

## TOPIC: FIRE CONTROL ORDERS (FCO)

A fire control order is given so that the soldier can recognize the target and fire at it effectively. It is important that the cadet knows how to react to the fire control order sequence.

A fire control order is given in a definite sequence. The mnemonic '**GRIT**' will help in remembering the sequence:

1. **GROUP.** This indicates who is being addressed, "Section", "Fire Team" (Charlie or Delta), "No. 2 Rifleman", etc.
2. **RANGE.** This indicates the distance to the target.
3. **INDICATION.** This indicates in which direction to look and what to look for.
4. **TYPE of FIRE.** This indicates what type of fire is required, Deliberate, Rapid or Bursts.

The order is completed with the command "**Fire**".

There are five basic types of fire control orders to cater for battle situations:

1. **FULL.** This is given if there is sufficient time: "Charlie Fire Team - 300 ruined house - bottom left corner - Fire".
2. **BRIEF.** This is given when there is little time and the target is obvious: "Section - quarter left - rapid - Fire".
3. **DELAYED.** This is used when the movements of friendly forces or of the enemy are known or can be guessed. The order "Fire" is delayed until the right moment: "Charlie Fire Team - 200 - half right prominent gap in hedgerow rapid - await my order - Fire".
4. **INDIVIDUAL.** This is used when it is impracticable for the commander to control the time to open fire so he passes the responsibility to the individual(s) concerned: "No. 1 and 2 Riflemen - 200 - slightly left - farm buildings enemy in that area - watch and shoot".
5. **TRACER.** Tracer may be used to indicate an extremely difficult target, or to indicate a target to a tank. "300 — watch this tracer — where it hits — enemy".

## **ISSUING FIRE CONTROL ORDERS (FCO)**

A successful FCO is one which brings controlled effective fire down on the enemy and takes them by surprise. It is essential that all cadets and NCOs know the meaning of the terms used in fire control and can decide quickly on the best type of FCO to be used for each particular situation.

The following terms are used:

1. **Fire Unit.** This is any number of soldiers firing under one commander, the fire unit commander, e.g., fire team and the fire team commander.
2. **Fire Direction Orders.** These are orders that a fire unit commander receives from his superior. They may include key ranges, special orders to withhold fire, when to open fire, at what targets and at what rates.
3. **Fire Control Orders (FCO).** These are orders that the fire unit commander gives to control and direct the fire of his cadets.
4. **Arc of Fire.** This is the ground for which a fire unit is responsible and in which it engages targets.
5. **Axis of Arc of Fire.** This is the approximate centre of the arc.
6. **Field of Fire.** This is the area of ground on which an individual cadet or a fire unit can fire effectively.

Before giving a FCO, the following should be assessed:

1. **The Target.** Is it sufficiently near, clear and vulnerable to justify opening fire. Consider if it would be better to wait for a more vulnerable target, or more complete surprise.
2. **Weapons.** Which of the weapons available would obtain the best results.

3. **Type of Fire.** Rapid fire is used to cover movement in the final stages of an assault. On other occasions, it is only justified if it will make surprise more complete or if the target is particularly vulnerable. Otherwise deliberate fire may be sufficient.

Only give an individual FCO when it is impracticable to control the time of opening fire. When engaging a large target, direct fire at one point on it at a time.

A FCO should be given always as follows and can easily be remembered by the mnemonic

**'CLAP':**

1. **C**learly, calmly and concisely.
2. **L**oud enough for the soldier to hear it above the noise of battle.
3. **A**s an order.
4. **P**auses to allow for target acquisition, sights to be set if applicable.

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