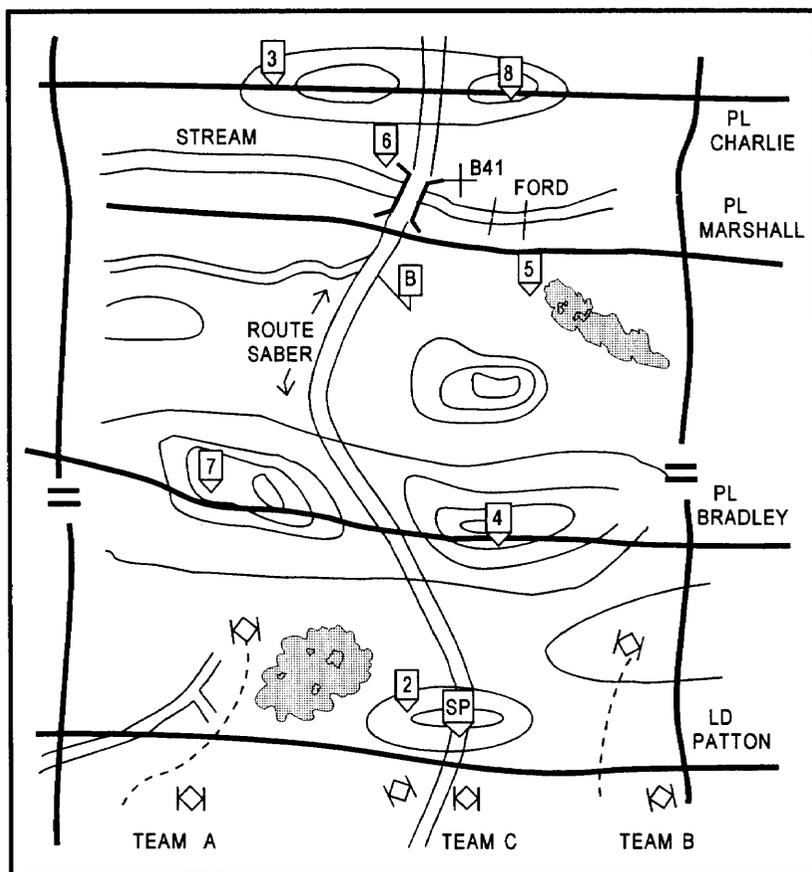
Figure 4-8B. Route reconnaissance (continued).

After both lead teams report "SET" and are in overwatch positions, Team C begins the route reconnaissance (see Figure 4-8 C). As the platoon leader moves along the route, his wingman maneuvers to provide overwatch for the platoon leader's reconnaissance. As the platoon leader travels along Route SABER, he is normally required to send a route classification of the trafficability at intervals designated by the commander. A route report maybe required only if there is a significant or unexpected change in the route's makeup.

As Team C clears the route, the other teams move ahead, clearing and reconnoitering critical and dominant terrain. The platoon leader controls and coordinates the movement of the teams. He must ensure that the flank teams remain far enough forward of Team C to provide security. The flank teams have also been assigned responsibility for covering lateral routes. Team A is executing a lateral route and will use contact point B to tie in with Team C on Route SABER (see Figure 4-8D).

The platoon order must address actions on the approach to the stream. In this case, the two flank teams have been given the task of locating bypasses in the form of fords or unmapped bridges. Team B is successful in locating a ford; Team A is not. Team B conducts a ford reconnaissance, following the steps used for obstacle and restriction reconnaissance, and then continues its mission (see Figure 4-8E, page 4-34).

Team C continues its route reconnaissance along the route until it approaches the bridge site. It then executes a bridge reconnaissance to establish trafficability of the bridge. Team A occupies an overwatch position while Team C reconnoiters the bridge. Team B continues its reconnaissance one terrain feature beyond the stream and then occupies a short-duration OP (see Figure 4-8F, page 4-34).

