



EHAT Lesson 2.4: Vulnerable Points and Vulnerable Areas



Overview

2.4.1 Definitions

2.4.2 Types of VPs

2.4.3 Examples of VPs and VAs

2.4.4 Personal Threat
Assessment - CAGES



Terminal Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, the participants will be able to describe and recognize Vulnerable Points and Vulnerable Areas as well as apply the use of CAGES to dynamically assess vulnerable points.



2.4.1 Definitions of VPs and VAs

Definition

VP's and VA's

A Vulnerable Point (VP) is a **specific point** where it is particularly advantageous to target friendly forces with an IED and/or Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW), ambush or both. They are typically characterized by prominent or restrictive feature

Vulnerable Areas (VA) are those **areas** where the ground/terrain lends itself to IED or SALW attack.

Definition

The two most important characteristics that help describe VPs and VAs are:

- **Canalisation** – an area or point where we can be predicted to be.
- **Slow down or stop** – a area or point where we will spend longer than usual.

IEDs will be placed in areas where they are most likely to be successful known as VP and VA locations



2.4.2 Types of VPs and VAs

Enemy Opportunity

VP's and VA's

Terrain Oriented VA/VP

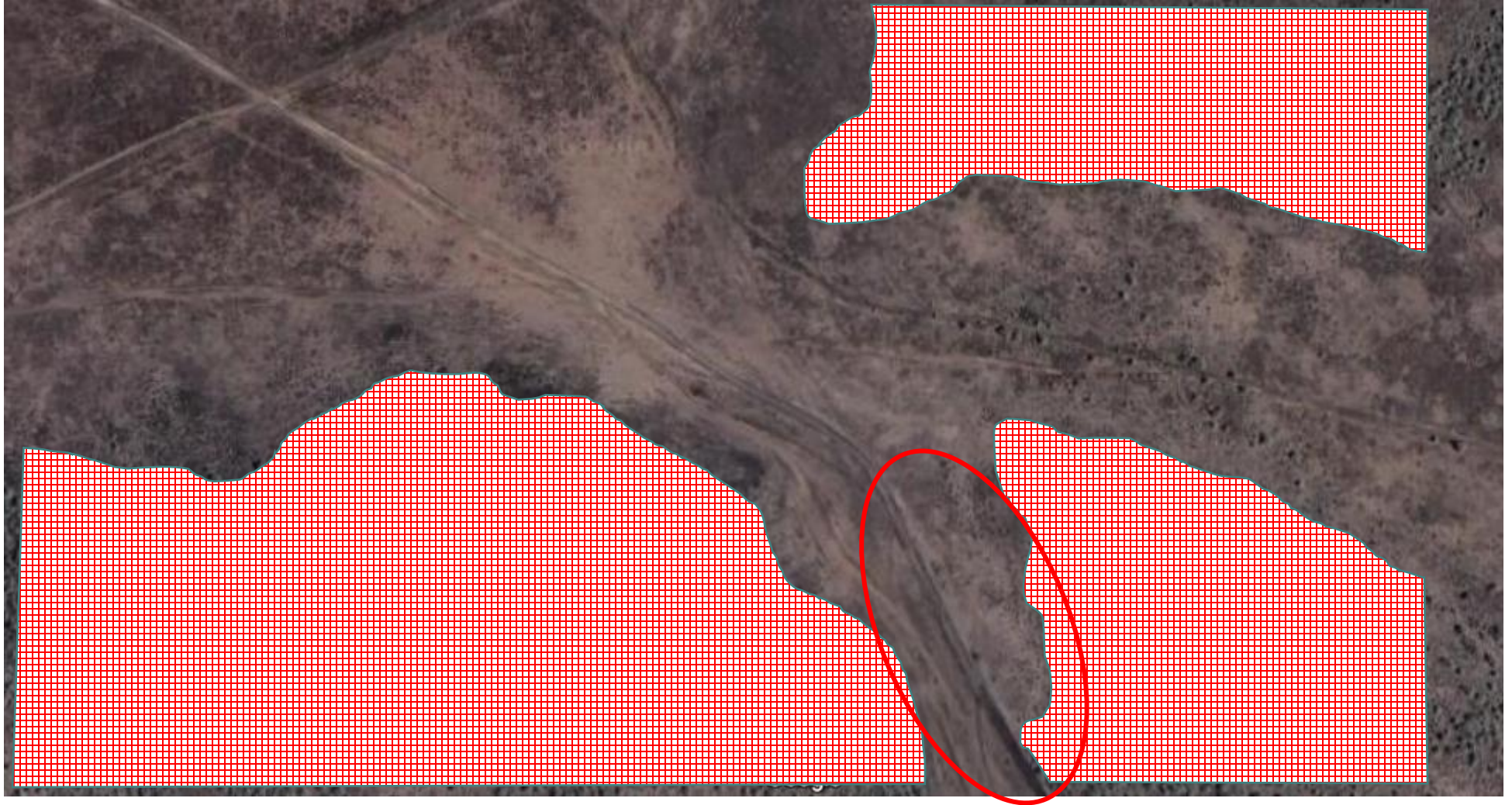
A terrain orientated VP/VA is where the ground offers a particular advantage

Situationally Oriented VA/VP

An adversary may use friendly forces patterns or predictable actions/responses to mount an attack at a specific point. It may be difficult to fully understand the adversary's intent during planning; where this is the case, Advanced Search assets should be tasked or advice sought from a Search Advisor.

