

# BASIC RECON SKILLS

Reconnaissance or scouting is the act/art of surveying an area for needed information. Accurate information is the foundation of successful action planning. A recon can be anything from a simple drive by or office visit, to full on 24 '7 surveillance.

**Where** - timber or mining areas, industrial and construction sites, suspected illegal dumping sites, public lands and waters, company headquarters, the CEO's home or country club, or the site of the next big demo.

**Why** - check compliance with environmental protection laws and agreements, ground check timber sale proposals, making maps, check out the layout for action potential and plans, -insert you favorite-.

**What** kinds of things should be checked or looked for - site layout, entrance/ exits, security details, employee schedules and activity, exact directions, routes/zones/drop off points for later use, location of cop shops along route, ditto cameras.

**How** - the art part, imagination and patience count for more than resources.

**Planning process** - "proper planning prevents poor performance"

- a) initial research
- b) define recon goals, list required info
- c) identify people and gather resources
- d) develop plans, methods, and timing

Sometimes some of most of these steps take only a couple minutes. They're not necessarily done in that order. Some of this planning might be done with the rest of the action team and some just with the recon team. Sometimes the recon team is also the action team, or is just one person.

## **Initial research**

**Who is the target?** More than just 'what' is the target. It's easy enough to point at paper mills, chainsaws, and bulldozers, but who owns and controls them? **Why are they doing what they're doing?** Can you map out the corporate structure?

**Where is it?** Try to determine as much as possible before hand, get maps, is the working part of the business in the same place as the office? What are the surroundings like? What are they doing at that location?

**Sources:** internet, phonebook, business section of newspaper, business journals, corporate literature, local industry guides from chamber of commerce, city or county clerks office, tax records, etc.

**Define recon goals, list required information.**

Many recons are done in steps. How it's divided up and how quickly to proceed depends on how 'hard' the target is. Do they have security? How tight is it? How much cover is available? Are they expecting trouble or oblivious? You should thoroughly check at each step to not only get as much info as possible, but to also plan a safe route to the next step.

After the initial research is done the first step is usually a walk or drive by. This should give you a good idea of where further watching can be done safely or where to drop off and pick up people. One person driving and one with a video camera works well. Practice before hand somewhere else so you can learn best camera techniques without pressure.

Determine what info is needed to meet the action goals, then work out the details. Sometimes it works backwards, and recon's reveal things to make plans around. Quite often the plan is a little vague - "let's go play with xyz corp.!" and some initial scouting is needed to see what's possible.

Depending on the size of your action team, you will need to coordinate different things with different people, include this in your planning process. Ask the different team members what information they need to perform their tasks, and when they need it.

**People and resources.**

- a) people
- b) transportation
- c) surveillance gear
- d) clothing, packs, personal, and miscellaneous.

**People.** It's important to match specific tasks to different types of people - for instance, you wouldn't want to pick an impatient, fidgety person who can't sit still for 5 minutes to hide in the bushes all day. If someone has to go mingle or interact with other people they should be the social type and shouldn't stand out too much.

In general, scouts should be careful, patient, intelligent, security conscious, have a good eye for detail, enough background info to know what they're looking for, and they should be comfortable with their surroundings.

**Transportation.** Penniless tree huggers don't have a fleet of vehicles on call, so you need to schedule around jobs, school and the social scene. Depending on what the target is you may not always want to use the same car all the time, and sometimes your car isn't suitable, so you may need to borrow one. More scheduling. Remember that some targets can't always be approached safely or too often. Make sure both car and driver are legal. Check the lights. Get rid of any bumper stickers.

The driver should have directions and map if unfamiliar with the area. Drop off and pick up point, times, and radio details should be thoroughly worked out. Make emergency or backup routes and plans.

Be sure that you all have an excuse for driving or trespassing in the middle of nowhere at 3 am.

