Close Combat Marine
Workbook

Marine Corps Institute
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Foreword

Close Combat and Learning Infantry Tactics

I have learned more about small-unit infantry tactics from the "Close Combat" simulation than I have from fourteen years of Marine Corps infantry experience.

"Close Combat" is a computer combat simulation published by Atomic Games. The focus of the simulation is on infantry combat at the small-unit level. The series currently consists of five versions: Close Combat I: *Omaha Beach*, II: *A Bridge Too Far*, III: *The Russian Front*, IV: *Battle of the Bulge*, and V: *Invasion Normandy*.

I am an infantry major with fourteen years commissioned service, seven years with 5th Marines, three years in schools, and three years as an infantry training officer with the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab. I have deployed overseas with 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines four times. I have commanded two infantry platoons and one rifle company. I have served as a battalion operations officer and regimental operations officer. I am a student of tactics. I have taught NCOs and officers infantry tactics. I have participated and led tactical decision training.

None of these activities or learning experiences can match the effective and focused tactical learning that I have experienced through repetitive fighting of the small unit scenarios in "Close Combat."

"Close Combat" permits a player to fight hundreds of scenarios, make thousands of tactical decisions, experiment with different tactics, and learn from his mistakes. I would be a far more qualified platoon commander now than I was twelve years ago. Through fighting the "Close Combat" simulation, I have internalized significant platoon-level tactical lessons:

- *Long unsupported assaults are deadly.* Assault for short distances, against a lightly armed or well-suppressed position. A single enemy soldier can destroy a squad across 100 meters of open ground.

- *A long covered approach is always better than a short open route.* Be careful of covered approaches that cannot be covered by an overwatching unit.

- *Every unit needs obscuration.* Smoke save lives. Every assault and every withdrawal should use smoke.

- *Fire and maneuver is the key tactic.* Use the majority of your force to overwhelmingly suppress the enemy, and a small assault unit to rapidly close on the objective.

- *It's all about suppression.* Fire without maneuver is wasteful and indecisive. Effective suppression is the basis for all infantry tactics.

- *Units without mutual support are doomed.* Mutually supported units protect each other from being fixed or assaulted.

- *Mortars are inherently inaccurate.* Area suppression is NOT destruction. Rounds are limited. Use them well. Don't waste mortars on bunkers or buildings.

- *Concentrate your fire.* Fire control insures decisive action. In contact, men will disburse their fire. Sequentially destroying targets with point fire is more effective than distributing ineffective fires.

- *Every unit— squad, platoon, and company—needs antitank capability when facing tanks.* An infantry unit with no organic antitank weapon is either *retreating* or *overrun*. Tanks can only be fought in close terrain.

- *For anti-tank positions, deep and narrow sectors of fire with defilade on both sides are best.* The best sector of fire allows you to engage only *one* tank at a time.

- *Defensive positions are temporary.* All units need multiple positions and the ability to withdraw.

- *For machinegun positions, deep and narrow sectors of fire, with defilade on both sides, are best.* Primary and secondary sectors separated by frontal protection are better.

- *Cover is life.* Move from one covered position to another. Good cover is relative to a single enemy position. Mutually supporting enemy positions can overcome the protection of your cover.

- *Use bounding overwatch to move.* A squad in contact needs immediate suppression from another unit. The measure of success is the number of units that can immediately bring suppression to bear upon enemy contact.

Good Marine leaders know all of these lessons. They have been taught, they have read, they have trained to do them. But I, and those Marines who have fought "Close Combat," know these lessons in our bones. We know the penalty for mistakes, for misreading the situation, for making decisions too late. Hundreds of simulated men have died in botched assaults, poorly laid positions, and as a result of unexpected enemy actions in order to teach these lessons. We have examined the ground, checked the line-of-sight, positioned the units, and supervised the units in contact so many times that the key tactical principles have become ingrained as second nature.

I have defended three hundred road intersections. Not just the first step of putting a defensive scheme on paper, but all the way through to initiation of combat, falling back to secondary positions under pressure, and sometimes being overrun by the enemy because I failed to protect my machine gun positions. I cannot walk across a street now without seeing in my mind the intersection occupied: "An anti-tank weapon tucked into that low position with an oblique field

of fire and good defilade, machineguns here and here, one squad forward with a alternate position near the guns, one squad on the corner in case they put infantry down that alley."

The historical methods for teaching tactics, walking the ground, working through the examples in the manuals, tactical decision games, and actual field exercises, are important and must be done by all leaders. Schools and units must focus on real leaders, real units, and real ground.

To augment this practical training however, leaders need to experience the chaotic challenges of combat hundreds of times. As an inexpensive and easy-to-use tool to teach a Marine leader the dynamics of tactics, the "Close Combat" simulation is matchless.

- *Repetition*. In order to understand and identify patterns, Marines need hundreds of simulated examples. In order to internalize lessons, Marines need to fight an active enemy and suffer from their own tactical mistakes. Through repetition, the basic lessons become so well known that advanced tactics and experimentation can be attempted. Only with the experience of fighting through a hundred enemy positions can a leader look for weaknesses in a given position and initiate creative ways to exploit that weakness. Reading the subtle aspects of a tactical situation is a learned skill that requires far more practice than is currently available outside of a simulation.

- *Efficient use of time*. Schools and units schedule training time. Far more time is typically available to individuals in the 'gaps.' Weekends, nights, travel time, and dead time can all be used for individual simulation training. This time is usually far more plentiful than that allocated to formal learning environments. In the operating forces, especially, opportunities for individualized learning should be maximized.

- *Peer competition*. Marines can fight each other on a simulated battlefield. These tactical learning experiences, heightened by professional rivalry, can serve as a catalyst for doctrinal discussions, an opportunity to build leader cohesion, and a chance to compare tactics and techniques among professionals. "Close Combat" simulation is a great tool while deployed either on ship, on exercise, or overseas.

"Close Combat" is a valuable tool. I recommend it to all Marine leaders interested in improving their small-unit tactical skills. Fight the scenarios. Fight your peers. *Fight to learn to lead*.

Brendan B. McBreen
Major   USMC

Introduction   How to use this Workbook

The **purpose** of this Workbook is to help you use *Close Combat Marine* to learn basic small-unit infantry tactical decisionmaking skills.

This section is organized into eight **modules**. Each module includes one or more **guidelines** and one or more **fights**. Each guideline explains a single tactical concept. Each fight corresponds to a *Close Combat Marine* scenario.

The first fight page of each scenario identifies the following:

- Simulation/Scenario
- Close Combat Marine Map used
- Task Organization
- Company Commander's Orders
- Sketch map

The second part of each scenario has the following:

- Issues for Discussion
- Tactical Themes
- Additional options

Procedure. For each module:

- Read the guideline.
- On the fight page, read the *Company Commander's Order.* Develop a plan for your platoon.
- Fight the scenario on the computer
- Capture what you learned by reviewing the *Issues for Discussion* and the *Tactical Themes.* Re-fight the scenario using the *Options*.

The **focus** of this Workbook is on the infantry platoon. In every scenario, you play the Platoon Commander of 1st Platoon of "A" Company of an unnamed infantry battalion. Although your *Company Commander's Order* references the other platoons of the company, you may or may not see the other platoons or the company headquarters in the scenario.

Your **units** are identified on-screen by a standard three-character callsign. The first character identifies the company, the second identifies the platoon, and the third letter identifies the squad or section:

A13

Company	Platoon	Squad
	0 – Company HQ	0 – Platoon HQ
	1 – 1st Platoon	1 – 1st Squad
	2 – 2nd Platoon	2 – 2nd Squad
	3 – 3rd Platoon	3 – 3rd Squad
	4 – Weapons Platoon	

To use this Workbook, you **need to have** *Close Combat Marine* installed on an available computer. You **need to know** the basics of how to use the simulation – how to order each of your units to

move, shoot, and defend. If you have never used *Close Combat Marine*, complete the *Boot Camp Tutorial* to learn the basics.

Each scenario in this Handbook has a **standard setup**:

Instructional Engagements	**Not User-Created Engagements**
File:	**As given in the Workbook**
Play As:	**Marine**
Multi-Player or Single Player	**Either**
Task Organization:	**As given in the Workbook**

The following **Options** are recommended. Experienced players can choose their own options.

Game Play:
Remove Trees	**NO**

Status Indicators:
Team Info Icon	**Fatigue**
Marines Outline Display	**Morale**

Monitors:
Display Team Data	**NO**
Display Inset Map	**YES**
Display Marine Monitor	**NO**

Every **Company Commander's Order** in this workbook fits on an index card. Each order was written as an example of clarity and conciseness. Information depicted on the terrain model illustration is not repeated in the text of the order. All Marine leaders should develop a clarity of language and an orders shorthand technique to communicate clearly, simply, and correctly. **Appendix A** offers **Thoughts on Verbal Orders**. **Appendix B** describes the commonly used **Orders Shorthand** acronyms and abbreviations used in this Workbook. **Appendix C** is a **Glossary** of tactical terms.

Because the focus of this Workbook and the focus of *Close Combat Marine* is on small-unit infantry tactics, **supporting arms** are not emphasized. Some scenarios include none at all. The techniques for requesting and coordinating artillery and close air support are not taught by *Close Combat Marine*. The challenge is to solve the small-unit tactical problem when supporting arms are limited or not available at all.

Module 1: CONTROL of FIRES

Small unit leaders—squad, section, and team leaders—are responsible for directing the fires of their units. Fires need to be coordinated in order to be effective.

Concentrate your fire

Without direction, Marines tend to fire at random targets. This leads to ineffective, dispersed fires.

Unit leaders need to concentrate overwhelming fires on a single target—*point fire*. When that target is destroyed, *all* fires can be shifted to the next target.

Sequentially destroying multiple targets with mass fires is far more effective than distributing ineffective fires across the battlefield.

Area fire is sometimes needed, particularly when suppressing suspected enemy positions. Assigning specific targets to specific weapons is sometimes necessary. Always realize, however, that dispersal of fires weakens your effort.

Control Techniques

Base Weapon or *Base Unit.* The unit leader physically directs the fires of his base weapon or his base unit. All others follow suit.

"On my tracer" or *"On my laser."* Leaders point out the target with tracer rounds or a laser pointer.

Fire Commands. Voice commands are effective before opening fire. Once engaged, battlefield noise
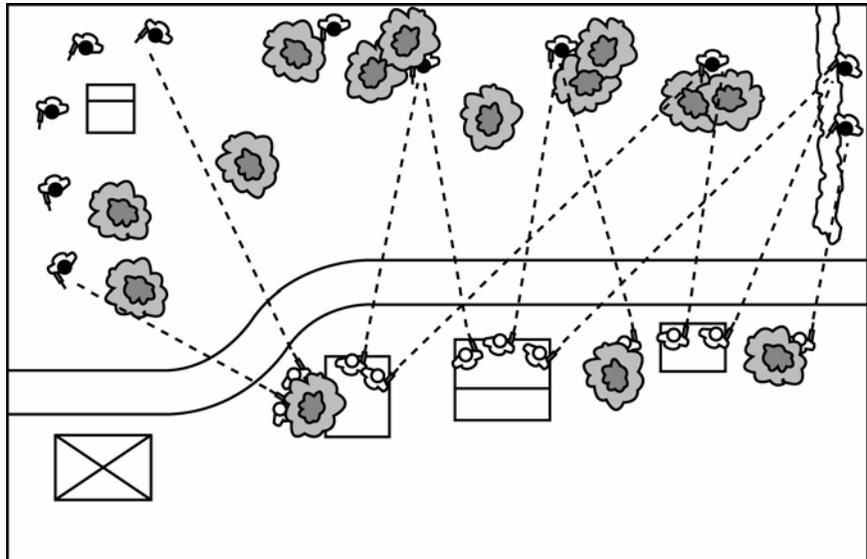
Dispersed fires are ineffective fires. Without control by the unit leader, each man selects and fires at a target to his front.
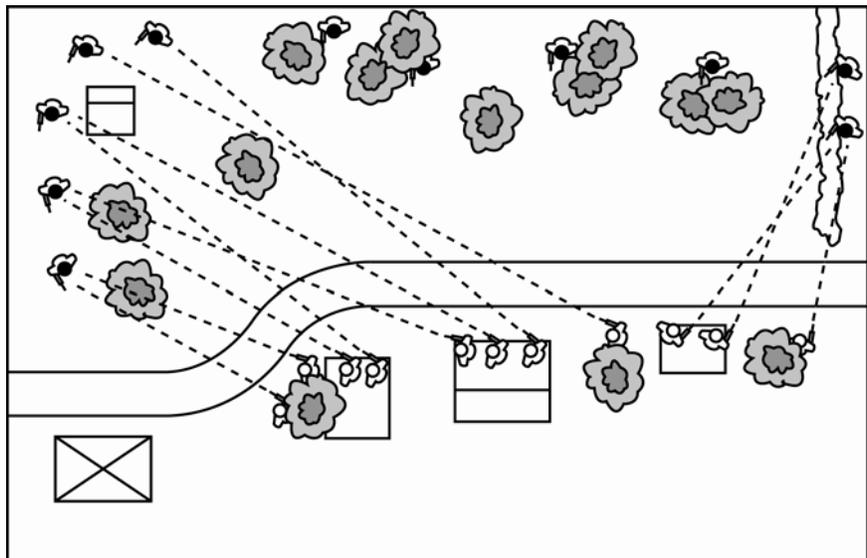
The enemy's flanking move can only be stopped by a leader who controls the fires of his unit and concentrates on the greatest threat.

and temporary deafness make voice commands impossible. Sound and visual signals, including hand and arm signals, replace voice commands under fire.

In stationary positions, leaders can establish terrain references such as target reference points and trigger lines to help coordinate fire control.

1

CONTROL of FIRES Example
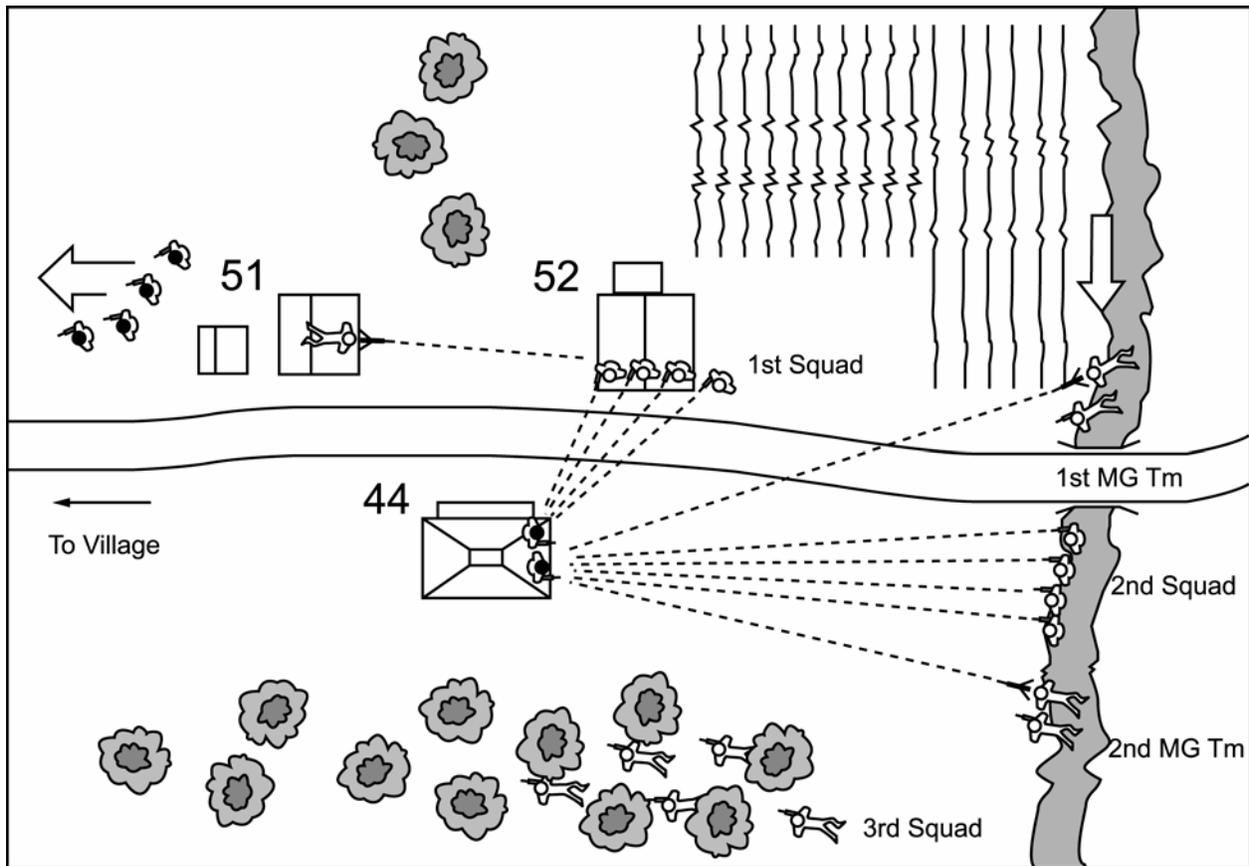
**As** 1st Squad moved from the streambed to Building 52, enemy fire erupted from Buildings 51 and 44. The platoon commander ordered, *"Destroy the enemy in the slate roof building* (Building 44) *in order to clear the route into town! 3rd Squad, main effort, flank left. Remainder of platoon support!"*

- 1st MG Team moved south to mask themselves from the enemy MG firing from Building 51.
- 1st Squad took cover from the MG firing from Building 51, and focused fire on Building 44.
- 2nd Squad and 2nd MG Team ignored the enemy MG in Building 51, ignored the enemy infantry behind Building 51, and focused their fire on Building 44.
- 3rd Squad's route masked Building 51, had good concealment, but little cover. Overwhelming suppression of Building 44 was needed to get 3rd Squad into their assault position. Any supporting units tempted to shift from Building 44 and fire on other targets endangered 3rd Squad and risked the entire attack.
- If mortars were available, they too would have attacked Building 44. Smoke would be used to obscure the movement of 3rd Squad.

