

How to Not be Useless

When you Play Soldier



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Foreword

Lots of hard work was copied and stolen from people to make this guide possible, so I hope you learn something.

Whether it's Airsoft or some newfangled videogame or whatever - if something has you playing soldier then this guide will help you.

Part one helps everyone. Part two helps you work in a team environment.

No big words and only a few pages long.



OVERVIEW

This guide will tell you how to be more effective at playing soldier in a team environment. It was originally made for Airsoft milsim but works for anything (including video games) where you're basically infantry.

I'm going to assume you know about your guns and your gear and how to use them. Nothing fancy, but you can manage to keep your gun loaded and equipment functioning.

If you're actually organized, then you will have a **buddy** and you will be in a **fireteam** and there will be a commander of some kind who gives your fireteam a job to do (your mission). More on all that later.

STUFF YOU NEED TO DO WITHOUT BEING TOLD

Automatically do these things at all times:

- NEVER EVER cross in front of another player's weapon.
- Look for and call out any enemies you see (aka make **contact reports**.)
- Move and shoot correctly so you don't get seen and killed so much.
- Your default action is "follow the leader." Move when they move, stop when they stop, and do what they do until told otherwise.
- Do your part to maintain 360 degree awareness (pick a direction to watch.)
- Know the job you have to do (i.e. your mission.)

When in a team environment (even a half-assed one) you have additional responsibilities, see part 2.

ABSOLUTE MORON-LEVEL TACTICAL BASICS

This is the bare minimum you need to know as a foundation for everything else:

- Have a basic understanding of the area you're in (major landmarks, etc.)
- When using "o'clock" for direction, "12 o'clock" is the direction of the objective, or the direction your team is moving in.
- The primary means of killing an enemy is by flanking them (sending people to shoot them up from the side or back).
- Keep the enemy busy until they *get* flanked by shooting at them so they have trouble moving or shooting without getting shot themselves. This is called **suppressive fire**. An example is shooting into and around a window with a sniper in it so he can't see or shoot while your pals make it safely across the street to kill him.

HOW TO MAKE A CONTACT REPORT

The contact report is is probably
THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU WILL DO.

It works like this - you see an enemy and tell your buddies by saying something like this:

“Contact, north-west, sniper, top of tower.”

First, you say “CONTACT”.

Then you say the direction of the enemy. Can be compass heading, o'clock, left/right etc.

Then say a short phrase saying what the hell it is you saw -- infantry, vehicle, etc.

End with concise, relevant info about how far away, under or beside what, etc.

Examples:

“Contact, north-west, sniper, top of tower.”

“Contact, 3 o'clock, machinegunner, 50 meters away under the tree.”

“Contact, left, 2 riflemen crossing the clearing.”

“Contact rear! Enemy squad! “ <Bangbangbangbang>

Note that even if the shit is hitting the fan (like you suddenly noticed someone behind you and had to immediately start shooting) you still call out the contact so your team knows what they are dealing with.

MOVING PROPERLY AND NOT DYING SO MUCH

This is the longest section so try not to get bored.

Surviving with your team is MUCH more important than killing some random guy you see in a bunkered-down shootout to the death.

Move from cover to cover, or concealment to concealment. You should always do this automatically whenever it is even *remotely* possible that an enemy is around. If you are under fire, do it in a series of small rushes. Try to plan ahead and pick out which cover you're moving to next *before* you actually move, so you don't find yourself having to backtrack to move forward showing everyone what a huge retard you are. This means that at all times you need to be aware of what cover is around so that you can run for it if the shit hits the fan.

Concealment is what keeps you alive most of the time. Anything that will make you harder to hit or makes you harder to see counts. This includes putting yourself in shadows, behind bushes or other objects, in a depression or hole in the ground, or failing all that just plain lying down prone so you present the smallest possible target while still being able to see the enemy just fine.

Even partial cover, combined with slow and deliberate movement, can be surprisingly effective at keeping someone from spotting you.

Take a knee whenever you stop for any reason. Kneeling or crouching makes you smaller and therefore harder to shoot or spot. Get into the habit of taking a knee whenever you stop for more than a second or two. If you expect to be stopped for longer you might want to go prone, find better cover, or both.



Don't silhouette yourself. Silhouetting is when you show yourself up against the sky or against a contrasting background colour to show everyone what a huge dumbass you are. The enemy will delight and your teammates will curse you for the short time they'll still be alive. If you absolutely MUST cross a ridge and think the enemy might be looking that way, go prone and cross where the vegetation provides some concealment.

Don't bunch up. A machinegun burst or grenade should never take out more than one person in your fireteam. If it does, it means you're a bunch of trench queers.

If you are not (and don't want to start) working in a team environment and hate learning new things then you can stop reading here.

TEAMWORK BASIC CONCEPTS

The rest of this is “Part 2” - how to move, talk, and operate as part of a fireteam.