**Surveillance gear.**

**Binoculars** and spotting scopes- extremely compact models with high power are often unusable, high power (over 10) makes hand jitter a problem and the field of view is narrow. 7 or 8 is a good usable power. Try to get binoculars with as large objective lenses as you can, at least 35mm, the bigger the lenses the better you'll be able to see in low light conditions. 7x35 or 8x42 are good common models. Buy or make a chest harness/pocket for your binocs, neck straps are clumsy and will wear you out.

**Spotting scopes** are small telescopes for hunters, get one with zoom lens, again lower powers with large objective lenses are more usable, some folks like a zoom rifle scope instead. A tripod or forked stick help to steady your optics for better views.

**Cameras** are nice and small but you either need to send the film out to be developed, or load it onto a computer, which can lead to security problems. You can develop your own 35mm black and white film if you have access to a home darkroom. Some digital models will allow direct connection to a tv. Make sure you've turned the camera's flash off before you get on site!

**Camcorders** are great but expensive, get extra long life batteries. When looking for used models get 8mm Sony handi cams with optical zoom and **manual focus** control, auto focus will just keep you focused on the bush or window pane between you and the target. It's generally best to keep the camcorder on wide angle unless you're zooming in on something, remember to zoom back out when done (the same applies to spotting scopes).

**Scanners** are very useful if you take the time to search out and program in the correct frequencies. To do it right takes at least several days and maybe more in a big city. Go to Radio Shack and get the frequency guide for your area. Make a 'hit table' of all the channels you id, how often they are used, and who is using them under what circumstances.

**Nite vision** is super cool if you've got the bucks for good gear, otherwise it can be disappointing. There are two aspects to nite vision - infrared vision and low light vision. Infrared is a frequency the human eye can't see, below red on the spectrum. Most nite scopes come with an 'infrared illuminator' which is an infrared flashlight. When you turn it on it lights up everything in infrared light and the scope will show what the human eye can't see.

Low light vision is a way of amplifying the amount of light that is available into something useable. It needs some small amount of light to work, such as starlight, moonlight, or city glare. The two aspects of nite vision are always working on all scopes, but there are huge differences in quality.

The cheap Russian 1<sup>st</sup> generation stuff that is on the market for a couple hundred bucks or so are very limited but have uses. They work ok if there is plenty of moonlight or city glare. They see the infrared from the (usually built in) illuminator flashlight very well, and are also useful for spotting infrared motion detectors, alarm beams, or other nite surveillance cameras that use an illuminator. **Warning:** if someone at the target site has a scope, they will see you using an illuminator so you should avoid it as much as possible. Another problem with the cheap units is they are bulky and need constant readjusting, which makes them unsuitable for continuous mobile use.

A compact 3<sup>rd</sup> generation monocular with a head strap adapter similar to what the military uses will cost about \$3000. High quality units are more.

Tools always break, batteries always run out. Cultivate natural night vision. Avoid bright lights, don't look into the fire. Red lenses or red tape on your flashlight will keep it from messing up your night vision. A blue lens works well on moonlit nights, it looks like reflected moonlight.

### **Clothing, packs, etc.**

Clothing should be appropriate for setting and assumed character, always try to blend in and avoid notice. This may require a change of clothes.

Many types of fabric make lots of noise when you move, avoid this.

Modifications: remove reflective tags or labels, sew in extra pockets or straps for gear, tie points for camo, harnesses, hidden mics and earphone wires, etc.

Camouflage gear is only camo when they can't see you. If you're spotted trespassing in camo gear it will look suspicious. It also looks weird at company headquarters. There camo might be a suit and briefcase. Outdoors, dark clothes in checks or plaid earth tones that match the background in the area, not black, long pants and sleeves, can blend in pretty good. Gloves, veil, and head cover complete the costume. If you need to you can hide or pocket the gloves and veil, jump out onto the road and look normal.

Packs should be small, easily accessible, make sure nothing rattles around, remove or mark over light or reflective labels, take off all the metal zipper dangles and replace with thin cord or ribbon. Butt packs are real handy, you can spin one around without taking it off, attach holders, equipment, and stuff to the belt. Camelbak water packs are very convenient and they don't gurgle when you move around. Instead of you and your crew all carrying large water bottles, which will all start gurgling eventually, you can each bring several small biker squeeze bottles, and when your team stops for water share an entire bottle between you.