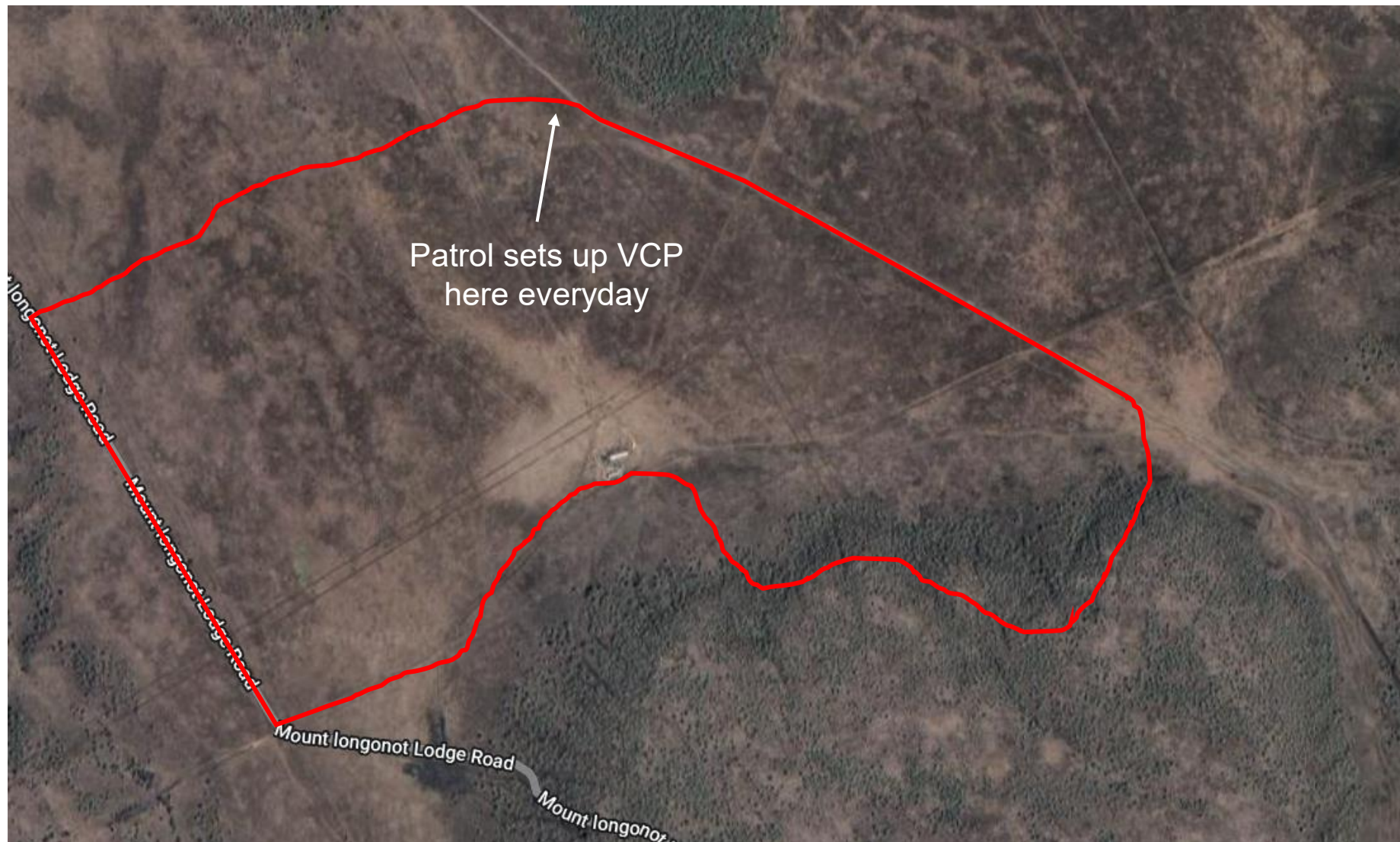
Enemy Opportunity

Terrain Oriented



Enemy Opportunity

Situationally Oriented





2.4.3 Examples of VPs and VAs

Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points

- Obvious road junctions or bends in roads
- High banked roads, culverts or bridges
- Choke points
- River, stream or Wadi crossings
- Previous patrol routes.
- Previous and likely ICP locations and cordon positions
- Frequently used/obvious approaches to SF base locations
- Potholes or other known obstructions on roads, tracks or paths