Movement, defilade, unit positioning, and the fire commands of small unit leaders all constitute **Control of Fires** at the small unit level. Ineffective, dispersed fires were prevented by small unit leaders who knew the importance of concentrating fire, and knew the techniques of fire control.

Small unit leaders tend to prioritize differently. This leads to uncoordinated actions. The commander's order clarified priorities. Squad leaders focused the fire of their squads, and the platoon commander directed the fire of his platoon. In rapidly changing situations, everyone will have a different priority. Control of fires becomes *vitally* important in combat.

Fight 1-1   *Urban Contact*

1. **Simulation:**   *Urban Contact*
    Map: Quantico3
    Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (1) Squad + (1) MG Team

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

    S: EN patrols, mostly sqd size, have become increasingly bolder as we have withdrawn (S). I
    think we can expect tentative contact here in the village this morning.

    Bn WTH (S) and repositions IOT turn over this sector to allied forces.

    M: "A" Co guards the Bn rear IOT prevent EN interference with our WTH.

    E: (1) Plat is detached to Bn. (1) Plat guards the town while (1) Plat moves (S) to establish
    next rear guard POS. FS: No CAS. No artillery. No Mortars.

    Tasks:
    1st Plat: ME. Guard the Co rear IOT prevent EN interference with our WTH.
    2nd Plat: Detached.
    3rd Plat: Move (S) and establish next rear guard POS IOT permit 1st Plat to WTH.
    Mortars: POF to 3rd Plat.

    A: SOP
    C: SOP
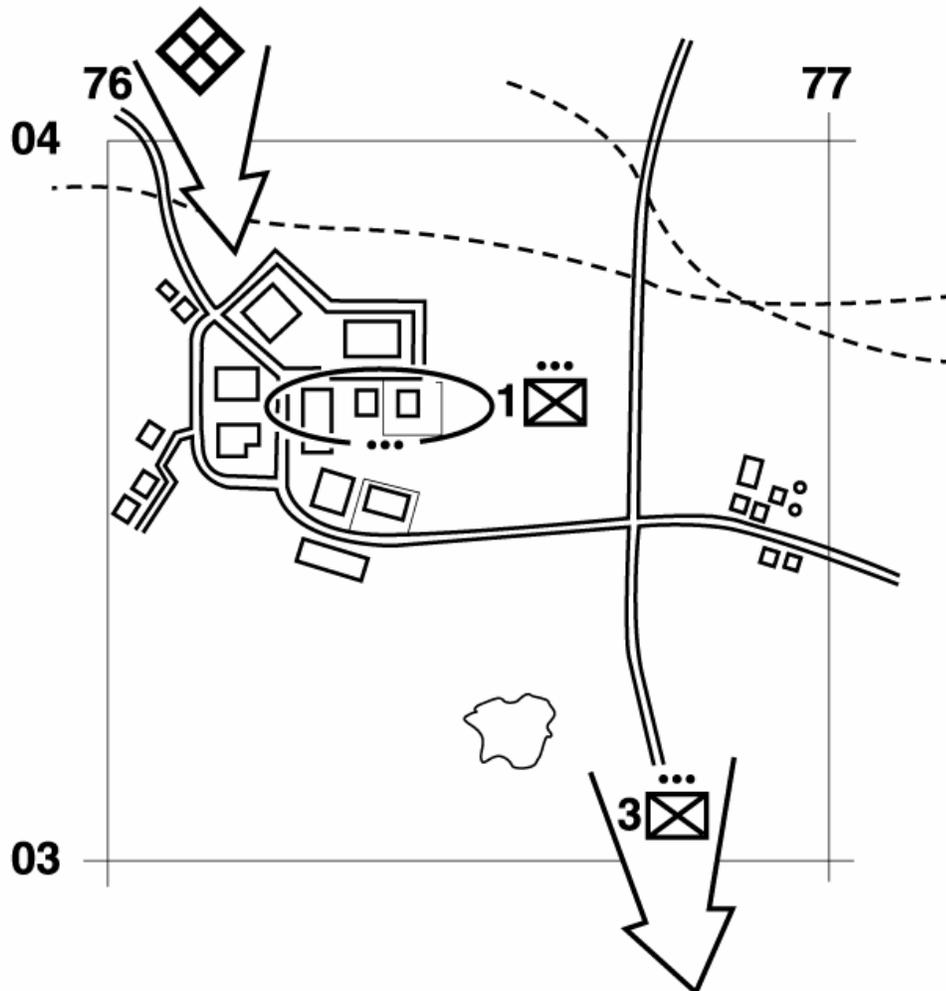
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. How did you control fires? Did you concentrate or distribute your fires?

   b. How did you plan to withdraw? In what order did units withdraw? What triggered withdrawal? Did this trigger give you enough time?

   c. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. Defensive control of fires in built-up areas.

   b. Withdrawal plans for small units.

Module 2: BOUNDING OVERWATCH

Use BOUNDING OVERWATCH to move:

When you expect contact.
When you do NOT know where the enemy are.
When you are NOT in a hurry.

Use BOUNDING OVERWATCH for:

|	
Movement to Contact	Sweeps and Searches
Crossing large danger areas	Hasty Attacks
Withdrawal under fire	Assaults

The elements of the unit each alternate between *moving* and *overwatching* the movements of the other elements.

Only one element moves at a time. Each move is a short bound from one covered position to another. The other elements provide *overwatch*—observation and immediate fire support, if needed. The entire unit moves in a continuous series of short bounds.
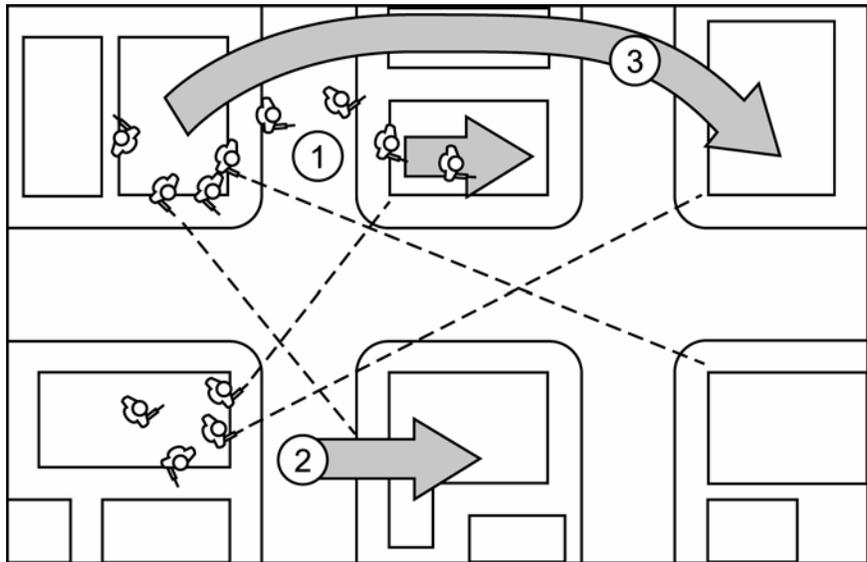
In the illustrations:

1. The 1st element moves while the other elements overwatch likely enemy locations.

2. 2nd element bounds forward while 1st and 3rd overwatch.

3. 3rd element catches up. 1st and 2nd overwatch.

Units stay close enough to observe each other. Attached machineguns should overwatch the most dangerous areas.

Using *alternate bounds*, elements leapfrog past one another. Using *successive bounds*, elements catch up to one another in the same order of movement.
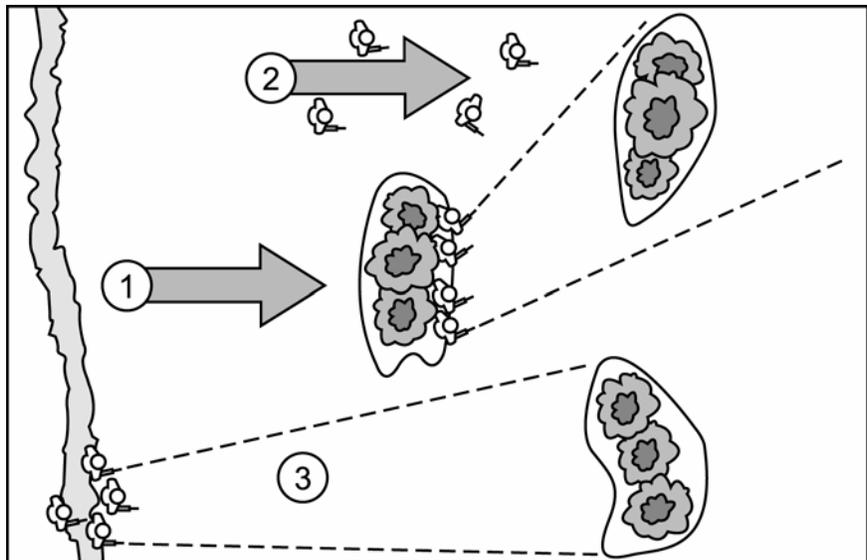
Bounding Overwatch provides significant benefits:

- Maximum dispersion and stealth minimizes your exposure to enemy observation and fires.
- Maximum security is gained. A unit surprised by enemy fire receives immediate suppression from a sister unit. Without overwatch, the unit becomes pinned, casualties occur, mortars fall, and then the enemy begins to maneuver against you.

Fight 2-1   *Secure the Airfield*

1. **Simulation:**   *Secure the Airfield*
   Map: Centralian1
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon**. (3) Squads + Company Mortars

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: Scattered EN units, maybe (20) soldiers, remain in the vicinity of the airfield. They may
       have a HMG, mortar, or AA missile that could threaten our helicopters.

       The remainder of the Bn will fly into the airfield once the AA threat is reduced IOT stage for
       follow-on OPS. I think the EN will avoid contact with us and wait to target the helicopters.

   M: "A" Co clears the area around the airfield IOT prevent EN interference with air OPS.

   E: While (1) Plat blocks the (N) access road, (2) Plats will clear both sides of the airfield from
       (N) to (S). FS: R/W CAS O/C. No artillery. Mortars with 1st Plat.

       Tasks:
       1st Plat: ME. Clear (W) side of airfield IOT prevent EN interference with air OPS.
   2nd Plat: Clear (E) side of airfield IOT prevent EN interference with air OPS.
       3rd Plat: Block (N) approach to airfield IOT prevent EN CATK.
       Mortars: POF to ME.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP

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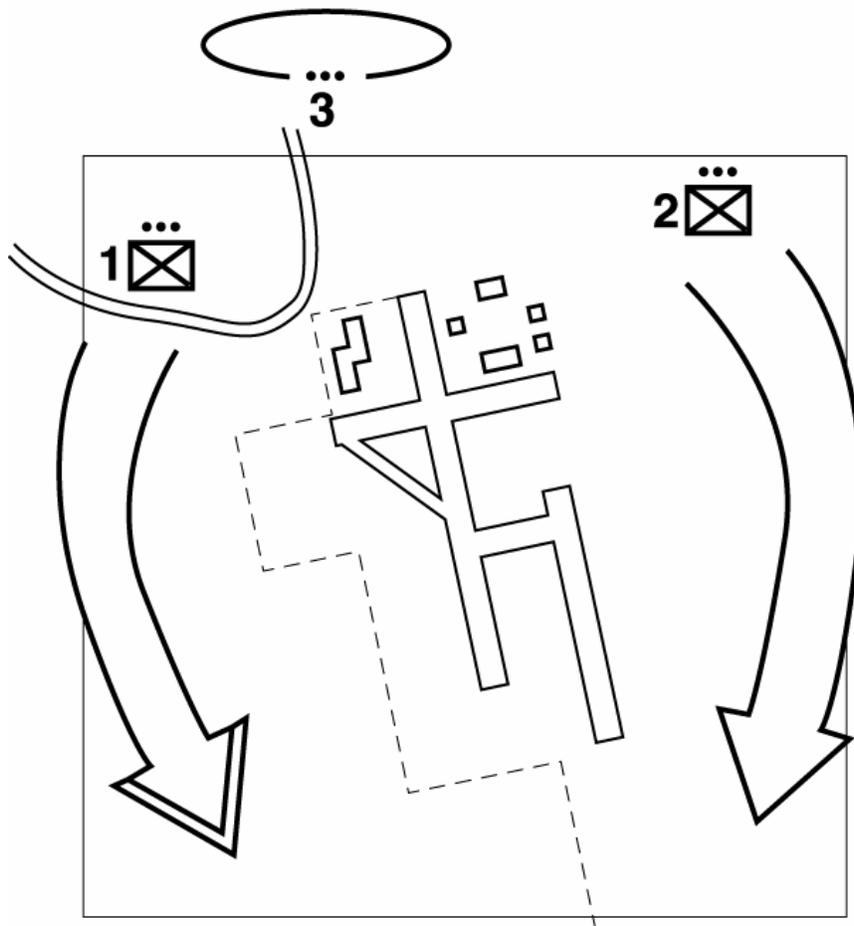
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. What does "clear" mean when given as a task to an infantry unit?

   b. How large an area must be cleared to make an airfield completely safe from enemy small arms fire? From RPGs or anti-air missiles? From heavy machine guns?

   c. What does it mean when you receive mortar fire? How do you deal with indirect fire? How do you avoid being targeted?

   d. Did you use all three squads to search a wide area or did you keep one back to be able to respond to enemy contact?

   e. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. Movement to Contact by bounding overwatch.

   b. Bounding overwatch by teams within the squad. Bounding overwatch by squads within the platoon. The measure of success is the number of units immediately able to fire on the enemy when contact is made.

   c. On contact, a squad envelopment is a two-team BOF and team assault. A platoon envelopment is a two-squad BOF and squad assault.

5. **Options**

   a. Edit the scenario. Add (2) machinegun teams. Delete the mortars. How do machineguns change your movement techniques? What changes when mortar fires are not available?

   b. Edit the scenario. Add (2) HMG HMMWVs. In the close terrain of rolling hills and scrub brush, what are the benefits and disadvantages of mobile firepower?

Fight 2-2   *Down on the Farm*

1. Simulation: *Down on the Farm*
     Map: Centralian2
     Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (3) Squads.

2. Company Commander's Orders

S: An EN unit, estimated at (15) to (20) soldiers, may be operating from this abandoned farm. Yesterday, a convoy security detachment chased them from the ford. The local traffic was being charged to cross the river. I think they will avoid contact with us and try to flee (N).

     The Bn secures the town 6k to our (E) IOT secure the main roads. This road is the (E)-(W) MSR, our primary connection with HHQ.

M: "A" Co finds and destroys the EN in this sector IOT prevent EN interference along our MSR.

E: (2) Plats will clear from (S) to (N), from the 16 to the 17 gridline. These Plats will find and fix the EN. (1) REIN Plat in RES will then maneuver to destroy the EN contact. FS: R/W CAS O/C. No artillery. Mortars with RES.

   Tasks:
     1st Plat: **Find and fix EN in GS 3616 IOT support Co ATK.**
     2nd Plat: Find and fix EN in GS 3716 IOT support Co ATK.
     3rd Plat   ME. RES. FIT of 1st Plat. BPT assault and destroy EN IOT prevent EN interference along our MSR.
     Mortars: POF to ME.

