



Voice Procedure for the Light Infantryman



Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to introduce the fundamentals of tactical radio communications at the Company and Platoon level, including basic Voice Procedure on the Combat Net Radio (CNR). Communicating effectively is a vital battlefield skill to enable command and control, improved situational awareness, facilitate the timely passage of information and maintain an all-informed net. It is especially important for Commanders, NCOs and Radio Operators to understand how to pass on critical information swiftly, accurately and succinctly.

[Alternative Colour Scheme Version](#) if you're struggling with the background on mobile devices.

Military voice procedure is used because it has real utility in the game environment and not simply because it makes the game play sound more authentic, though it does that too. However, similar to other guides for ArmA, this is not a slavish copy of military manuals, although they provide a useful reference. Military Simulation (milsim) necessarily requires that real world tactics, techniques and procedures are tailored to fit the game and this guide is no different.

Standard operating procedures vary between countries and even different units, although NATO countries follow a common standard when necessary. The scope of this guide covers US and UK/Commonwealth variations. Relevant parts have been labelled to clearly indicate the variances. Either way, good net discipline and accurate, realistic communications not only enhance unit effectiveness but also increase enjoyment of the game.



US Specific



UK & Commonwealth Specific



Joint Forces or NATO Standard



Tailored for ArmA

About the Author

The author is a former British Army Captain with operational experience in Iraq and worldwide. Having worked as both a Challenger 2 Troop Leader and Infantry Platoon Commander, he was posted as the Regimental Signals Officer responsible for running Battlegroup Headquarters and maintaining communications for the unit. Heavily involved in the conversion of the British Army to Bowman digitised communications, he was later posted as the SO3 Comms at the Combined Arms CIS School, where he instructed the next generation of Troop Leaders and Signals Officers. He has been playing milsim on the Operation Flashpoint / ArmA platform since the game was released, with the occasional break to do it for real, and has been Platoon Commander of VOLCBAT since 2010.

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References

1. MCRP 6-22C US Marine Corps Radio Operators Handbook
2. FM 10-33 US Army Radio Operators Handbook
3. FM 11-32 US Army Field Manual: Combat Net Radio Operations
4. JWP 6-00 CIS Support to Joint Operations (2nd Ed)
5. UK Voice Communications Procedures EBB v7

Note: US publications are freely available online. UK pubs can only be accessed on the Restricted Lan Interconnect (RLI). All information included here is unclassified.

Combat Net Radio

Radio Nets

Unit level radio nets at Battalion and above are formal nets. They have watchkeepers maintaining a 24 hour listening watch, are fully logged and require scheduled reports, returns and requests (R3) as well as the regular command, control or admin traffic. As such, there is a fair amount of formal protocol that applies specifically to these nets. At sub unit level (Company and below), command nets are usually informal although standard Voice Procedure (VP) still applies. At the Section or Squad level, short range nets on Personal Role Radios are considered 'chat nets', although it is good practice to follow standard VP.

A Light Infantry Company operates a single command net with occasional use of additional nets for busy operations in order to declutter the command net, such as an Admin net or Offensive Support (Fires) net for Forward Observers, Forward Air Controllers or Joint Terminal Attack Controllers attached to the subunit. Each Platoon has a separate Platoon Command net, sometimes referred to in the US as an Assault net. Finally, each Section/Squad has a PRR chat net. Fire Teams work on the Section/Squad net but Team Leaders will monitor (listen to) the Platoon Command net on a separate radio. The Battalion Signals Officer distributes frequency allocations, call signs and passwords on a Communications Electronic Instruction (CEI) ahead of operations. As a rule it is better to use as few nets as possible.