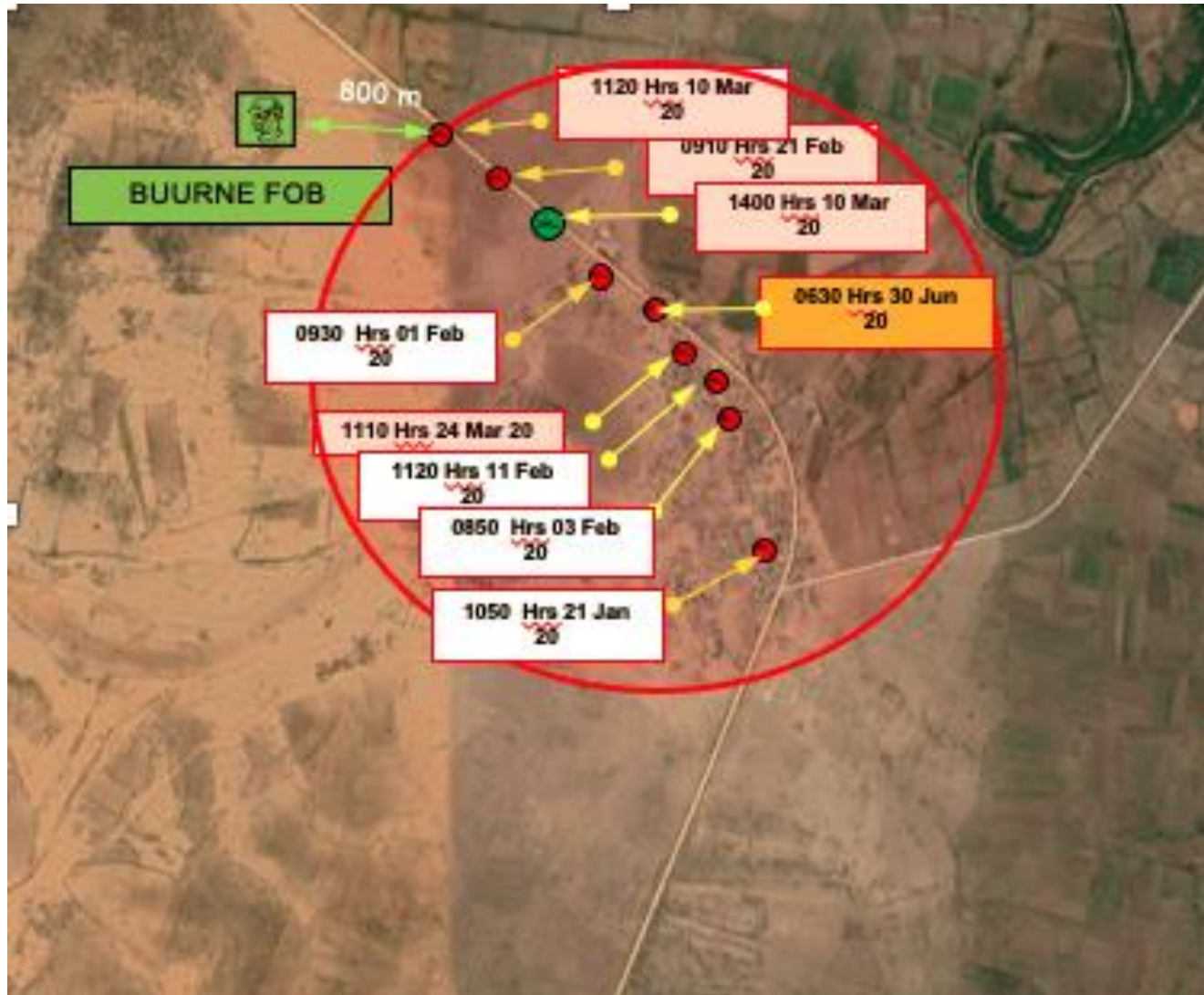
Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Previous Attack Sites



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Approach to friendly force locations



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Previously occupied locations

No	Year	Incident in Host Nation FOB	IED
1	2017	25 June, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	
2	2018	7 June, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	YES
3	2018	25 August, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	
4	2018	15 October, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	YES
5	2018	1 December, Host Nation vacate the FOB due to political issues allowing to occupy the position	
6	2019	17 August, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	
7	2020	25 March, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	YES
8	2020	5 August, conduct a pre-dawn attack and briefly occupies the FOB	YES

Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Previously occupied locations



Example of two previously occupied check points, both of which with VO IEDs, to target returning troops

Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Culverts



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Bridges



Songobia Bridge, Mali

Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Bridges



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Intersections and Junctions



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Sharp Turns



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Choke Points



IED on a choke point in Timbuktu Mali

Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Steep Slopes/Crest of Hill



Examples of VPs

Vulnerable Points – Areas of soft ground or pot holes

Soft Ground can prove advantageous to the Insurgent:

- It is easier to emplace devices in soft ground.
- Vehicles are forced to slow down.
- Vehicles can become stuck.
- Troops may have to dismount vehicle to help with recovery if they become stuck.



Examples of VAs

Vulnerable Areas

Common characteristics of vulnerable areas include (mnemonic **POLICE THESE**):

- **P**reviously used tracks & patrol routes
- **O**ften used positions
- **L**inear features
- **I**nterior of buildings
- **C**analized routes
- **E**xtended long stretches of road

