



SOG PRAIRIE FIRE ACROSS THE FENCE

**RECON TEAM KNIFE
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
FOR ACROSS THE FENCE IN SINGLEPLAYER
WITH JOHNNYBOY'S SOG AI MOD**



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CONTENT

- Preface
- Recon Team (RT) Knife Team Configuration
- RT Knife Team Members Loadout and Special-to-type Mission Equipment
- Pre-mission Activities at the Forward Operating Base (FOB)
- Activities upon Insertion into Area of Operations (AO)
- Patrol Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP)
- TTPs for Locating, Marking, Identifying and Photographing North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Sites
- Immediate Action Drills (IAD) upon Direct Contact with Enemy Forces
- Usage of Close Air Support (CAS)
- Calling for Extraction from AO
- Operating at Night
- Photographs of NVA Sites for Identification Purposes
- Afterword and Acknowledgements

PREFACE

This Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual is a little project of mine to guide myself (And others) to play the SOG Prairie Fire (SOG PF) Across The Fence (ATF) persistent dynamic reconnaissance game mode by Savage Game Design (SGD) for ARMA III in Singleplayer in as realistic and tactical a manner as possible, while utilizing Johnnyboy's amazing SOG AI mod.

SOG PF, ATF, and SOG AI allow players to experience the danger, fear and intensity of running cross-border missions as a Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (MACV SOG) Recon man in a very well curated gaming medium, and I feel that the game should be played realistically to fully embrace the experience.

There is no doubt that SOG PF by the SGD team is the most authentic MACV SOG and Vietnam War experience brought to the PC gaming medium, or any gaming medium for that matter. No other Vietnam War game comes close. Thus, the game should be experienced in the most realistic and authentic way possible.

While ATF is best experienced in a Multiplayer setting, Johnnyboy's SOG AI mod allows you to play it with a smart and immersive AI Recon Team. This manual serves as a guide to play ATF with a SOG AI Recon Team. This guide includes tips and tricks I learnt from playing ATF in both Singleplayer and Multiplayer settings, reconnaissance and patrol techniques used by real MACV SOG Recon veterans, as well as from my own military training and experiences.

Nothing in this guide is essential in any way in terms of playing ATF. It is simply a guide to the way I play ATF with SOG AI to make the experience as close to a SOG recon mission as possible, which is realistic, tactical, fun, and of course, to provide some tips to succeed in these missions across the fence.

I hope readers enjoy flipping through this document and learn a tip or two to enhance their Singleplayer ATF experience with Johnnyboy's SOG AI mod.

RECON TEAM (RT) KNIFE TEAM CONFIGURATION

1. Recon Team (RT) Knife (My fictitious in-game MACV SOG Reconnaissance Team) primarily operates as a six-man reconnaissance team, in line with Savage Game Design's (SGD) SOG Prairie Fire (SOG PF) Across The Fence (ATF) game mode team size limitation. The team composition is as follows:
 - 1) One-Zero (Team Leader)
 - 2) One-One (Machine Gunner/Medic)
 - 3) One-Two (Radio Telephone Operator (RTO)/Rifleman)
 - 4) Zero-One (Indigenous Team Leader/Demolitions)
 - 5) Zero-Two (Point Man)
 - 6) Zero-Three (Tail Gunner)
2. The roles and responsibilities for each team member are as follows:
 - 1) **One-Zero (Player):** Responsible for leading the team, making tactical decisions, and collecting photographic intelligence, marking locations, and identifying North Vietnamese Army (NVA) sites found in the AO. The One-Zero also carries the primary PRC-77 radio for calling CAS.
 - 2) **One-One (AI):** Provides heavy firepower and is the main medic on the team with the infinite-use Medi-kit.
 - 3) **One-Two (AI):** Carries the team's secondary PRC-77 radio for calling CAS and provides medium-level firepower with his CAR-15.
 - 4) **Zero-One (AI):** Provides medium-level firepower with his CAR-15 and is the team's demolition man with the Toolkit.
 - 5) **Zero-Two (AI):** Leads the team through the jungle, looking for signs of the NVA or booby-traps along the team's patrol route.
 - 6) **Zero-Three (AI):** Covers the team's rear during patrols and plants mines on the team's backtrail when pursued by NVA forces.

RT KNIFE TEAM MEMBERS LOADOUT AND SPECIAL-TO-TYPE MISSION EQUIPMENT

3. All team members of RT Knife are equipped to meet their mission-specific roles. This chapter attempts to provide a basic loadout for the team to execute and complete its mission across the fence. However, please note that this is a non-exhaustive list and can be modified to the taste of individual One-Zeros.
4. First is a list of common equipment for all team members. These are:
 - URC-10 Emergency Radio x 1
 - First Aid Kits x 12 (Minimum) **[Except for One-One. One-One carries an infinite-use Medi-kit and only one First Aid Kit]**
 - M-34 White Phosphorous (WP) Grenades x 2
 - M-67 Fragmentation Grenades x 4-6
 - V-40 Mini-grenades x 8-9
 - White Smoke Grenade x 1
 - Yellow Smoke Grenade x 1
 - Purple Smoke Grenade x 1
 - Red Smoke Grenade x 1
 - M-18 Claymore Mine with WP Grenade Attached (Proximity) x 1-2
5. On top of the above equipment, each team member is equipped with their own mission essential weapons, gear, and special-to-type items. The specific equipment for each team member are:
 - 1) **One-Zero:**
 - CAR-15 with XM-203 Grenade Launcher x 1
 - Browning Hi-power 9mm Pistol with Suppressor x 1
 - CAR-15 Magazines (Assorted) x 20
 - Hi-power Magazines x 2
 - M433 40mm HEDP Rounds x 10
 - PRC-77 Radio x 1
 - Binoculars (In pack or in optics slot) x 1
 - SOG 35mm Camera (In pack or in optics slot) x 1
 - M-112 Breaching Charge x 1
 - M-14 Toe-popper Mines x 5

2) One-One

- SOG RPD x 1
- RPD Ammo Drums (Assorted) x 7
- Medi-kit x 1

3) One-Two

- CAR-15 x 1
- CAR-15 Magazines x 28
- PRC-77 Radio x 1
- M-112 Breaching Charge x 1
- M-14 Toe-popper Mines x 10

4) Zero-One

- CAR-15 x 1
- CAR-15 Magazines x 28
- M-112 Breaching Charge x 1
- M-14 Toe-popper Mines x 10
- Toolkit x 1