Call Signs

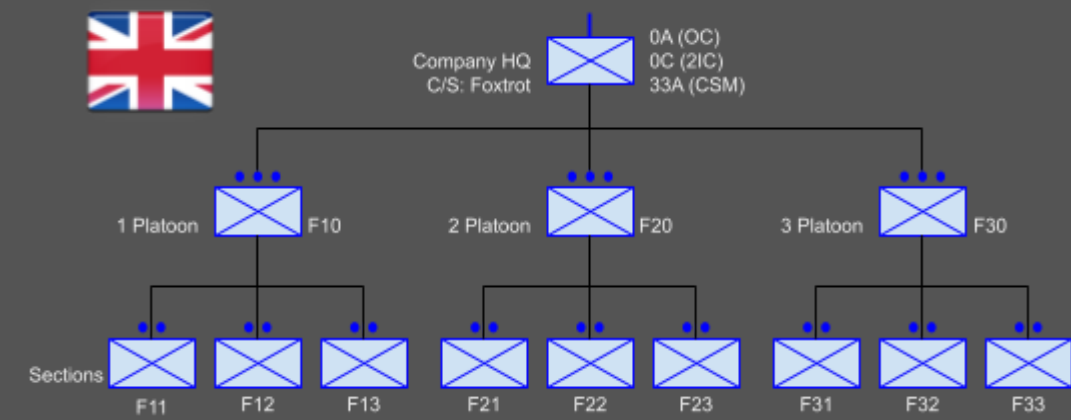
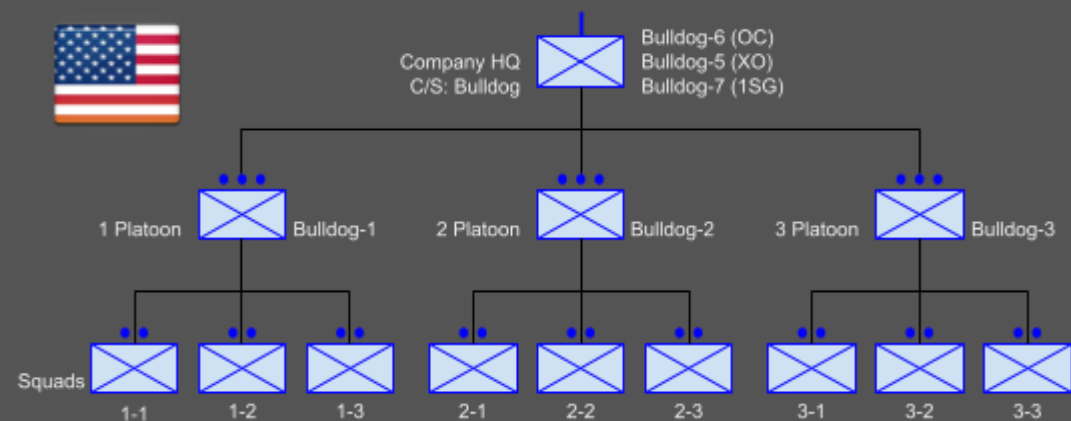
Call signs are a means of uniquely identifying each station on a net. Call signs will vary slightly depending on the structure and type of unit and even unit SOP, but this guide focuses on a generic Light Infantry Company. While the US and UK follow a slightly different approach, there is logic to both systems.

In the US Army, a Company is allocated a call sign identifier, often starting with the letter of the Company (e.g. Able for A Company, Bulldog for B Company). Platoons are designated with a number (Bulldog-1 for 1 Platoon). Each leadership position has a number affixed: 7 for NCOs, 6 for Commanders, 5 for Executive Officers. Hence Bulldog-7 is B Company First Sergeant. Bulldog-1-6 is B Company, 1 Platoon Leader. Support platoons are often given a separate callsign (e.g. Steel for mortar platoon). For brevity once comms have been established, the identifier is omitted and only the numbers are used. New call signs joining the net must announce themselves with the full call sign and identifier.