These might be whole new concepts you need to get used to. You will need to know these things even if you never plan to lead a fireteam yourself.

The Buddy System Concept

The smallest combat unit is the **Buddy Pair**. The buddy system ensures that everyone has at least one person looking out for them at all times. It simply means that you move with, watch out for, and fight with another person at your side.

The Fireteam

You and your buddy are also part of a larger group: the **Fireteam**.

Fireteams are the fundamental combat unit. They are a four (or up to six) man team that operates as a cohesive unit on their own radio channel. The people within a fireteam are made up of buddy pairs. One person is the leader. Usually one other person has a special role like Medic or Designated Marksman or SAW gunner or whatever, and the others will be riflemen. The leader is never buddies with someone who has a special role (too many eggs in one basket that way.)

Getting and Completing Missions

If your team is actually organized, then some overall commander will give each fireteam leader a job to do and the fireteam leader will direct their fireteam to do it. During the mission the fireteam leader will be the one communicating with the overall commander or rest of the command structure. This might mean two radios, or it might mean checking in at set intervals, or some other system.

HOW TO WORK WITH A BUDDY

Your basic responsibilities to your buddy which you are expected to perform automatically and constantly are:

Stick with your Buddy

When they move, you should go with them. Together you are far more effective than apart, so you should never go solo. The smallest unit is always the buddy team. (Even a scout/sniper has a spotter.)

Communicate with your Buddy

If it's important, let them know. If you're moving, say so - so that they know to cover you. Good communication keeps everyone working together and aware of the overall situation. What one guy knows, the other should know.

Cover your Buddy

Cue off your buddy's movements, sector of observation, and so forth. If they are watching one way, you cover the other way. If they will be crossing a danger area (i.e. a clearing, street, etc) cover them as they move - then they do the same for you.

Help your Buddy if they go down

If you are hit then you can count on your buddy to come to your aid. Likewise, if your buddy is hit you know to step forward and do your part to either save him yourself or contribute to the medic saving him.

Depending on the game and rules, this might involve dragging him out of the danger area, carrying him to a medic, using smoke to conceal his position, or simply killing whoever tried to kill him. Remember that you are no good to your buddy if you are dead. If the tactical situation does not allow you to immediately help your buddy, your job is to make the situation more favorable - typically accomplished by killing the enemy, or coordinating with others to suppress or kill the enemy.

If your buddy goes down and there is an appropriate medic rule in place, call out to the rest of the fireteam and have them cover you while you get your buddy to safety. Once you have made it to cover, call out for a medic. Depending on the situation you may want to stay to provide security for the medic as he works, or move back to the rest of the fireteam and keep fighting. You may also apply medical aid directly yourself if you are able.

Return to your Buddy

If you die and respawn, it is your responsibility to hook back up with your buddy. If your buddy is dead, you join the rest of the fireteam for a nice threesome. When your buddy respawns and comes back to your location, you switch over to him again.

HOW TO BE PART OF A FIRETEAM

Your basic responsibilities as a member of a fireteam are:

KNOW YOUR TEAM AND MISSION

Know who the other people are and make sure you understand the job your fireteam has been given. You are required to listen to the fellow players who have been set up as leaders. If you don't, you're a useless fucking slob who is no fun to be with. If you have a better idea, save it for when it's your turn to be leader.

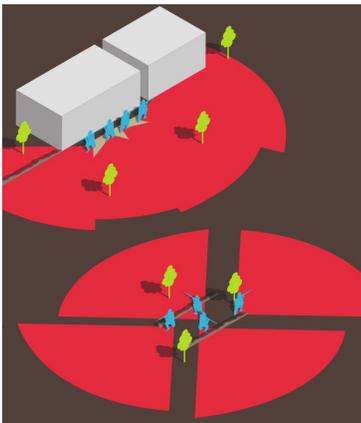
PRACTICE FIRE AND NOISE DISCIPLINE

If you fire off some rounds at the nearest tree because you're bored not only are you wasting ammo but you probably let the enemy know where you are and what direction you're coming from and will get your fireteam flanked. Similarly, if your team is on a stealth approach it is NOT okay to fire at any enemy on sight unless the enemy is actively taking aim or shooting at YOU.

MAINTAIN SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

More than anything else, keep in mind where other friendlies are so you don't shoot at them! This also means not being a huge dumbshit by running in front of friendly lines of fire and getting yourself shot. Do not EVER cross in front of the gun of another person, regardless if it's in combat or not.

The enemy WILL try to flank you, so watch your rear and your sides. You will also whenever possible keep several meters between yourself and the other teammates to avoid all being gang-raped by a machine gunner or grenade.



COVER YOUR SECTOR

360 degree security is needed at all times. This means that with a fireteam, every person is observing/covering a different area. This is something that is expected of you to do automatically and dynamically as you move around without being told.