5) Zero-Two

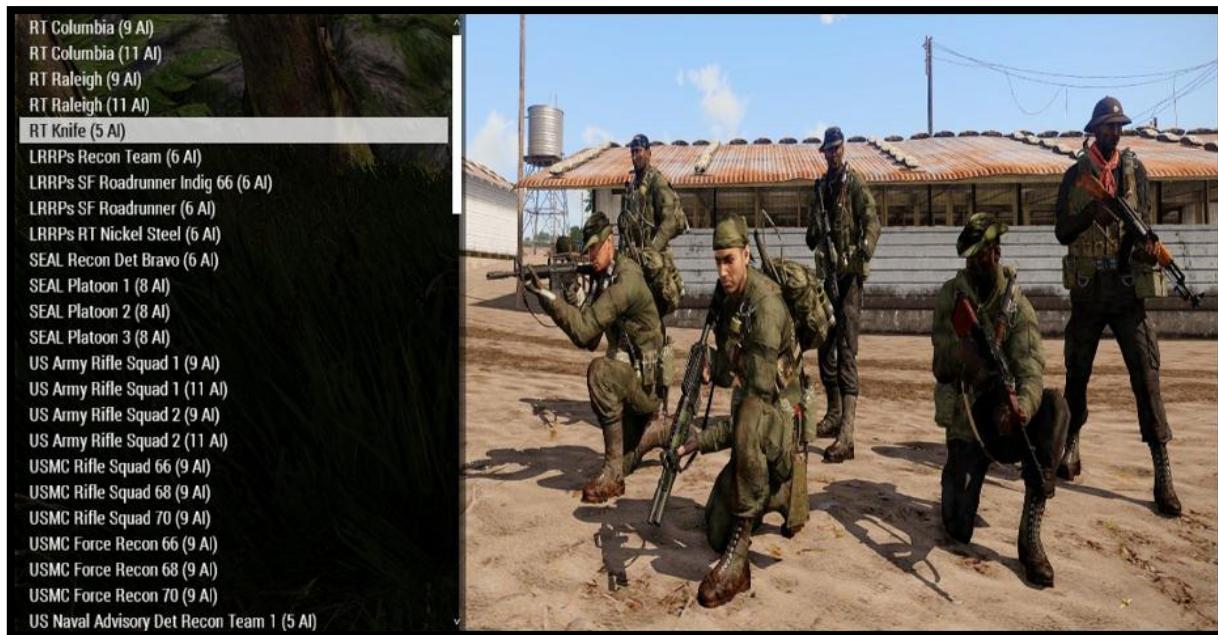
- Type-56 x 1
- Type-56 Magazines x 28
- M-112 Breaching Charge x 1
- M-14 Toe-popper Mines x 10

6) Zero-Three:

- CAR-15 with XM-203 Grenade Launcher x 1
- CAR-15 Magazines (Assorted) x 24
- M433 40mm HEDP Rounds x 10
- M-14 Toe-popper Mines x 37

6. *As of this writing, Johnnyboy has updated the SOG AI mod with an RT Knife team that you can spawn which is based off my team configuration and equipment set up elaborated in this and the previous chapter, as shown on the next page. This makes it easier for those who would like to replicate my team set up. (Thanks a lot, Johnnyboy!)*

RT Knife Spawn Option in Johnnyboy's SOG AI Mod



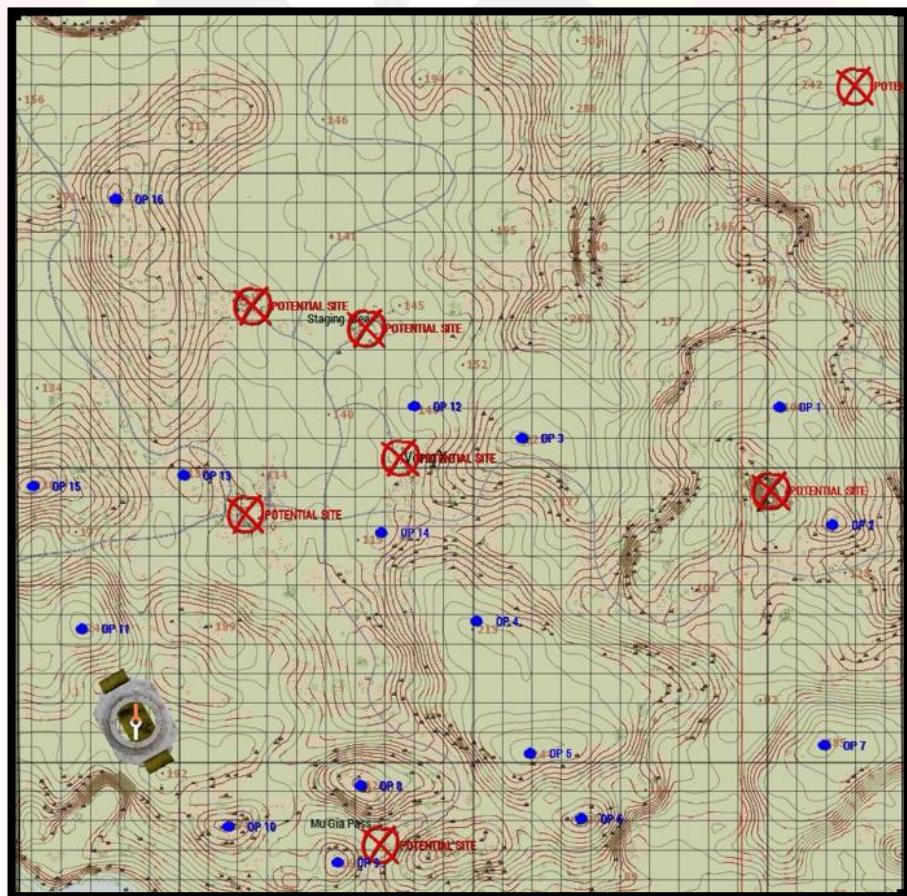
PRE-MISSION ACTIVITIES AT THE FORWARD OPERATING BASE (FOB)

7. **The Basics**. The basic steps for commencing an ATF mission applies, such as selecting a mission from the map boards in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC), selecting your skills and abilities from the radio, and equipping yourself either through the equipment tab from the radio or via the arsenal. Alternatively, with Johnnyboy's SOG AI, you may also select your loadout upon insertion into the AO when you select your AI Recon Team and equip them.
8. **AO Map Study**. While it is not possible to conduct a Visual Reconnaissance (VR) flight of the AO in ATF, you can do a terrain appreciation by opening the map of the AO that has been assigned to you and studying it to prepare yourself for operating in the target area. During this phase, you can:
 - a. Study terrain features for potential patrol routes within the AO, looking at:
 - i. Whether the terrain is hilly or flat for ease of movement,
 - ii. Single, double or triple canopy jungle, or open grasslands for covered and concealed movement.
 - b. Look for areas that could potentially be an NVA site. These potential sites can be marked beforehand using red objective markers for ease of identification later in the mission. Potential areas are:
 - i. Villages within the AO,
 - ii. Road and trail intersections,
 - iii. Open ground that can accommodate NVA bases,
 - iv. High ground that can accommodate NVA bases.
 - c. Look for high ground such as hills and mountains that could potentially serve as Observation Points (OP) for you to conduct reconnaissance of the AO. These potential OPs can be marked beforehand using blue dot markers titled OP 1, 2, etc. for ease of identification later in the mission. Do note that a potential OP to you can also be a potential OP for the NVA, so approach these locations with caution.

d. Look for potential danger areas that your team may have to navigate through. These areas can be marked beforehand using red warning markers for ease of identification later. Such areas include:

- i. Roads and trails across the AO that may need to be crossed,
- ii. Water bodies such as rivers that may need to be crossed,
- iii. Bridges across rivers or valleys that may need to be crossed.

e. After populating your map with the information above, you may commence the mission and insert into the AO. Do note that the points above are a non-exhaustive list of actions you can do to prepare for the mission. None of the actions listed above need to be done prior to a mission. It is simply a guide to assist you in completing the mission in the best way possible. An example of how the map might look after an AO map study is below.



