



## Section 8 : Scenario Training 103

### Ambush

Author : John "Thumper" Edens with numerous contributions from masters - living and dead.

#### Ambushes : Why on earth do I care?

Scenario Paintball frequently involves running timed missions, which means moving a patrol from one location to another, quickly, quietly and avoiding enemy contact when possible. This movement will frequently use trails or other obvious routes that are easily predicted by the enemy. These routes can be compromised by the effective use of ambushes. A study of ambushes will lead to the better usage of them as an offensive tactic, but more importantly, being able to understand the animal to defeat the animal, i.e, the beginning of counter-ambush tactics and more effective mission running skills.



The Vietnam War educated the US in the usage of ambushes as an offensive and defensive tactic. The VC would set out ambushes on trails and waterways as a means to inflict casualties with a minimum of loss and effort, which in turn creates an important psychological effect on their enemy : fear of an area and fear of moving in the dark.

This "fear of an area" has an important implication on paintball mission running. If you fear to use an area, and it is the most effective route, the enemy is forcing you to be less effective through fear. Ambush tactics (and sniper operations) can create that fear.

One must embrace fear, or fall victim to it. Practice and familiarity is the first step over the mastery of fear.

## KNOW THY ENEMY



*Sun TZU : "Know thy enemy and know thyself, find naught in fear for 100 battles. Know thyself but not thy enemy, find level of loss and victory. Know thy enemy but not thyself, wallow in defeat every time."*

In scenario paintball - you must think of the bad guys shooting at you as the enemy, but don't forget the gamemaster who is writing the rules and setting the stage for your amusement - He too must be considered. The gamemasters are included in this discussion. Now lets get in their heads...

In real military action, soldiers are under orders and have little choice in their situation. They will conduct ambushes and patrols because their lives depend on it, and if they don't follow orders they face some pretty stiff consequences. The "ambush willing" enemy in paintball is much different. Ambushes require a great deal of discipline to sit in a consealed position for long periods of time while the sounds of friends doing fun things echos in the distance. This means the enemy you will face will be **one of two types**:

The first is the very **dedicated, likely well lead missions team**, probably on a similar mission to yours - but got there first and set up a defence -

\*OR\* the small **AD-HOC** group of kid who dont have a clue about the real game are either looking to avoid trouble or are just out hunting anything that moves when you stumbled along.

OK, got it - you face well organized OR an ad-hoc enemy. Based on my experience, these two types of ambush willing enemy occur with equal frequency when running missions.

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## >> AD-HOC

**AD-HOC** : Lets look at the AD-HOC enemy first. The poorly lead, poorly disciplined group will do a few things fairly predictably:

- AD-HOC rarely have or use radios.
- AD-HOC is likely not on a mission and its emination likely has no point value.
- AD-HOC dont set up in an effective pattern. The fundamental concepts of ambush tactics are foreign to them.
- AD-HOC will likely be grouped together because they are a bit scared, but being grouped they are also limiting their angles and effective killing zone.
- AD-HOC are likely hiding behind cover as you patrol because your patrol suprised them and they took **THE MOST OBVIOUS** cover handy. This means bunkers and buildings - nothing cleaver, dirty or dedicated.

**WARNING:** If AD-HOC runs away DO NOT FOLLOW. There is a reasonable chance AD-HOC is planned bait for a more serious element waiting just beyond.

**Defeating AD-HOC** : Defeating this enemy is pretty simple. Dont push them out of their cover. They like it there, and will stay there if you let them.

▶ **If you have time** : simply give them obvious target to shoot at and send a stealthy flanker to quickly and quietly take them from the side. Block their retreat and then envelope them on all sides and quickly eliminate them. BE QUICK : Keep an eye on the time. You may have just eliminated 2-3 enemy soldiers, but they just cost your patrol 5 minutes of valuable time.