A: SOP
C: SOP
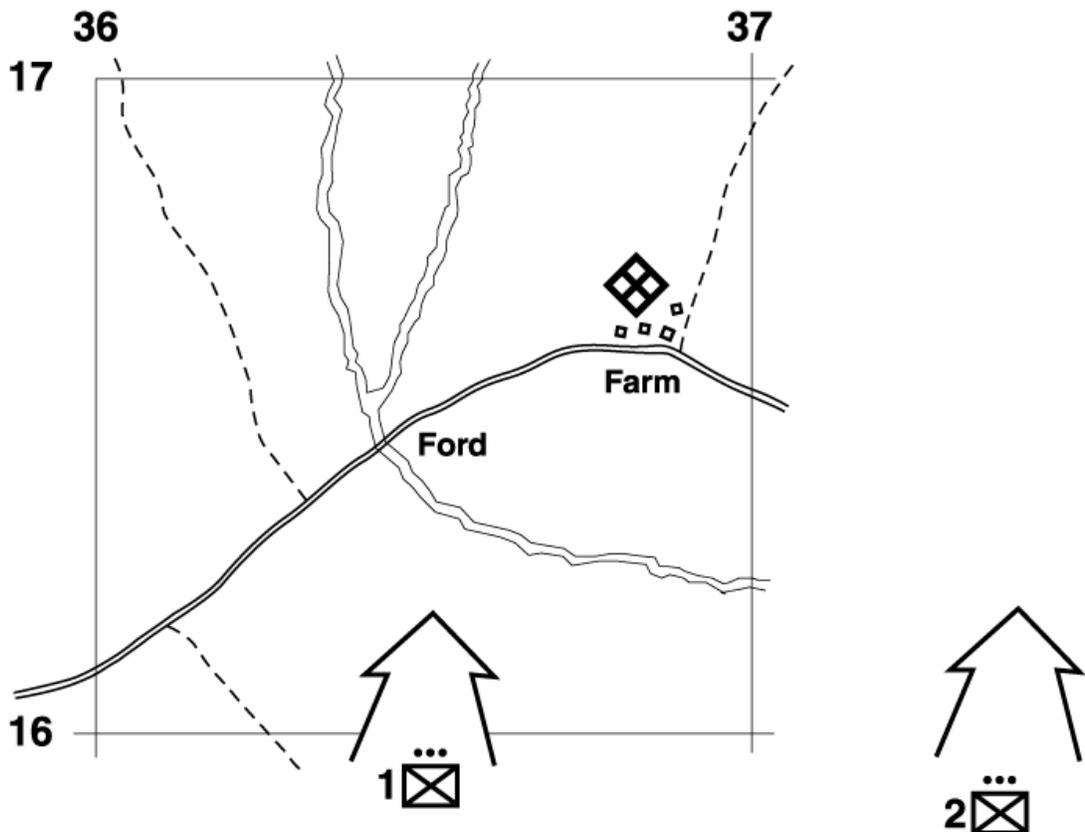
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. Did you search every inch of the grid square or did you focus on likely hide sites?

   b. Are grid squares good control measures? How did the terrain, especially the river and the ford affect your search?

   c. Why did the company commander not conduct a deliberate attack on the farm? What is the difference between a movement to contact and a deliberate attack? Did the farm become your focus?

   d. Why were company machineguns and mortars assigned to the assault element? Shouldn't the fixing force BOF be reinforced with as much firepower as possible?

   e. How did the lack of mortar support make your mission more difficult? Did you need to close the enemy to get effective fire? Did you suffer any fratricide?

   f. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. Bounding overwatch is the recommended movement technique when contact is expected. Bounding overwatch by teams within the squad. Bounding overwatch by squads within the platoon. The measure of success is the number of units immediately able to fire on the enemy when contact is made.

   b. Fixing the enemy by fire is indecisive if the enveloping assault force cannot close. The fixing force needs to be prepared to conduct an independent attack.

5. **Options**

   a. Edit the scenario. Add (3) trucks and (2) HMG HMMWVs. Delete one squad and mount the other squads in the trucks. Ignore the company commander's scheme of maneuver. If you convoy along the road from west to east, have you secured the MSR?

   b. Edit the scenario. Add (3) AAAVs. Clear the road from west to east. Besides increasing your mobility, protection, and speed, what other benefits do you gain from AAAVs? What problems arise?

Module 3: Infantry DEFENSE

A strong defense is tied directly to the terrain. Learn to analyze and use your ground.

1. Try to envision the enemy's attack. Select the ground where you will stop his attack. Tentatively emplace your key units so their primary sector fires interlock on this ground.

2. Envision the enemy's response to your fire, an alternate scheme of attack, or a secondary thrust. Select the ground where your forces will stop this attack.

3. Now modify you tentative positions to cover both possible attacks.

   a. Give key weapons primary and supplementary positions to cover the two approaches. Select a covered route between positions.

   b. Emplace rifle squads to observe and protect the flanks of your key weapons. Insure squad sectors contribute to the fire plan.

   c. Some units will not support both approaches but will continuously cover a single sector.

4. Be elastic. The enemy *will* do something unexpected. You will need *multiple positions*, a *reserve*, and a *withdrawal plan*.
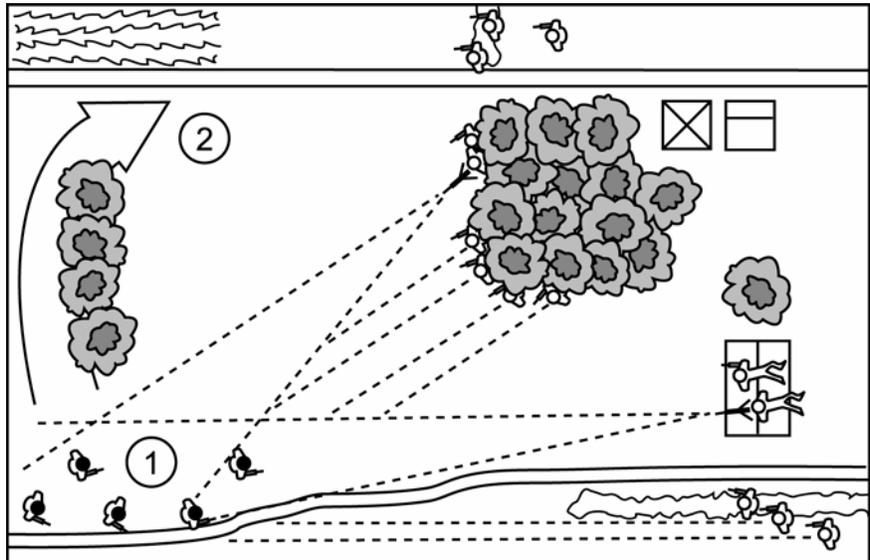
Primary positions cover the enemy's expected route.
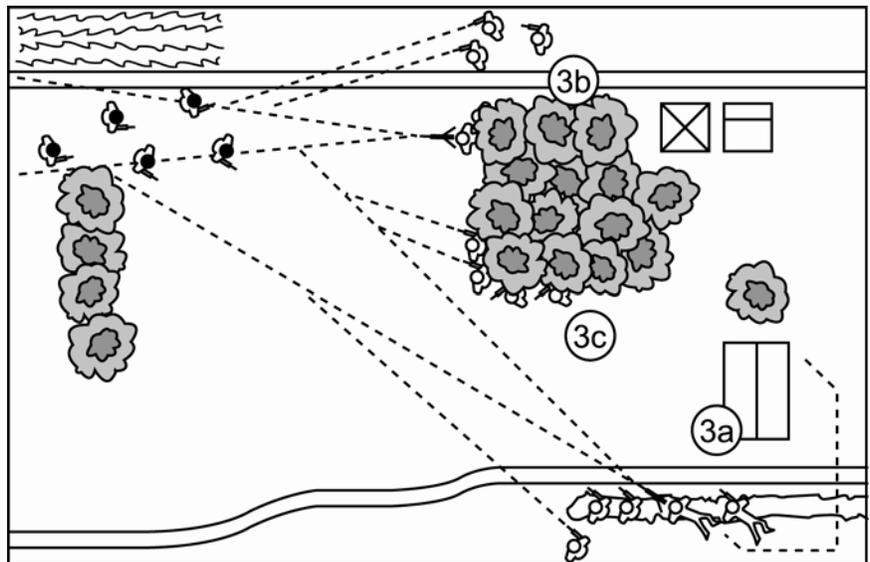
Supplementary positions cover a separate sector.

Multiple Positions. Every position has a primary sector of fire. Some have a secondary sector of fire. Alternate positions cover the primary sector from a different location. Supplementary positions cover a separate sector. Use alternate and supplementary positions to deceive the enemy about your strength, to react to enemy moves, and to disperse the enemy's ability to effectively respond to your defense.

Defense in Depth. Some supplementary positions should cover friendly positions. How will you engage the enemy that overruns your former left flank position?

Infantry DEFENSE - continued

The Reserve

A reserve force is kept back to respond to unexpected enemy actions or take advantage of opportunities. Squads and platoons are not large enough to designate a reserve. All commanders should keep in mind what unit they will pull out of contact to execute a potential reserve mission.

The Withdrawal Plan

All your units must be able to withdraw. This is an important skill, essential to minimize your casualties. The goal is to delay the enemy, withdraw rapidly and secretly, and suffer no casualties.

Think through the withdrawal: what circumstances, what routes, what overwatch positions, and in what sequence will units move? An unplanned withdrawal can lead to disaster. Withdrawal plans should be decentralized so separate elements can withdraw on their own and still support the unit.

Move machinegun teams first, and have them establish overwatch positions. Rifle squads have better observation skills and can move faster than machine gun teams, so they should bring up the rear. Use smoke to obscure the enemy's observation.

If the enemy does not realize that a position has been withdrawn, he wastes time and energy assaulting empty positions.

When you are first establishing your defense, do not select exposed positions for your units. Find positions that have at least one covered route of withdrawal.

Defense Against Enemy Tanks

Fighting enemy tanks is far more difficult than fighting an unarmored enemy. Large, open sectors of fire, which are an asset when fighting enemy infantry, are the primary danger when facing tanks. **See ANTI-TANK Tactics for Infantry Units.**

Squads and Fire Teams

Ideally, each member of a fire team covers the entire fire team sector. Fire teams should collectively engage one target at a time. **See CONTROL of FIRES.** Squads are the smallest unit capable of tactical combinations. In defensive positions, squads can cover multiple sectors, one team per sector. A squad can assign each team a different mission, one to fire, and one to maneuver. When squads suffer significant casualties, and they are no longer capable of multiple tasks, use them as single-task fire teams.

MACHINEGUN Defense in Urban Terrain

Machineguns are the backbone of the infantry defense.

Defensive Positions

Positions with deep and narrow sectors of fire— 'keyhole' positions—are best for machineguns. Double keyholes, primary and secondary sectors separated by frontal protection, are far better than one wide-open sector. Machinegun positions should have defilade protection on both sides.

This protects the gun from the concentrated return fire of multiple enemy units. Narrow sectors limit the enemies that may see you to return fire. When enemy units cannot overwatch each other and concentrate their fire against you, their mutual support is defeated.

The strongest positions are entrenchments or structures that protect you from intense direct and indirect fire. The enemy *will* target your machineguns.

Observers and defensive positions on your flanks need positions with wider visibility, but machineguns need the concealment and protection of narrow keyhole sectors.

Know how the enemy may exploit your dead space. Cover it with mortars and rifle grenades.
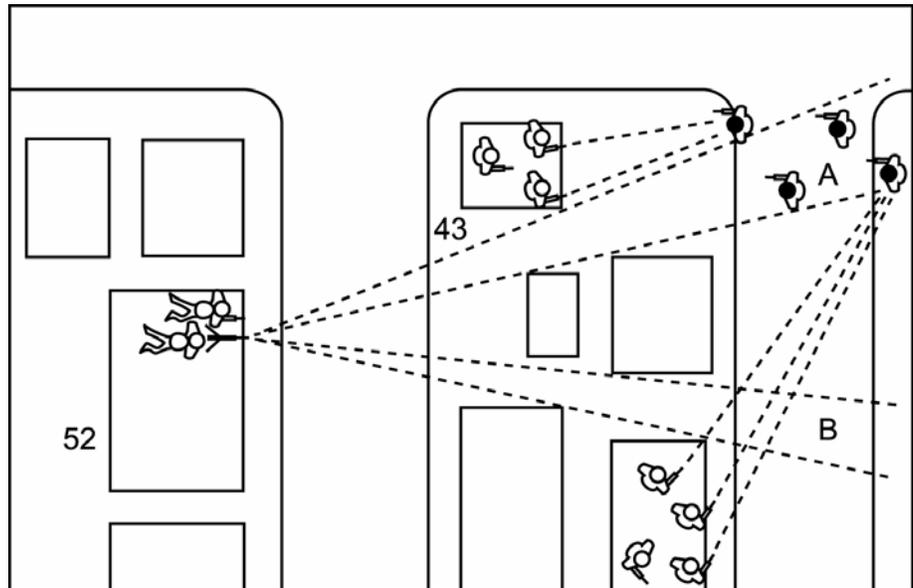
Enemy overwatching units cannot see or fire on Building 52. Enemy indirect fire is difficult to adjust onto Building 52. The Building 52 position has defilade on both sides to protect against the eventual enemy flank attacks from the north or south.

Alternate Positions

In the illustration, the primary positions permit interlocking fields of fire in both zones **A** and **B**. The machinegun's deep fields of fire permit the gun to remain in position and provide overwatch as the rifle squads reposition one block to the west. New sectors would then include the intersection northwest of Building 43, Building 43 itself, and the other buildings of that block.

Keep yourself hidden

The enemy cannot respond if he cannot find you. Camouflage your positions well. Engage the enemy in the flank whenever possible to reduce your risk of detection. Use keyhole positions to mask your firing signature. Move positions when the enemy finds you and begins coordinated action against you. Every machinegun position needs a withdrawal plan.

Develop an eye for Defensive Positions

Keyhole sectors are challenging to emplace, but their concealment confuses the enemy and reduces friendly casualties. This type of position is very difficult for the enemy to find and dislodge.

Interlocking Sectors of Fire

Machineguns mutually support each other, interlocking their sectors of fire on likely kill zones.

Rifle squads should be positioned to provide observation of secondary sectors and flank protection. When machineguns are turned outboard for flank protection, this disperses their effectiveness.

Alternate and supplementary positions should also attempt to be mutually supporting and interlocking.

Machineguns are slow to change sectors and slow to move their positions. Establish positions carefully. Select covered routes between positions. Plan how and when units will change positions.
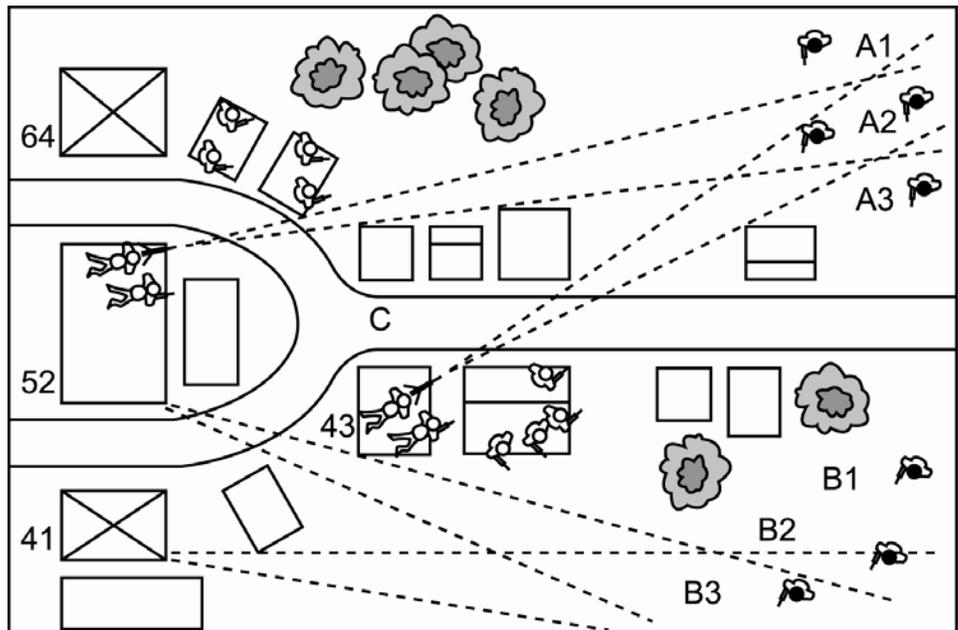
The enemy is expected in zone A, so the primary sectors of the two machinegun teams in Buildings 43 and 52 interlock in zone A. The keyhole sectors of fire protect the machineguns. Enemy units at A1 or A3 cannot see, return fire, or adjust fire on Buildings 43 or 52. Rifle squads provide observation of secondary sectors, flank protection, and additional interlocking fires.

Another enemy approach is through zone B. The machinegun team in Building 43 moves to Building 41 so that the sectors of both team's supplementary positions interlock in zone B. The keyhole sectors of fire hide and protect the machineguns against overwatching enemy units in B1 and B2.