ACTIVITIES UPON INSERTION INTO AREA OF OPERATIONS (AO)

9. Upon disembarking the helicopter at the Landing Zone (LZ), move quickly to cover and concealment. Then, use SOG AI via the Action Menu to spawn your team. Do note that the smallest SOG AI team as of this writing is five AI soldiers. You may use Zeus (Y key) to delete members as you wish. Doing so is optional, though, if you prefer to operate with a bigger team. If you deleted team members, use the SOG AI function “Renumber My Squad Members” to reset their numbering for ease of command.
10. *While completely optional, a personal aesthetic preference of mine in creating a realistic SOG RT is to remove all the spawned team members that are dressed in Tiger Stripe uniforms. This is because SOG RTs rarely, if ever, wore Tiger Stripes during cross-border operations. Instead, they would be dressed in jungle green fatigues, jungle green fatigues with black spray-painted lines, or full-black fatigues.*
11. It is highly recommended to have loadout presets for each of your team members already created to ease equipping your spawned team. You will need to use the SOG AI functions “Change Player Loadout” and “Copy Player Loadout to Unit” to equip your team members.
12. *As of this writing, as elaborated in paragraph 6, Johnnyboy has updated the SOG AI mod with an RT Knife team that you can spawn which is based off my team configuration and equipment set up elaborated in the previous chapters. This makes it easier for those who would like to replicate my team set up. (Thanks, Johnnyboy!)*
13. Once you have created your team, you may commence the mission proper. Form the team up in file formation, order them to follow you, set their behaviour to stealth (All using the SOG AI radial command menu), and select your Point Man using the SOG AI “Take Point” function.
14. The SOG AI Point Man function is a true gamechanger for Singleplayer gameplay in ATF and SOG PF in general. Leading your team through the jungle used to be the player’s responsibility, but the Point Man changes that. It’s like having Le Duy Nhut from Vietcong (The game) fame leading Team A-216 through the jungle. *If you’re old enough to know, you know.* The Point Man in SOG AI, when activated, is coded with heightened sensory

awareness of the enemy, allowing him to detect enemy forces before they see or hear you. This really helps with keeping your team undetected and ratchets up the immersion of the game. Your Point Man, when activated, is really what in SOG parlance was known as “good in the woods”.

15. Use the ATF “Stop, Focus” function to get a lay of your surroundings and check if the NVA have detected your insertion.
16. Next, pull out your map to confirm your location. Check for marked areas of interest (AOI) provided by TOC that are likely to have NVA sites nearby. There will be up to three AOIs per mission. As a baseline, plan a patrol route to one of these AOIs using the line drawing feature (Control + Left Mouse Hold) with a blue line. An example of a patrol route drawn on the map with a danger area crossing is pictured below.
17. If any potential NVA Sites, OPs, or Danger Areas identified during your pre-mission map study intersects with your patrol route, you can plan your actions accordingly.
18. For ease of navigation, you can use the waypoint feature (Shift + Left Mouse Click) to create a visible waypoint to navigate to. Then, order your Point Man via SOG AI to patrol in that direction. He patrols to a maximum of 100m with each order given. The reconnaissance mission has begun.

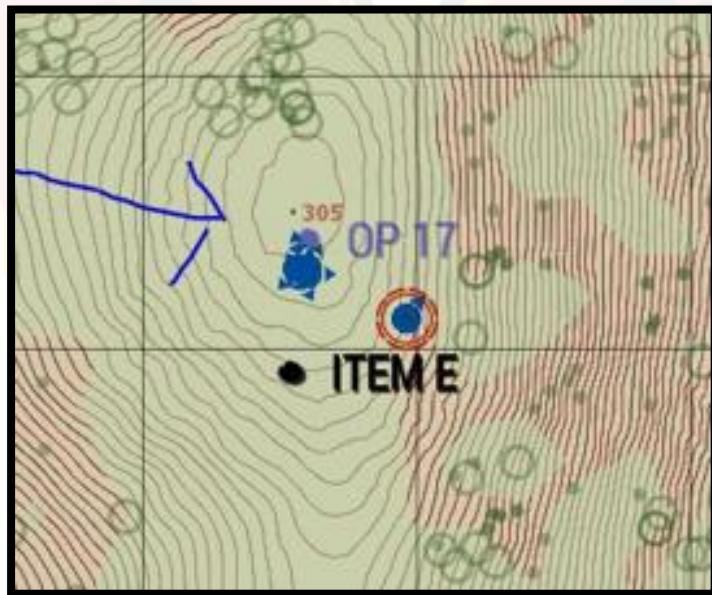


PATROL TACTICS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES (TTP)

19. Patrol in file formation to create as little of a visible backtrail as possible for NVA trackers to find and track you.
20. It is recommended to patrol slowly to make as little noise as possible and to create less of a visible backtrail.
21. If you need to patrol at a quicker pace, do so in a crouched posture as this will reduce your signature to the enemy.
22. With SOG AI, your Point Man can be ordered to patrol slow or fast, with slow being the default. Slow should be used when walking upright, while fast can be used when moving in a crouch. You should not be moving fast when you are close to NVA forces and trying to remain undetected.
23. It is recommended to patrol within the jungle vegetation to stay concealed and covered instead of patrolling out in open areas. If open areas are unavoidable, patrol through them fast while crouched to minimize your signature. Your SOG AI Point Man will usually find concealed patrol routes.
24. With each patrol order, your Point Man will navigate up to 100m. It is strongly recommended to execute “Stop, Focus” every 100m to look and listen for NVA forces in your vicinity. You may also halt at any time to execute “Stop, Focus” if you suspect NVA nearby.
25. When Glints are observed, patrol towards it and inspect the glinting items. Either your Point Man or you can do these inspections. These items will provide intelligence on the general direction of nearby NVA Sites. It is recommended to mark these items using a black dot marker on the map with the direction indicated to assist you in navigating towards the nearby Site. An example of such a marking is pictured on the last page of this chapter.
26. Multiple items may point to the same NVA Site. By marking them and indicating the direction, it will help you triangulate the Site, giving you a more accurate estimation of the Site’s location.