▶ **If you dont have time**, bypass the AD-HOC group and leave a sleeper / sniper on your trail to keep them from trailing you. BE QUICK - your mission is now possibly compromised, as is your force size and direction. Make note as to weather the AD-HOC group have radios. They may also report you activities to their C&C when they spawn. When you reach your mission objective - expect trouble from the enemy base direction. They will be real short on time to stop you.

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## >> Dedicated & Disciplined

**Dedicated & Disciplined** : Lets look now at the other ambush willing enemy. Odds are, the producer has written either a direct conflict mission, a criss-cross mission, or an A/notA mission.

▶ **Direct Conflict** : A direct conflict mission is where both armies have mission **A** - guaranteeing action. Skeeter writes these 10% of the time. Ben and Wayne writes these 30% of the time. Thumper writes 100% of the time. Del writes these 100% of the time, with odd purpose variation.

▶ **Criss-Cross A & B:** With Skeeter, Ben and Waynes games criss-cross missions occur all the time. These mission are written such that when your mission team is on the way to "A" and the enemy mission team is on the way to "B" and these paths cross each other. A and B will be near by.

▶ **Criss Cross A then B / B then A** : Another classic variation on this theme is when your mission team has "A then B" and the enemy has "B then A" (very common at night w/ Ben and Thumper). The two will certainly bump into each other with some cleaver timing as planned by the producer.

 **Criss Cross: A / notA** : Another variation is for one mission team to be sent out early to "Patrol Road A" or "Snipe Road A" and the other team is sent on mission that would likely need to use Road A on its way to objective A. This mission type has serious ambush / counter ambush implications.

Mission durations vary from "hold objective for 10 minutes" to "hold objective for 30 minutes" to hold objective at 3:30. To hold this for 10 then that for 10.

## ENEMY SPOTTED & DUG IN

**If you run into a bunch of bad guys** who are either dug in or moving in formation quietly - I would say there is a 75% chance you have just stumbled on an enemy mission team. If they are dug in, they are on mission. If they are moving they are either on mission, or it headed towards their base after they likely just completed their mission. If they are headed back to base, go quick quiet and let them pass. If they are headed away from base, and towards your mission or near by - its time to take the best ground and get ready to take them out to the last man.

**Your primary mission is your mission card, but now you have the opportunity to defeat their mission as well. Doing both is what Roadkill calls a double whammy.**

Now back to the ambush discussion.

### > MISSION TEAM LEADER TIPS

You are leading a mission team to your mission objective.

You know the enemy, you can make a reasonable guess at his purpose, discipline and a reasonable guess at how long he has to do it.

CASE 1 : If the enemy team is dug in there is a good chance it is set up in a defensive perimeter. A wise team will space their gunners out around 60' apart and in a circle or semi circular formation, 100' or so from their mission objective "A". If it appears your mission objective is also A its time to attack their formation. They picked the ground, they beat you to it, and they are disciplined and ready. They may have flankers out and on the move already.

Look at your watch and look for a ref. If you see a ref near by, assume you have less than 5 minutes to take it away. (Skeeter is know for making a mission near your base worth lots of point for the enemy, and they dont have to hold it for long)

The best bet here is to move aggressively, leap frogging, and try and get to the best cover close to, or better yet inside their perimeter. Time is short, and the odds are likely against you - but its time. FAST and FURIOUS. Once inside, bring in move troops quickly and assume a tight pattern of mutual support. You are playing against the clock and it is no time to be a candy ass.

### > POINT MAN TIPS

First: take a heavy gunner with you to "walk slack". He should be 15 meters behind and a few meters to the side of you. One burst of enemy fire should not get both of you. His job is to lay down some suppression fire for a few seconds while you get you tail to cover - if something bad happens. The main body of the mission team should be 60 feet behind him w/ a 5 meter spread.

Now - live in the moment. Focus with all thoughts on the situation. Focus with all senses on the situation: smells, birds, shadows, sounds, movement, wind, insects. Focus your mind on your senses - all of them. Live in the moment.

If you are on your way to the mission, and you are on point - start thinking.