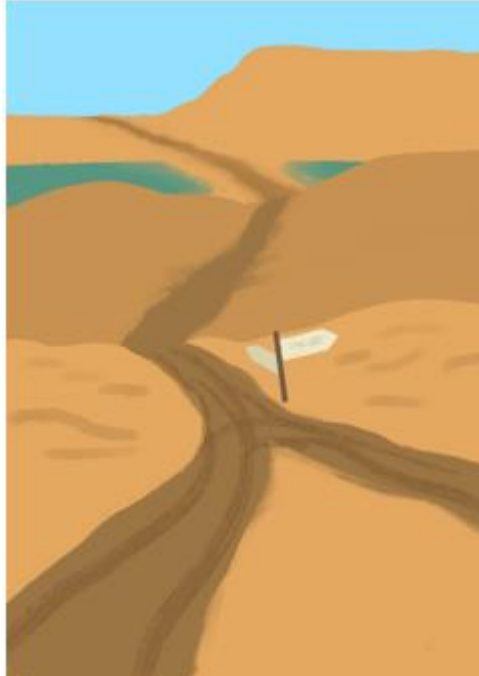
- **T**actically important areas
- **H**igh ground dominated areas
- **E**scape routes into and out of areas
- **S**uccessive VPs in close proximity
- **E**xit or entry of areas of urban / rural interfaces;

Examples of VAs

Vulnerable Areas – Examples



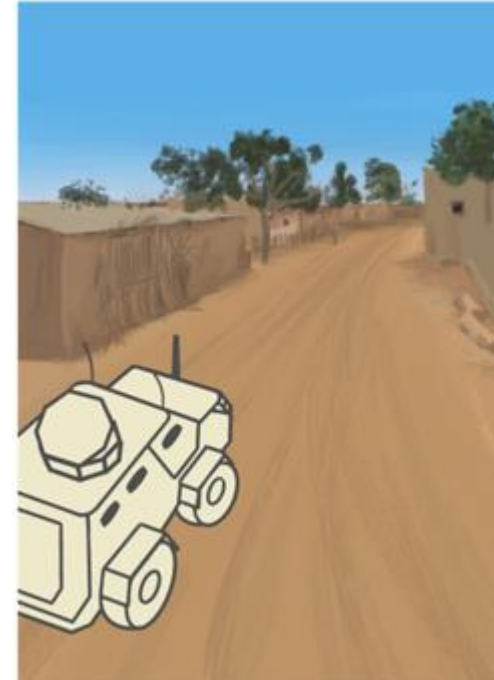
Long sections
of channeled
terrain



A series of VPs
close together



Terrain
dominated by
high ground



Urban rural
interface

Examples of VAs

Previously Used Tracks and Patrol Routes



Tracks used by previous Patrols provide a good indicator of future patrol routes. Pattern setting allows Troops to be targeted.



If you are on a route that has been used before or regularly used, you are vulnerable to attack

Examples of VAs

Linear Features



Provide the Insurgent with:

- Easy concealment of Command Wires
- Line of Sight between Firing Point and Contact Point

Provide troops with:

- Shade from the heat
- Cover from view and/or fire

Examples include:

- Compound walls
- Irrigation ditches
- Edges of fields
- Wadis

Examples of VAs

Linear Features

Interiors of buildings can easily conceal enemy presence as well as offering opportunity for channelling through doorways in which devices may be hidden.



Examples of VAs

Canalized Routes



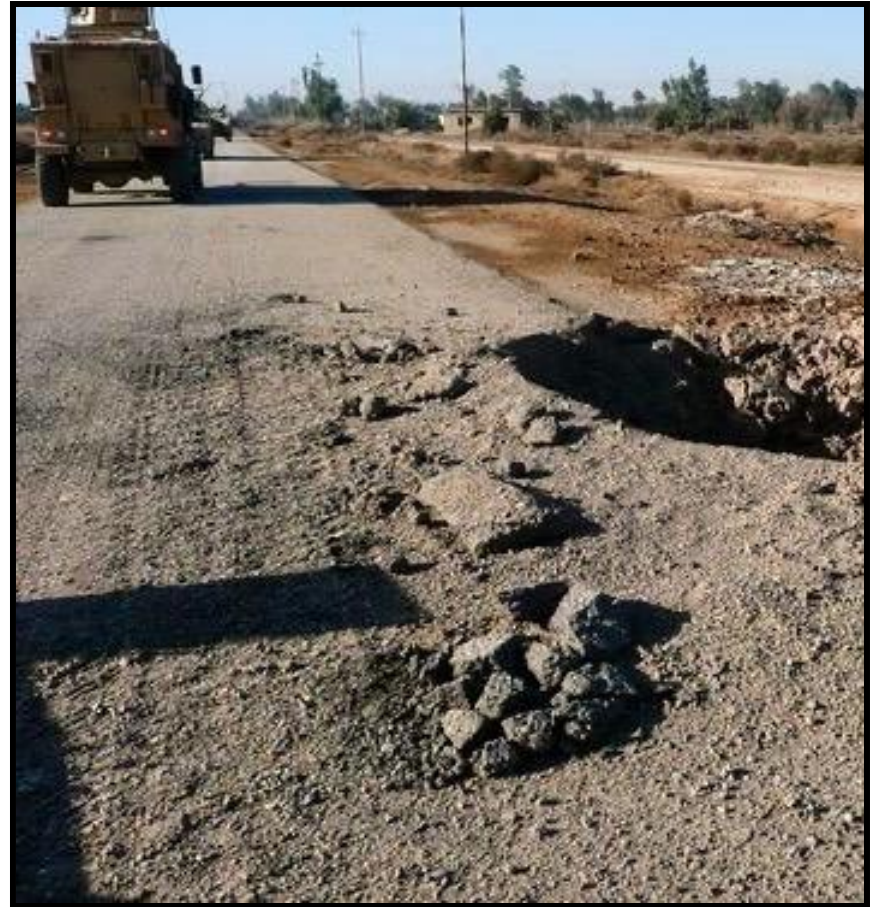
Canalized routes are areas where patrols are channelled by **natural** or **man-made** features such as:

- Banks, ditches.
- Gaps between dense vegetation.
- The base of steep terrain.