On the Platoon nets, Squads use the same call sign with the squad number affixed. Hence Bulldog-1-1 is 1 Platoon 1st Squad; Bulldog-1-1-A is 1 Platoon, 1st Squad, Alpha Team. “Actual” is appended to any call sign to specify the commander, as opposed to the Radio Telephone Operator (RTO) who would otherwise routinely answer the call.

In the UK, a call sign indicator (often a phonetic letter or unique word) is allocated to each sub unit. Platoons and Sections are designated by number, for example “F10” (pronounced Foxtrot One Zero) is B Company, 1 Platoon, where Foxtrot is the call sign indicator allocated to B Company in the CEI. “Alpha” specifies the Commander, so F10A is 1 Platoon Commander. This can be further broken down to designate Sections and Fire Teams, hence F11 is 1 Platoon, 1 Section; F11C is 1 Platoon, 1 Section, Charlie Fire Team.

Leadership positions have fixed call signs: 0A is the Company Commander, 0C is the 2IC, 33A is the Company Sergeant Major. 0 (Zero) is the Control Station and is



typically manned by the Radio Operator. On the Platoon nets, Sections use the same call signs though in this context 0A is the Platoon Commander, 0B the Platoon Sergeant.

Voice Procedure

Voice Procedure is used in order to get the most amount of information across in the shortest possible time. Airtime is precious and as much as possible needs to be reserved for command and control, so reducing the amount of unnecessary chatter is vital. To facility brevity and accuracy, VP employs a number of prowords with specific meanings and rules associated to them, which are largely standardised throughout NATO. Good net discipline can be maintained by following some basic rules:

Golden Rules of VP

- 1. Think before transmitting.
- 2. Avoid offering messages.
- 3. Be brief.
- 4. Be succinct.
- 5. Use Out instead of Over whenever possible.

Consider this:

“BULLDOG-1-6, BULLDOG-1-6 this BULLDOG, message over”

“Roger BULLDOG, this is BULLDOG-1-6, send traffic over”

“BULLDOG-1-6, initiate movement at this time to checkpoint Three Two Tango, Break, how copy over?”

“BULLDOG this is BULLDOG-1-6, Roger Wilco, moving to checkpoint Three Two Tango, I am Oscar Mike over”

“BULLDOG-1-6 this is BULLDOG Roger Out”

Compared to this:

“BULLDOG-1-6 this is BULLDOG, move now to Checkpoint Three Two Tango, over”

“BULLDOG-1-6, Roger Out”

Prowords

Prowords are standardised calls used to ensure understanding of common terms and tasks and help keep comms clear and succinct. Every proword has a specific and unique meaning and some of them will by implication trigger a certain set of activities. For example “CONTACT” explicitly means the call sign is engaged with the enemy and the chain of command will react accordingly. Care should therefore be take to use the correct proword to avoid unintended consequences.

BREAK

Indicates a 5 second pause in a long message to allow others to break in with critical information. Should only be used on half duplex nets by commanders providing long messages such as quick battle orders.

CANCEL	Cancel a previous message, as in "reference move to FRV, CANCEL. Hold firm."
CONTACT	I am coming under effective enemy fire and have engaged the enemy, as in "CONTACT WAIT OUT."
CORRECT	You are correct, or what you have transmitted is correct.
CORRECTION	An error has been made, the correct version is...
DANGER CLOSE	Used in Close Air Support requests to indicate ordnance will be dropped within a range that could cause friendly forces casualties.
DISREGARD	Transmission made in error, disregard it.
FIGURES	(Optional) Numerals to follow. Only required to avoid ambiguity.
MESSAGE	A message that requires recording is about to follow. Reply with "SEND".
OK 	I can hear you loud and clear. Used in reply to RADIO CHECK (UK)
OUT	I have finished speaking and do not require a reply.
OVER	I have finished speaking and require a reply. OVER and OUT are never used together.
RADIO CHECK	Use to confirm comms are working. Reply with "OK OVER" (UK) or "ROGER OVER" (US).
READ BACK	Read back the last message to confirm it has been received correctly.
RELAY (TO)	Retransmit this message to the following stations.
REPEAT	Repeat the last artillery or naval gunfire fire mission. Not to be confused with SAY AGAIN!
ROGER	I have received and understood your message. Used in reply to RADIO CHECK (US).
ROGER SO FAR	Confirm receipt and understanding of the part of a long message sent so far.
SAY AGAIN	Send the last message again. Can be combined with prowords "ALL AFTER" or "ALL BEFORE," as in "SAY AGAIN ALL AFTER Grid..."
SEND	I am ready to record your message. Response to "MESSAGE".
SIGHTING	I have seen the enemy but am not engaged. Followed by a Sighting Report.