 *"If I were them where would I be?"*

**Sun Tzu** : *"To know your Enemy, you must become your Enemy."*

Make a mental threat assessment of every likely point, and systematically eliminate each possibility by



visual inspection. When seriously in doubt, run to cover (or be on edge to run to cover) against the threat and then make the assessment.

## **\*\*MOVE\*\***

Move smoothly and with a minimum of sound and movement. Plan at your footing. Walk on sand, dirt, and straw, not leaves or branches. Nothing should beep or rattle.



**THUMPER** : *"If I'm on point, I normally move in a slight zigzag pattern, moving from large cover to large cover, especially when my spider senses kick in. I rarely move completely to the cover ahead, but it is "mentally available" and I'm moving towards it "just in case". This creates an odd path resembling a zig-zag. This zig-zag pattern also allows you to see more deeply behind the threats ahead as each sideways step opens up a new field of view. Moving laterally creates an opportunity to visually doublecheck the threats that were not previously ruled out as 100% safe."*



**GRENDDEL** : *"As a pointman expect you are going to be eliminated more often than you teammates. It is not the point man's job to engage your opponents unless he is forced too. His job is to try and lead the party to their objective by the quickest path that will not compromise your position and finally to look out/be bait for OPFORs ambushes. Good communication not necessarily by radio and trust with your slack is of utmost importance. I tend to turn off my radio on point so I do not have chatter distracting me. Your slack should be close enough to see you but far enough away that if you spring an ambush he is not in the normal fire lanes/range but still able to see your signals and bring support quickly if needed. Moving down trails is a good way to get ambushed. Many of my teammates bitch and moan about the paths I tend to take because I like to cut my own trails and avoid existing trails as much as possible. It is slower but there are many times I've been able to come up on ambushers from their flank and warn my teammates so we can surprise them."*

## **\*\*LOOK\*\***

Look ahead - look at the hard cover and the shadows and think:

***"What is the best use of that cover against me? - Do the shadows for that cover make sense?"***



**Aerion** : *"The hardest bad guy to spot is the one that is camouflaged, concealed and dead still. When setting an ambush (or escaping from one) get behind a tree or brush (preferably both) kneel down and remain very still. My favorite concealment for this tactic is a clump of or a series of small trees. Peering between small trees does not present an outline of your shape and the outline is what the enemy is looking for."*

## **\*\*STOP\*\***

Every 100 ft - stop, and just listen. Focus on just your hearing for 10 seconds. Think to yourself:

***"What sound unnatural or man-made?"***

Your peripheral vision out the corner of your eye is much more acute to detecting movement than the center of your eye. Occasionally look past the obvious and to the sides of it, trying to detect movement and changing shadows in the obvious. Think to yourself:

*"Which way is the wind blowing? Do all shadows in my field of vision move with the wind? Do the ones that don't move make sense?"*

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**\*\* THINK \*\***

Always think before you move:

*"If a sniper opened up now, where would I dive for cover."*

Look for that cover now and move towards it. Paintballs don't move that fast and you have time to duck if you are mentally ready for the shot before it's fired. (real world bullets ain't like that) But you better have a mental plan before you move.

Look for evacuation routes. The bright ambush soldier won't paint himself in a corner. He will be able to get out, and he may have a back door to leave. Look for the door, and look on your side of it.

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**\*\*SENCE\*\***

Sixth Sense. This may sound odd, but the animal inside you can sense danger. You may not register why your senses go on full alert, but disregarding them is foolish.



**STEERS:** *"At PBC, at some points I would see that where I'm at is too quiet (like on the path to the right of the sacred burial grounds-right where I got shot) and 1/2 I failed to stop and take cover -due to the narrow roads of the field. Surprisingly, half the time I sense something is about to happen, it usually does. Paying attention to everything is vital."*

**By truly focusing on the situation you will come to understand your sixth sense and to trust it. It is very primitive and animalistic - but is the animal within you that your team needs right now.**

## OPEN FIRE

You are pointman for a squad, you left your wingman behind and now someone opens up and his first round missed - (or you know you have been spotted) now what..?