Examples of VAs

Extended Stretches of Observable Road

- Where insurgents can see Friendly Forces approach from a distance.
- This type of terrain increases potential for CWIED and RCIED threats.



Examples of VAs

Areas of Tactical Importance



Areas that are tactically important to troops may become a target so that the Insurgent causes disruption to future operations, they include:

- Airfields, Runways and HLSs.
- Communication masts.
- Water re supply points.
- Fuel re-supply points.
- Crossing Points.

Examples of VAs

High Ground Dominated Areas



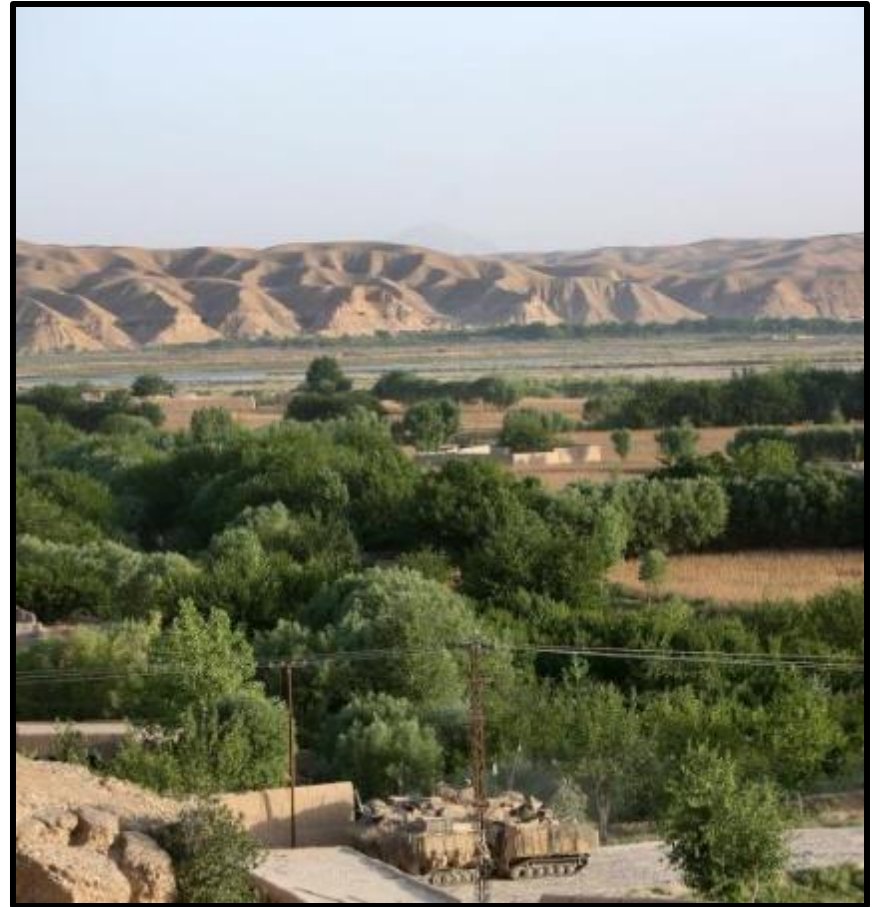
High ground-dominated areas provide any of the following:

- Good field of view of approaching targets.
- Clear line of sight to a contact point and aiming marker.
- Unobstructed signal from firing point to the receiver of a RCIED.

Examples of VAs

Escape Routes

- Escape routes may be littered with IEDs to protect perpetrators withdrawal.
- They can also conceal routes of approach/exit for other potential attacks.