Miscellaneous: food, water, flashlight, compass, maps, first aid/snakebite kit, pen, paper, cough drops (junk the wrappers), watch, money, change of clothes, radios, extra batteries, water filter. Depends on where your at. Make dark cloth bags to carry food and stuff, take it all out of the noisy plastic bags at home. One time we tested to find the noisiest materials normally brought camping and it was the kind of stiff plastic film bags for power bars, chips, etc. Velcro is loud. Zippers aren't that bad if you go slow.

### **Develop plans.**

This part is basically just figuring out how to get in and out without getting caught or raising suspicion. Try to get an idea of how many times you'll need to go there, when, and for how long. Drive in, sneak in, drop off, fill out a job application, deliver some flowers or pizza, try to get an interview, etc.

Intelligence gathering is the reason for recons - we want to know something so we go find out - what's the best way?

Things to look for: directions, site layout, cover, hiding places, dead (hidden from view) space, exits, escape routes, building dimensions, floor plans, sale unit boundaries, lay of the land, staging areas, media access and positioning, equipment, driveways and parking lots, doors and windows, locks, security cameras, motion sensors, fences, gates, guards, dogs, employee schedules and activity, shift changes, blockade locations, action potential, radio/cell phone coverage, etc.

**Map making** is one of the most important skills a scout can develop. Accurate maps need to be made and continually updated with the latest info. It's easy to make copies of street maps, forest service sale unit, topographic, overhead photos, development maps, etc., then fill in with color coded additions showing relevant details. Be sure to include correct scale legend.

When making maps in the field you can use compass angles from object to object, compare to landmarks already on a map to correctly place them on the map, learn to estimate distances and sizes, it helps to learn the measurements of common things like cars, wheels, light and power poles, garbage cans, doors and windows, traffic lanes, city blocks, etc.

**Movement** - If you're around other people, where you can and will be seen, or in a camera zone, it's important that you not act nervous or unsure of yourself (unless it's part of the act), act like you work there or own the place - you're supposed to be there. Be bold and creative, but not outrageous. Take advantage of the corporate personalities willing submission to authority and bureaucracy when choosing cover roles.

Cars and people that repeatedly circle or drive by some places get noticed. Whether that happens or not depends on the target and your timing and discretion. Government buildings, military and intelligence operations, and business's that have been alerted by previous actions or publicity often pay close attention to their security. Famous or rich people, criminals, and politicians often have body guards who are trained in counter surveillance.

If you're sneaking around in the bushes you can't afford to get noticed. Learn about stealth, camouflage, anti-tracking, and give yourself lot's of time.

If you're planning night ops you should scout the target both day and night. Landmarks or objects visible by day may not be by night. Security will be different. Note times when changes in anything occur. Map out zones of light and shadow from security lights. Also camera field of view.

**Testing security** - often the target's security measures need to be tested. Sometimes cameras are just fakes, or real ones are hidden. Motion detectors wired to security lights, silent alarms, or time lapse video recorders are common. The basic idea is to cause some sort of disturbance, open a door or window you suspect is alarmed, then return it to normal, back off to a hidden spot and wait to see what happens. Be careful - cops are trained to do silent approaches, they will often back off themselves and call for backup if they are suspicious of a test or diversion. The lost tourist/hiker, overturned ball or frisbee, or loose dog or kid routine are useful. Sometimes

## **Analysis and distribution**

This step is basically organizing and making sense of all the facts that have been gathered, then making specific maps and reports for each team or member. Raw intelligence is filtered, organized, reprinted, and sent to each person. This doesn't need to be a hard or overly technical process, but careful planning always pays off. Take time to save time.

Everyone should get exactly what they need to complete their tasks. Be sure to ask what they need before hand! For instance, all the drivers will need to know exactly when and where they're going, and who and what they are taking along. Their maps must be easy to read and handle, with no fumbling, while driving at night. Directions must be clear and exact, with mileage between turns. Alternate and emergency routes should be clearly marked.