Team C completes its bridge reconnaissance and establishes local security on the approaches to the far side of the bridge. Once this is complete, Team A passes across the bridge and through Team C, continuing its reconnaissance to clear dominant terrain on the left flank of the route (see Figure 4-8G, page 4-35). Once Team A is set in sector, the platoon resumes its route reconnaissance to the LOA (see Figure 4-8H, page 4-35).
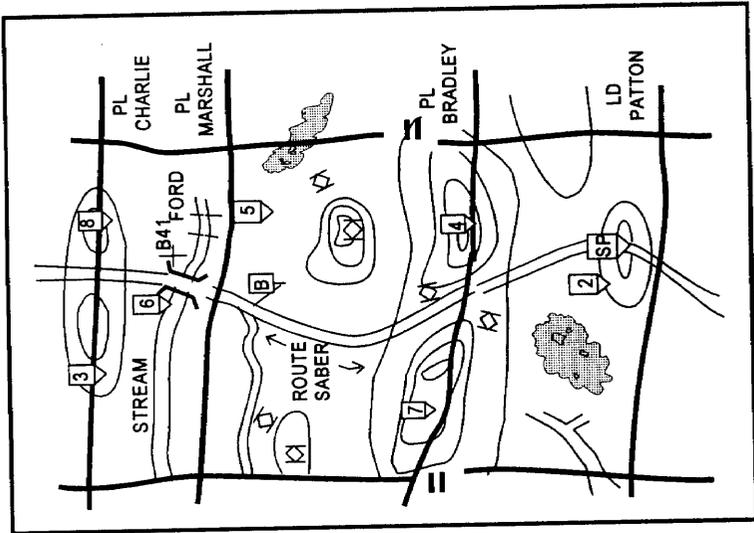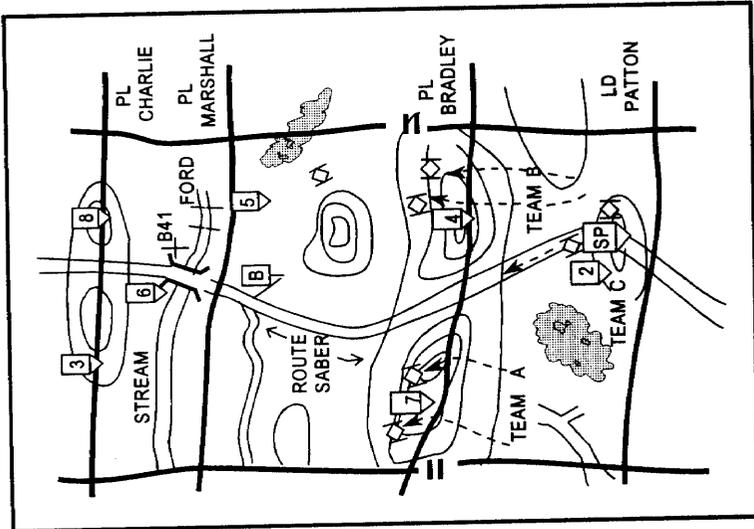
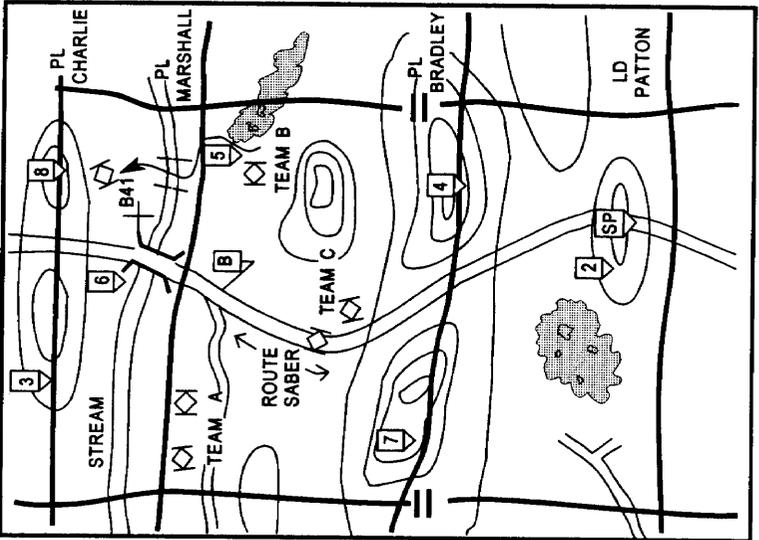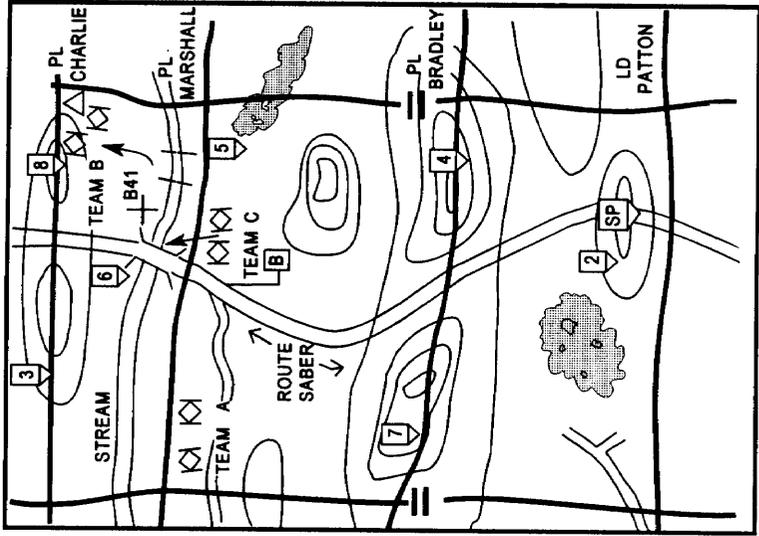Figure 4-8. Route reconnaissance (continued).
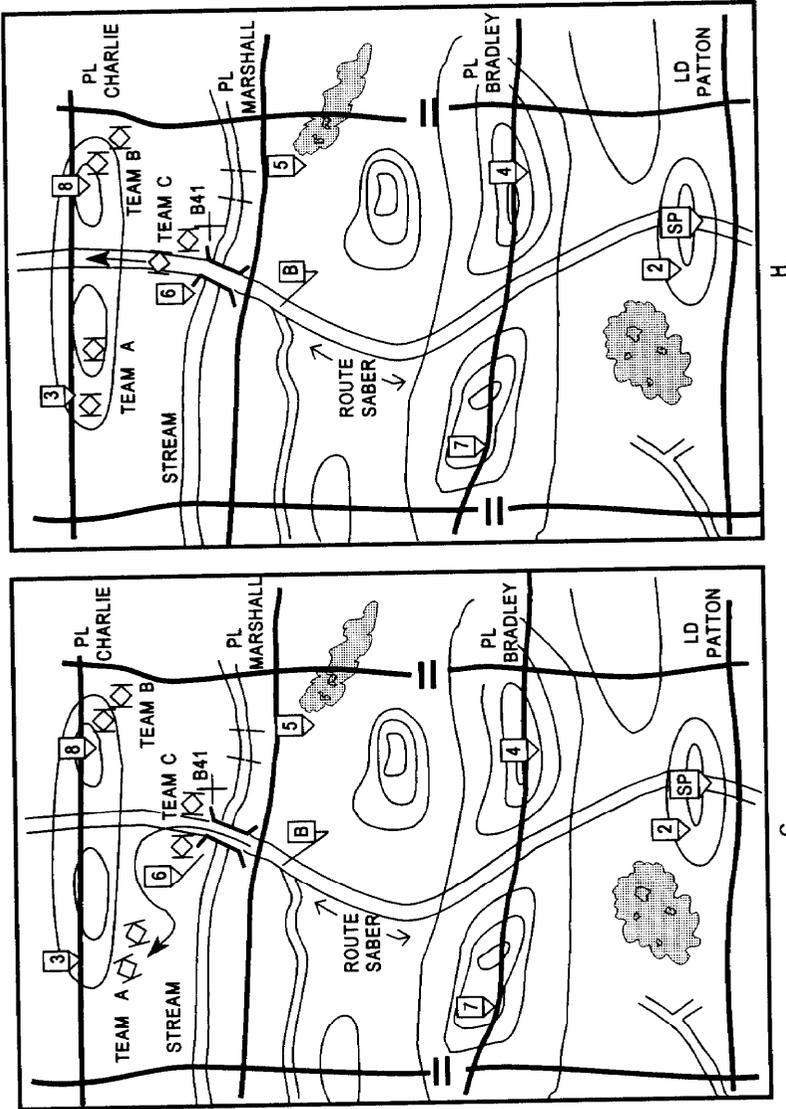
Figure 4-8. Route reconnaissance (continued).