Examples of VAs

Successive VPs in Close Proximity

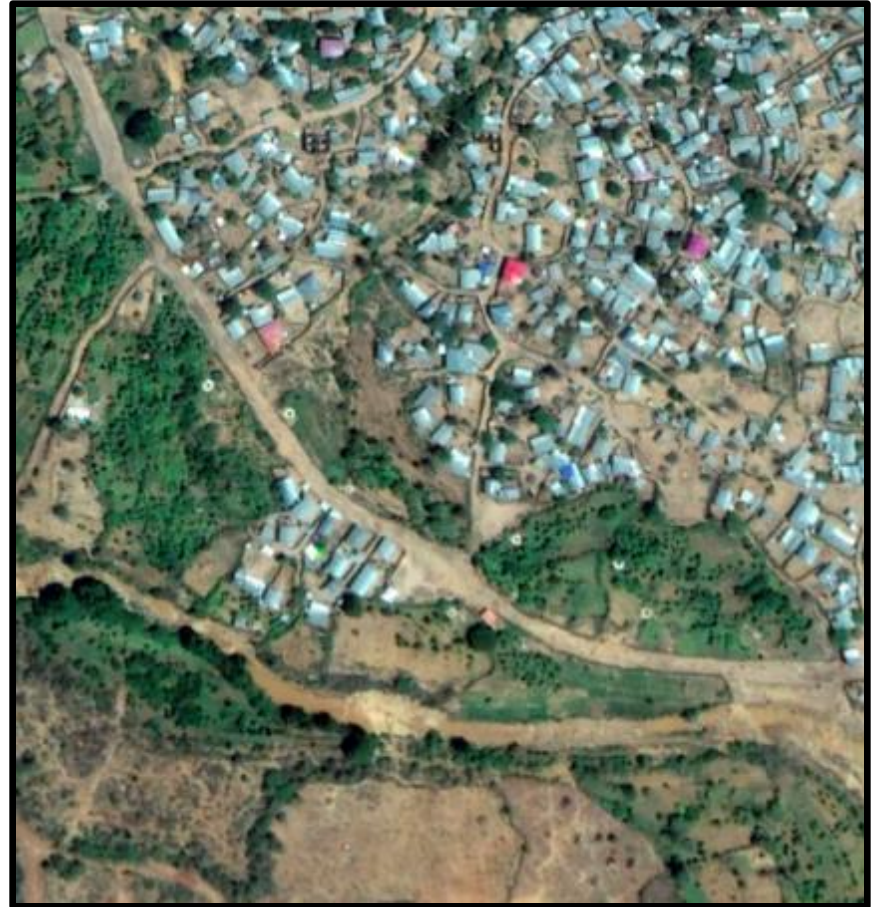


A number of VPs in close proximity which can not be treated separately are treated as a VA.

Examples of VAs

Exit Routes of Rural Urban Interface

When changing from urban/rural environments, formations will be changed which takes time to execute and creates vulnerabilities.

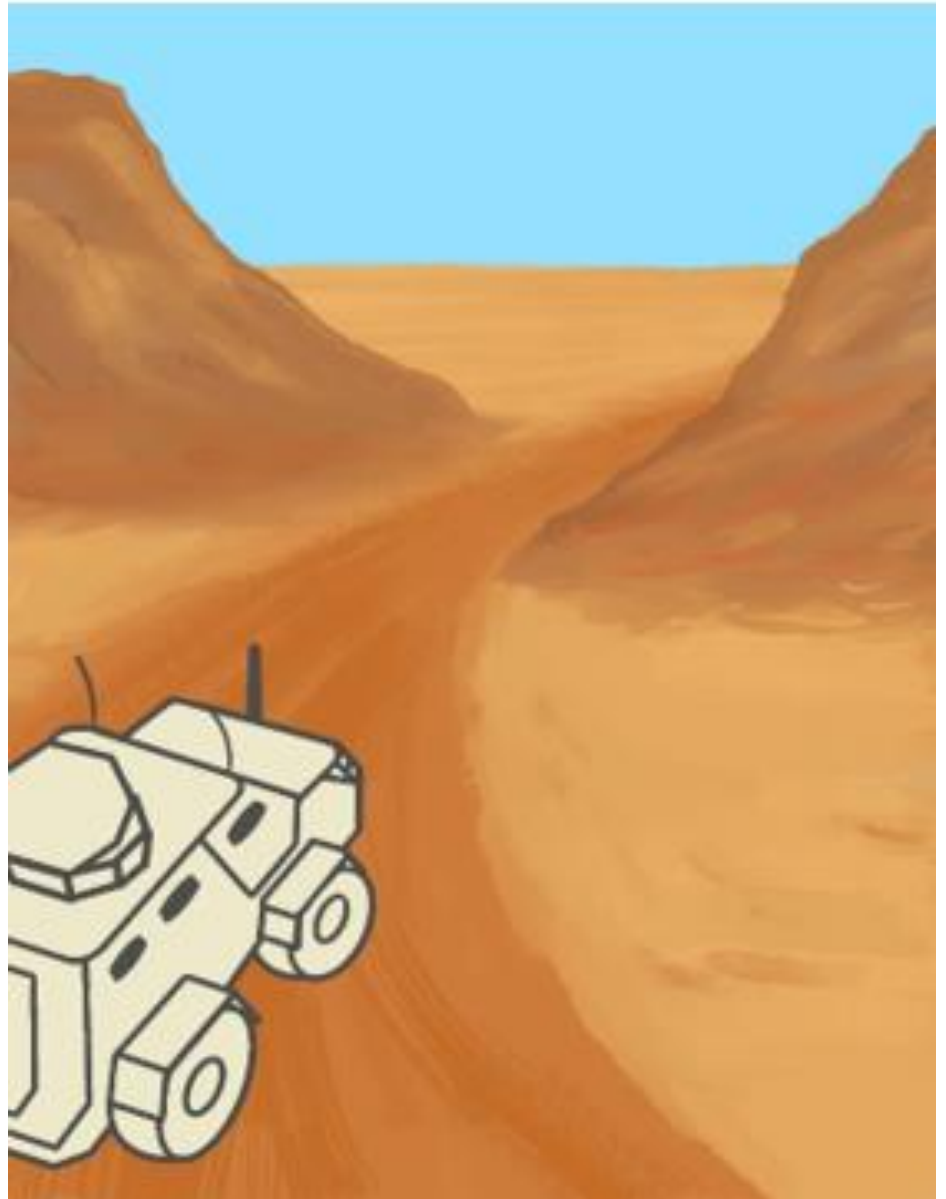




2.4.4 Personal Threat Assessment - CAGES

Personal Threat Assessment

- IEDs are not placed at random
- They are placed at points which advantage the adversary
- These are known as **vulnerable points**.
- The use of a personal threat assessment can help to alert that you might be approaching a vulnerable point.