27. When NVA forces are nearby, go prone in the vegetation and ensure your whole team follows suit. Stay still (Halt the team using the SOG AI radial menu) until the NVA moves away. It is recommended to crawl away until you are certain the enemy is nowhere close to you or hunting you before continuing to patrol in an upright or crouched posture. ***Don't underestimate the concealment capabilities of bushes in the AO. When prone inside the bushes, you are nearly invisible to the enemy, even if only a few feet away. But note that bushes do not provide good cover against enemy fire.***
28. If you must reconsolidate the team, you can use the SOG AI "Lay Dog" function to get the team into a tight circle, prone, and pointing outwards. You can then switch around gear (E.g., transfer Toe-popper mines to your Zero-Three's pack if he's running low) or carry out other activities as required.
29. If you must execute a Lay Dog drill, it is recommended to have your Zero-Three plant a Toe-popper mine on the Lay Dog location when your team moves out as it will leave a large signature that NVA trackers can pick up and follow. The Toe-popper mine will kill/wound the trackers when they step on it, slowing them down, and the explosion will give you early warning that the NVA are close by.
30. Danger areas, such as trails, roads, rivers and bridges, that need to be crossed, must be done so in an expedient and secure manner. For trails and roads, scout them for enemy patrols, ensure it is clear, then cross the team over quickly to avoid the time spent in the open. Speed is key when crossing trails and roads.
31. For crossing of rivers, which should be minimized as much as possible, first locate the narrowest section of the river. It would be better if the river is shallow and can be walked across. Then, scout the crossing site to ensure no enemy patrols or boats are close by, then cross one half of the team while the other half provides security. Once across, the second half crosses while being covered by the first half of the team. Crossing the team in halves is made possible by the SOG AI mod.
32. Crossing of bridges is the most dangerous as it is likely to be guarded by enemy forces. Scout the bridge for enemy guards. If there are none, cross the whole team over quickly. For crossing of bridges, speed trumps security.

33. Continually check your team's patrol direction and try to change directions regularly to prevent NVA trackers from guessing where you will be and preparing an ambush for your team up ahead.
34. Reconnaissance missions require patience and discipline. Rushing through the vegetation will only make you an easier target to locate and destroy because you create a larger signature for the enemy to home in on. Learn to move slow and methodically. A firefight may be more fun from a gameplay perspective, but in reality, a SOG RT would not be rushing to their deaths for kill counts.
35. Additionally, moving too quickly prevents you from hearing or spotting things first, which could have you walking right into an NVA patrol or base without you knowing until it is too late. Thus, move slow, use "Stop, Focus" regularly to study your surroundings. If you need to move quickly to cover ground or escape from the enemy, do so in a crouched posture to minimize signature. However, the adage still rings true: Patience is a virtue.
36. Always stay alert. You are never safe until you are extracted and back at the FOB.



TTPS FOR LOCATING, MARKING, IDENTIFYING AND PHOTOGRAPHING NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) SITES

37. The objective of ATF is to locate NVA Sites in the AO for the purposes of gathering intelligence of enemy disposition, or for future targeting for destruction, just like it was for the SOG RTs during the war. This requires you to locate sites, mark them accurately on the map, identify what the sites are, and take photos of the sites for photographic intelligence.
38. A limitation playing ATF in Singleplayer is that you must do the abovementioned actions yourself. You AI team, although thoroughly enhanced with SOG AI, cannot carry out these mission essential actions. Thus, when NVA Sites are detected, it is up to you to locate, mark, identify and photograph them.
39. Often, NVA Sites are located close to an AOI given by TOC, or you may be guided to NVA Sites by the Glint items found and inspected by you or your Point Man.
40. These Sites are usually guarded by NVA sentries and patrols. If you move slow and stealthily, you should be able to hear them before you see them. Use “Stop, Focus” liberally when closing in on an NVA Site; the ripples created by the noise the NVA make will help you pinpoint their locations and, hopefully, give you a bead on the location of the site itself. When it is clear you have found a Site, the real sneak and peek work begins.
41. It is best to close in on a site on your own to minimize signature and avoid detection. You can either order your team to Lay Dog or halt in place, stay prone and on stealth mode. Ensure the team’s holding position is safe from NVA patrol routes and within vegetation to prevent compromise. It is recommended to mark the team’s location for ease of navigating back to them after your reconnaissance is complete.
42. Close in on Sites slowly with stealth as your primary consideration. It is recommended to have your suppressed pistol in hand in the event you need to engage the enemy. Close in just enough to allow you to identify the type of Site it is so that you can input it into the ATF Scouting Report from the

dropdown menu. Photographs of the different types of Sites are provided in the last chapter of this manual for reference.

43. Remember to stay concealed in the vegetation as much as possible while conducting your close-in on the Site. If a certain approach exposes you too much, back out and attempt to approach from another direction that gives you a clear view of the Site while remaining undetected.
44. Another way to identify Sites is to take a photo of it using the SOG 35mm Camera. A clear and reasonably close photo will automatically identify the site in the ATF Scouting Report, ensuring a correct Site identification report. Photos are not mandatory but will allow you to gain more Experience Points (XP) for levelling up in ATF. However, getting into position for a clear photo may put you at a higher risk of compromise. Thus, you will need to weigh this consideration when trying to get a photo of the Site.
45. Next, use the waypoint feature (Shift + Left Mouse Click) to assist you in pinpointing the Site's location by clicking on the map and adjusting it until the visible waypoint marker in-game is right on the Site. Once done, you can mark the Site's location in the ATF Scouting Report with great accuracy.
46. With that, you would have met all the requirements in locating, marking, identifying and photographing an NVA Site while remaining undetected. However, you are far from out of the woods. With the same care and consideration for stealth, return to your team's location, taking care to avoid bumping into NVA patrols. Once again, use "Stop, Focus" to assist you in returning to your team undetected.
47. Once you have linked up with your team, do a quick consolidation, decide on the next course of action and patrol direction, and continue mission.
48. The guide above is a close-in method of tackling an NVA Site. This method is usually required when Sites are located deep in the jungle or surrounded by tall elephant grass, making them difficult to identify and mark unless you are close to them.
49. However, some Sites may be out in the open or in areas where they can be identified, marked and maybe even photographed with great clarity from a distance. Increasing the chances of finding Sites in this manner would be to patrol to high ground that gives you a birds-eye view of the AO. This can be

facilitated through pre-mission AO map studies, where potential OPs on high ground can be identified beforehand to assist you in navigating to these locations in the AO. Locating Sites via this method allows for lower probability of compromise. *I would say that locating Sites from high vantage points is the safest and most optimal way of conducting a reconnaissance in the AO.*

50. However, it must be noted that high ground also serves to the advantage of the NVA. Thus, as with anywhere else in the AO, approach high ground with caution as the possibility of the NVA being there is significant. NVA Sites have been known to be on high ground.
51. If there is great difficulty in identifying and marking a Site due to the thickness of vegetation or the presence of NVA around the Site, a potential though undesirable method would be to conduct a Direct Action (DA) raid on the Site to overrun it and find out what the Site is. Up close photos can also be taken when directly on the Site. This method can be supplemented with air strikes to soften the Site prior to raiding it.
52. A DA raid may also be necessitated because the team is compromised while closing in on an NVA Site, forcing the team to go loud or lose the opportunity to mark and identify the Site.
53. However, the DA raid method should only be executed as a last resort. Deliberately engaging an NVA Site will more than likely attract NVA forces from all around to start hunting you. This can quickly lead to a Tactical or even a Prairie Fire Emergency, ending your reconnaissance mission and forcing you to call for an extraction. If you're unlucky, your whole team could be wiped out. Thus, careful consideration must be made before committing to this course of action. These considerations include:
 - a. Optimal direction of assault,
 - b. Enemy heavy weapons emplacements to be destroyed first,
 - c. Potential enemy reinforcement routes,
 - d. Withdrawal route post-assault,
 - e. Rally Point (RP) to consolidate and reorganize post-assault,
 - f. Presence of nearby LZs for a quick extraction post-assault,
 - g. Availability of CAS for softening of target or for breaking contact with the enemy.

IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILLS (IAD) UPON DIRECT CONTACT WITH ENEMY FORCES

54. It is not the objective of a SOG RT to get into a firefight with the enemy during a reconnaissance mission. Instead, the most successful reconnaissance mission is one where valuable intelligence is gathered without the enemy ever knowing you were there. However, with the odds stacked against you, it is difficult to be behind enemy lines and stay undetected forever. Thus, it is helpful to be equipped to engage the enemy silently to prevent too much noise when contact is inevitable, but also be ready to fight hard when things go loud.

55. With an AI team, engaging the enemy silently will not be as easy to do as when operating with an all-human team in a Multiplayer setting. Additionally, fully suppressed primary weapons such as the Sten Gun, M-45, or M-3 Grease Gun, are not effective weapon systems to have when the engagement has turned into an all-out firefight, which is often the case.

56. Thus, I choose to prioritize stealthy patrol and reconnaissance techniques to remain undetected, but to have the team loaded for bear with medium to heavy firepower for when we are compromised. However, I, as the One-Zero, will equip myself with a suppressed Browning Hi-Power 9mm Pistol to give me the option to engage enemy forces as silently as possible as a last resort to keep my team's presence unknown. This is especially so when I conduct close-in reconnaissance of NVA Sites. Having a suppressed pistol allows me to eliminate guards silently if the need arises, and hopefully, do it well enough that it doesn't raise any alarm to our presence.

57. However, should the team be well and truly compromised, and you are engaged in a loud and unmissable firefight, or when you are executing a DA raid on a Site, the team will need to achieve immediate fire superiority and gain the upper hand quickly to successfully break contact with the NVA and withdraw, or to overrun the Site and gather the intelligence required in an expedient manner. ***In either situation, the objective is not to be slowed or bogged down in the contact zone because the longer you stay there, the more NVA forces will mass on you and destroy your team.***

58. Whether you are compromised or executing a DA raid, the optimal formation to engage the enemy is line formation, with your team in line abreast to your left and right. This allows all the team's firepower to be on-line to hit the enemy hard and gives the illusion of a force that is larger than it actually is, with all six shooters firing at once.

59. Getting on-line is easier if you are engaging the enemy on your terms. With SOG AI's radial menu, it is also relatively easy to order your team into line formation to return fire when compromised. Thus, I recommend the team come on-line as a basic fighting formation when things go loud.

60. In the event of compromise:

- a. Orientate to the direction of the enemy. If the enemy is firing from multiple directions, orientate towards where you are receiving the heaviest concentration of enemy fire.
- b. Return fire into the highest concentration of enemy forces and toss grenades or fire 40mm rounds into their ranks. M-34 WP grenades are highly effective in neutralizing enemy threats and obscuring their vision. Just be sure to throw it far enough so it doesn't hit your team with burning phosphorous.
- c. Find the best cover you can and get to it while continuing to engage the enemy. If none is close by, get low and continue returning fire. Your team should automatically be doing the same.
- d. Use the SOG AI radial menu to order your team on-line while still engaging the enemy.
- e. At this point, given the situation you are facing, you must decide your next course of action:
 - i. If there is a direction that is open without enemy forces (Usually the direction from which you came from), you may break contact with the enemy and withdraw from the fight in that direction.

- ii. If the enemy force is small or manageable by your team, you may assault and destroy the enemy and proceed in your planned patrol direction.
 - iii. If your team is surrounded, you will need to determine the direction with the lowest enemy concentration or simply decide on a direction to break out from and hit it with whatever firepower you can bring to bear, including danger close air strikes, if available. When the enemy is softened in that direction, you will assault through that position and hopefully break out of the encirclement.
- f. All three courses of action can be executed by a single command in the SOG AI radial menu. If option i. is selected, face the direction of the opening you plan to withdraw to and select the “Leapfrog” command. Doing so will order your team to fall back 100m, and they will execute a leapfrog fighting withdrawal manoeuvre. In this manoeuvre, they will toss and fire grenades and use smoke grenades to mask your team’s withdrawal. Additionally, the Zero-Three or last man in the team will plant a Claymore mine if he has one to stall advancing enemy forces. Fight alongside your team as they execute the IAD. Once contact with the NVA is broken, order them to follow you in file formation and get as far away from the contact zone as possible.
- g. If options ii. or iii. are selected, face the direction you plan to attack/break out from and select the “Leapfrog” command from the SOG AI radial menu. Doing so will order your team to attack in that direction, and they will execute a leapfrog assault manoeuvre. Their actions and tactics will be like the withdrawal manoeuvre; except this time, they are assaulting forward. In this case, they will not deploy Claymores. Fight alongside your team as they execute the IAD and be very clear of your direction of travel once you’ve overrun the enemy/broken out of the encirclement. Once contact with the NVA is broken, order them to follow you in file formation and get as far away from the contact zone as possible.

61. If the decision is made to engage the enemy in a deliberate manner, whether to raid an NVA Site or eliminate an NVA force, the considerations in

paragraph 53 of the previous chapter must be taken into account, along with the considerations in the above paragraphs in this chapter:

- a. Optimal direction of assault. Choose an assault direction that best favours you. Attack from higher ground with good cover and concealment, and from which your team, while in line formation, can engage most of the enemy.
- b. Enemy heavy weapons emplacements to be destroyed first. If the situation allows, do a reconnaissance of your intended target to look for enemy machine gunners or rocket launcher equipped soldiers. They should be priority targets as they can do the most damage to your team.
- c. Potential enemy reinforcement routes. When raiding an NVA Site, or even when attacking a moving NVA force, be mindful of potential routes enemy reinforcements may take to flank or conduct a counterattack against you.
- d. Withdrawal route post-assault. Any contact with the enemy must be dealt with quickly. This means hitting them hard, achieve the objective of the strike, and get away from the contact zone as fast as possible, or risk being bogged down by reinforcing NVA forces. Always have a clear direction to withdraw to after the assault; speed and mobility is key when rounds have been exchanged.
- e. Rally Point (RP) to consolidate and reorganize post-assault. Determine beforehand a defensible spot to Lay Dog your team post-assault to consolidate and reorganize. You could mark potential RP locations on the map with a blue flag marker and/or use the waypoint feature (Shift + Left Mouse Click) for ease of navigation to the RP. The RP will be where you get your team patched up if any injuries are sustained, and to move around equipment, such as Toe-popper mines to the Zero-Three, if required. Do not stay too long at the RP as you are more than likely being hunted by the NVA at this point. Ensure the RP is some distance away from the firefight, and that you are not being pursued or being pursued too closely by the NVA. It is also recommended to

ensure your RP is situated in a defensible location in the event you come under attack at the RP. An example of an assault plan with an RP is pictured below.