Figure 4-8. Route reconnaissance (continued).

Section V. ZONE RECONNAISSANCE

Scouts conduct zone reconnaissance missions to gain detailed information about routes, terrain, resources, and enemy forces within a zone defined by lateral boundaries. Commanders normally assign a zone reconnaissance mission when they need information before sending their main body forces through the zone. The reconnaissance produces information about the enemy situation and about routes and cross-country trafficability within the zone. This is the most thorough and complete reconnaissance mission and therefore is very time-intensive. It is common for scouts executing a zone reconnaissance to advance at only about 1.5 kilometers per hour.

CRITICAL TASKS

Scouts must accomplish the following critical tasks during a zone recon-naissance unless the commander directs them to do otherwise:

- Reconnoiter all terrain within the zone.

- Inspect and classify all bridges within the zone.

- Locate suitable fording or crossing sites near all bridges within the zone.

- Inspect and classify all overpasses, underpasses, and culverts.

- Locate mines, obstacles, and barriers in the zone.

- Locate bypasses around built-up areas, obstacles, and contami-nated areas.

- Find and report all enemy forces within the zone.

TECHNIQUES

A zone reconnaissance is a very time-consuming operation. Unless the orders specify otherwise, all the critical tasks listed above are implied in the zone reconnaissance mission statement. Commanders who want a faster tempo of operations need to modify the mission statement or prioritize the critical tasks for the platoon leader. A scout platoon can effectively reconnoiter a zone that is

3 to 5 kilometers wide. The width of the zone is determined by the road network, terrain features, anticipated enemy activity, and time available to accomplish the mission. If the platoon is stretched any farther than 3 to 5 kilometers, it quickly loses the capability to accomplish the critical tasks and to move securely.

When a scout platoon leader receives a zone reconnaissance mission, the order will define the zone by lateral boundaries, an LD, and an LOA or objective. The parent unit may include additional PLs or other graphic control measures within the zone to help control the maneuver of the units.

The platoon leader analyzes the mission to determine what must be accomplished. He analyzes any information he has received about the enemy in the IPB to determine what enemy activity he should expect to encounter. He then analyzes the terrain by conducting a map reconnaissance and by examining any aerial photographs or information from other units to determine what types of terrain the platoon must operate over. This reconnaissance is important in identifying areas the enemy could occupy based on fields of fire, natural obstacles, and observation capability.

The platoon leader completes his troop-leading procedures and comes up with a course of action to best accomplish his assigned mission. He may add additional PLs on easily identifiable terrain through the zone to assist in controlling the maneuver. He places checkpoints in any specific areas that must be reconnoitered or used in controlling the operation. If the terrain is mixed, with a lot of dead space and with easily identifiable features, he may want to use boundaries to designate areas of responsibility for each team. He will place contact points at critical areas where he wants to ensure that teams maintain contact.

The platoon leader works with the FSO to plan indirect-fire targets to support the platoon's scheme of maneuver. As a minimum, they should plan targets on known or suspected enemy positions.

Depending on the type of scout platoon and the METT-T considerations, the platoon can conduct the zone reconnaissance using a two-, three-, or four-team organization. It must deploy to cover the entire zone. It usually operates in a zone it knows very little about, so the course of action must allow for flexibility, responsiveness, and security as it moves. The platoon leader deploys the scout teams online across the LD. He uses PLs, checkpoints, contact

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points, or TIRS points to ensure that the platoon reconnoiters the entire zone and that teams maintain contact with each other. He ensures that the scout teams remain generally on line; this prevents development of significant gaps that a moving enemy could exploit. Scouts dismount as necessary to gather detailed information, clear danger areas, or move through areas that are not accessible to the vehicles. The platoon continues to reconnoiter the zone until it reaches the LOA or the final reconnaissance objective.
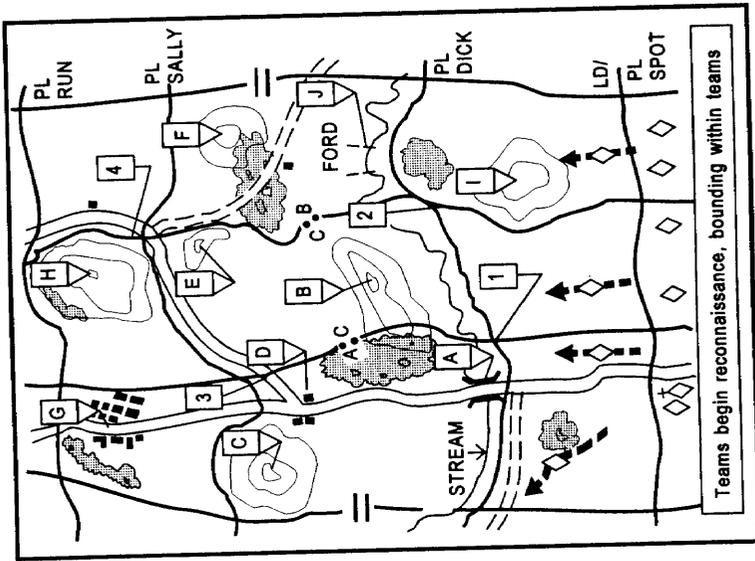
EXAMPLE OF A ZONE RECONNAISSANCE

The following example of zone reconnaissance is for a battalion scout platoon. Figure 4-9 illustrates this situation.

Although strict formations will not generally be used by scout platoons forward of the FEBA, the platoon leader in this example starts out with his platoon on line. The platoon leader will attempt to generally maintain this relationship even though the teams will not be mutually supporting much of the time. The platoon should deploy into formation prior to crossing the LD, with Team A on the left, Team B on the right, and Team C in the center of the zone (see Figure 4-9A).

The platoon crosses the LD at the time prescribed in the commander's OPORD, using the bounding overwatch technique of movement within teams, In this mission, the platoon leader has chosen to position himself with Team A because of the importance of the route and bridge in Team A's area of operations, The teams maneuver through the zone in a zigzag pattern to ensure the zone is properly reconnoitered and to accomplish all critical tasks of a zone reconnaissance. Security is provided within teams because the width and terrain of the zone prevent the teams from providing mutual support (see Figure 4-9B).