COMMUNICATE PROPERLY

At all times you are expected to scan for, spot, and call out enemy contacts. If you see an enemy that hasn't already been called out, ALWAYS CALL IT OUT IMMEDIATELY.

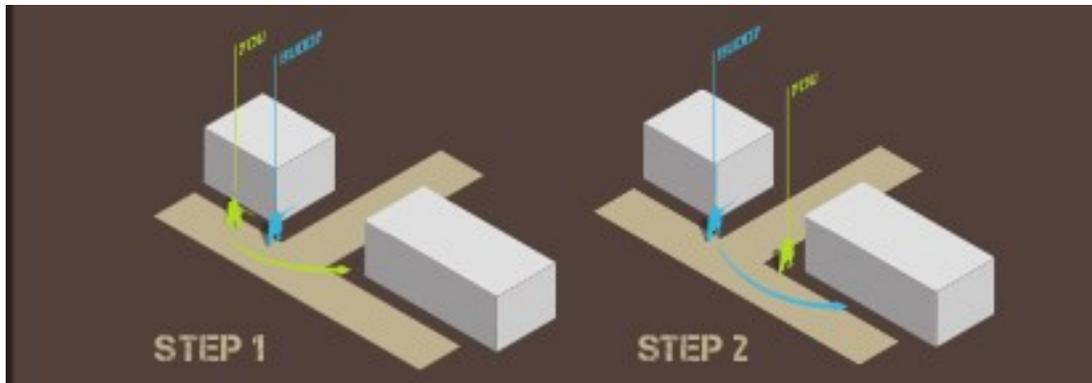
If the enemy hasn't seen you yet, do a contact report before you begin firing in case the leader decides they want to go around instead of getting dragged into a firefight.

In addition, you will be concise on comms. Don't fucking jibber-jabber useless shit and drown out any important talk. Even if the radio is dead silent, you will still keep your trap shut because you never know when someone will suddenly need to say something actually important.

MOVING IN A TEAM

“Bounding Overwatch” is the standard, de-facto infantry movement technique. Look it up. It is one of the most fundamental combat movement skills practised and happens to be one of the simplest as well.

The basic idea is: one element is always stationary and covering the movement of the other element(s). An “element” could be you, a buddy, your buddy team (in a fireteam), or an entire other fireteam for example.



HOW TO COVER SOMEONE

If there is no action going on in the area, you cover someone by keeping your weapon ready and your eyes peeled, ready to pop any enemy that shows up while your buddy moves, medics, or whatever else. Preferably you do this from behind cover or concealment yourself.

If you're under fire, you provide cover by shooting at the enemy. Basically your job is to make them duck down, take cover... really *anything other than shooting at friendlies*. This is usually by shooting at them, but you can also do it with smoke. An example is shooting into and around a window with a sniper in it so he can't see or shoot while your pals make it safely across the street, or grab a wounded, or throw a grenade into his window, or whatever.

WHEN TO SHOOT

Generally you are assumed to be “Weapons Free” which means shoot enemies on sight unless told otherwise. If you are on a stealth approach, don't shoot unless the enemy is actively taking aim at you. *You might be sure an enemy has seen you, but if they are not fixing to shoot you then do not shoot at them.*

You in both cases make a contact report no matter what.

RADIO USE

We're just about done here, then you can go off on your killing rampages. You might be totally switched-on and marching around the field filling assholes with bullets but if you can't talk like a normal person it's all for nothing.

SHUT THE FUCK UP

The number one thing to remember whether on the radio or not, is **shut the fuck up**. You people gossip like little kids about the most meaningless shit imaginable and it gets people killed because you gave away the team's position or prevented someone from giving a contact report over the radio. When you DO talk, be clear and concise and don't spend minutes saying what you could have said in three words.

MAKE SURE YOUR DAMN RADIO WORKS

Be on the same channel as the rest of your fireteam and do a radio check to confirm before you head out. If you're the leader, make sure you have radio contact with the rest of command. You'll need to tell them when you have accomplished your mission or when things have changed, or to receive new orders.

When you're talking on the command channel, prefix everything you say with "Command" so everyone's clear and no one confuses it with anyone else they might be talking to. Like, "Command, this is Bravo fireteam. We are entering the town from the north."

CONGRATULATIONS!

Yay! You are now officially cool as a result of learning all this sweet stuff so you can go school some other guys! You're not useless!

APPENDIX – AN EXAMPLE

Here is some of that shit in action. A member of Fireteam Alpha encounters an enemy squad (notice the contact report, although you probably will not use a compass heading as the direction). They start shooting at each other, and Alpha's leader talks to Bravo's leader on the command channel to let them know what's happening and asks if Bravo can help (by flanking the enemy.)

Bravo's Fireteam Leader agrees and lets Alpha know that Bravo will be coming in from the southwest - so Alpha knows not to shoot at them. While the enemy is being a bunch of bunker noobs, Bravo flanks them and wipes them out from the side or rear in a surprise assault.