In today's games (Thumper's and Skeeter's in particular) **TIME is of the essence**. We all need to be more willing to bypass the bad guy, and leave a sleeper for him on our trail (just in case). If time permits, take him out.

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## SQUAD LEADER NOTES:

It's decision time : take him out or bypass. Look for refs. If there is a ref standing nearby and you are out in the boonies, #1 odds are the shooter is not alone, and #2 he is part of a mission team at their mission objective. Also note the ref may be bird-dogging the mission team and they are on-route to another location.



**AERION :** *Depending on the size of the squad and the proximity to the mission objective, it might be necessary and/or practical to eliminate the ambush anyway.*

*If there are a small number of ambushers and a large squad, you can leave a detachment*



*behind to insure the ambushers have a bad day while the balance of the squad proceeds to the objective. Also, if you have a larger reinforcement group following behind, it might be best to eliminate the ambush rather than risk your reinforcements being bogged down by an ambush.*

*Bypassing the ambush will often be the best course of action. It's always situational and sometimes it's a best guess which to do. But Thumper's point is that the strategic situation and not testosterone should be the deciding factor whether or not to engage an ambush.*

## POINTMAN NOTES:



**THUMPER :** *When moving as a group and stumbling on an ambush, the first guy spotted or shot at **just volunteered to become the bait** and to keep the bad guy in place (and entertained). Everyone else needs to disappear and only move while the bad guy is shooting at the bait. The bait may want to **rotate away** from the flanker position, being obvious as he does so. **Quick and Obvious**. This helps speed up the opportunities for movement for the flanking element.*

*Sun TZU: "Even though you are competent, appear incompetent."*



**AERION :** *"Patience is unfortunately scarce among paintballers. Rarely have I stumbled into a well executed ambush.*

*When escaping from an ambush, **use a J-Hook manoeuver**. Run back away from the enemy until you feel you're probably out of his clear sight. Then turn 90 degrees either left or right. Move in that direction until you hit good cover but usually at least 30 yards or more. Stop, hide and wait. Be patient. Your enemy will either come after you but not knowing where you are or will give up and move away. If the enemy comes after you, you're in an ambush position. If your enemy moves away you can trail him and hopefully get a back shot at him.*

*Point men generally have a 50% life expectancy. Being more alert will help, but a well concealed enemy will almost always get the first shot. Moving from cover to cover helps because it helps to keep the enemy from getting a clear shot at you. Working in your favor is that most ambushers lack the patience and discipline to wait for a good, clear, close shot. You'll rarely get eliminated on the first shot. More deadly will be ramping fire.*

*If you're suspicious of an area, get behind cover and wait. Rarely will paintballers have the patience to wait you out. Most will break concealment and come after you or fire a couple of shots at you."*



**GRENDEL :** *"Pointmen need to be able to hold the ambushers attention long enough to allow your teammates to respond. Many times this includes moving further into the ambush or a oblequies to the ambush or even through the ambush. This is one of the reasons you will get eliminated more because if they sprung the ambush correctly moving back toward your teammates will:*

- 1) move you back into the main ambush the is ment for your teammates resulting in your elimination for no gain.*
- 2) draw fire toward your teammates that are not yet into the ambush.*

*I actually do not like to have to "bunker up" when ambushed since it limits your view and decreases your tactical options, but sometimes there is no other choice. IMO movement is your best defense and if I can I like to move quickly through the ambush since the rear of an ambush is the weakest part and you can draw most if not all of the fire away from your teammates.*

*You've been ambushed what do you do? Well Arion hit on the most useful simple and almost universal move*

*the "J hook". I've used this so many times it is almost ridiculous, when I'm running solo or as a flanker. As Aerion described you move away then circle back either right and left and go to "ground", be quite alert, and patient. Many times you can catch a lone pursuer following directly up your path and you can move into his back door for the "kill". If you are pursued by many, become a mushroom and break out that radio and get word to your teammates and you might be able to direct them into a rolling ambush.*