- f. Presence of nearby LZs for a quick extraction post-assault. The probability of continuing reconnaissance in a stealthy manner post-assault is low, given that the NVA will be hunting you. While risky, you could decide to stay on the ground and continue mission. However, it is recommended to call for an extraction from the AO after engaging the enemy. Do a map study for potential LZs in the vicinity of your engagement zone prior to assault so that when one is selected by TOC to extract your team, you are ready to make a beeline to it and get back to the FOB.
- g. Availability of CAS for softening of target or for breaking contact with the enemy. Air strikes are an essential part of keeping SOG RTs alive across the fence. For deliberate engagements with the enemy, be it an attack on an NVA Site or an ambush against an enemy force hot on your backtrail, air strikes can be used to destroy the enemy without your team even having to fire a shot. This takes practice, but if used well, air strikes can be a major gamechanger for your small team against a numerically superior enemy force.

62. As a baseline, any loud engagement with the enemy, be it accidental or deliberate, should be treated as a compromise. From that point, expect NVA

trackers to increase in number and ferocity in tracking you, and for NVA forces to descend upon your team. This should be taken seriously; I had once tried to continue mission after a major engagement with the enemy. I thought I was successful in evading trackers, but after almost thirty minutes of moving away from the contact zone and closing in on an AOI across the AO, my team was hit by a reinforced NVA platoon from three sides, totally annihilating us. It felt like a deliberate ambush that we were herded into by the NVA trackers.

63. Thus, after any engagement, the team should be in peak survival mode, with the intent of being extracted as quickly as possible. You may decide to continue mission, but as mentioned, that is not advisable.
64. Either way, your team needs to move fast. Should you be pursued, which is highly likely, have your Zero-Three or Tail Gunner plant Toe-popper mines on your backtrail to kill, wound and slow down NVA trackers from catching up with you. Depending on the persistence of the pursuit, a Toe-popper every 100m-200m should help in slowing them down, opening the distance between your team and them.
65. If you are in a running firefight with the NVA, use WP grenades, fragmentation grenades, 40mm rounds, Claymore mines and air strikes to kill them and delay their advance. Give the enemy a reason to stall and allow your team to break contact.
66. It must be noted that this manual is discussing ATF in a Singleplayer setting. While SOG AI thoroughly enhances the AI in operating as close to a real SOG RT as possible, there are still limitations in their capabilities that prevent them from operating like a full-human team in a Multiplayer setting. This point is important to understand the limitations you will face in the situations elaborated in the following paragraphs.
67. If you are in contact and you have wounded teammates, or you are wounded, medical aid will need to be rendered quickly, and the team needs to move fast to get away from the contact zone. *As of this writing, SOG AI has been updated where your AI teammates may autonomously carry wounded teammates to a safer location in the direction of escape to render first aid when the team is executing the Leapfrog fall-back command. This helps prevent the team from being bogged down in the contact zone. I have*

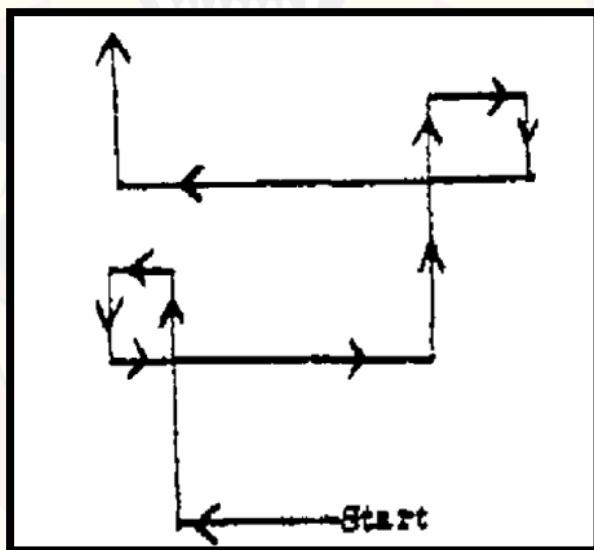
personally not noticed this happen, but I may also have been too pre-occupied with keeping the team alive to notice.

68. However, it is imperative to note that the autonomous actions by your AI to carry wounded teammates, and the assault and fall-back fighting manoeuvres, are only activated when you give the “Leapfrog” command. Any other orders, such as “Follow Me”, do not activate these actions.
69. If AI teammates are wounded and need medical aid, your other AI teammates are skilled enough to render first aid. Make it your focus to provide cover fire for them so that they can be quickly patched up, and the team can continue its fighting withdrawal.
70. The Rally Point (RP) is important to allow the team to consolidate, get injuries patched up, equipment redistributed, and for you to quickly decide on your next course of action. Thus, always have an RP planned when engagements happen, even an ad hoc one, for reconsolidation.
71. As elaborated in paragraph 64, once enemy contact is broken and your team is on the run, mine your backtrail with Toe-popper or Claymore mines to slow down and thin out the NVA that are likely hunting you.
72. At this point, your priority should be to get extracted quickly. You would be in what is known, in SOG parlance, as a Tactical or Prairie Fire emergency. A Tactical emergency is defined as having been compromised and contact with the enemy is broken, but there is a high possibility that the team is being hunted. A Prairie Fire emergency, on the other hand, is defined as a team in dire straits and close to being overrun. During the war, when a SOG RT declared a Prairie Fire emergency, all air assets within a hundred-mile radius were diverted to support the team’s rescue.
73. Such a mechanic where all manner of air assets come to your rescue does not yet exist in the ATF game mode, but you do have access to air support if you have the PRC-77 radio and the skill ability to call for air strikes. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
74. However, in both situations, you will likely need to run to an LZ for extraction. If you happen to be far from an LZ, you will have a higher chance of being contacted by the enemy en route to the LZ.

75. Besides getting your Tail Gunner to lace your backtrail with mines, there are some patrol movement techniques you could use to either shake NVA trackers off your trail, or to ambush the trackers and eliminate them. These movement techniques are not limited for use only when compromised. They can also be used during your patrol to both avoid detection and prevent encirclement by the NVA. The techniques and pictorials below are from the United States Army Special Forces Combat Recon Manual, Republic of Vietnam, written by Project (B-52) Delta in 1970.

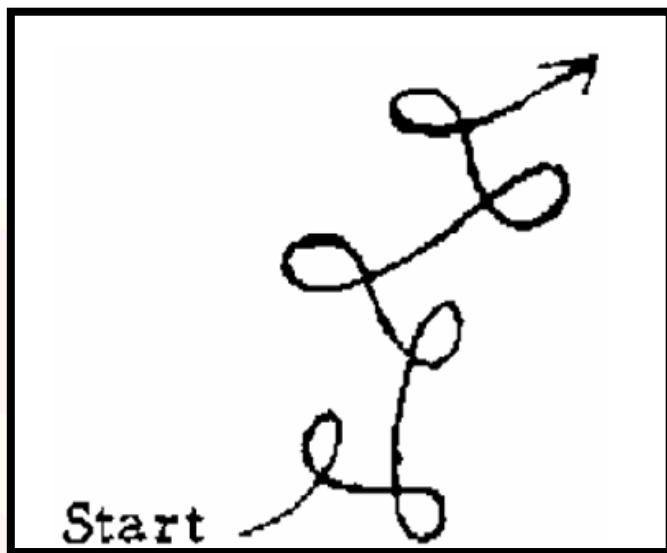
76. The Box Technique: A simple and effective method to employ, as shown in the figure below. The distances, direction and sizes of each box you make should vary to prevent an obvious pattern from forming. With each box you make, you can set an ambush for NVA trackers or simply check your backtrail for any followers. If an ambush is being planned, you could get your Tail Gunner to lay a mine, then do a box back to the mine for a mine-initiated ambush. This method can help mask your actual heading from the NVA, allows you to check your backtrail or conduct an ambush on NVA trackers. Just be sure to vary the boxes and direction to prevent the enemy from noticing a pattern.