Depending on the factors of METT-T, the platoon leader chooses the movement technique best suited for command and control. He may choose to have the teams clear and set at all checkpoints, or he may have them bound through the checkpoints, report clear, and then set at the PLs. If the platoon leader has not assigned teams a particular checkpoint to orient on, the team leaders must plan their own measures to control the movement. They move team elements to contact points to ensure the move is tied in with that of the other teams. The platoon leader does not allow any element to cross PL DICK until all elements have reported set (see Figure 4-9C, page 4-41).

4-38
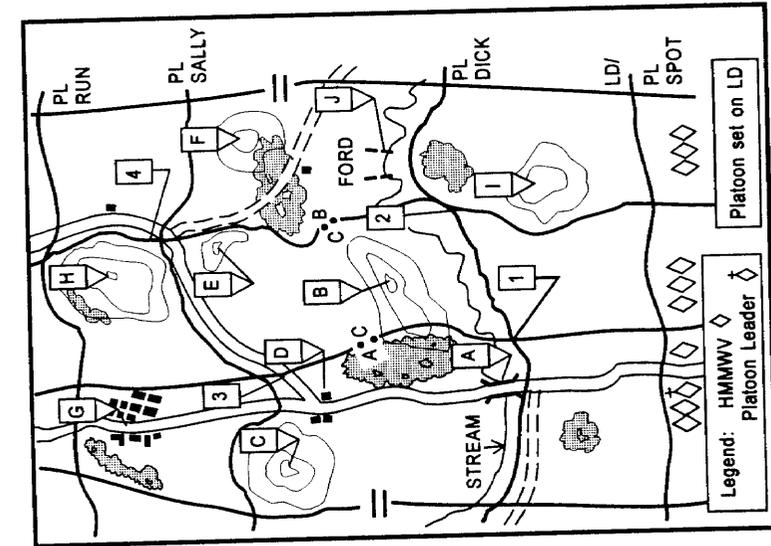
Figure 4-9. Zone reconnaissance.

When the platoon is set on PL DICK, the leader gives the teams permission to execute DICK and move to PL SALLY. The teams immediately begin reconnaissance of natural and man-made obstacles, including the stream to their front. Team A must execute a bridge reconnaissance and reconnoiter the stream for possible unmarked fords as well. Team C reconnoiters the stream for possible unmarked fords. Team B reconnoiters the stream for possible unmarked fords and conducts a ford reconnaissance at the known ford in the zone.

Once Team C completes its reconnaissance of the stream and reports negative results, it moves to the vicinity of contact point 2 and awaits permission to cross the stream at Team B's ford. Team C is also prepared to cross at Team A's bridge, if necessary (see Figure 4-9D).

As Teams A and B complete their reconnaissance tasks at the bridge and ford, they revert to the bounding overwatch movement technique and continue reconnaissance. Team C moves across the team boundary and prepares to cross the stream at the ford (see Figure 4-9E, page 4-42).

The zone reconnaissance continues with Teams A and B clearing checkpoints D and F. The platoon leader holds the teams at those control measures to allow time for Team C to clear checkpoint B and get on line with the other teams at checkpoint E. This prevents dangerous gaps from developing between the teams (see Figure 4-9F, page 4-42).

Once Team C sets at checkpoint E, the platoon leader has all elements on line and set along PL SALLY. Teams A and C ensure that they make contact at contact point 3. The platoon leader gives permission for all elements to execute PL SALLY, then move to and set at PL RUN (see Figure 4-9G, page 4-43).