The action planning committee will need to know how everything is laid out, and how to get everyone in place, perhaps beyond gates, guards, or closed doors. Effective decision making is enabled by the use of accurate maps, charts, pictures, etc., in the planning process. Creativity is your greatest asset.

## **Security concerns**

By necessity, the recon team is involved with the earliest parts of planning. Because of this and the fact that they are often trespassing or near target property, they are amongst the first who can compromise an action. Therefore it's important that scouts be trustworthy, careful, patient, security conscious, and should handle themselves well under stress - especially if they get caught - always have a cover story. Remember the scout motto - 'be prepared' ;-)

Researchers should be wary of leaving a trail of info requests such as phone calls, email, website access (server IP logs), sign in sheets, and appearances on security cameras. Use public access computers and look for cameras. Most security tapes are kept for a month and then taped over.

Materials and document storage and destruction - planning for actions can sometimes take months, safe places must be found for all materials, maps, reports, drawings, etc. Don't carry the action plan to a protest march or anywhere you may get arrested. Don't stack the tripod poles and a pile of ropes and harnesses in your front yard. Determine if it's necessary to keep each piece of paper or picture that is generated in each phase of the project. Don't just throw papers away, going thru activists garbage is a common cop practice. Burn and stir the ashes of everything as soon as you can.

Avoid computers if possible. Color copiers at public copy centers are required by the Secret Service to embed their own serial numbers into the pixels of the images they make. New computers also embed their numbers into some of their programs which can be traced by analyzing disks, files, and emails. Buy lots of cheap hard drives anonymously, use a different one for each action, and then take a sledge hammer to it.

Trespassers should use stealth and anti-tracking techniques to avoid leaving traces that they were ever there. In some cases (say if you know you'll leave a dew trail through a big lawn, or muddy prints) it might be smart to leave a watcher at a remote observation point who can watch in the morning to see if anyone has noticed your team was there. This watcher should arrive and leave by a different route than the first team did so that if someone notices tracks and follows them, they won't lead to the watcher.

### **Stealth, tracking, and camouflage.**

**Stealth** is the art of moving and observing without being noticed or leaving a trail. The idea is get in and back out without them knowing you were there.

**Tracking** is the art of observing the signs of people/animals/vehicles on their surroundings and using these signs to gather information or follow them. We would generally use this art in a negative sense - when we know the ways trackers use we can take steps to avoid their notice or deceive them.

**Camouflage** is the art of blending in to your surroundings in order to avoid notice. Camo is a tool used to enhance stealth.

**Why?** To increase your security. If they don't know you're there they can't bother, chase, or arrest you, blow your action plans, or ask silly questions.

Remember that we're not generally in a timber sale or other target area unless there's some controversy - if there is a campaign with public opposition the Forest Disservice or corporate security will be alerted.

**Basic ideas:** quieting your mind, body, and equipment. Balance, awareness of surroundings, slow speed travel, picking your path and footsteps carefully, disturbing the ground and plants as little as possible, taking advantage of background noises and motions, blending into the scenery.

**Quiet!** Before you get to the quiet zone take a few moments to compose yourself, take some long slow breaths - try to still your mind and body. You



cannot expect to be sufficiently aware of your surroundings, or to be able to move silently, if your mind is all a-whirl, or if you are out of breath. Yoga and some martial arts teach many useful quieting techniques.

All your gear should be properly packed to keep it from making noise when you move. Take those metal zipper dangles off everything, replace them with thin cord or ribbon. Take anything in a noisy plastic or paper wrapper out before you leave home and put it in a cloth sack or bandanna. Make sure loose items are lashed down. Safety pin your car key to the inside of your pocket. Attach lanyards to everything with a handle. Zippers and velcro make lots of noise, can you replace them with buttons, strings, or straps? Water bottles slosh when you move around. Camelback pack are really handy and are quiet. You could all bring several small bike bottles apiece and when the team stops for water you can all share one bottle.