Personal Threat Assessment

Channelling

Aiming Markers

Ground (Terrain)

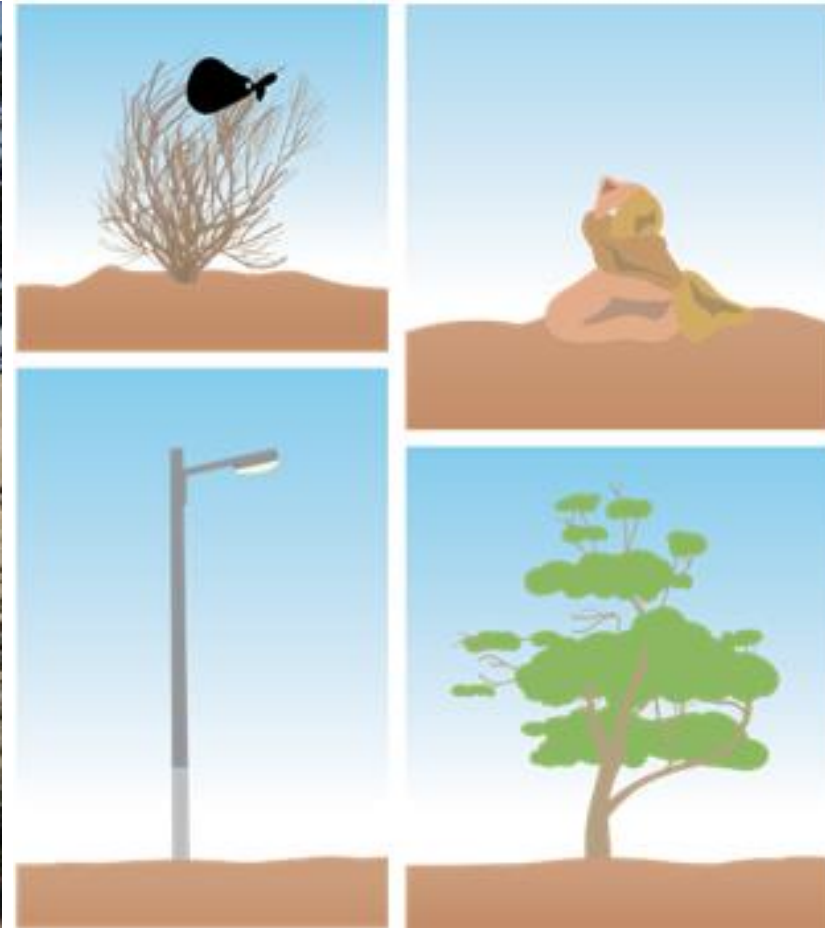
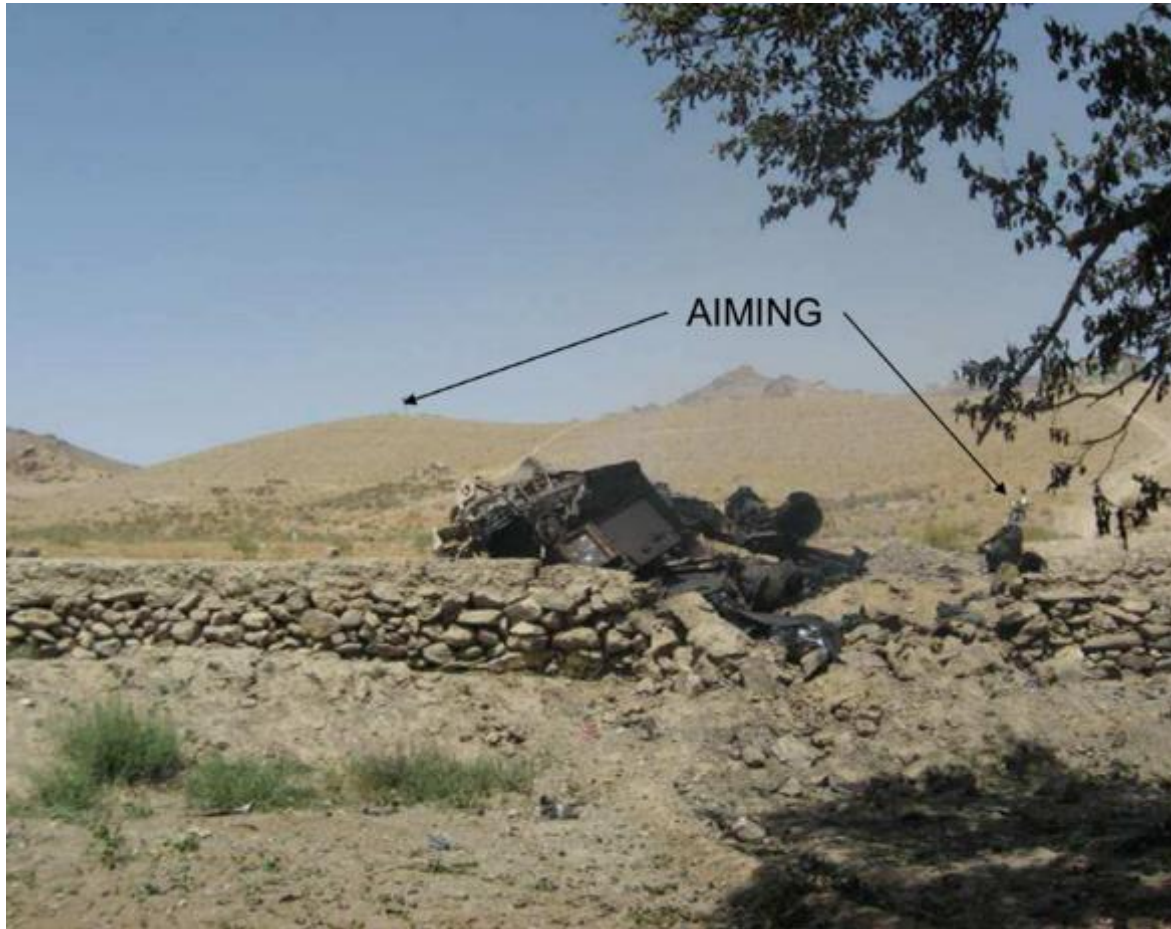
Environment