VERIFY	Verify all or part of a message and send the correct version.
WAIT	Short pause - further information to follow in a few seconds.
WAIT OUT	Further information to follow in a few minutes (net is cleared for other users).
WRONG	You are wrong, or what you have transmitted is wrong.
WILCO 	I have received and understand your message and will comply. Since the meaning of ROGER is already implied, the two prowords should never be used together.

Incorrect Prowords

A number of words have crept into popular use which do not officially exist in military VP. Their provenance has been incorrectly attributed to the military by the entertainment industry or habits picked up from CB radio and Civil Aviation. This happens in the real military and not just in some ArmA groups but just because you heard a soldier say it once does not make it correct! They should be avoided as they add little value and merely clutter the net with unnecessarily long transmissions.

Incorrect	Correct
Affirmative	YES
At this time	NOW
Be Advised	Not required
How copy	OVER
Interrogative	Not required

Incorrect	Correct
Lima Charlie	OK or ROGER
Negative	NO
Roger your last	ROGER
Send traffic	Not required
Solid Copy	ROGER

Phonetic Pronunciation

While the phonetic alphabet is now used universally, pronunciation of numbers is taught slightly differently. For example, USMC teaches TREE but US and UK Armies say THREE. US use NINER but UK teach NINE.

Reports

Reports are VP drills designed to communicate the most critical information in a simple, unambiguous format quickly and easily. The most common tactical reports are Sighting, Contact, Spot and Situation Reports. SALUTE or SALTA are acronyms used to describe the enemy in detail and are aids to completeness. SALUTE is used for detailed recce reports whereas the slightly abbreviated SALTA is more commonly used for quick tactical reporting.

Report			
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	Sighting Report	Contact Report	Spot Report
Usage	Used when a unit observes an enemy or suspected threat but is not actually in contact. This is strictly distinct from a Contact. Contact must only be used if the unit is coming under effective enemy fire.	Used when a unit comes under effective enemy fire or has actively engaged the enemy. Immediately on coming under contact, the call sign sends "CONTACT WAIT OUT." All stations will keep traffic to a minimum until the call sign in contact has sent a full contact report.	Use when a unit observes any known or suspected threat activity or any characteristic of the area of operations likely to impact the mission. A SPOTREP should be sent within one minute of a contact and uses SALUTE to describe the enemy.
Format	• Time of report • Size of enemy • Activity • Location • Time observed • Actions taken	• Time of report • Size • Activity • Location • Actions	LINE 1 - Date & Time ____ (of report) LINE 2 - Unit ____ (sender's callsign) LINE 3 - Size ____ (number of enemy) LINE 4 - Activity ____ (what they are doing) LINE 5 - Location ____ (Grid of enemy) LINE 6 - Unit ____ (or uniform worn) LINE 7 - Time ____ (observed) LINE 8 - Equipment ____ (carried) LINE 9 - Assessment ____ LINE 10 - Narrative ____
Example	<i>"0A this is 31. Sighting as at 0930 hrs, Grid 12345678, 4 man patrol moving North on road, am observing, Out."</i>	<i>"0A this is 31, Contact Wait Out." "0A this is 31, Contact as at 0930 hrs, Grid 12345678, enemy bunker with PKM, am assaulting, Out."</i>	<i>"BULLDOG-6 this is BULLDOG-1, SPOTREP, one BRDM stationary at Grid 12345678, 0930 hrs, am continuing to observe, Out."</i>



Situation Report (SITREP)

Sitreps are the primary means of updating the chain of command on your current location and tactical situation. As a rule of thumb, each sub unit should send a Sitrep every 5 mins in contact and every 15 mins out of contact. They should also be sent after completing any significant task, such as an assault, upon reaching a checkpoint or RV, or when requested by the commander.