**Balance** - most people walk in a controlled fall. Once they have started a step they generally can't stop or redirect it without losing their balance. This is caused by improper balance and moving too fast. Shift your center of balance back and low, carefully set your foot in the right spot, then put your weight on it and shift your body over that foot. It's much easier if you go slow and use smaller paces. Practice standing on one foot while stretching around in all directions. Control your breathing. Again yoga is great.

**Awareness** - if you concentrate on one thing too hard you will miss most of what happens around you. Take off the blinders, be still, and feel your surroundings. Slowing your pace helps a lot. Try to stretch and exercise your senses. Remember that as an animal you are the product of billions of years of evolution, our senses kept us alive and out of trouble for many years. Focusing your eyes too closely on your path can give you tunnel vision. Look around, up and behind. Try to develop a 'wide angle' view while you walk. Most people do this while they are driving in a familiar area.

**Go slow** - speed is directly related to noise. If you're in the woods in the middle of dry leaves you will make some noise no matter what you do, but slow is still better than crashing thru the brush. Another reason for going slow is that the human eye and brain keys on moving objects. Fast objects attract more attention. Very slow things sometimes escape notice especially by someone who is moving themselves. If you are already going slow you can easily stop to avoid detection, but if you are moving fast and see someone you may not be able to stop easily without stumbling or making noise as you hit the ground.

Another aspect of moving without being noticed is to stop frequently. Take a few or a dozen steps from one bit of concealment to another - then stop, look and listen. Do it again. Keep it up and pretty soon you're there.

**Pick** your steps carefully - don't step on twigs or crunchy ground cover, avoid stepping on rocks or logs that will shift, don't squash plants - if you step on a plant stem it will generally bend over in the direction you are moving, when stepping over logs don't scrape the top of it with your trailing foot's toe, lift your feet, if you get tangled in a briar don't just pull yourself loose - take the time to untangle yourself. Move plants aside - make your move- then replace the plant, don't drag your feet, keep your balance. Stay low to the ground. Always be looking for the next bit of cover, always ask yourself if you would be hidden if someone came and you had to freeze.

Try to plan your route so that you will disturb the ground and foliage as little as possible. In many situations you will have to decide whether your priority is to avoid making noise or leaving tracks. Then you can decide exactly where to stick your feet. As an example - stepping on a trail is quiet but leaves a clear track, stepping in the weeds or dry leaves right beside it makes noise but the mark that's left is kind of vague. Which step you take depends on the situation.

If you've disturbed the ground a lot in one place or left an identifiable footprint you may want to stop and fix it - sweep it up with a pine bough or cover it over. When bushwhacking try not to walk in a straight line.

Use all available concealment such as shadows, trees, bushes, tall grass, hills, ditches, human structures, etc. Try to stay in what's known as 'dead space' - areas that people in the target zone can't see no matter how good their vision. Stay low - go under or around obstacles - avoid going over. Don't silhouette yourself against background objects or the horizon, keep below ridgelines, expose nothing shiny or reflective.

Don't make the trees or bushes move around overhead when you pass thru them, when climbing uphill don't grab small trees or bushes for help - this will shake the top of the tree alerting anyone looking in that direction.

Take advantage of background noises and movements, whether natural or human. Streams, wind, rain, passing cars and trains, noisy animals, etc., can all be used to let you walk faster and noisier than normal.

You don't always need to be completely silent, you just don't want to attract attention. There is usually some amount of noise in a forest (or anywhere

else), try not to make more noise than that. Or make the noises sound natural.

Try to develop a sense for how far sounds travel and how much noise is noticeable from what distance and over what types of ground cover. Take a walk in the woods with some friends and practice at different distances.

**Practice, practice, practice.**

If you are part of a team you should practice moving as a team, one person watches while another moves, help each other thru obstacles, agree on hand signals and warnings. Don't forget to look behind you, the person in the rear can concentrate on sanitizing your trail - covering over the teams tracks. Avoid roads, trails, and natural drift lines. Don't leave the same way you came in. Try to develop a sense for how fast you can safely move, this is dependent on how close you are to the target area and how much you know about their security and personnel. The best way to figure that out is to practice with friends.