If the enemy seizes the outlying buildings and starts working west along the road, interlocking fire can be brought against zone C from Buildings 41 and 64.

Fight 3-1   *Urban Defense*

1. **Simulation:**   *Urban Defense*
   Map: Quantico3
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (2) Squads + (2) MG Teams

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: EN reconnaissance patrols have been sighted (E) of the town. I think the EN will attack us
       with a reinforced platoon here in town IOT gain control of this road network.

       Bn secures this (NW)-(SE) MSR IOT prevent EN interference with resupply convoys.

   M: "A" Co secures the town IOT protect the MSR from EN interference.
   E: (1) Plat secures the town. (1) Plat secures the (NW) road. (1) Plat is detached. FS: No
       CAS. No artillery. No Mortars.

       Tasks:
       1st Plat: ME. Secure the town IOT protect the MSR.
       2nd Plat: Detached.
       3rd Plat: Move (NW) and secure road sector IOT protect MSR.
       Mortars: POF to 3rd Plat.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP

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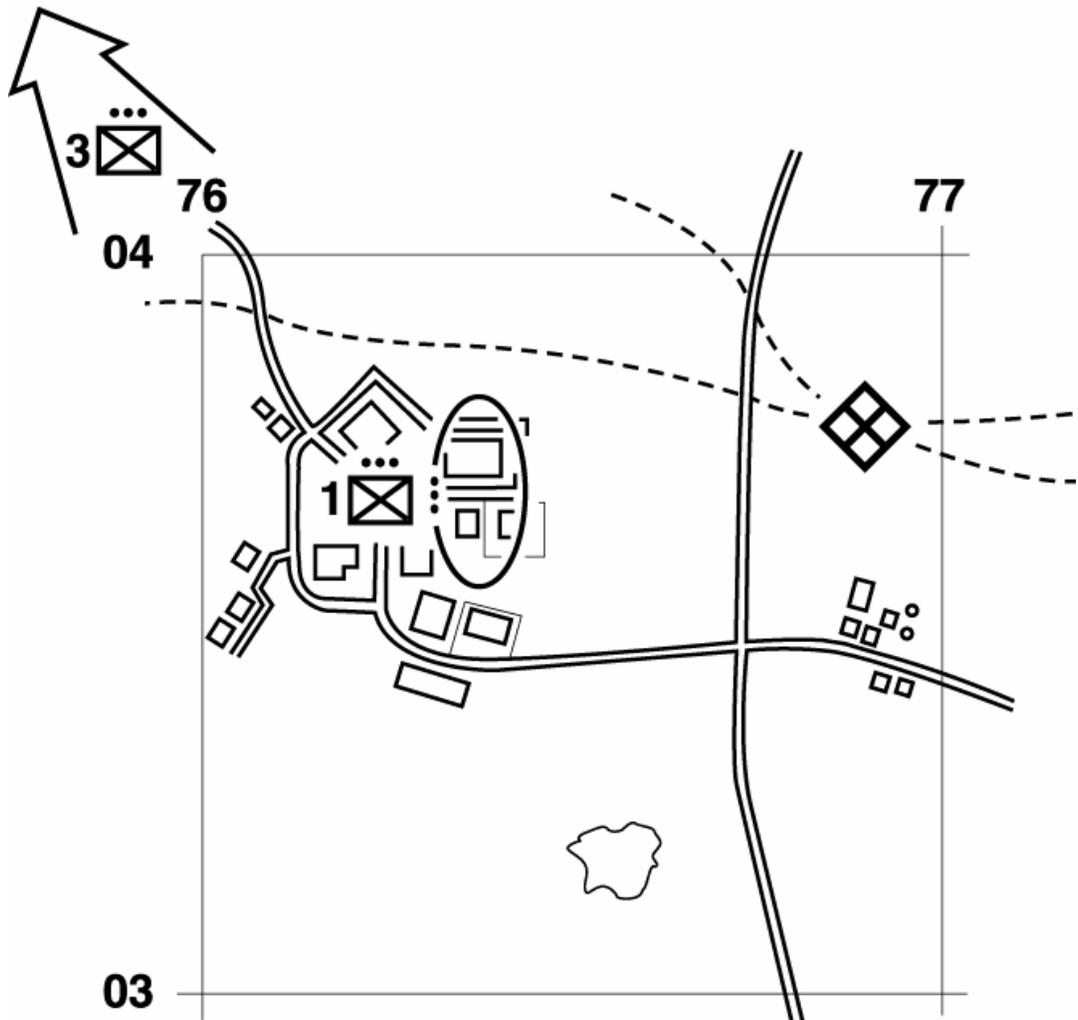
3. **Issues for Discussion**

    a. How did you select your primary defensive positions? Did your machineguns have primary and secondary sectors? Frontal protection?

    b. Did you plan supplementary positions to react to unexpected enemy moves?

    c. How did you plan to withdraw? In what order did units withdraw? What triggered withdrawal? Did this trigger give you enough time?

    d. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

    a. Selection of defensive positions in built-up areas. Primary, alternate, and supplementary positions. Primary and secondary sectors of fire for machineguns.

    b. Withdrawal plans for small units.

Module 4: ANTI-TANK Tactics for Infantry Units

When fighting armor, every infantry echelon—from squad, to platoon, to company—needs an organic anti-tank (AT) capability. Against tanks, infantry without AT weapons are either withdrawing, hiding, or being overrun. The tank is invulnerable to infantry without AT weapons.

Close Terrain

Infantry can only fight tanks in close terrain. Use broken terrain, vegetation, and urban areas to deny enemy tanks their key advantages of mobility and standoff range.

AT Positions

Positions with deep and narrow sectors of fire—'keyhole' positions—are best for AT missiles. Your AT positions should have defilade protection on *both* sides, with a narrow sector of fire limited to *one* tank.

This protects you from the return fire of multiple enemies. If only one tank is engaged, only that tank might see you to return fire. When enemy vehicles cannot overwatch each other and concentrate their fires against you, their mutual support is defeated.

The strongest positions are *over-runnable*—structures or entrenchments that protect you from intense direct and indirect fire and can be overrun by tanks. The enemy *will* target your AT positions.

Observers and flank defenders need wide visibility, but AT missiles need the concealment and protection of narrow keyhole sectors.
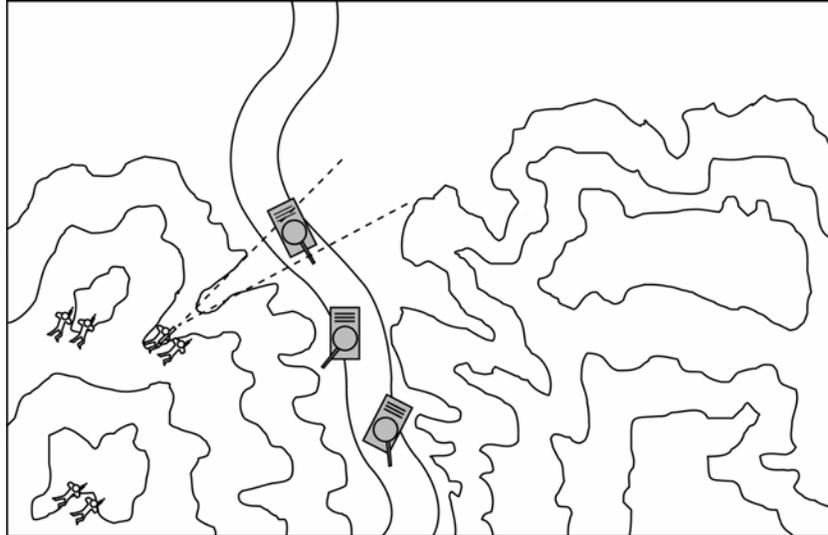
The keyhole sector is one tank wide. This provides concealment and protection. The other enemy tanks cannot see you or focus their fires on you.
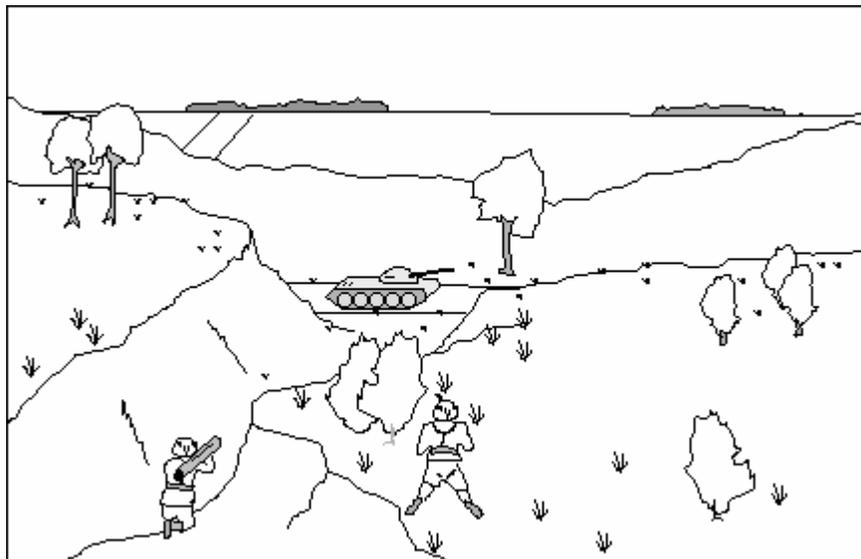
A panoramic view of the same AT position. Information on the enemy's approach is relayed from a separate observation post with good visibility.

Keep yourself hidden

The enemy cannot respond if he cannot find you. Camouflage your positions well. Shoot at the tank's vulnerable flank or rear whenever possible to reduce your risk of detection. Use keyhole positions to mask your firing signature. When you are detected, *move.* Use smoke to mask your withdrawal.

ANTI-TANK Tactics for Infantry Units - continued

Techniques of Fire

A single position, firing one or more missiles, is easier for the enemy to find and attack. Multiple missiles fired nearly simultaneously from multiple locations—*volley firing*—is the best technique for increasing kills, decreasing your chance of detection, and weakening the effectiveness of the enemy's response.

Enemy Tank and Infantry Coordination

Fighting against well-coordinated enemy armor and dismounted forces is challenging. If you attack the infantry, the tanks counterattack. If you attack the tanks, the infantry counterattacks.

Separate the tanks from the infantry then *kill the tanks first.*

AT teams are especially vulnerable to enemy infantry. Protect their flanks. AT teams should withdraw when discovered and attacked by enemy infantry. Establish supplementary positions to attack tanks in different sectors.

AT Missiles

When the enemy has no armor, AT missiles can be used to attack bunkers, buildings, entrenchments, or other vehicles.
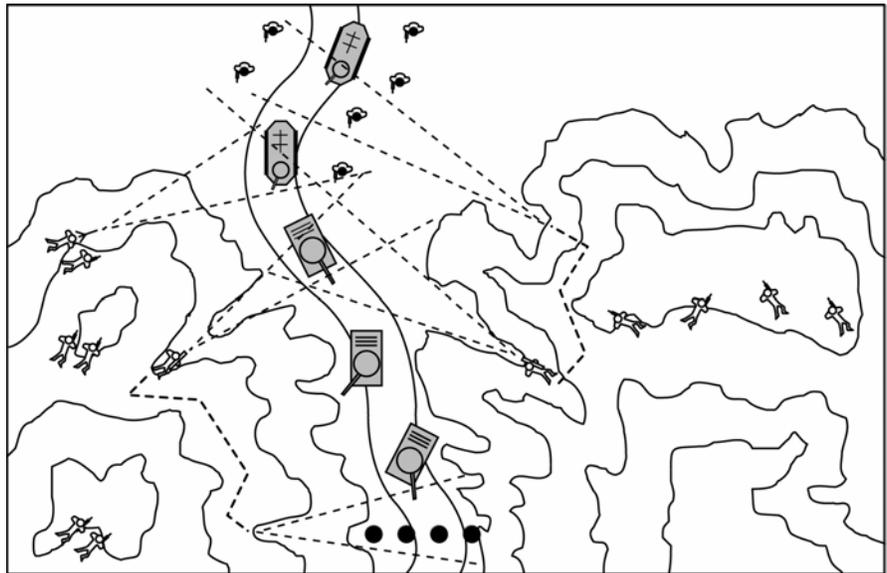
This integrated AT defense is strengthened by a number of combined arms techniques. The third tank is a victim of volley firing—multiple missiles from multiple locations. Dismounted enemy troops and APCs are engaged by machinegun fire and indirect fire. Rifle squads protect the flanks of key weapons.

Additional attacks are made from supplementary AT positions—dotted lines show the routes. Mines, covered by fire, slowed the column to trigger the attack.
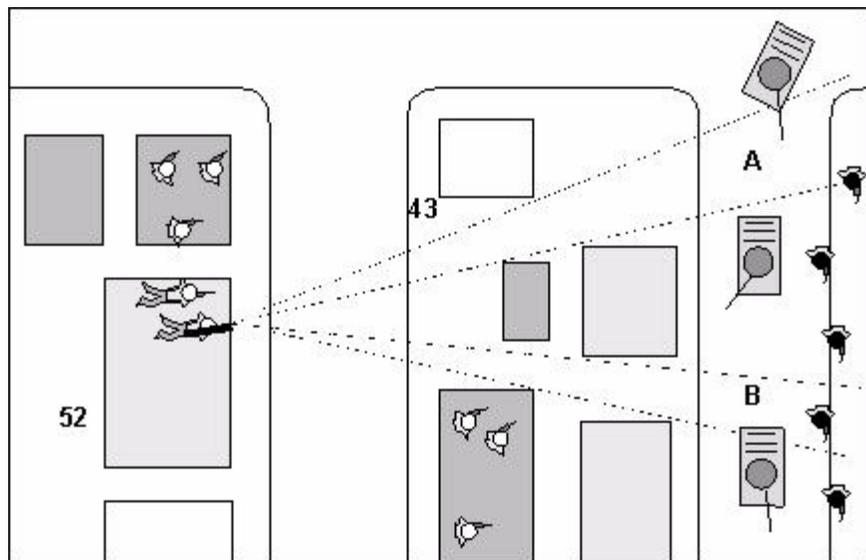
A double keyhole AT sector in urban terrain reduces the enemy's ability to see or concentrate fires on Building 52. Building 43 is not occupied because the enemy's response when a tank is hit in zone A will be to concentrate fire on Building 43.

Dismounted enemy soldiers are a danger to AT positions. Friendly rifle squads are emplaced to avoid enemy tank fire while still protecting the AT positions.

Fight 4-1

The Wadi

1. **Simulation:**   *The Wadi*
   Map: 29Palms1
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon**. (2) Squads + (2) AAAV + (2) Javelin Teams
                                         + (2) TOW HMMWVs

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: An EN armor and mechanized column of almost 70 fighting vehicles, T-72, BMP, and
        BTRs, is approaching from the (S). They are desperate to break through our position and
        get out of the open desert to escape our air ATKS. Recon vehicles were spotted hours ago
        in front of our position. I think their ME will bypass us to the (W).

        Bn secures this valley IOT prevent EN access to the coast. Bn DEF POS is focused on
        defeating the EN in EA PANTHER on our (W) flank. ME is Co "B".

   M: "A" Company blocks the wadi corridor IOT protect the left flank of the Bn.

   E: Each platoon will block one of the three avenues into the wadi. FS: R/W CAS O/C. Artillery
        is focused on EA PANTHER. Mortars with ME.