Setting Patterns

Personal Threat Assessment – Channelling



Personal Threat Assessment – Aiming Markers



Personal Threat Assessment – Ground



Personal Threat Assessment – Ground



Personal Threat Assessment – Environment

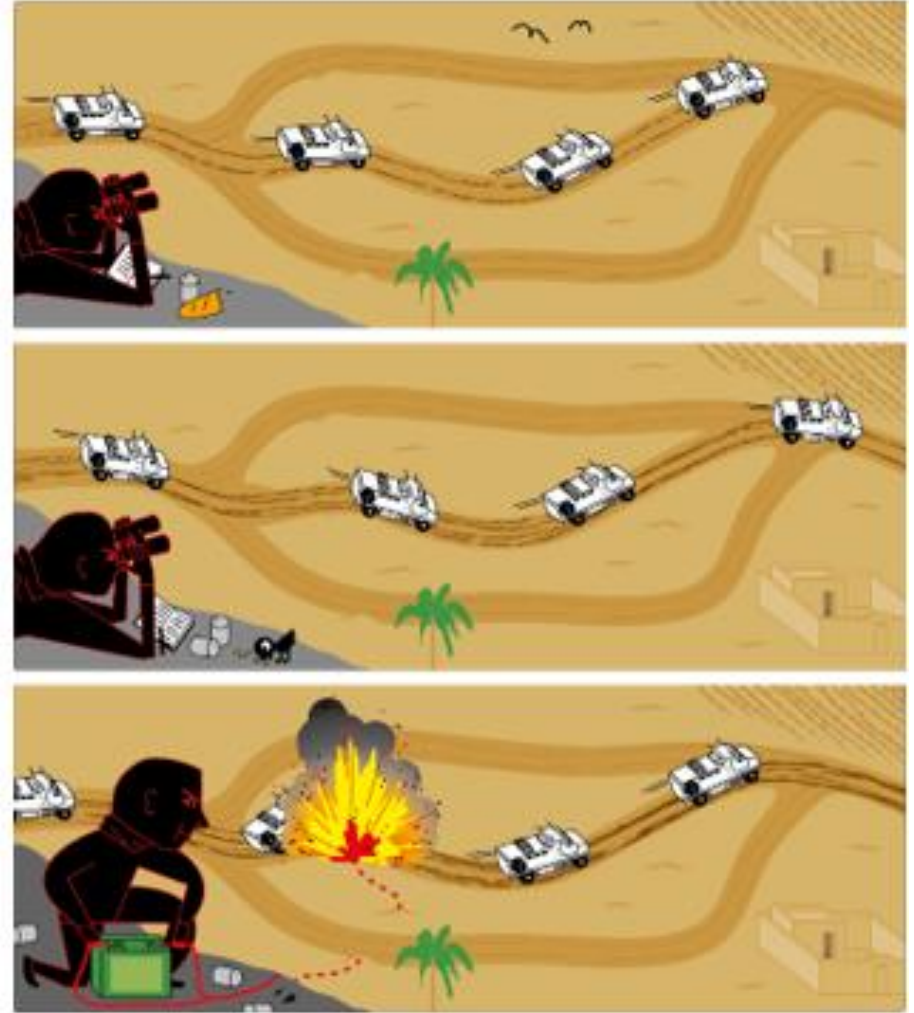
*“absence of the normal and
presence of the abnormal”*



Personal Threat Assessment – Setting Patterns



Previous attack locations and rest areas



Pattern setting

Personal Threat Assessment

Channelling
Aiming Markers
Ground (Terrain)
Environment
Setting Patterns

- Treat this like a drill.
- Systematically ask yourself if you can see any of these indicators on patrol
- If you suspect something, make it known to your patrol commander

Questions?