The human eye is particularly attuned to the shapes and colors of the human body. One of the central ideas behind camouflage is to break up the outline of the body and it's parts. Floppy hats with vines and leaves dangling changes the shape of a head, loose fitting long sleeves and pants are much better than short ones. Attach local foliage to your clothes, use charcoal, mud, or camo makeup on your face. Color is very important but it may be more correct to say that shade and brightness is the more important thing. Skin does not match ground cover or foliage, white people are extremely reflective. Wear a hat. Wear gloves and make sure your shirt doesn't hike up in the back.

If a plane flies overhead, get under a tree if you can and don't look up. Don't move until the noise goes away or you can see it's far off.

Attitude and patience is all important. Be confident and alert, remember that you are working for the earth - they're just collecting a paycheck. This goes double when you are being chased. Many people have eluded pursuit by patiently imitating bushes or animals. One woman escaped from an FBI search team (including helicopters) by telling herself she was invisible and imitating a cactus. Another guy got away from the Forest Service by covering himself with mud, pretending he was a snapping turtle, and just floating downstream. Don't lose your cool. Our opponents do not have super powers or xray vision.

There are two types of cover: primary and secondary. Primary cover is anything so thick that you can't see through it. This might be a tree stump, a tangle of brush, or even a field of tall grass. Secondary cover is composed of thinner material such as leafy branches that do not completely obscure your view. When stalking, keep most of your body hidden behind primary cover, even if you have to crawl or inch along on your belly. Utilize secondary cover either to watch animals or to plot your direction.



Stalking crouch, bracing hands on knees for extra support.

### STEPS IN STALKING



Lift foot high and maintain balance.



Come down on outside ball of foot.



Roll to inside ball of foot.



Lower heel and toes, then apply weight.

Normally the stalk is done in a crouch. If this posture becomes tiring, you can ease your back somewhat by resting your hands on your knees. You can even help to lift your knees by pulling on your pant legs. You may also find occasion for stalking on hands and knees—or even on your belly. In such cases, simply remember to lift one limb at a time in a slow, flowing motion—moving around vegetation instead of through it.

When crawling, lift the knees high instead of sliding. Keep the toes pointed so they don't catch on anything. Come down on the hands just as you would normally come down on your feet, rolling from outside to inside and back before committing the weight. In the belly stalk, inch the whole body along on hands and toes, keeping the arms in close to the sides.

# TRACKING

**Learn to track.** Tracking allows you to locate trap sets where a trapper walks his line. It warns you of recent activity in your area of operations, such as surveillance or patrols by law enforcement. Perhaps most important, only by learning tracking can you learn proper counter-tracking measures—walking so as to leave a minimum of sign that can be followed by others.

You are learning what "sign" looks like. If a track is hard to spot, get your nose to the ground and look for indicators: rocks or pebbles pushed into the dirt, thin cracks in the soil, a small lip of dirt that throws a shadow, a broken twig or bent blade of grass. You learn by studying EVERY TRACK. In difficult tracking conditions, these subtle indicators may be all you have to go on!

Only after you have acquired the ability to locate every track in easy terrain should you move ahead to more difficult circumstances like rocky ground, grassy areas, or tree shaded tracks. As you make it more difficult for yourself, you learn more—still by locating every track.

As you practice tracking, always put the track between you and the sun. The sun will throw shadows in the edge of the track making them visible to you while you stand or crouch. Try walking off to the side while looking over your shoulder.

Do not erase the tracks as you go. If you lose the trail, go back to the last clear footprint. While learning to track at a walking pace, use the tip of the stick to scratch a mark next to each verified track. You can then easily come back to the last clear track, get down and use your tracking stick as described above to locate the next track, and the next one, and so on.

Under difficult conditions, you may find only a slight heel or toe impression. This is why you use rubber bands to mark the distance between heel and toe. Regardless of how little evidence of a track you find, the tip of your stick will reveal the approximate location of the next track.