**AERION :** *When you've spotted the ambusher. First thing to do is freeze in place and either squat down or if possible move behind some cover/concealment. You should also signal your wingman. Keep in mind that the OPFOR probably has a wingman or two himself. So you should also carefully look around for other OPFOR in the area. Even if you don't spot one, continue to assume one is there and maintain area awareness.*

*At this point, you have a choice to make depending on who your wingman is. Basically one of you will execute a frontal assault while the other goes for the flank. Choosing who executes the flank depends on who has what kind of marker (pumps are not the best frontal assault weapon), who stealthiest and the likelihood that one of you has been spotted. If the OPFOR already knows you're there, then the wingman should flank regardless. Otherwise, I'd consider stealth skill and/or markers.*

*The flanker should quickly move backwards from the OPFOR and do their best to avoid being seen. Once well out of sight, the flanker should move laterally in the direction that will best put him behind the OPFOR. The flanker should move quickly, quietly but still on the lookout for the OPFOR wingman (or wingmen). The assaulter should stay hidden long enough to allow the flanker to manouever behind the OPFOR.*

*While the flanker is manouevering behind the OPFOR, the assaulter should be looking around for an accessible fighting position. Move as close to (or inside of) the fighting as you can without being spotted. Make sure the fighting position is within range of the OPFOR.*

*Once the flanker has had time to get behind the OPFOR (or has signaled he's ready) the assaulter should start firing at the OPFOR. Be prepared for return fire from unseen OPFOR as well. The assaulter's job is not to eliminate the OPFOR but to provide a distraction to allow the flanker to get in close, while unseen, to get the elimination. The assaulter should be providing lots of fire but staying well under cover to prevent being eliminated. But the assaulter should remain area aware to make sure he's not flanked either.*

*The flanker should make sure he stays out of sight until the shooting starts. Otherwise, the OPFOR might look around and spot him. Once the shooting starts, the flanker should move as quickly, but quietly as possible up behind the OPFOR and take him out. Both team members should maintain area awareness to make sure the OPFOR wingman isn't working a his flank as well.*

*If the OPFOR has spotted you, or even shot at you, the procedure is the same except that you've been volunteered to provide the frontal assault while your wingman executed the flank. If practical, the assaulter should attempt to move laterally away from the direction the flanker is going.*

*If there are three or more of you, the basic process is the same. You choose one or more members of your squad to flank while the remainder provide the frontal assault. You might also choose to have one or two squad members to hang back as a rear guard.*

## SQUAD NOTES:

### SITUATION ONE : ELIMINATE AMBUSH OPFOR

Ok, your squad leader has made the call to take the OPFOR out. Your pointman is underfire, and has the badguys attention. He is buying time for you to act. Its action time.

**FLANKER:** If you are the typically the flanker for your squad - get moving. Wait till the bad guy shoots at

your pointman and move then: low and quick. Go for the quick sure elimination. TIME is not on your side. 4 minutes maximum to get the elimination. Be very circumspect in route. There is a 50/50 chance he has friends. Review pointman notes above.

**HEAVY GUNNER :** The heavy gunner needs to move quickly to help take some pressure off the pointman. **MOVE QUICKLY TOWARDS A GOOD FIGHTING POSITION NEAR THE THE POINTMAN.** Dont open up until it will help the flanker move into position. If the point man goes down, its your turn to be BAIT, so keeping him alive is in your best interest.