        Tasks:
        1st Plat: **From BP A10, block the (S) avenue of the wadi IOT protect Bn's left flank.**
   2nd Plat: From BP A20, block the (E) avenue of the wadi IOT protect Bn's left flank.
        3rd Plat.   ME. From BP A30, block main avenue into wadi IOT protect Bn's left flank.
        Mortars: POF to ME.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP
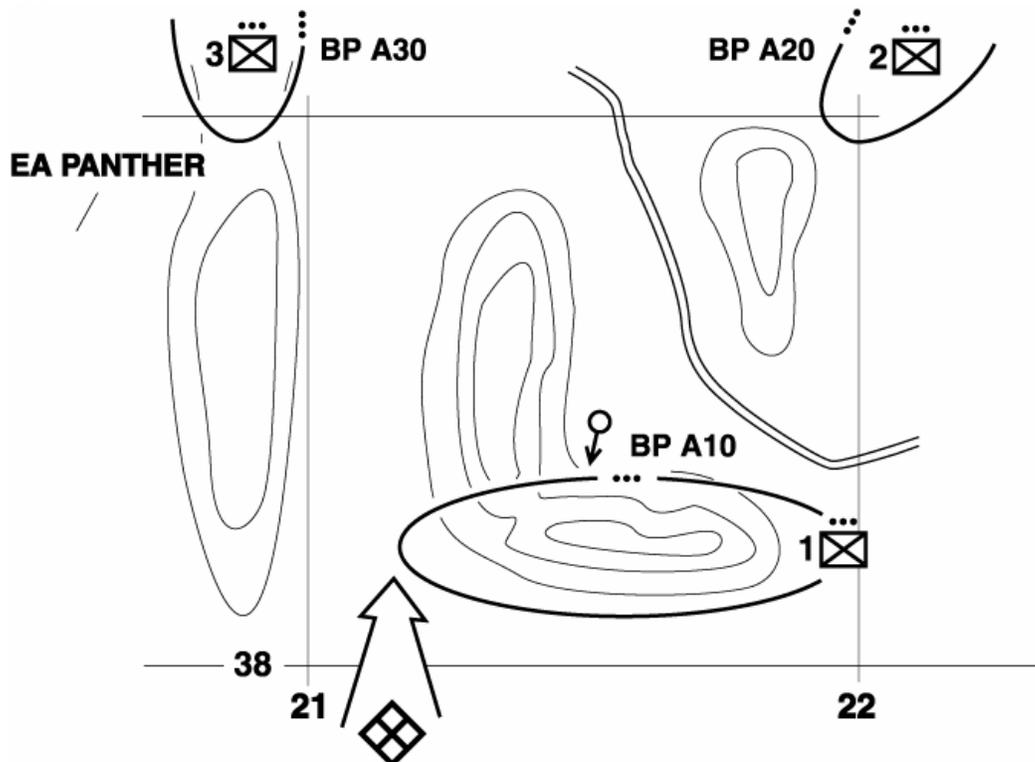
3. **Issues for Discussion**

    a. Did you limit your position to the BP A10 assigned by the company commander or did you adjust your positions based on recon of the ground?

    b. In the desert, what is close terrain? How does infantry fight tanks in generally open terrain? How does infantry fight tanks when CAS and artillery support is not available?

    c. What is the role of the AAAV when fighting enemy armor from fixed defensive positions? In a mechanized fight, what role does infantry play? Do these reasons apply in this scenario?

    d. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

    a. The benefits of reverse slope. Protection from observation prevents the enemy from knowing your strength and dispositions. Preparations can be made without worry about exposure. Defilade protects forces from artillery, and makes artillery difficult to adjust. Defilade protects forces from direct fire when the enemy closes. Enemy units that crest the high ground lose the mutual support of their peers.

    b. The difficulty of fighting tanks in open terrain. Tank main gun ranges exceed almost all heavy infantry weapons ranges.

Fight 4-2   *Bridge Defense*

1. **Simulation:**   *Bridge Defense*
   Map: Montanyan3
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (2) Squads + (2) MG Teams + Company Mortars
                                       + (2) Javelin Teams + (2) TOW HMMWVs

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: The lead elements of an EN mechanized column, consisting of both tanks and BMPs, is racing toward the bridge from the (W). I think they'll attack without pause to seize the bridge for FOF to ATK (E).

        Bn secures four crossing sites on the riverline, between here and 7k (S) IOT trap the EN (W) of the river. "B" Co is the Bn ME.

   M: "A" Co secures the bridge IOT trap the EN (W) of the river.

   E: (1) Plat on the (W) side disrupts the EN ATK, prevents their recon of our POS, and then WTH (E) across the river. The ME Plat on the (E) side establishes our main DEF POS vic of the bridge. FS: R/W CAS O/C. Artillery. Mortars with 1st Plat.

        Tasks:
   1st Plat: **Secure (W) side of bridge IOT prevent EN recon of our main DEF POS.**
   2nd Plat: RES.
   3rd Plat: ME. Secure (E) side of bridge IOT trap the EN (W) of the river.
   Mortars: POF to 1st Plat.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP
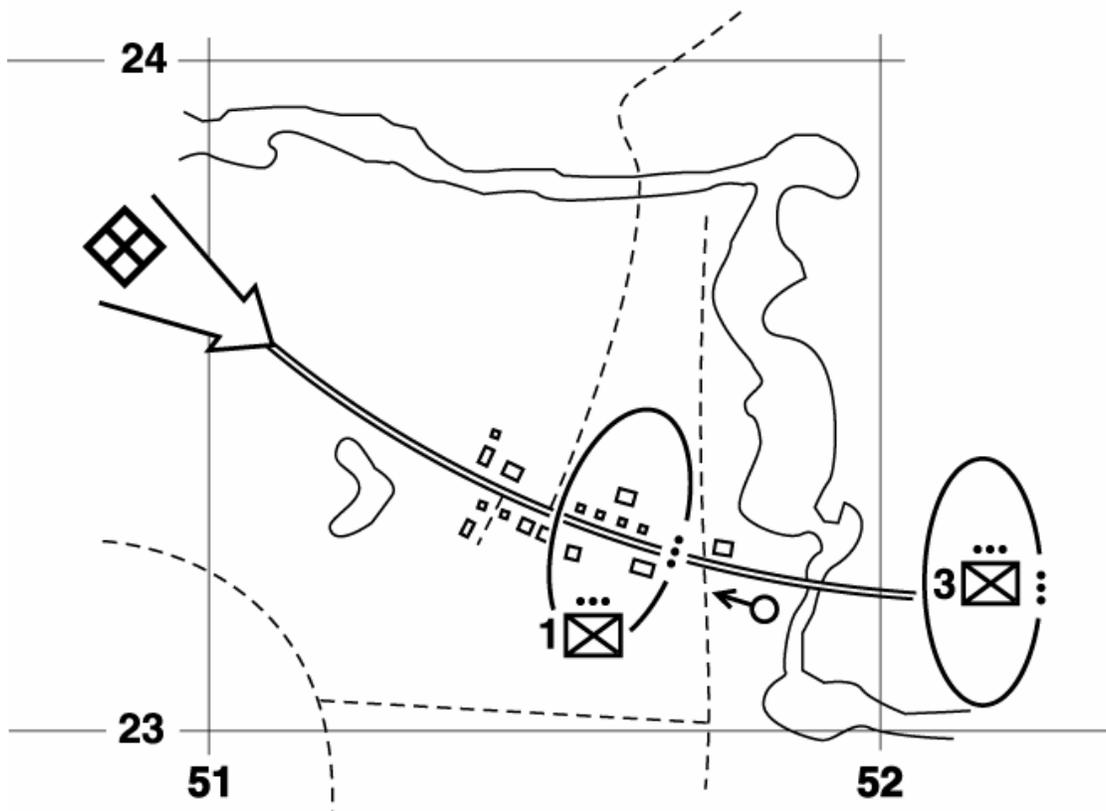
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. How does infantry fight tanks in open terrain?

   b. How important is CAS when fighting tanks? If CAS is plentiful, what is the minimum force needed on the ground? If CAS is unavailable, what does the ground force need to be able to do?

   c. Is there any reason to put mortars on the west side of the river?

   d. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. The primacy of AT weapons when fighting tanks. Minimum infantry squads protect AT weapons from enemy infantry. Excess infantry units are not needed because they only delay the withdrawal.

   b. Defending both sides of a riverline prevents the enemy from reconnaissance and selection of the ideal crossing site.

   c. The importance of organic AT weapons for every infantry echelon: Squad, Platoon, Company, and Battalion.

5. **Option**

   Edit the scenario. Add (2) M1A1 tanks. Add (2) more CAS sorties. How do these strong AT forces affect you plans for using the infantry platoon?

Module 5: The Infantry ASSAULT

Long, unsupported assaults across open ground are deadly. A single enemy soldier with an automatic rifle can destroy a squad crossing 100 meters of open ground. Assault for *short distances*, from *broken terrain*, against *weak or well-suppressed* enemy positions, under the protection of *suppressive fire* and *obscuration*.

Assault only under the protection of suppressive fire. Self-generated suppression, *fire and movement*, is not sufficient. A dedicated support element, firing from an established SBF position, can focus entirely on suppressing the positions that most endanger the assault. Maintain suppressive fire right up to the point when the assault element enters the enemy position. Shift or cease fire meters in front of the assault element.

Assault only across short distances. Select the closest covered assault position available. Choose a covered and concealed approach to this position. *A long covered route is always better than a short open route.* A covered approach keeps you protected and concealed. The enemy, unaware of your intentions, is slow to react. Short assaults from nearby assault positions *surprise* the enemy. Be careful of approach routes that cannot be covered by an overwatching unit. Camouflage well to maximize your concealment.

Long assaults exhaust your men, leaving them vulnerable when you enter the enemy's position. Long assaults expose you to increasing enemy observation and fire. The enemy has time to react with reinforcements and supporting arms. The accuracy of his fire is increased. Casualties increase yet evacuation is difficult. Failed assaults have to withdraw under fire. Long assaults by fire and movement require more suppressive fires and are critically vulnerable when suppression stops early.

Assault only with obscuration. Smoke grenades and mortar smoke save lives. Every assault should be obscured by *darkness*, *fog*, or *smoke* to reduce the enemy's ability to see and react. Obscuration reduces casualties and increases the morale of the assaulting force.

Assault only against small, lightly armed, demoralized, or well-suppressed positions. Avoid mutually supporting positions.

Assault Position
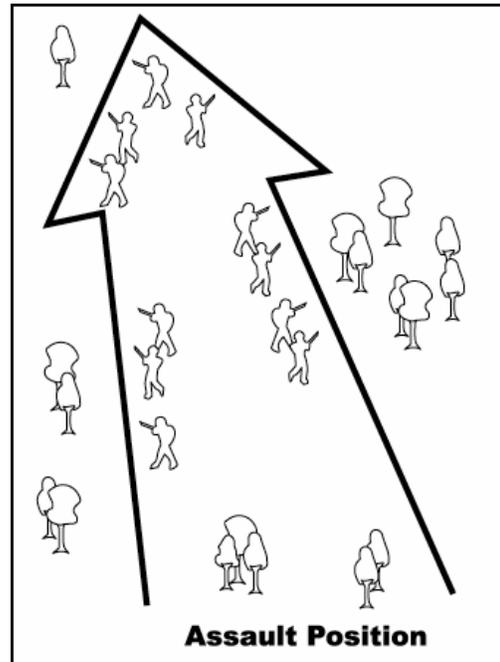
Assault Techniques. The Assault Element:

- Should be **small**. Bigger is *not* better. 60 to 70% of your unit should *support* the assault. A small assault element is quicker, easier to control, and suffers fewer casualties.
- Should be **prepared to breach** enemy obstacles.
- Uses a **wedge formation** to balance rapid movement with maximum firepower. Terrain is critical. Formations are not.
- Needs a **deployment drill** to pass through a breach in column and rapidly spread out to maximize firepower to the front.
- Needs very **few signals** with the support element. The assault element needs to focus on the assault.
- Needs SOPs to **control fires**, especially grenades.
- Needs a solid **fire and movement** drill for when overwhelming suppression does *not* permit the assault element to close on the objective standing up. Use the *base unit* technique. Unit leaders bound forward leading their men, using micro-terrain for cover.

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Fight 5-1   *Attack on the Bank*

1. **Simulation:**   ***Attack on the Bank***
   Map: Lejeune2
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon** (2) Squads + (1) MG Team

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: An EN sqd with a MG holds the bank building, the last organized resistance in the village. I think they missed their WTH and are now planning on fighting to the end.

   Bn secures a DEF POS 6k (W) IOT destroy an anticipated EN CATK.

   M: "A" Co clears the town IOT free the road from EN control.

   E: While (1) Plat clears (S), the ME Plat clears (W) to the bank. RES Plat then clears the rest of town. FS: No CAS. No Artillery. Mortars with 2nd Plat.

   Tasks:
   1st Plat: **ME. Clear (W) to the bank IOT free the road from EN control.**
   2nd Plat: Clear (S) across the river IOT free the road from EN control.
   3rd Plat: RES. BPT Clear the town IOT free the road from EN control.
   Mortars: POF to 2nd Plat.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP
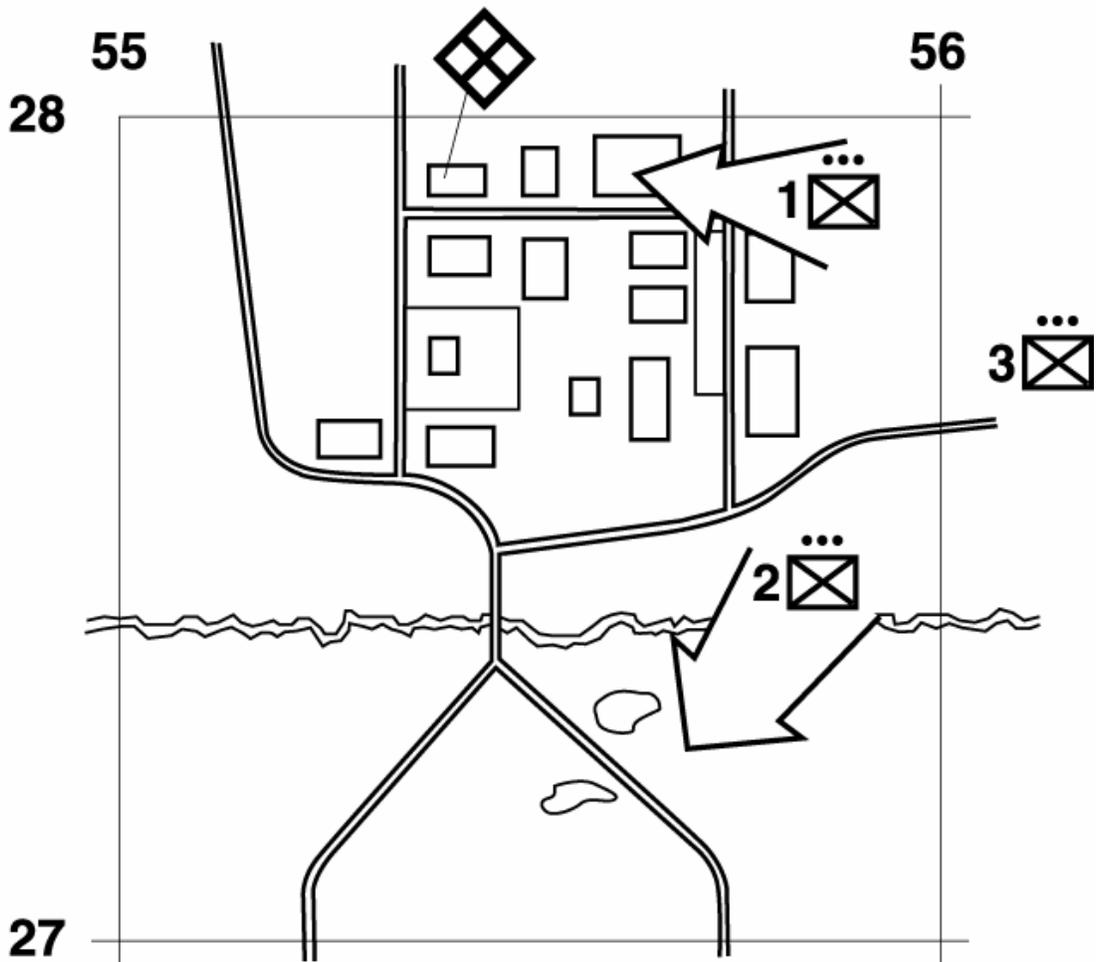
3. **Issues for Discussion**

    a. How did you organize your platoon for the attack? How strong was your SBF element?

    b. How did you conduct the final assault? Teams on line? Fire and Movement? Did you use smoke? How close was your assault position to the enemy?

    c. Did your SBF element fire at *probable* targets as well as known targets? Was the fire of your SBF element concentrated on those targets that *most* endangered the assault element?

    d. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. SBF element: Composition, positions, suppressive fires, selection of targets and probably targets, control of fires.

    b. Assault element: Composition, covered route, assault position, obscuration, assault techniques, casualties.

5. **Option**

    Edit the scenario. Add (1) squad, (1) MG team, and the company mortars. What does your SBF element look like now? Your assault element?