As the teams move across PL SALLY, Teams C and B make contact at contact point 4. The platoon uses bounding overwatch within each team as the movement technique. The teams continue the zone reconnaissance in this manner, accomplishing all critical tasks and reporting all control measures and other reconnaissance information, until they reach the LOA or reconnaissance objective (see Figure 4-9H, page 4-43).
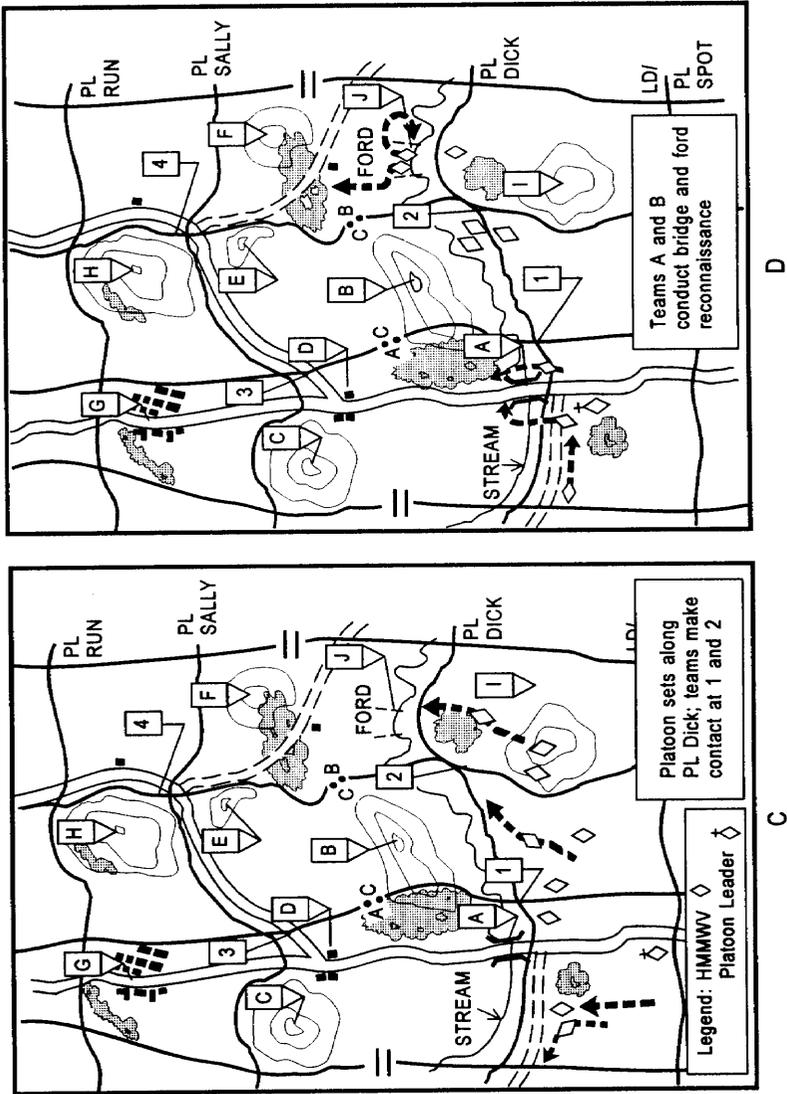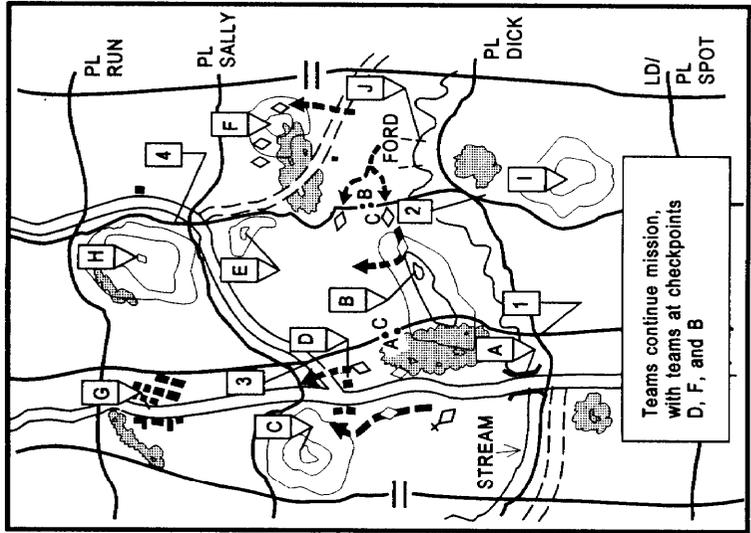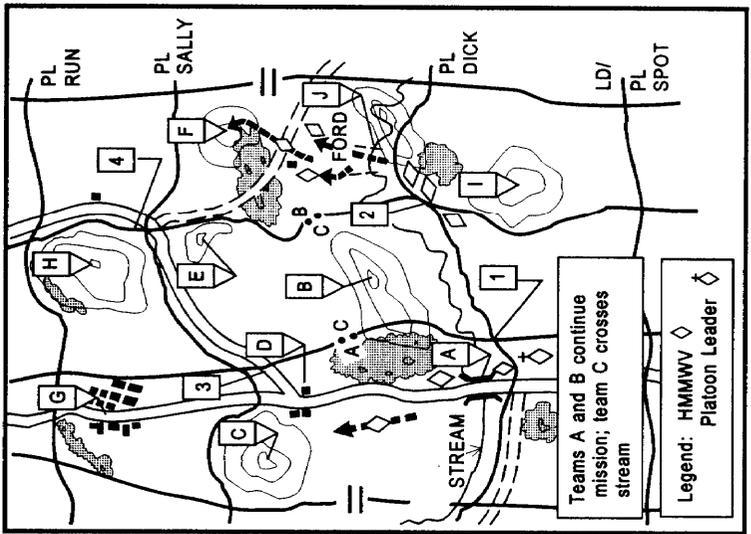
4-40

Figure 4-9. Zone reconnaissance (continued).

Teams continue mission,
with teams at checkpoints
D, F, and B

F

STREAM

Teams A and B continue
mission; team C crosses
stream

Legend: HMMWV ◇
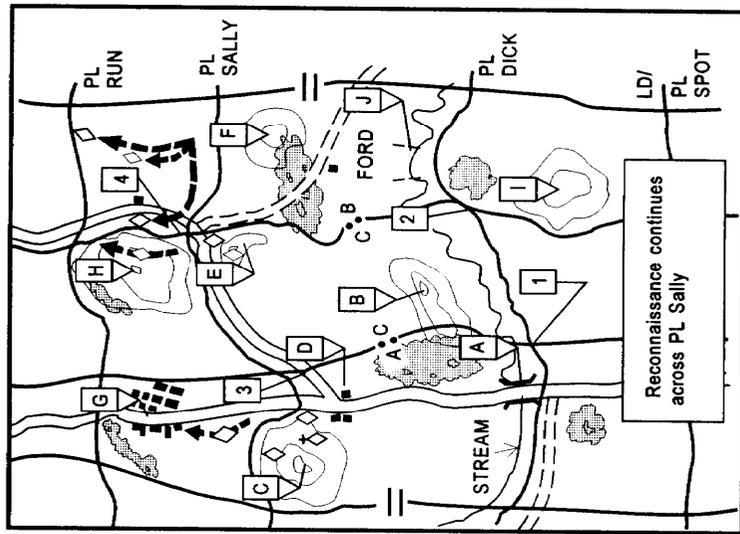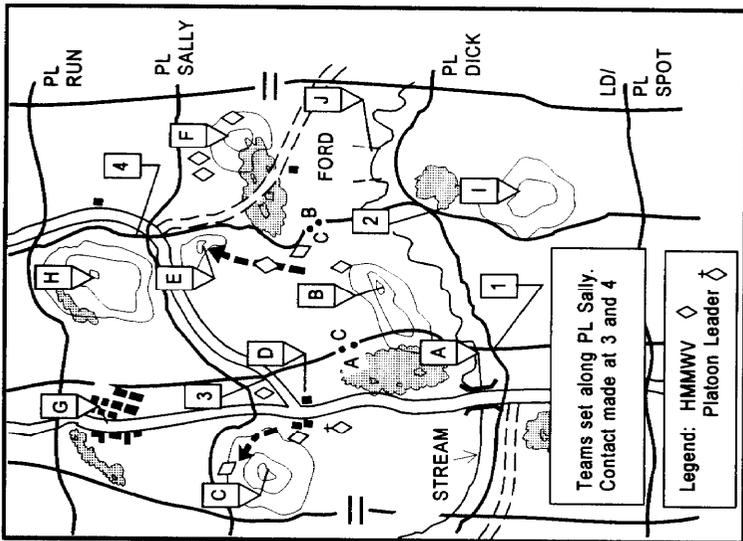   Platoon Leader ◇

E

Figure 4-9. Zone reconnaissance (continued).

Figure 4-9. Zone reconnaissance (continued).