The Box Technique



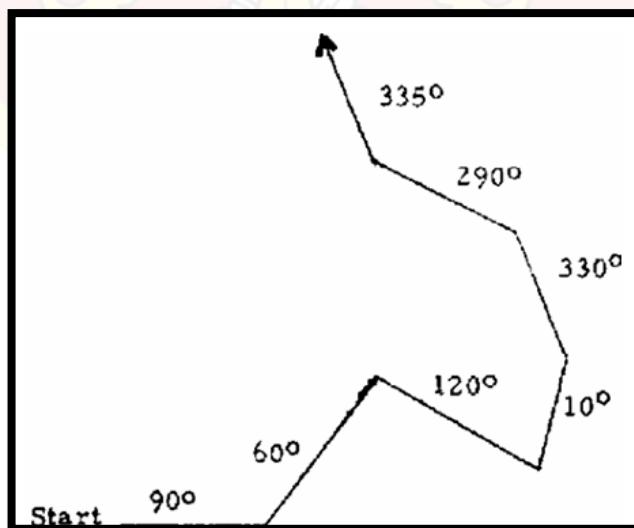
77. The Figure Eight Technique: This technique is like the Box technique, except that you are making circles instead of boxes. A pictorial example is provided on the next page.

The Figure Eight Technique

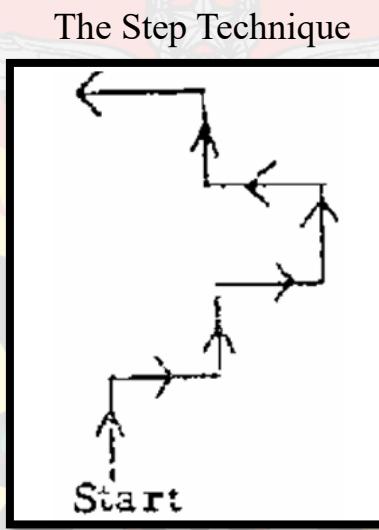


78. The Angle Technique: A simple technique to employ to evade trackers and confuse them in terms of general direction of travel. The team will make a series of irregular-angled direction changes with varying distances travelled per azimuth. The team must be clear on their intended direction and ensure they angle back to their patrol route at some point along the movement. When uncompromised, the angles and distances can be more deliberately planned out to prevent detection. In a compromised situation, coming back to the intended patrol route could happen when the team is certain they have shaken the NVA trackers off their trail. As with the techniques above, avoid setting a pattern for the enemy to find and use against your team. A pictorial example of the Angle Technique is provided below.

The Angle Technique



79. The Step Technique: This technique is like the angle technique, except your team changes directions at 90 degrees instead of varying angles. This method is simpler to perform as you only change directions at right angles. However, it is also simpler for trackers to get a bead on. Ensure your distances on each azimuth and your directions of turn vary to make it difficult for the enemy to track. The Step Technique is pictured below.



80. *On a personal note, I tend to use the Angle or Step techniques when patrolling uncompromised because it is easier to direct the Point Man with SOG AI using these techniques. When compromised, and depending on the state of compromise, I would use any of the four techniques elaborated above. Usually, when compromised, I would take over as Point and lead the team instead of relying on the AI Point Man as it is more complex to direct him in patrolling in a box or figure eight route. It is not impossible to let the Point Man lead during a compromised situation, but you may need to configure the SOG AI mod to shorten his patrol distances or continuously give patrol orders for the boxes or figure eights to be created when you are being hunted. Once again, because it is an AI and not a human team, there are limitations that you need to contend with. Thus, once compromised, I recommend leading the team yourself instead of relying on directing the AI Point Man in executing the Box or Figure Eight techniques.*

USAGE OF CLOSE AIR SUPPORT (CAS)

81. Air strikes were often the difference between life and death for a SOG RT during the war. It may not be as necessary in SOG PF's ATF game mode as it was in real life, but having CAS available is a major gamechanger when you are a small team across the fence with a whole load of NVA trying to kill you.
82. You will need the RTO backpack and the RTO skill chosen to use the PRC-77 radio to call for CAS. At the moment, the URC-10 emergency radio does not allow you to call for CAS. While I do have a dedicated RTO (One-Two) as part of my team configuration, it is highly recommended to also be carrying an RTO backpack yourself in case your One-Two is killed, and you are unable to retrieve the pack from him. That way, you will always have CAS available.
83. When calling for CAS, use the right ordnance for the right target and for the right mission:
 - i. BLU-1/B Napalm canisters and Mk-20 Rockeye cluster bombs are best suited for infantry forces,
 - ii. Mk-82 500lb hard bombs are suited for hard point targets like NVA Sites and positions,
 - iii. Vulcan 20mm cannon rounds are best for infantry targets that are extremely close to your position (Danger close fire).
84. CAS can be used to destroy targets of opportunity, like NVA Sites or large concentration of NVA forces that you find. These are optional targets in ATF, though, as the objective of the game mode does not include destroying enemy forces.
85. You will more likely be using CAS to assist you in breaking contact with the NVA. The enemy could be engaging you from a fairly long distance, or they could be right in your nose. As elaborated in paragraph 83, for danger close situations, the 20mm Vulcan cannon gun run is best to prevent your team from being hit by the air strikes as well.
86. However, like in real life, it might take a while for the aircraft to turn around and come in for another pass. In such situations, you may need to use Napalm, Cluster bombs, or even hard bombs to help you beat back the NVA.

87. Be prepared to call in bombs danger close when you are in dire straits. In such situations, make sure you know the location of your teammates. It is best to have them in line with you in prone position and halted so they don't move into the blast radius of the bombs. Even when calling for a gun run danger close, your team should be in this posture to prevent a blue-on-blue situation.

88. When calling for an air strike, always try to direct the strike aircraft across your front or across your rear (If you are running from a contact). Don't direct the aircraft to fly directly over your position during its attack run as a drop too early or too late could end up with the ordnance landing right on top of you. SOG RTs have called air strikes on their own positions deliberately during the war as they were essentially already overrun. But you would want to avoid that situation at all costs.

89. CAS in SOG PF's ATF game mode comes a lot faster than they did in real life. From the time you request for the strike using the "Radio Support" function to the time the ordnance hits the target is approximately a minute to ninety seconds. Thus, if you're hitting a moving NVA force, take this timing into account and select the ordnance impact point accordingly to ensure you hit your intended target with full effect.

