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# Scouting and Patrolling

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**U.S. Marine Corps**

17 April 2000

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**Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both men and women are included.**

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20380-1776

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FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-11.3, *Scouting and Patrolling*, provides the doctrinal foundation and the tactics, techniques, and procedures for scouting and patrolling conducted by Marines from the fire team to the company level. Although the information focuses on infantry units, much of the information is also applicable to combat support units that are assigned patrolling missions.

2. SCOPE

MCWP 3-11.3 provides all Marines with the instructional material they need to build the skills necessary to become effective scouts and patrol team members. This publication provides the fundamentals of scouting and patrolling and their relationship to each other. It also addresses organizational structure of teams and patrols, the training required to develop teamwork, and reporting requirements.

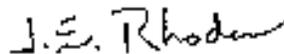
3. SUPERSESION

MCWP 3-11.3 supersedes Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 6-7, *Scouting and Patrolling*, dated 6 January 1989.

4. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



J. E. RHODES  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps  
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# PART I. SCOUTING

## CHAPTER 1. FUNDAMENTALS OF SCOUTING

Scouting involves observing terrain and/or the enemy, and accurately reporting those observations. Scouting requires proficiency in the use of weapons, cover and concealment, route selection, and skill in unobserved day or night movement.

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### 1001. PURPOSE

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When an infantry unit is not actively fighting the enemy, it should be actively searching for the enemy, which is the primary purpose of scouting. The unit attempts to keep the enemy off balance while making preparations for further attacks. Physically locating and keeping the enemy off balance are normally accomplished by small units ranging from a two-person scouting party to a squad-size patrol.

Infantrymen are sent out as scouts or as members of a patrol because the commander needs information about the enemy, terrain, and the location of friendly troops. The lives of the entire unit may depend upon the success or failure of a scout or patrol and the accuracy and timeliness of the report. The success of the scout or patrol will depend upon their training, preparation by the commander, and understanding their mission and the commander's requirements.

To wage combat successfully, a commander must have accurate, detailed, and timely information about

the enemy, the terrain, and adjacent friendly units. Well-trained scouts and capably led patrols are among the most effective means the commander has for acquiring the information necessary to plan tactical actions and make decisions in execution.

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### 1002. REQUIRED SCOUTING SKILLS

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To be effective, a scout must be able to—

- | Recognize terrain features.
- | Read a map and determine direction.
- | Practice and implement the principles of cover and concealment.
- | Fully utilize movement and route selection.
- | Know the enemy (estimate enemy unit composition and strength).
- | Observe and report information accurately.
- | Select routes and move through numerous types of terrain.

## CHAPTER 2. TERRAIN, MAPS, AND DIRECTION

A scout must understand map symbols, identify elevations from contour interval lines, scale distance on a map, relate natural and man-made features shown on the map to the actual features on the ground, plot a course from one point to another, and locate his current position. To relate a map to the actual terrain and its features, a scout must be able to orient it to the ground using a compass, two points, a watch, and the sun or the stars.

### 2001. TERRAIN FEATURES

Since the infantry works and fights on the ground, terrain ashore information that scouts gather and report on is of great importance. Hills, valleys, woods, and streams are the forms and growths commonly referred to as natural land features. Artificial or man-made features include houses, bridges, and railroads. Figure 2-1 shows some important terrain features.

### 2002. THE LENSATIC COMPASS

The best method of finding direction, during both day and night, is with a compass. The lensatic and M2 are the two types of compasses issued to infantry units. Both work on the same principle.

The standard compass for general use in the Marine Corps is the pivot-mounted lensatic compass, so called because azimuths are read through a magnifying lens in the eyepiece. Figure 2-2, on page 2-2, shows the lensatic compass and its nomenclature. The metric graphic scale on the side of the compass is 1:50,000, which is the most used scale in military mapping. The graphic scale is useful in the field as a straightedge, an aid in orienting the map, and a means of reading map grid coordinates. The plastic dial is graduated in both degrees and mils. Numbers on the dial are printed in black. There are luminous markings on the bezel, floating dial, and on both ends of the sighting wire, plus a 3-degree bezel serration and clicking device that permit reading azimuths at night. The compass is carried in a nylon case that may be attached to the cartridge belt.

Magnetic compasses are affected by the presence of iron or magnetic fields. Consequently, the scout should not be within the influence of local magnetic

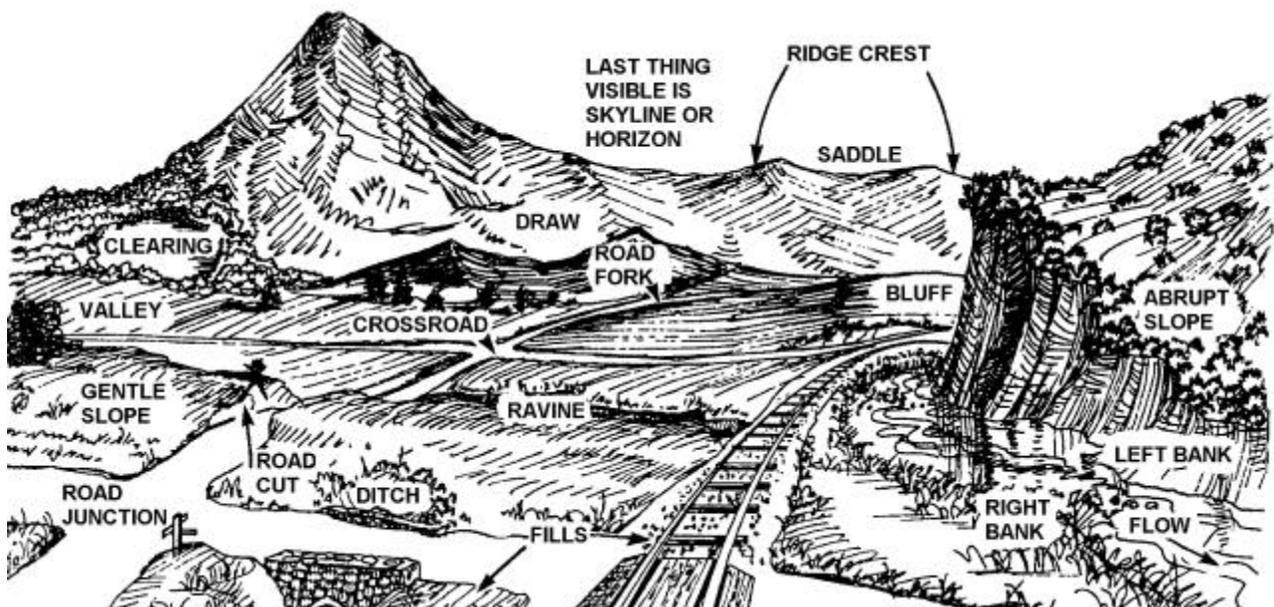


Figure 2-1. Natural and Artificial Terrain Features.