As a minimum, Sitreps must include the location of known Enemy and Friendly Forces. Admin and Logistics Requests may be added if the situation dictates. HQ will send a consolidate downward Sitrep



AMCAS

AMCAS is an abbreviation of Ammunition and Casualty state. It can be used in a SITREP to indicate the overall combat effectiveness (CE) of subunits.

- Green - over 90% CE

from time to time in order to ensure everyone is fully aware of the situation and the commander's intent.

- Time of report
- Enemy locations, casualties inflicted, PWs taken
- Friendly locations and state
- Commander's Intent
- Additional Info - Combat Service Support or other pertinent info

- Amber - 60% to 90% CE
- Red - less than 60% CE

A unit at less than 40% CE is considered to be destroyed.

"0B this is 31, AMCAS Green, Out."

"0A this is 31, SitRep as at 0930 hrs, Grid 12345678, have engaged and destroyed 10 infantry at Objective Tango, further 8 enemy infantry sighted 1000m on Axis, withdrawing North. Am re-orging and awaiting further orders, Over."

Support Requests

Some request formats vary between national militaries and different units, especially in the case of ArmA where they are often tailored to the game and capabilities of specific units. Refer to your unit SOPs for further information.

Fire Missions

Target Grid is the method used by an untrained observer to request Offensive Support (such as 81mm mortar and 105mm Light Gun) from a Forward Observer attached to the unit. The FO then handles the details and execution of the fire mission with the artillery battery. Note that when requesting OS, every line is repeated in full by the answering call sign to confirm it is correct. The VP used between FO and battery has additional detail but is not included here.

 Fire Mission "Target Grid"		
Fire Support Request	__ this is __ fire mission, over.	<i>"K11 this is 32, Fire Mission, Over"</i> <i>"K11, Fire Mission, Over."</i>
Indication	Target Grid Ref _____ (Optional) Target No. X-Ray _____	<i>"Fire Mission, Grid 3221 5612..."</i>
Direction	Direction of target from the observer	<i>...Direction 1800 mils....</i>
Target Description	Type and Activity	<i>...Enemy infantry in the open...</i>

Effect	Neutralise (a combination of HE & Smoke) Screen (a smoke screen in front of target) Illuminate (star shells)	<i>...Neutralise...</i>
When & For How Long	Immediate (<i>Now</i>) Delayed (<i>In 2 minutes</i>) On My Command	<i>...Now for 2 minutes, Over"</i>
Confirmation		<i>"K11, Fire Mission Grid 3221 5612, Direction 1800 mils, Enemy infantry in the open, Neutralise now for 2 minutes, Out"</i>
Fire For Adjust (if required)	Shot 15 (time until rounds land) Splash (called 5 seconds before impact) Left/Right, Add/Drop	<i>"32 this is K11, Shot 15....Splash" "K11 Left 100 Add 50 Over"</i>
Fire For Effect	Shot 15 (time until rounds land) Splash (called 5 seconds before impact)	<i>"32 this is K11, Shot 15" "32, Shot 15, Out" "32 this is K11, Splash, Out"</i>
Fire Mission Complete	Rounds Complete (guns have stopped firing) Repeat (repeat the fire mission exactly) Record As Target (log fire mission for a repeat in future e.g. UT1001) End of Mission (support no longer required)	<i>"32 this is K11, Rounds Complete, Over" "32, Rounds Complete, End of Mission, Over" "K11, End of Mission, Out"</i>

Close Air Support

CAS from fast air or attack helicopters is normally requested via a 9 line CAS request ("nine liner"). An abbreviated 7 line format can be used in emergencies. For most game purposes, this ECAS request is sufficient. The critical information is Lines 1 to 3 and 7.