CALLING FOR EXTRACTION FROM AO

90. Whether you are compromised and need immediate extraction, or you have accomplished the mission without as much as a squeak, you will need to request for a helicopter extraction from the AO to complete the mission and return to the FOB.
91. Getting extracted in ATF is much faster than it was for the real SOG RTs during the war. From the time you request an extraction via the Action Menu to the time the UH-1 Huey helicopter arrives at the LZ is approximately five minutes.
92. Much like in real life, helicopters can't just land anywhere it wanted in the jungle due to terrain limitations. Additionally, for ATF and SOG PF in general, a "string" extraction mechanic does not exist. Thus, when an extraction is requested, the game picks the closest LZ to you. If you happen to be close to an LZ, that will be in your favor for a quick extraction, especially when under fire. However, if you far from an LZ, you might find yourself having to travel 700m to a kilometre to get to the helicopter.
93. Unlike real life, you don't get to select predetermined LZs in ATF for insertion and extraction; A list of LZs are not provided to you. The assigned LZs for the mission work on its own algorithm. Thus, just be ready to act accordingly when LZs are assigned to your team for insertion and extraction.
94. Note that being assigned a nearby extraction LZ is not always a good thing. If you are in heavy contact near the LZ, you may be bogged down on the LZ as you are not falling back any further but to the helicopter. The helicopter is invincible for the sake of gameplay, but you have no more distance to put between you and the enemy. Thus, whichever situation you find yourself in, attempt to break contact cleanly with the enemy before committing to the LZ and boarding the helicopter.
95. *Finally, a personal preference is that as the One-Zero Team Leader, you should be the last to board the helicopter, ensuring all your teammates are safely on board before extracting from the AO.*

OPERATING AT NIGHT

96. *I must caveat that as of this writing, I have not yet operated at night in ATF. Thus, the points I am covering in this chapter are based on TTPs used by SOG RTs, from the United States Army Special Forces Combat Recon Manual, Republic of Vietnam, as well as from TTPs used by the SGD RT Columbia development and beta testing team when they play ATF and SOG PF Multiplayer missions.*

97. As a baseline, SOG RTs did not move at night while operating across the fence. It was too dark and difficult to navigate at night, and the noise they would make moving in the dark would attract the NVA, who, being on their own turf, would likely not be moving around at night. Instead, SOG RTs would set up Remain Overnight (RON) sites, where they would settle for the night to rest until daybreak.

98. I, too, believe that in ATF, you should move as little as possible at night as your vision will be significantly affected by the darkness. Thus, I recommend that if you play ATF into in-game nighttime, you should plan for a RON site at least an hour in advance and navigate to it before darkness falls.

99. Your RON site should, preferably, be located on high ground (Like one of your pre-identified OPs), so that even at night, you can conduct opportunistic reconnaissance of the AO from your RON site by looking for campfires that would signal potential NVA Sites. *This method of spotting campfires was taught to me by a member of the SGD RT Columbia team.*

100. When patrolling to your RON site, be sure you're not being tracked by the NVA; A firefight at your RON site in the dark would make for a bad night. It is recommended to fishhook using the box or figure eight technique a hundred meters or so before occupying your RON site to observe your backtrail and confirm you're not being followed.

101. Occupy your RON site with your team using the "Lay Dog" command in the SOG AI radial menu. The team will form a circle in prone position. You can adjust the size of the circle by configuring it in the SOG AI tab under the "Configure Addons" option of the game.

102. Next, plant mines on your backtrail as that would be the most likely enemy approach. I recommend planting three in a straight line along your exact backtrail with a 20m spread between them, the closest mine being 20m from you, and two more, one on each side of the mine closest to you, 10m to each side of the closest mine, forming a T-shape of mines. This gives you early warning and a final defensive layer of mines to allow you to engage the enemy and escape if necessary.

103. While undesirable, should you be compromised at the RON site, you will need to break contact and escape. Thus, plan for both a primary and alternate RP to run to should this happen. Plan for two RPs as there is no telling which way the enemy might sneak up on you; The most likely enemy approach is from your backtrail, which you would have mined, but the enemy is capable of anything. Mark the RPs on your map and use the waypoint feature to help you mark your primary RP so you can expediently move in that direction with a visible waypoint marker should the need arise; The waypoint feature is an advantage the real SOG RTs never had.

104. When planning RPs, make sure they are ***NOT*** in the direction of your planted mines for obvious reasons.

105. If you must abandon your RON site due to compromise, consolidate your team at the RP and call for an extraction as soon as possible; Night fighting is not in your team's favor.

106. Prior to settling into your RON site, have a tentative patrol route planned for the next day so that your movement out of the RON site is smooth.

107. Prior to moving out at daybreak, plant a mine in the RON site; Your team would have left a huge signature on the ground that the NVA can track. The mine would deter, wound or kill NVA trackers that happen upon your RON site after you have left.

108. Be alert when your team leaves the RON site in the morning; Do not be complacent after having survived the night without contact.

109. ***Of course, as this is a video game, you could simply skip the night portion by using the skiptime code. However, if you want to play the game realistically, the points covered in this chapter would be useful in surviving the night in Prairie Fire.***

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NVA SITES FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES

110. The images below were taken from the Across The Fence New Player Guide by SGD. These images can assist you in identifying any NVA Sites you find while on the ground in Prairie Fire. Study them well; they will help you accomplish your mission more efficiently, and efficiency could mean the difference between life and death for a SOG RT in Indian Country.

AA Gun



Ammo Cache



Bulldozer



Encampment



Supply Dump



Transmitter



Truck Park



Waystation



AFTERWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We've come to the end of this SOP manual. I hope you, the reader, have found this document useful in helping you play ATF in Singleplayer using Johnnyboy's amazing SOG AI mod in a realistic, tactical and fun manner.

Once again, I must caveat that nothing in this manual is set in stone. It is just the way I play ATF in a Singleplayer setting, and I felt that it would be beneficial to others to share the way I play it to make the ATF experience as realistic and fun as possible.

I also believe that a good number of the TTPs and SOPs in this manual can be used in a Multiplayer setting. In fact, with all human players, I believe the TTPs and SOPs discussed in this manual can be executed in a smoother and more expedient fashion.

I'd like to thank Rob Graham, CEO of SGD, and his hardcore team for creating such a great and important gaming medium dedicated to MACV SOG and the Vietnam War. I'd also like to thank the SGD RT Columbia team for their input for this manual, and for the fun times I have with them when we play SOG PF and ATF. Johnnyboy, too, deserves a giant thanks for his rock-solid SOG AI mod, and for his assistance in putting this manual together.

Finally, thank you, the reader, for taking the time to read this manual. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed creating it.

Below is a link to my YouTube playlist for SOG Prairie Fire. In it, I have videos of me playing ATF and custom SOG PF missions in both Singleplayer and Multiplayer settings, with SGD's RT Columbia development and beta testing team. Enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhcSodjFawc&list=PLvQKLOL_cAFGfRjtxOzw4d-4IDtofPbv

GOOD LUCK ACROSS THE FENCE, ONE-ZERO.
YOU'RE GONNA NEED IT.