Section VI. AREA RECONNAISSANCE

Before moving forces into or near a specified area, commanders call on their scouts to conduct an area reconnaissance to avoid being surprised by unsuitable terrain conditions or unexpected enemy forces. The area could be a town, ridge line, woods, or another feature that friendly forces intend to occupy, pass through, or avoid. Area reconnaissance is frequently required for objective areas to confirm the IPB templates and to provide detailed information regarding enemy dispositions. In addition, area reconnaissance within a zone of operations can be used to focus the scouts on the specific area that is critical to the commander. This technique of focusing the reconnaissance also permits the reconnaissance to be accomplished more quickly (see Figure 4-10). Thus area reconnaissance can be a stand-alone mission or a task to a team or platoon within the larger context of a platoon or troop reconnaissance mission.
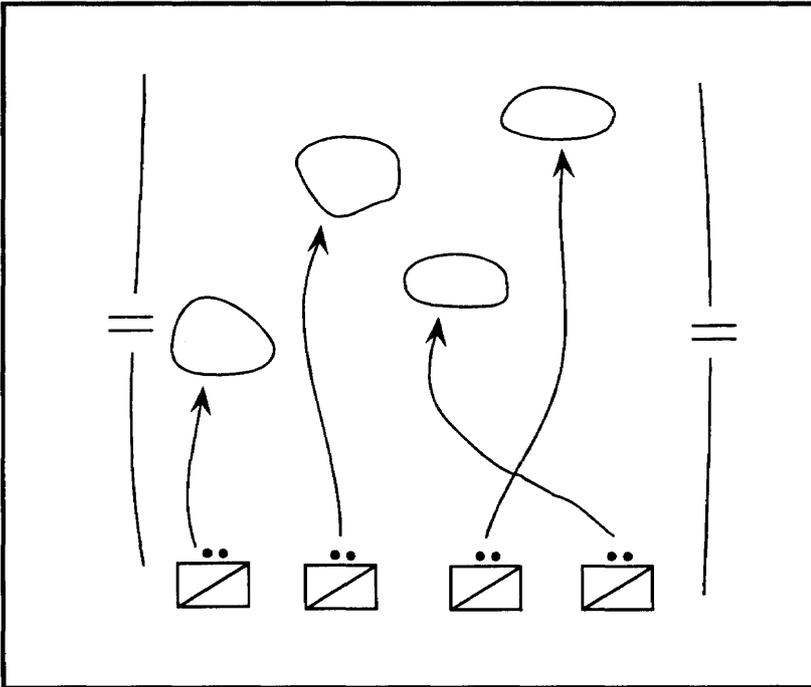

Figure 4-10. Zone of operations divided into a series of team area reconnaissance assignments.

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CRITICAL TASKS

Scouts must accomplish the following critical tasks during an area reconnaissance unless the commander orders them to do otherwise:

- Reconnoiter all terrain within the area.

- Inspect and classify all bridges within the area.

- Locate suitable fording or crossing sites near all bridges within the area.

- Inspect and classify all overpasses, underpasses, and culverts.

- Locate mines, obstacles, and barriers in the area.

- Locate bypasses around built-up areas, obstacles, and contaminated areas.

- Find and report all enemy forces within the area.

TECHNIQUES

The order to conduct an area reconnaissance mission identifies the area to be reconnoitered within a continuous boundary. The platoon leader analyzes the mission, enemy, and terrain and completes his troop-leading procedures. He also plans the movement to and, if necessary, from the area, following the basic rule of using different routes to and from the area. The routes are specified for the platoon when it works as part of a larger unit, such as a cavalry troop. The platoon's primary concern during movement to the area is security rather than reconnaissance. In the absence of a specified route, or if the platoon leader feels there may be enemy forces along the route to the area to be reconnoitered, the platoon should deploy and execute a tactically sound move. During movement to the area, it may be appropriate (depending on the commander's intent) for the platoon to avoid contact.

The platoon leader encloses the given area within a platoon zone; he uses boundaries, an LD, and an LOA. The platoon leader can divide the area into team zones by placing boundaries on identifiable terrain; this ensures that each team has responsibility for specific pieces of terrain. The platoon leader may also choose to orient and focus teams on checkpoints for both movement and reconnaissance. PLs may also be used to help control the movement of the platoon to the area. The platoon leader places contact points at the intersections

4-45

of PLs and boundaries and any other places he wants physical contact and coordination between his scout teams. He uses TIRS as necessary. The platoon leader works with the FSO to plan indirect fires to support the platoon's scheme of maneuver.

The platoon can conduct the area reconnaissance using any of the platoon organizations. The platoon leader deploys his teams abreast across the LD to accomplish their reconnaissance tasks. Formations are often not appropriate to this mission because of the irregular shape of the area and the wide variety of METT-T considerations.

EXAMPLE OF AN AREA RECONNAISSANCE

The following example of area reconnaissance is for a battalion scout platoon. Figure 4-11 illustrates this situation.

In this example, the battalion scout platoon has been given the mission of performing an area reconnaissance of Objective LEAD and Objective IRON. The platoon has not been assigned a specific route, and enemy dispositions are vague. The platoon leader decides, after analyzing the factors of METT-T, to deploy his platoon to maximize security.

The platoon leader analyzes the terrain and his mission requirements and decides to use the four-team organization. He assigns Teams A, B, and C respective checkpoints on Objective IRON. Because of Objective LEAD's smaller size, he assigns only Team D to reconnoiter it. The platoon leader decides that he will move with Team C and thus provide close control of the reconnaissance of Objective IRON. The PSG will move with Team D and observe the reconnaissance of Objective LEAD. The platoon leader decides to move the platoon using checkpoints that make maximum use of cover and concealment between the LD and the objectives (see Figure 4-11A).