As you progress to more difficult tracks (perhaps set by a friend who gives you no clues as to where they ultimately lead), you will eventually lose the trail completely. To relocate, walk slowly in a circle about ten feet from the last clear track. Look closely for another sign. If necessary, move out five more feet and repeat. Work in ever larger circles until you find the tracks again. While learning, you may want to use the track diagram on a piece of paper to be sure you have the correct track. (The penciled diagram of the track showing the pattern of the imprint is used in law enforcement and search and rescue work; eco-saboteurs use it only in training, never in the field while at "work.")

Eventually you should practice following someone's tracks laid down at a jogging and running pace. Studying varying depths of heel and toe prints will teach you how to spot running tracks in the future.

Learn how to age tracks by studying a line of tracks over a period of time (ideally checking them every day). Notice how wind carries small debris into the track, how the edge crumbles with time, how heavy dew or light rain alters the appearance. Lay down tracks in damp and wet soil and come back after they're dried to learn from them. Sometimes just touching a track will reveal that they were laid down when the ground was wet (then think back to when the last rainfall was). With enough practice, the next time you're prowling around a bulldozer in the woods, you'll know when the last tracks were laid down

whether tracks walking past or around the machine indicate a security patrol, and whether tracks on nearby trails indicate possible surveillance teams lurking in the brush.

Learning how to spot, follow, and age human tracks will help you in the study of vehicle tracks. This may tip you off to a motorized security patrol at a construction site, or lead you to the ideal choke point to build a road or trail block against ORVs.

Since a lot of monkey business occurs at night, you should practice spotting tracks at night. Here you will check roads or trails leading to a target site for signs of recent passage. A flashlight with a red lens (which won't ruin your night vision) held close to the ground, will throw shadows into tire or footprints. In the field, use this method **ONLY** in areas where you can't be observed from a distance, such as in thick brush, a low spot, or near a curve.

As you learn to track, you will learn what conditions are most unfavorable to tracking. Use this knowledge to minimize your own tracks. Never assume a pursuing tracker knows less than you do. You may have just walked across two hundred yards of slickrock, leaving no sign at all, but as soon as you step off into the dirt again, you'll start to leave some sign. They will know this also.

In areas where you cannot avoid leaving tracks, like the soft dirt in a road, erase your tracks as you go. Do not erase them with wide, sweeping actions, since this makes your trail all the more obvious. Carefully use your hand to brush out your tracks one at a time. This is practical only for very small areas where you can't avoid leaving tracks between areas where you don't leave tracks, such as a sandy area between slickrock.

If you will be moving cross-country for some length of time (say, eight hours or more) be careful not to leave a clear trail near the target. The beginning of your trail will be used to indicate the direction in which searchers will concentrate their efforts. If possible, leave the target at right angles, or in the direction opposite to which you eventually intend to travel. Circle back later, avoiding major trails that might be checked in the immediate area.

#### **FIELD NOTES**

\* If you can afford the risk of exposure, moving 100 or 200 yards along a paved road will often throw off a human tracker. This is especially true if your first steps back off the pavement are in a place where you can avoid leaving tracks

#### **Insertion**

The team will most likely be carried to the vicinity of the target in a motor vehicle (see also the section on Mountain Bicycles in the Miscellaneous Devilry chapter). Whether it be a motorcycle, car, or truck, it should look ordinary, and lack anything that might be conspicuous—such as a special paint job, provocative bumper stickers, or personalized license plates.

On most operations, one should not stop directly in front of, park near, or repeatedly cruise past the target.

When exiting the vehicle, do not slam the car doors. Instead, push on the door until it partially latches. The driver can stop briefly after leaving the target area to close doors properly. In rural and suburban environments, it is generally best to drop off the team well away from the target and let them walk to it cross-country. In built-up areas, the drop is usually made closer to the target to avoid being stopped by police patrols when walking down city streets. The aim is to avoid having a casual passerby witness the drop and later report a description of you, your car, or your license plate.

c. **Reduction or Trail Signs.** A sniper who tries to hide his trail moves at reduced speed; therefore, the experienced tracker gains time. Common methods to reduce trail signs areas follows:

(1) Wrap footgear with rags or wear soft-soled sneakers, which make footprints rounded and less distinctive.