**SQUAD LEADER:** keep you butt safe. You have the mission card. Jump in if teh situation deteriorates, otherwise play it safe. Watch you rear. If the emeny is very good, you may have your assetts exposed. Plant a sniper to cover your rear, or cover it yourself. **LOOK BEHIND YOU,** away from the action (the enemy's bait)

## SITUATION TWO : BYPASS AMBUSH

**\*\*\* Under Construction \*\*\***

### Glossary:

- **Area Awareness** - Continually scanning your area (in all 360 degrees) to look for OPFOR or other hazards. Also includes listening to sounds.
- **Assault** - (see Frontal Assault)
- **Concealment** - any combination of vegetation or other environmental object that make it harder for the OPFOR to see you but could be penetrated by paintballs. (i.e. tall grass or a leafy tree branch).  
Cover - a hard object that paintballs will not penetrate (i.e. tree or bunker).
- **Cover Fire** - Fire in the direction of an OPFOR to distract or to make sure the OPFOR cannot fire at a squad mate.
- **Drag** = Rear Guard
- **Fighting Position** - A well protected place to fire from. Should offer good cover and/or concealment while allowing good visibility of the surrounding area. There are two types of fighting positions, hasty and prepared. A hasty fighting postion might be a fallen tree, a ditch or a couple of larger rocks. A prepared fighting position is usually a constructed bunker or fox hole.
- **Formation** - Any group of one or more people on a patrol or forming a battle line.
- **Frontal Assault** - A direct attack, generally lacking in any kind of stealth or trickery. A frontal assault should draw as much attention as possible as it is often used as a distraction for a more stealthy attack from a flank.
- **Flank** - The side or rear of a formation or OPFOR.
- **Go To Ground** - Drop to the ground and/or duck behind cover or concealment.
- **OPFOR** - Opposition Force. The enemy or the other team.
- **Leapfrog Movement** - Moving using two or more members of squad. One member provides coverfire in the direction of the OPFOR while the other member moves. Then they reverse roles.
- **Paradoxial Movement** - Movement inconsistent with the wind or other movement in the immediate area. A piece f driftwood moving upstream is an example of paradoxial movement. In the case of shadows in the woods, the paradoxial movement will be non-movement when all other shadows are moving, or vise versa.
- **Point (or Point Man)** - The front person of a formation watching for OPFOR ahead of a formation.
- **Rear Guard** - A team member responsible for watching the rear of a formation for OPFOR activity and to warn the formation of an approach. On a static formation, the rear guard typically faces backwards.
- **Skirmish Line** - a nearly straight line of combatants.
- **Slack** - the next position in line after the point.
- **Squad** - A small group of two to ten or more combatants working as a team and usually with a common mission or

goal.

- **Wingman** - A teammate partner traveling with you. Usually some kind of communications and coordination is involved.
  - **Wings** - The left and right most elements of a formation or battle line.
  - **Zig Line** - A two tier line composed of a line of defenders forward of and staggered off of a second line. Think of a Zig line as a series of W's with squad members on each point of the W. Normally the heavier and less mobile weapons are deployed on the back line and smaller and more mobile weapons and units form the front line. The back line usually acts as spotters for the front line and provides cover fire when needed. Allows the line to move forward or retreat under cover using a leapfrog movement.
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## HAND SIGNALS:

Assault (or Cover Fire) - hold hands as though holding a rifle or pistol. Squeeze trigger on rifle or otherwise simulate shooting the imaginary weapon in the direction the attack should go. Proceed and follow the signal by pointing at the person to whom the instruction applies.

Go to ground - Hand open with palm down. Motion is as though dribbling a basketball.

Spotted OPFOR - Hand shaped like a Victory sign. Fingers pointing to signaler's eyes followed by pointing in the direction of the OPFOR. You can also add the number of fingers indicating the number of OPFOR spotted.

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## RADIO SIGNALS

No - one click of push to talk (PTT)

Yes or acknowledge - 2 clicks of the PTT

I'm in trouble and there are a lot of them - Multiple clicks of PTT in quick succession. (Grendel came up with for RK years ago, ask for the story sometime)



**GRENDEL** : *By the way keep talking on the radio to the minimum with short statements and no general chatter. Radio chatter can get you in big trouble on the field it is almost as bad as looking directly at a light before walking out into the woods at night.*



**AERION**: *Nothing diminishes the value of radio communications quicker than useless chatter. It's distracting and often can cover over important information. Even valuable information should be given as briefly as possible.*

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