Using the four-team organization, the platoon crosses PL BOB at the time specified in the commander's OPORD. The platoon crosses in sequence, with the two lead teams executing and the following teams waiting until initial checkpoints are cleared before proceeding. No platoon formation is used. The lead teams, which have the longest distance to move to their reconnaissance objectives, use bounding overwatch to ensure maximum security (see Figure 4-11B).
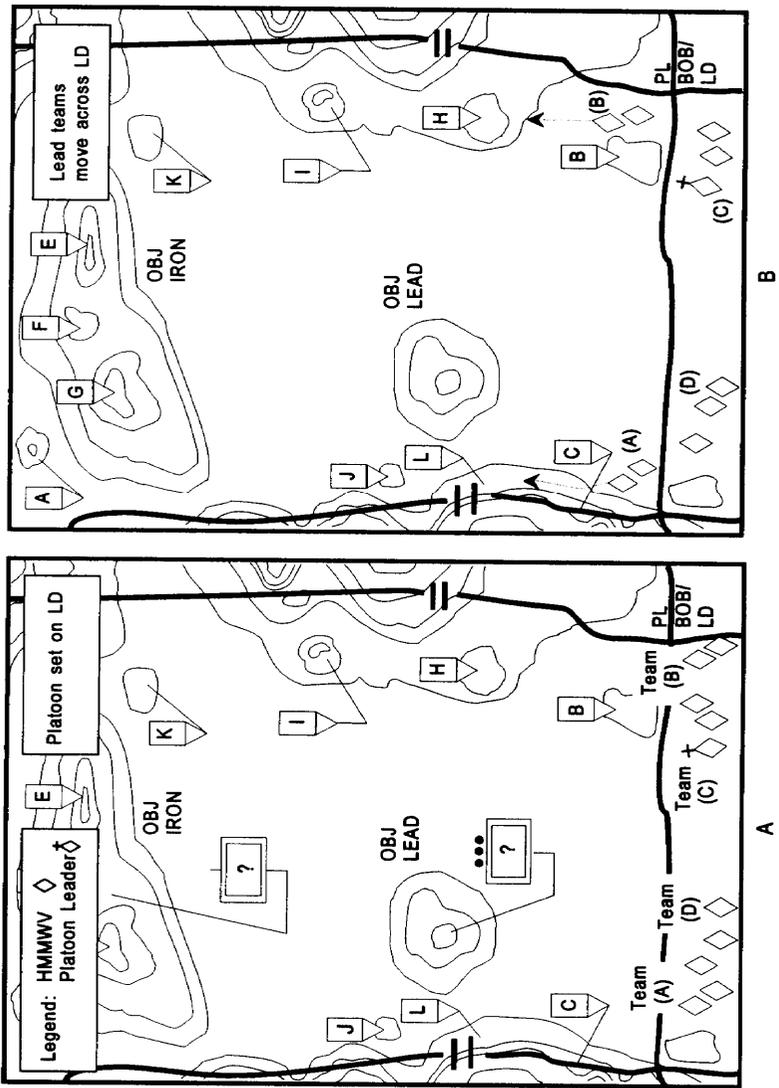
4-46

Figure 4-11. Area reconnaissance.

As the lead teams execute checkpoints C and H, the trail teams cross the LD. The movement technique is bounding overwatch within teams (see Figure 4-11C).

The scout teams continue their move to the designated dismount points. Team D occupies its dismount point, checkpoint L. The team sets its vehicles in hide positions, organizes a patrol, and deploys local security (see Figure 4-11D).

Team D's patrol moves on covered and concealed dismounted routes to Objective LEAD and conducts a dismounted reconnaissance. The patrol uses the fan dismounted reconnaissance technique to thoroughly reconnoiter the objective. Teams A and B occupy their dismount points (checkpoints A and D, respectively). Team C continues to move (see Figure 4-11E, page 4-50).

Team D's patrol completes its reconnaissance of Objective LEAD. The team submits its report and establishes an OP in the vicinity of checkpoint J from which it can observe the objective area. Teams A and B dispatch their patrols to conduct dismounted reconnaissance on Objective IRON. The platoon leader has designated checkpoints on the objective to focus each team's patrol. Teams A and B reconnoiter checkpoints G and F, respectively. Team C occupies its dismount point in the vicinity of checkpoint K (see Figure 4-11F, page 4-50).

Teams A and B complete their reconnaissance of Objective IRON; they establish OPs from which they can observe into the objective area and monitor any changes in the enemy situation, They also submit detailed reports on enemy dispositions through the platoon leader to their commander. Team C executes a dismounted patrol of checkpoint E, its portion of Objective IRON (see Figure 4-11G, page 4-51).

Team C completes its dismounted reconnaissance of checkpoint E. All teams observe the objective area and send updated spot reports as necessary. The platoon continues to observe the objective until relieved or assigned subsequent tasks by its higher headquarters (see Figure 4-11H, page 4-51).
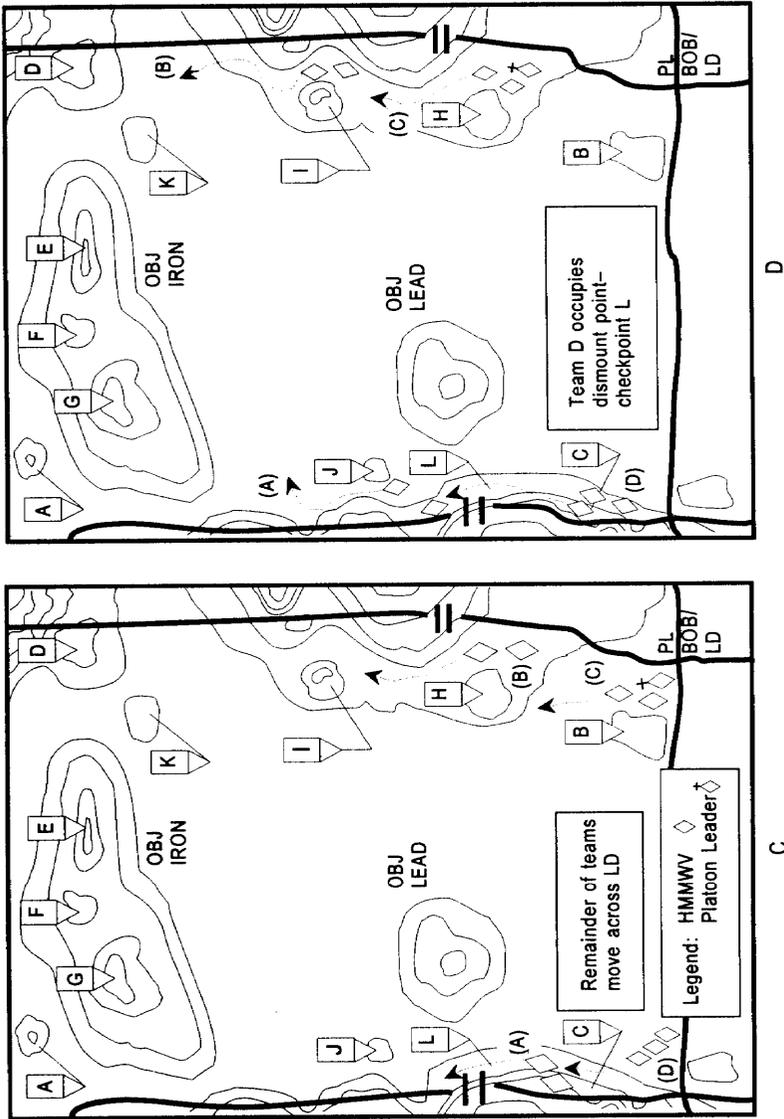
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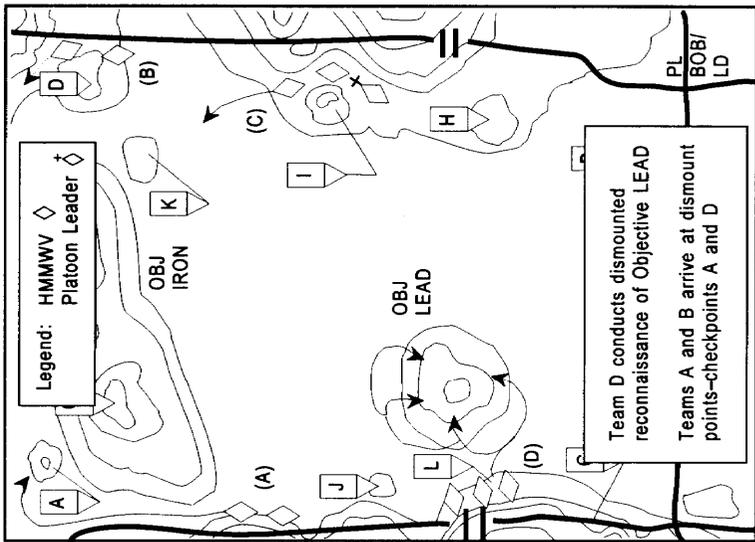Figure 4-11. Area reconnaissance (continued).