(2) Brush out the trail. This is rarely done without leaving signs.

(3) Change into footgear with a different tread immediately following a deceptive maneuver.

(4) Walk on hard or rocky ground.

## 8-10. DECEPTION TECHNIQUES

Evading a skilled and persistent enemy tracker requires skillfully executed maneuvers to deceive the tracker and to cause him to lose the trail. An enemy tracker cannot be outrun by a sniper team that is carrying equipment, because he travels light and is escorted by enemy forces designed for pursuit. The size of the pursuing force dictates the sniper team's chances of success in employing ambush-type maneuvers. Sniper teams use some of the following techniques in immediate-action drills and deception drills.

a. **Backward Walking.** One of the basic techniques used is that of walking backward (Figure 8-6) in tracks already made, and then stepping off the trail onto terrain or objects that leave little sign. Skillful use of this maneuver causes the tracker to look in the wrong direction once he has lost the trail.

b. **Large Tree** A good deception tactic is to change directions at large trees (Figure 8-7). To do this, the sniper moves in any given direction and walks past a large tree (12 inches wide or larger) from 5 to 10 paces. He carefully walks backward to the forward side of the tree and makes a 90-degree change in the direction of travel, passing the tree on its forward side. This technique uses the tree as a screen to hide the new trail from the pursuing tracker.

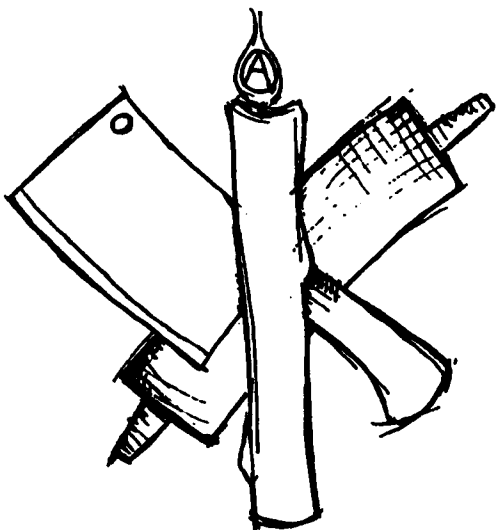
**NOTE:** By studying signs, a tracker may determine if an attempt is being made to confuse him. If the sniper team loses the tracker by walking backward, footprints will be deepened at the toe and soil will be scuffed or dragged in the direction of movement. By following carefully the tracker can normally find a turnaround point.

c. **Cut the Corner.** Cut-the-corner technique is used when approaching a known road or trail. About 100 meters from the road, the sniper team changes its direction of movement, either 45 degrees left or right. Once the road is reached, the sniper team leaves a visible trail in the same direction of the deception for a short distance on the road. The tracker should believe that the sniper team "cut the corner" to save time. The sniper team backtracks on the trail to the point where it entered the road, and then it carefully moves on the road without leaving a good trail. Once the desired distance is achieved, the sniper team changes direction and continues movement (Figure 8-8)

d. **Slip the Stream.** The sniper team uses slip-the-stream technique when approaching a known stream. The sniper team executes this method the same as the cut the corner technique. The sniper team establishes the 45-degree deception maneuver upstream, then enters the stream. The sniper team moves upstream to prevent floating debris and silt from compromising its direction of travel, and the sniper team establishes false trails upstream if time permits. Then, it moves downstream to escape since creeks and streams gain tributaries that offer more escape alternatives (Figure 8-9).

Beware of ultraviolet brighteners in your clothing. These chemicals, which are now in *all* laundry detergents, make you glow in the dark to an officer equipped with night vision equipment. This problem is so serious that the US military specifies that no brighteners be used in the manufacturing or cleaning of combat fatigues.

A commercial remedy is readily available in the hunting supply market. Hunters are trying to reduce their visibility to animals whose eyes are far more receptive to ultraviolet light than is the human eye. "U-V Killer" (and a detergent called "Sport Wash") can be found in better sporting goods and hunting supply stores, or, as a last resort, through the manufacturer: Alsko/Sno-Seal



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