 Emergency Close Air Support		
*Line 1	Target Grid	<i>"K20 this is 32, Standby for ECAS, Over"</i> <i>"K20, Send, Over"</i> <i>"32, Line 1, 123456..."</i>

*Line 2	Target Type A - Infantry B - Light Vehicle C - Armoured D - Fixed	Line 2, Alpha
*Line 3	Requested Ordnance H - Guns I - Rockets J - AT Missiles K - LGB	<i>Line 3, India</i>
Line 4	Marking V - Smoke W - IR Beam X - Laser Y - None	<i>Line 4, Victor</i>
Line 5	Ingress A - Heading (towards target) B - Battle Point Grid (Run In)	<i>Line 5, North West from Grid 123456</i>
Line 6	Egress H - Heading	<i>Line 6, North</i>
*Line 7	Friendlylies V - 400m+ W - 300m+ X - 200m+ Y - 100m+ Z - Danger Close	<i>Line 7, Victor, Over"</i>

Casualty Evacuation

CASEVAC requests follow a 9 line format. However, some information is irrelevant in the game context so we can use a simplified 5 line format.



CASEVAC Request

Line 1	Location of Pick Up Site (Grid)	<i>"Hello K20 this is 31, Standby for CASEVAC request, Over"</i> <i>"K20, Send, Over"</i> <i>"31, Line 1, 123456..."</i>
Line 2	Call sign & Frequency (PI HQ by default)	<i>Line 2, 32 on 77.9</i>
Line 3	Number of Casualties (T1, T2, T3, T4)	<i>Line 3, 1x T1, 2 x T2</i>
LIne 4	Security of Pick Up Site E - Enemy N - No Enemy P - Possible Enemy	<i>Line 4, November</i>
Line 5	Method of Marking Pick Up Site (Smoke, Lightsticks, Other)	<i>Line 5, Purple Smoke, Over"</i>

Annex A: Example Call Sign Matrix

This is an example call sign matrix for B Company showing the US call sign system and the equivalent UK or “Commonwealth” system. The second table shows the call signs used on the platoon level net for 1 Platoon B Company.

B Company (Company Net)		
 Call Sign: BULLDOG	 Call Sign Indicator: FOXTROT	Station
BULLDOG	0	Control Station (RTO / RO)
BULLDOG-6-Actual	0A	Company Commander
	0B	Company Commander’s Vehicle
BULLDOG-5	0C	Company XO / 2IC
BULLDOG-7	33A	Company 1st Sergeant / Sergeant Major
BULLDOG-1	F10	1 Platoon

BULLDOG-1-6-Actual	F10A	1 Platoon Leader / Platoon Commander
BULLDOG-1-1	F11	1 Squad / Section
BULLDOG-1-1-A, B, C	F11C, F11D	Fire Teams
BULLDOG-2	F20	2 Platoon
BULLDOG-3	F30	3 Platoon

1 Platoon B Company (Platoon Net)		
 Call Sign: BULLDOG	 Call Sign Indicator: FOXTROT	Station
BULLDOG-1	0	Control Station (RTO / RO)
BULLDOG-1-6-Actual	0A	Platoon Leader / Platoon Commander
BULLDOG-1-7	0B	Platoon Sergeant
BULLDOG-1-1	F11	1st Squad / Section
BULLDOG-1-1-A, B, C	F11C, F11D	Fire Teams
BULLDOG-1-2	F12	2nd Squad / Section
BULLDOG-1-3	F13	3rd Squad / Section