Legend: HMMWV ◇
Platoon Leader ✝◇

OBJ IRON

OBJ LEAD

Team D conducts dismounted reconnaissance of Objective LEAD

Teams A and B arrive at dismount points—checkpoints A and D

(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)

PL BOB/ LD

E

Teams A and B conduct dismounted reconnaissance of Objective IRON

Team D establishes OP at checkpoint J

Team C arrives at dismount point—checkpoint K

OBJ IRON

OBJ LEAD
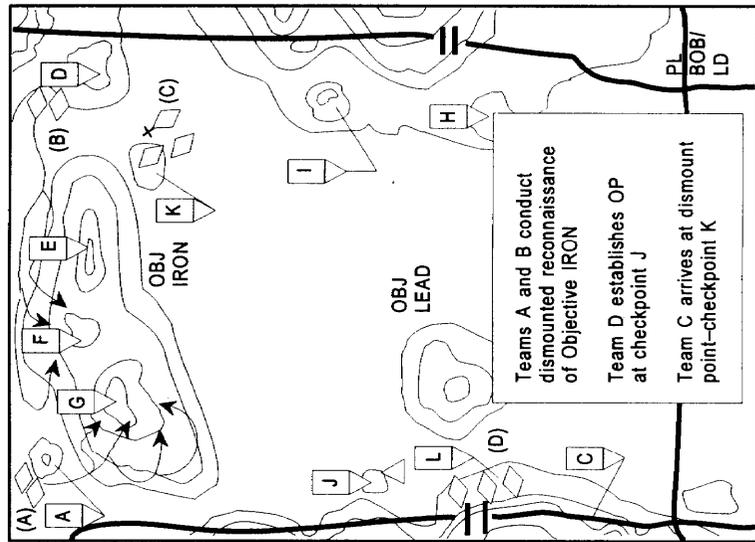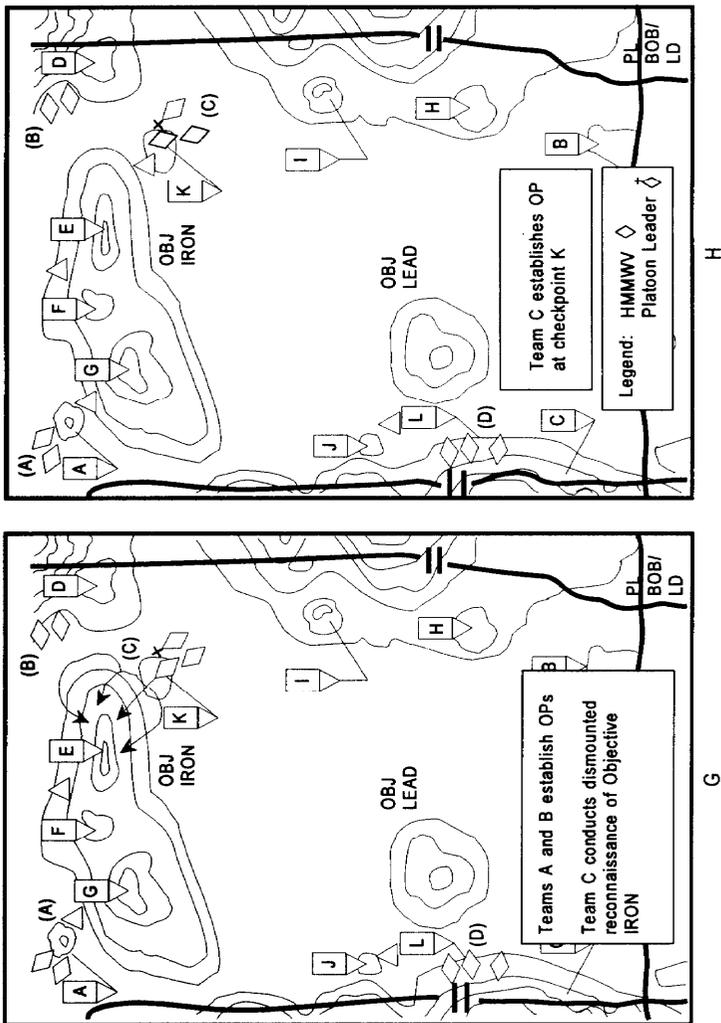
(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)

PL BOB/ LD

F

Figure 4-11. Area reconnaissance (continued).

Figure 4-11. Area reconnaissance (continued).