Module 6: The Infantry ATTACK

While a *support element* suppresses the enemy with overwhelming fires from a fixed location, a small *assault element* moves around and assaults the enemy flank. This *fire and maneuver* attack, known as a *single envelopment* or *flank attack*, is the key infantry tactic for all echelons, from squad, to platoon, to company and battalion.
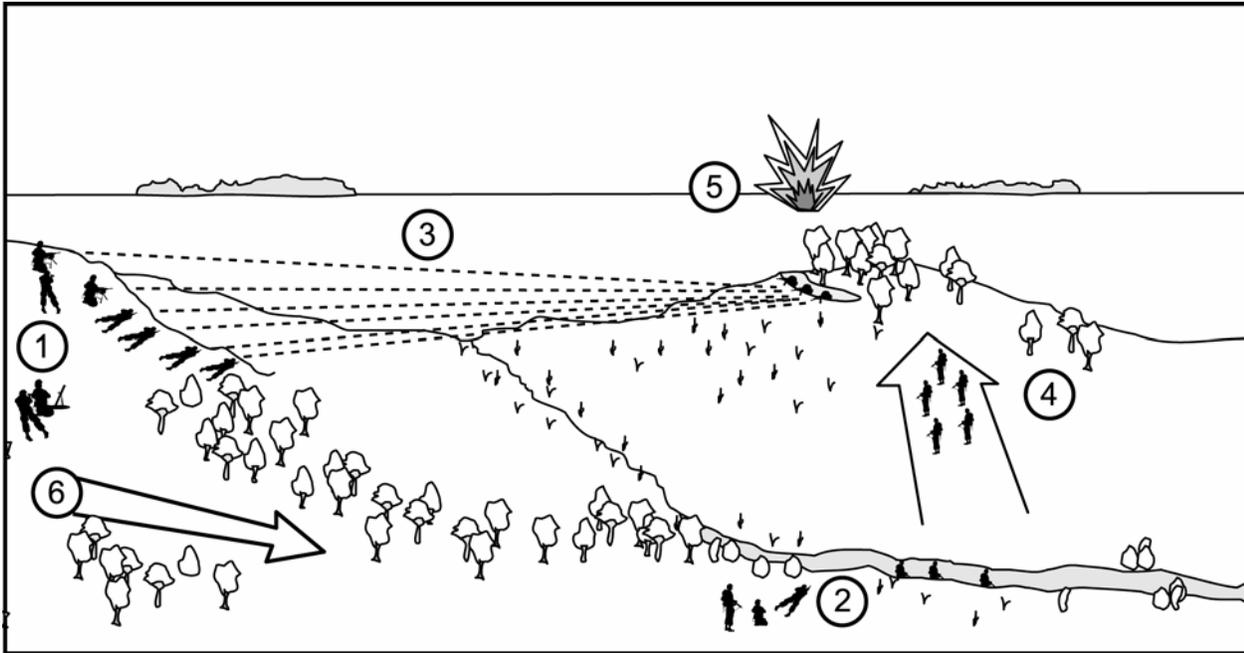
Attack Sequence

1. *The support element* is composed of the majority of your unit, including all available machineguns and supporting weapons. It sets up at the *support-by-fire position* (SBF) in order to overwatch the movement of the *assault element*.

2. The *assault element* avoids detection by moving along a covered route to a covered assault position on the enemy's flank.

3. The *support element* fixes the enemy and shuts down their fires with overwhelming suppressive fire. **See SBF Tactics.**

4. Once the enemy is suppressed, the assault element assaults. Suppression must be maintained until the last possible minute.

5. The support element shifts or ceases fire.

6. A third element, the *reserve* or *exploitation element* can follow the assault element into the enemy position and exploit the attack.

Enemy Positions

This tactic is most effective against isolated positions. Mutually supported positions must be attacked simultaneously or not at all.

If no covered approach exists, the assault element is completely dependant on continuous, effective suppression. This is difficult. Surprise the enemy by assaulting behind darkness, fog or smoke.

Hasty Attack

Finding the enemy first is critical. Developing a hasty attack while under enemy fire is difficult. The support element will probably expend all their ammunition before the assault element can get into place. The assault element, moving rapidly, may not find a covered route and may not surprise the enemy. Undetected enemy units may engage to prevent the assault.

"Fire without maneuver is indecisive. Maneuver without fire is fatal."

SBF Tactics

The support element executes the Support By Fire (SBF) mission. While the assault element moves to outflank the enemy, the support element suppresses the enemy with overwhelming fire.

The SBF:

- Reduces the volume and effectiveness of enemy fire by *suppressing* the enemy—forcing him to take cover.
- Kills exposed enemy and destroys his unprotected weapons.
- Reduces the effectiveness of the enemy's observation.
- Permits the assault element to close on the objective, ideally without being observed or taking any casualties.

The Support Element:

- Should be reinforced with all available machineguns. *Machineguns are the primary and most effective suppressive weapon in the infantry.*
- Should be supported by mortars for obscuration fires.
- Should be 3 to 8 times larger than the assault element. This insures responsiveness and overwhelming fire.

The Ideal SBF Position:

- Is protected from enemy return fire by partial defilade.
- Has good visibility of the enemy position.
- Overwatches the assault element's route.
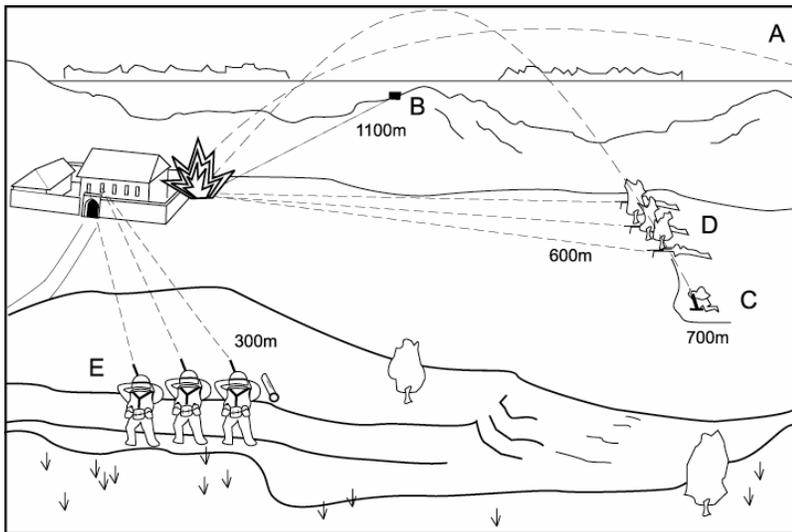
From over the horizon, A, artillery, battalion mortars, and CAS attack the objective. Heavy weapons, HMGs, AAVs, or tanks, fire from defilade at B. The support element at the SBF position fires company mortars from defilade at C, and machineguns and rifle squads fire from D. The exploitation element, responsible for overwatching the assault element, fires their small arms from E. The assault element started at E and used the cover and concealment of the sunken road to close to an assault position near the objective.

The Integrated SBF

The support element integrates all available supporting arms. Large weapons—artillery and CAS, if available—fire first. Vehicle-mounted weapons, mechanized or armor support, and mortars fire next. The machineguns and small arms of the support element then fire. Decreasing the size of the weapons permits the assault element to close on the enemy.

SBF Sequence

Occupy SBF. The support element overwatches the assault element's movement. If the assault element is engaged, the SBF provides immediate mutual support.

Fire Suppressive Fires. The support element calls supporting fires and then fires organic fires to permit the assault element to close on the enemy.

Shift Fires. As the assault element assaults, fires shift to suppress other positions, attack retreating forces, or prevent enemy resupply, reinforcement, or counterattack efforts.

Targeting

The support element fires at known and suspected enemy positions. Too many positions cannot be suppressed. Fires need to be *concentrated* and *overwhelming*.

Fight 6-1   *Convoy Rescue*

1. **Simulation:**   *Convoy Rescue*
    Map: Lejeune3
    Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (3) Squads + (2) MG Teams + Company Mortars
                                          + (2) HMG HMMWVs

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

    S: An EN patrol has cut the road at the village, stranding a convoy farther (E). EN is believed
        to number (12) to (15) soldiers and have shoulder-fired missiles. The convoy reports
        additional EN movement in the hills to their (E), trapping them in place. I think the EN will
        focus on the road traffic and less on the overland approaches to the village.

        This main road links our Bn, 4k (W), with 2nd Bn, 17k (E). tomorrow, Bn moves (N) and
        secures riverline IOT prevent EN crossings.

    M: "A" Co destroys the EN in the village IOT clear the road for convoy operations.

    E: (2) Plats envelop the village from the (N). HMG Sqd provides SBF vic road. FS: R/W CAS
        O/C. Artillery. Mortars with ME.

        Tasks:
        1st Plat: ME. Destroy the EN in the village IOT clear the road for convoy operations.
        2nd Plat: RES. FIT of 1st Plat. BPT continue ATK.
        3rd Plat: Detached.
        HMG Sqd: DS to ME.
        Mortars: POF to ME.

    A: SOP
    C: Convoy is up on Co Tac.
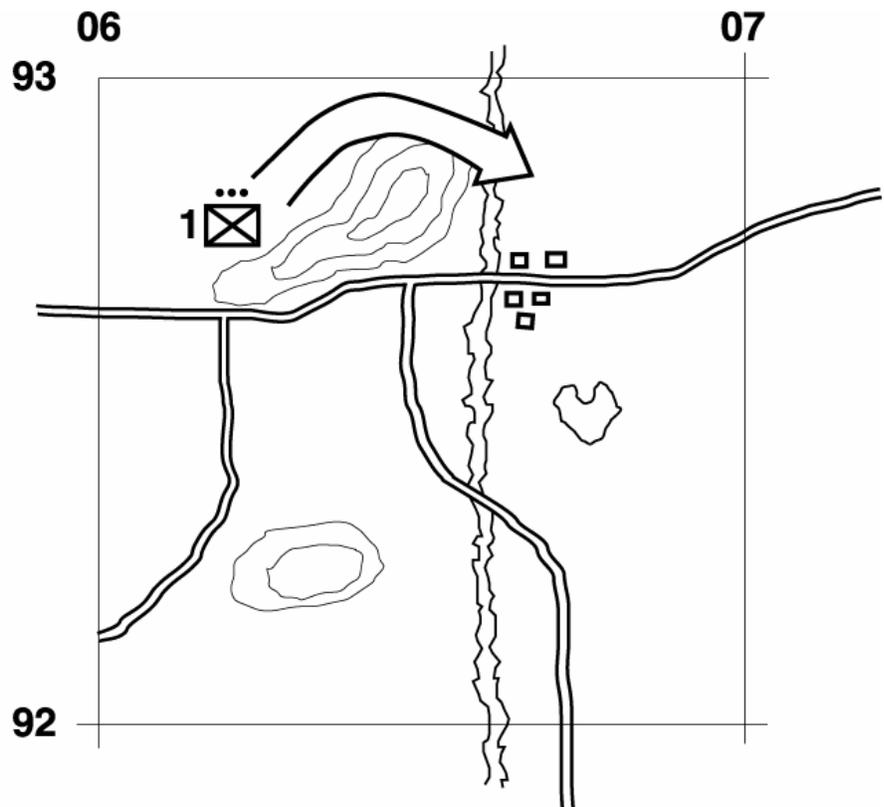
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. Why isn't the mission to rescue the trapped convoy?

   b. How did you use your HMGs? Are (2) HMG HMMWVs a sufficient SBF element? What happens if the vehicles run into difficulties and cannot fire the SBF mission? Does a vehicle SBF element need additional security forces?

   c. How would you coordinate fires with the trapped convoy?

   d. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. Fire and maneuver attack. HMG SBF element. Covered route for envelopment.

   b. Fire deconfliction between two friendly units with the enemy between their positions.

5. **Option**

   Bypass the village to the south. Linkup with the trapped convoy. Attack the village from west to east. An alternative would be to abandon the trucks and lead the personnel back south around the village back to safety. What would that accomplish?

Fight 6-2 *On the Beach*

1. **Simulation:**   *On the Beach*
   Map: Centralian3
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (2) Squads + (2) MG Teams + Company Mortars

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: Small EN infantry units still control sections of the coastline. (4) hours ago, a helicopter took small arms fire from the village in this sector, and reported at least (20) EN soldiers and an armored vehicle.

       Bn secures the village 7k to the (W), IOT protect the coastal road in both directions. 2nd Bn is on the coast 10k (E) of here.

   M: "A" Co clears the coastal road (E) IOT establish LOC with 2nd Bn.

   E: (2) Plats in column clear the coast road. (1) Plat supports with a parallel advance farther inland to the (N). FS: No CAS. Limited Artillery. Mortars with 1st Plat.

       Tasks:
       1st Plat: ME. Clear the coastal road (E) IOT establish LOC with 2nd Bn.
       2nd Plat: RES. FIT of 1st Plat. BPT continue ATK.
       3rd Plat: Clear (E) along high ground IOT protect left flank of 1st Plat.
       Mortars: POF to ME.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP

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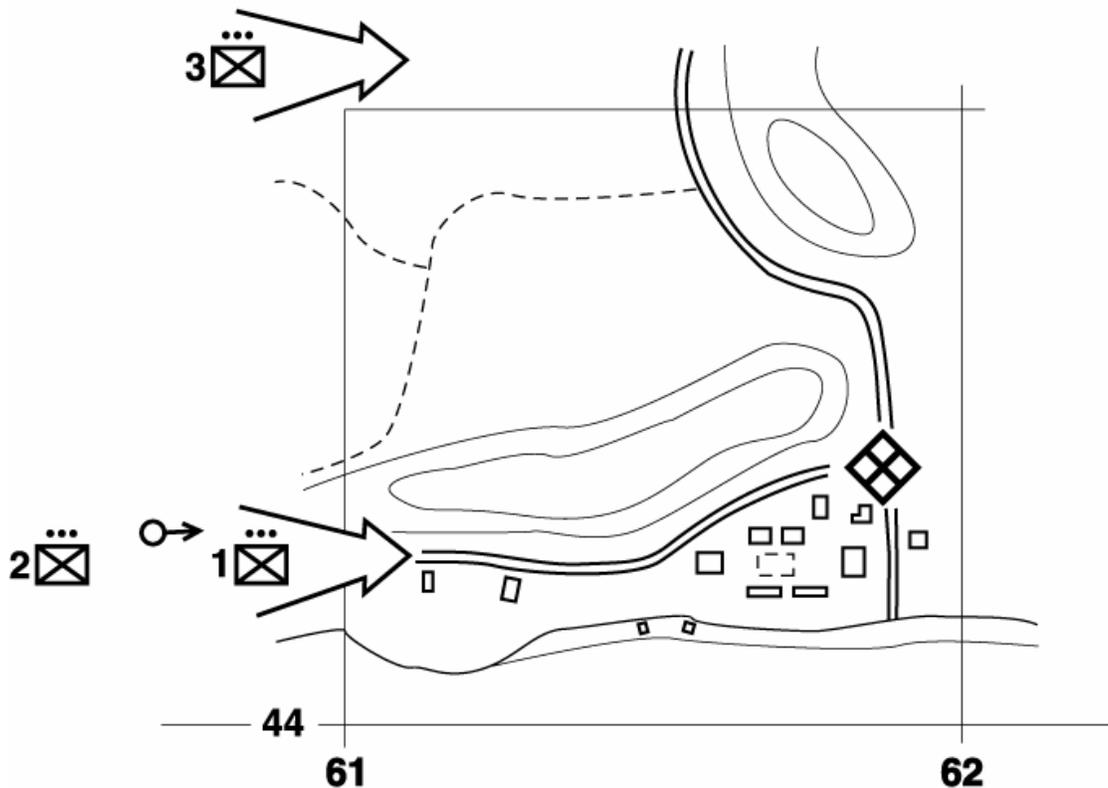
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. In open coastal terrain, what techniques should an infantry platoon use to minimize its exposure while moving? After contact with the enemy?

   b. If you focus exclusively on the village, how is your left flank protected? What would happen if an enemy force located inland north of the village counterattacked?

   c. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. A good covered approach is dependent on a leader's ability to analyze and use terrain.

   b. In contact in open terrain, every maneuver is tied closely to the cover provided by the terrain and the concealment provided by smoke and sparse vegetation.

   c. Combat between buildings.

5. **Option**

   Edit the scenario. Add (2) HMG HMMWVs. If these vehicles approach the village along the coastal road while the platoon approaches behind the high ground, how does this improve your scheme of maneuver? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a motorized BOF?

Fight 6-3   *Attack on the Village*

1. Simulation: *Attack on the Village*
   Map: Montanyan2
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon**. (3) Squads + (2) MG Teams + Company Mortars

2. Company Commander's Orders

S: Small EN units have been reported in the village. An AT BRDM was sighted there yesterday. I think they're trying to block our advance (W).

   Bn, currently 8k (E), plans on convoying through here in less than 24 hours IOT reposition for security OPS in the capital city.

M: "A" Co seizes the village IOT clear the highway for the Bn advance.

E: While (1) Plat blocks the EN escape 800m (SW) of the village, (1) Plat ATKS the village from the (NE) high ground. RES Plat will FIT. FS: R/W CAS O/C. Artillery. Mortars with ME.

   Tasks:
   1st Plat: ME. Seize the village IOT clear the highway for the Bn advance.
   2nd Plat: RES. FIT of 1st Plat. BPT continue ATK.
   3rd Plat: Block road 800m (SW) of village IOT prevent EN WTH.
   Mortars: POF to ME.

A: SOP
C: SOP

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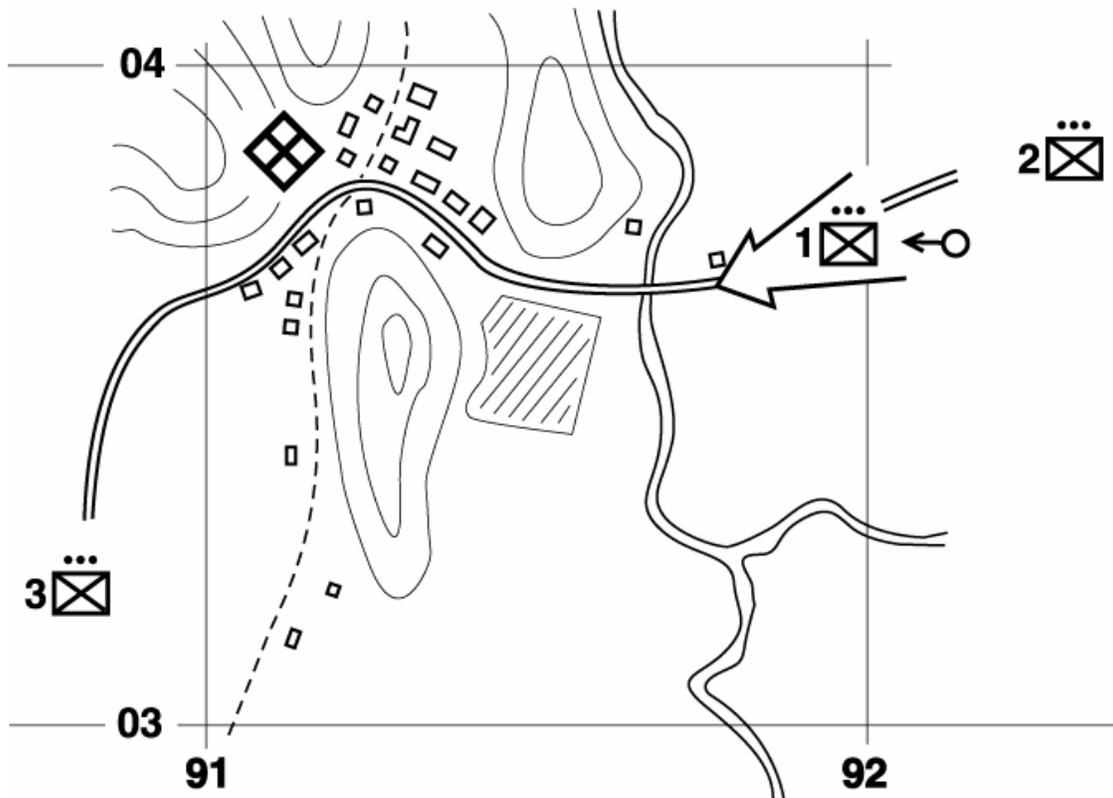
3. **Issues for Discussion**

    a. When entering the town, did your open fire on the first building to be assaulted? Did you wait for the enemy to fire first?

    b. What if the Rules of Engagement prevented you from firing on buildings unless occupied by active hostile forces? How would that change your scheme of maneuver? Your success?

    c. What effect do mortars have on enemy troops entrenched within a building?

    d. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

    a. The cover and concealment provided by buildings. The difficulties in closing on an unknown enemy hidden in a built-up area.

    b. Use of bounding overwatch and smoke obscuration when fighting from building to building.

5. **Option**

    Edit the scenario. Add (3) AAAVs. Delete (2) machinegun teams. How does a mechanized BOF change your scheme of maneuver? Your success? What risks do you acquire?

Module 7: MORTAR Tactics in Open Terrain

Mortar fires are inherently inaccurate. Mortars are an area weapon. Mortars are best used for suppression, not destroying point targets.
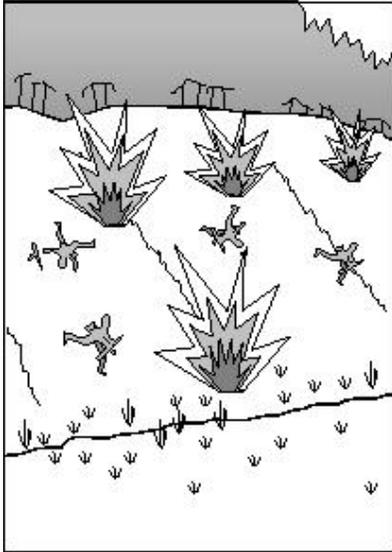
Infantry in the open are particularly vulnerable to mortar fire, especially when combined with direct fire.

Good Targets

Fire mortars at vulnerable targets in the open:

- Infantry in the open
- Infantry under trees
- Infantry behind one-sided defilade like walls or hills
- Stationary soft vehicles
- Stationary crew-served weapons, especially heavy weapons that cannot be moved quickly

Mortar suppression is not destruction. Suppression needs to be combined with other weapons. Limited rounds limit the duration of mortar suppression.

Enemy infantry in the open should be attacked with a combined arms mortar and direct fire attack.

Bad Targets

Do not fire mortars at invulnerable targets:

- Buildings. Blasting through ceilings with mortar fire is a waste of rounds.
- Bunkers and entrenchments.
- Tanks and armor. Mortar fire can only button them up and slow them down.
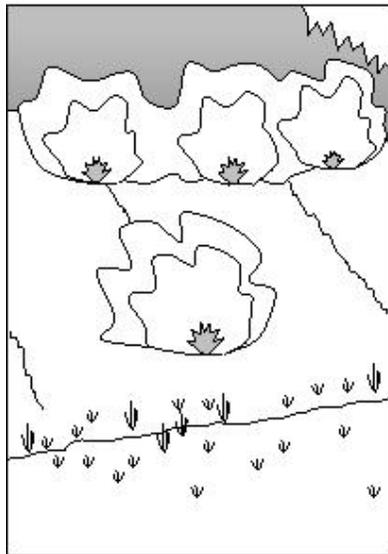
Mortar smoke blinds the enemy and reduces the accuracy of his fire.

Don't Waste Ammunition

Rounds are limited. Save rounds for lucrative targets. Mortar rounds are heavy to carry and consumed rapidly. Don't waste rounds on:

- Unobserved targets
- Bad targets
- Distant targets that do not support your mission. Select targets carefully.

Mortar Smoke

Mortar smoke provides more obscuration at greater range than grenade smoke. Fire mortar smoke:

- To blind the enemy during an attack.
- In front of a distant enemy that is firing on you.
- In front of your position when pinned by the enemy to permit withdrawal.
- To deceive the enemy by misdirecting his attention.

What's He Doing?

Enemy Mortars

Pay attention to the enemy's mortars.

- If you are under mortar fire, you are under observation. Move.
- If he is saving rounds, he probably doesn't have many to waste.
- If he is using smoke, he's hiding something. Fire into his smoke.

When you are pinned down in the open by enemy fire, expect to be mortared. Use **bounding overwatch** to avoid being fixed.

Find and attack his mortars. Study the terrain for potential positions. Listen for mortar fire to determine his location.

MORTAR Techniques

Mortar Units

Mortar crews are valuable support units. Do not use mortar crews to assault or engage in direct fire combat.

Light, Medium or Heavy?

Light mortars move faster and are more responsive than medium or heavy mortars. Medium and heavy mortars move slowly, and their ammunition is heavy, but they are more destructive. Heavy mortars usually need vehicles to move on the battlefield.

On the Move

While on the move, mortars are an infantry commander's most responsive and immediate fire support available. A mortar unit's ability to set up and fire quickly is critical.

MOUT

Mortars are valuable in MOUT because of their high rate of fire, high angle of fire, and short minimum range.

Positions in existing structures and narrow alleys provide maximum protection for minimum effort. Avoid rooftop positions for mortars. Observers should use tall buildings to control fires.
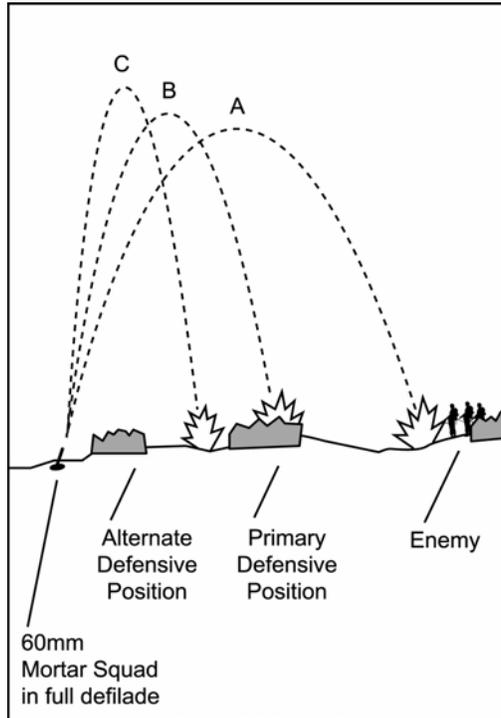
Defilade mortar position supports both the primary and the alternate platoon defensive positions without moving tubes or ammunition.

Mortar Positions

The best mortar position is a compromise between *defilade*, *security* and *communications*.

Defilade:

- Provides protection from enemy direct fire weapons
- Minimizes the requirement for security
- Helps the unit avoid detection by the enemy
- Avoids trees and overhead cover

But... light mortars are more accurate when firing at targets they can see.

Security. Mortar crews provide their own security. They should stay close to the units that they are supporting to minimize security needs.

Communications. Light mortars should stay within signal range of the units that they are supporting, even when connected by radio. Mortars are difficult to adjust when visibility is poor. Medium and heavy mortars operate almost exclusively by radio.

Shifting Positions

Once they are set up, avoid moving guns unnecessarily. Moving mortar ammunition is much more difficult task than moving the tubes.

Planned Targets

In stationary positions, plan and register targets. Target dead space, choke points, and Final Protective Fires.

Fight 7-1 *The Hairpin Turn*

1. **Simulation:** *The Hairpin Turn*
   Map: Montanyan1
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon**. (3) Squads + (2) MG Teams + Company Mortars

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: An EN Plat has blocked the road (N). Their POS, on the high ground overlooking the hairpin turn on the far side of the river, includes AT weapons. Armored vehicles have been sighted as far (S) as the bridge. They may have limited artillery support. I think they're digging in for a hard fight, but looking for a mechanized ATK, they will focus on the road and the bridge.

   Our Bn, currently 9k (S), ATKS north across the river within 12 hours IOT protect the left flank of HHQ

   M: "A" Co secures the crossing site and clears the highway IOT permit FOF to ATK (N).

   E: (1) Plat will envelopment left. RES Plat will FIT. (1) Plat clears the alternate route 1600m (E) of bridge. FS: R/W CAS O/C. Artillery. Mortars with ME.

   Tasks:
   1st Plat: ME. Secure crossing site and clear highway IOT permit FOF to ATK (N).
   2nd Plat: RES. FIT of 1st Plat. BPT continue ATK.
   3rd Plat: Clear the ford 1600m (E) of bridge IOT provide alternate route across the river.
   Mortars: POF to ME.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP
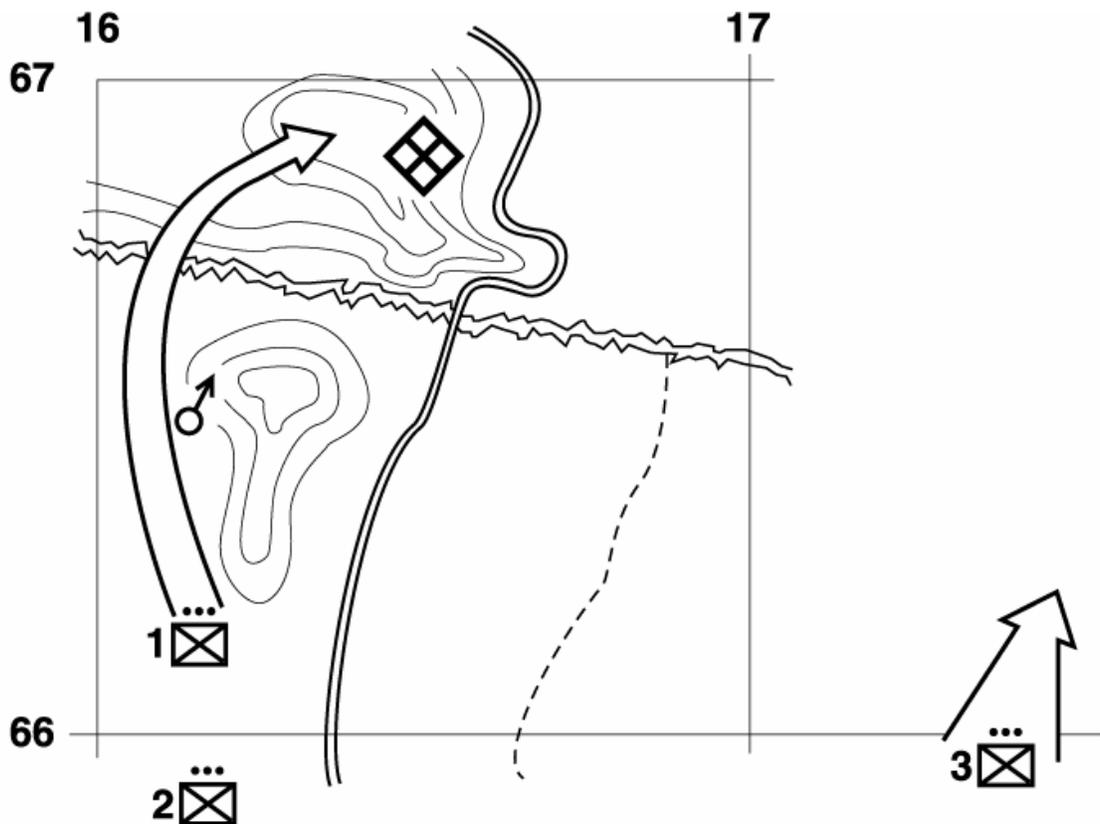
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. How much time does a foot mobile envelopment require?

   b. Would you have liked to recon the enemy dispositions on the hill before your movement?

   c. The company scheme of maneuver provided no SBF element south of the bridge. How significant was this decision? How did you use the machineguns attached to you?

   d. How significant were the company mortars in support of your attack?

   e. Did enemy forces cross to the south side of the river? What was your response?

   f. In close terrain, how much of a threat is an enemy APC to a Marine infantry squad?

   g. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. Movement. The tradeoff between security and speed. The importance of a covered approach.

   b. The importance of reconnaissance for all units. The danger of advancing on an unknown enemy position.

5. **Option**

   Edit the scenario. Add (2) HMG HMMWVs. If these vehicles are used as a SBF element, how does this change the fight?

Fight 7-2   *Close on the Town*

1. **Simulation:**   *Close on the Town*
   Map: Quantico3
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon**. (3) Squads + (2) MG Teams + Company Mortars
                                 + (2) HMG HMMWVs

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: An EN unit, estimated at (20) soldiers, holds the town. More EN may be (N) of the town. EN vehicles, including APCs, have been sighted on the road north of town. The EN may have artillery support. I think they'll be well dug-in and well armed.

        Bn, currently (N) of us, clears (W) IOT cut all EN supply routes in this sector. "A" Co is ME.

   M: "A" Co seizes the town IOT cut EN (N)-(S) supply route.

   E: While (1) Plat block EN WTH, our ME Plat seizes the town. FS: R/W CAS O/C. Artillery POF to "A" Co. Mortars with ME.

        Tasks:
   1st Plat: **ME. Seize the town IOT cut EN (N)-(S) supply route.**
   2nd Plat: Block EN WTH (NW) of town IOT prevent EN escape.
   3rd Plat: RES. FIT of 1st Plat. BPT pursue EN WTH.
   Mortars: POF to ME.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP
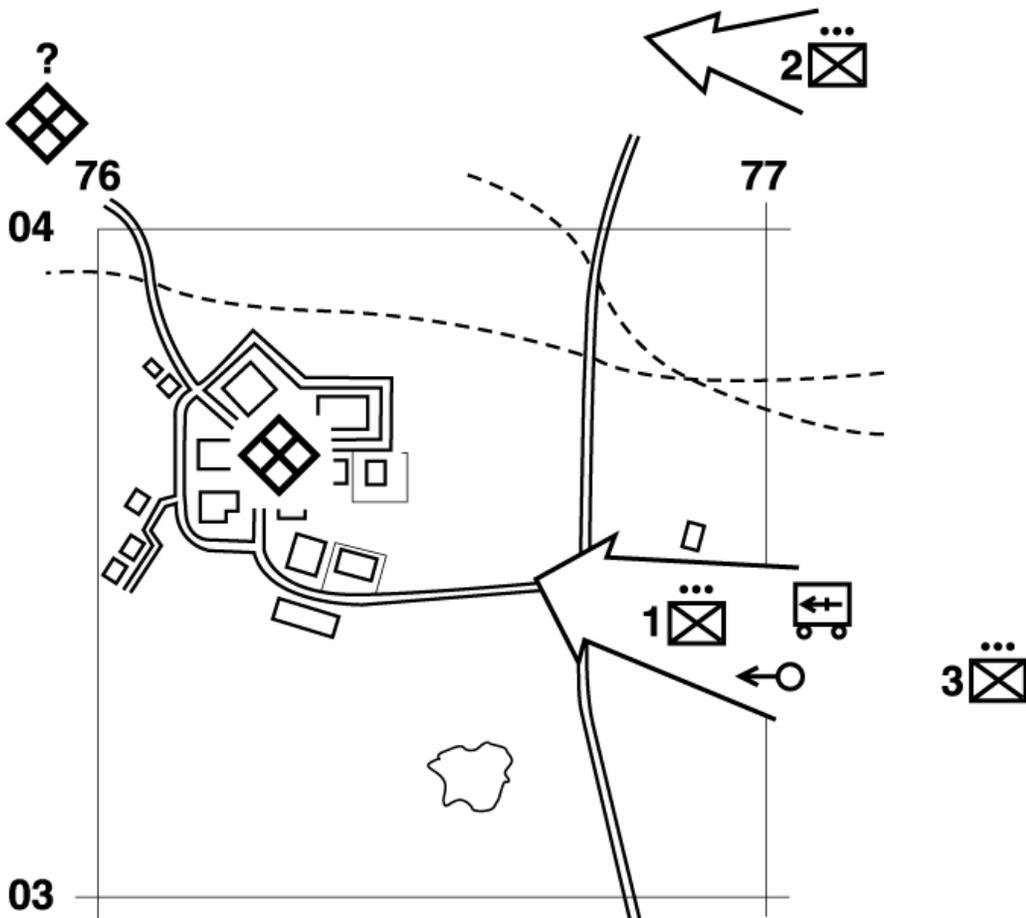
3. **Issues for Discussion**

   a. How does a lack of reconnaissance and lack of knowledge about the enemy make attack planning difficult?

   b. How does an infantry unit kill an armored vehicle at 500m? How does it kill it *without* CAS?

   c. What limitations do CAS and artillery have in urban areas?

   d. How did you use your HMG HMMWVs?

   e. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

   a. Deliberate attack on a built-up area.

   b. Attacking an enemy with artillery capability.

5. **Options**

   a. Edit the scenario. Add (2) recon teams. If these teams are used to collect information on enemy positions, how does that change your attack plan?

   b. Edit the scenario. Add (3) AAAVs. How do AAAVs assist in attacking a town?

Module 8: MECHANIZED INFANTRY

Amphibious vehicles are fighting vehicles. In addition to *mobility* and *protection*, AAAVs give the infantry an increased capability to *fight*.

The Mechanized Attack

It's all about suppression. The strength of mechanized infantry is its significant organic firepower. The mechanized infantry attack places a small dismounted assault element against a vulnerable penetration point, supported by the overwhelming firepower of a *vehicle-mounted* support element.

The support element suppresses the enemy while the assault element closes to assault. The only difference between this attack and the standard infantry attack is the firepower, protection, and mobility of the support element.

The vehicles are the support weapon for the squads—a mobile base of fire with heavy weapons and plenty of ammunition.

Weapons Vehicles

Heavy weapons mounted on HMMWVs or other vehicles serve the same purpose. They are mobile bases of fire. Unlike armored vehicles however, HMMWVs have no protection and add no mobility to the infantry units they support.

The Mechanized Defense

The mechanized infantry defense can be organized three ways.

- **Dismounted and co-located**. The preferred method is to have the armored vehicles and infantry co-located in the same battle position. This is ideal for control, ability to move rapidly, mutual support, and ability to counterattack.

- **Mounted and co-located**. Keeping the infantry inside the vehicles should only be done for a hasty defense. The unit is ready to move, but observation and security are reduced.

- **Separated**. Vehicles and infantry in separate battle positions can interlock their fire on a single avenue of approach or cover two avenues of approach. The separate positions should still provide each other with mutual support. Command and control is more difficult, and follow-on operations require time to link-up and load the vehicles.

Internal Friction

Commanders of infantry units and commanders of amphibious vehicles need to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, weapons capabilities, vulnerabilities, and preferred tactics. Amphibious vehicles cannot survive against AT missiles, tank fire, or heavy enemy armored vehicle fire.

Fighting as an integrated combined-arms team requires much more training, coordination, and preparation than simply *moving* together.

Tanks and Mechanized Infantry

When supporting tanks, mechanized infantry units protect the tanks, clearing complex terrain to allow them to move through or defending them against foot-mobile enemy in close terrain.

When tanks support the infantry, the tanks contribute to the base of fire, providing significant firepower against hardened defensive positions and buildings. Although necessary in some situations, using tanks to support infantry is usually an underutilization of their capabilities.

Fight 8-1   *Seize the Airfield*

1. Simulation: *Seize the Airfield*
   Map: Centralian1
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (3) Squads + (3) AAAVs + Company Mortars

2. Company Commander's Orders

S: The airfield is held by a REIN Plat, (30) soldiers and at least (2) armored vehicles, probably
    BTR-60s.They have not had much time to dig any entrenchments. I think they will DEF from
    the buildings that guard the (N) entrance.

    Our Co surface attack, the Bn ME, will be supported by "B" Co's helicopter assault (E) of
    the airfield. The remainder of the Bn will then converge on the airfield both by air and by
    surface means IOT stage for follow-on operations.

M: "A" Co seizes the airfield IOT permit FOF to land by helicopter.

E: (1) Plat will seize the main terminal building with the RES Plat in trace. Once secure,
    another Plat will seize the (6) small terminal buildings. RES Plat then clears the runway
    perimeter. FS: R/W CAS O/C. No artillery. Mortars with ME.

    Tasks:
    1st Plat: ME. Seize the main terminal IOT permit FOF to land by helicopter.
   2nd Plat: Seize the (E) terminal buildings IOT permit FOF to land by helicopter.
    3rd Plat: RES. FIT of 1st Platoon. BPT clear runway perimeter.
    Mortars: POF to ME.

A: SOP
C: SOP
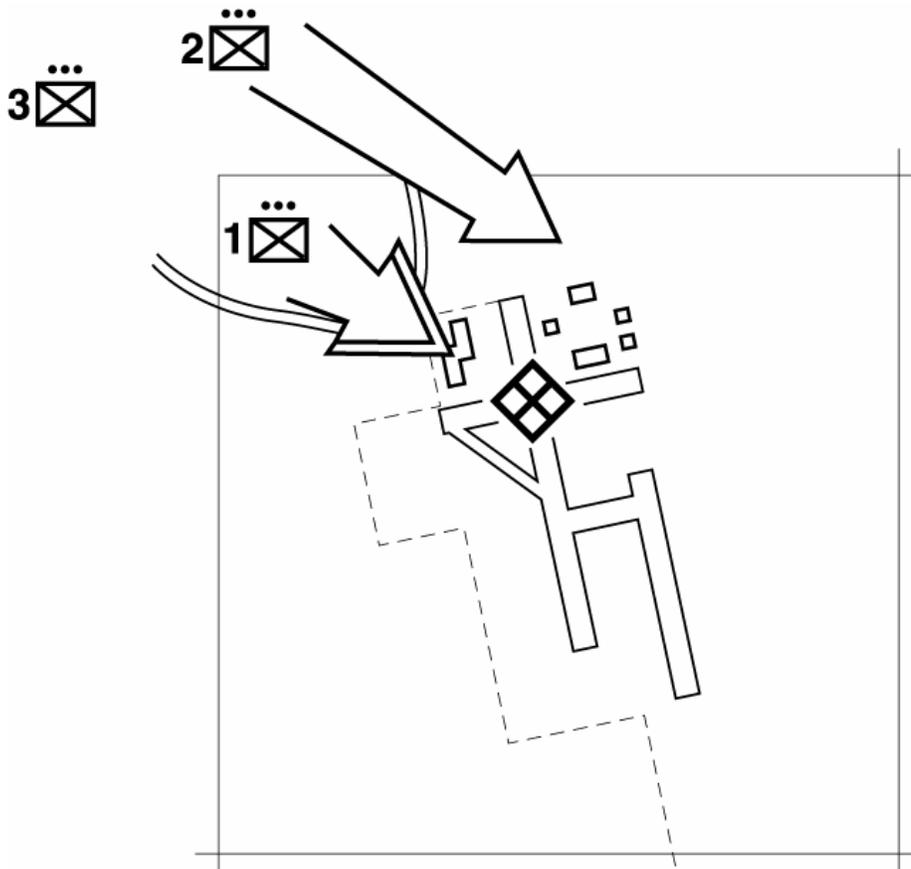
3. Issues for Discussion

a. Why is 1st Platoon's task "seize the main terminal"? Why not "destroy enemy forces"?

b. Why is an airfield difficult to seize? Is one platoon sufficient to "clear the runway perimeter"? Can the enemy still prevent aircraft from using the airfield even if no enemy soldiers occupy the perimeter?

c. How does an infantry platoon attack an enemy armored vehicle at 500m? What if CAS is not available?

d. When does mechanized infantry mount and move inside their vehicles? When do they dismount? Once dismounted, what is the relationship between vehicles and infantry? Does each vehicle support its own squad or do the vehicles become a single tactical unit?

e. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. Tactical Themes

a. Mechanized Infantry. The key skill of mechanized infantry is coordination between the vehicle weapons as a BOF and the dismounted assault element.

b. Infantry versus armored vehicles in open terrain. Wide-open fields of fire favor the enemy armored vehicles.

Fight 8-2 *Ambush React Force*

1. **Simulation:** ***Ambush React Force***
   Map: Lejeune1
   Task Organization: **1st Platoon.** (3) Squads + (2) HMG HMMWVs

2. **Company Commander's Orders**

   S: This morning, a (6)-truck convoy traveling (NW) drove through an attempted ambush here along the (S) side of the road. The EN force was reported as (20) soldiers with RPGs, MGs and mortars. I think this morning's ambush was triggered early before they had time to set up. I think the EN will remain in the area and set up again soon.

   Bn is staging 16k (E) IOT begin security OPS in this sector. This road is our MSR.

   M: "A" Co destroys EN ambush force IOT safeguard traffic on the highway.

   E: (1) Plat clears the (N) side of the highway, (1) Plat clears the (S) side. On fixing the EN, the RES Plat will ATK. FS: R/W CAS O/C. No Artillery. Mortars with ME.

   Tasks:
   1st Plat: Clear (S) side of road IOT find and fix EN for Co ATK.
   2nd Plat: Clear (N) side of road IOT find and fix EN for Co ATK.
   3rd Plat: ME. RES. BPT destroy the EN IOT safeguard traffic on the highway.
   Mortars: POF to ME.

   A: SOP
   C: SOP
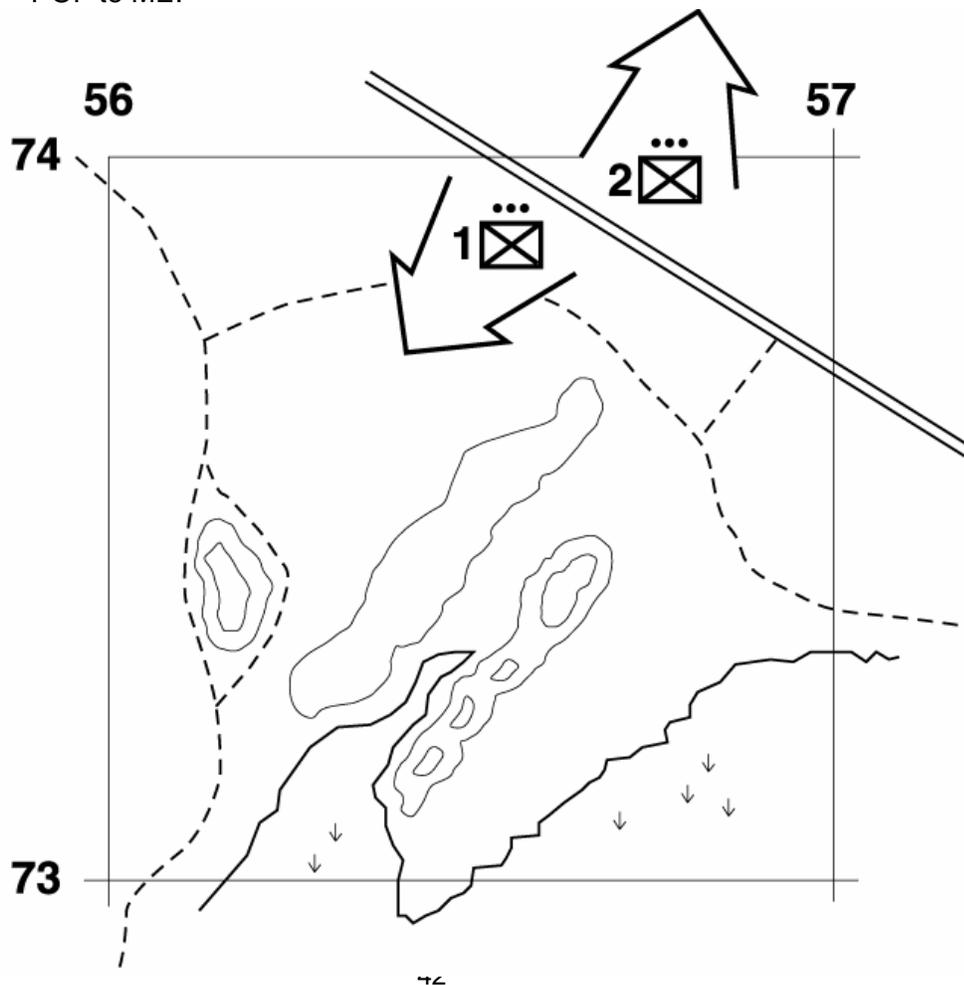
3. **Issues for Discussion**

    a. How did you use the HMG HMMWVs?

    b. How long does it take to search a grid square on foot?

    c. How do you fight against enemy mortars? How does your lack of mortars affect your capabilities?

    d. How do you deal with multiple simultaneous enemy contacts?

    e. When searching, did your squads remain in mutually supporting distance of one another? In close terrain, how far is "mutually supporting distance?"

    f. What caused most of your casualties? How could these casualties have been reduced?

4. **Tactical Themes**

    a. Platoon Movement to Contact. Bounding overwatch by teams within the squad. Bounding overwatch by squads within the platoon. The measure of success is the number of units immediately able to fire on the enemy when contact is made.]

    b. Fixing the enemy by fire is indecisive if the enveloping assault force cannot close. The fixing force needs to be prepared to conduct an independent attack.

    c. Coordination issues, control, fratricide, mutual support, between HMG HMMWVs and the infantry platoon.

5. **Option**

    Edit the scenario. Delete the (2) HMMWVs. Add (2) MG teams and a mortar team. Is the search easier or more difficult with a foot-mobile machinegun squad?

"All Stations, this is Kodiak Actual..."

Thoughts on Verbal Orders in the Infantry Battalion

by

Major Brendan B. McBreen

*"At eleven-fifty, Engineers attach to Echo, machineguns DS to Echo. I think the enemy has withdrawn - the vehicles at the stadium are abandoned and the snipers to the south are just a delay. Our forces to the north can't be relieved until we've secured the main road. **Mission: At thirteen hundred, we attack east and seize the railroad bridge in order to prevent enemy interference with the MSR.** One company attacks north of the boulevard inclusive, one south. Echo, main effort. Seize the railroad bridge in order isolate the town from enemy east of the river. Golf. Clear the south sector of town in order to prevent enemy interference with the main effort. Fox, reserve. Co-locate with mortars at checkpoint romeo-three-one. Confirm, over."*

The Marine Corps preoccupation with the planning process and written orders serves to *decrease* our ability to issue effective verbal orders.

Think of your own experiences with verbal orders. At a wargame at Quantico, *"We couldn't really do an order in only an hour, so these bullets represent some of our **thoughts**."* At a warplan simulation at Camp Pendleton, *"If this were real, we'd have the imagery to permit us to make our **plans**."* On a TDG at a battalion PME session, *"We've outlined two **options** to think about."* During an exercise, a voice crackles over the radio, *"Move to phase line gold and **stand by** for further orders."* Thoughts? Plans? Options? Stand By? Gentlemen, we need a clear *order* implementing your decision *now*! The above examples represent three negative trends you may have observed (1) an expectation of more time, (2) an expectation of more information, and (3) a lack of decisiveness and sense of urgency. Given ample time, each of the officers involved could have developed his thoughts into a coherent order in the recommended fashion. Without practice at rapidly producing succinct verbal orders, however, he is adrift.

Why are we not as good at verbal orders as we should be? The first reason our verbal orders technique suffers is because in school and in the fleet, "the orders process" is synonymous with "the planning process" which concludes with lengthy written orders development. The training rationale is that this develops an understanding of the components of an order. Once the concept is understood, unit SOPs can reduce the details of the order. The reality, of course, is that most well trained leaders mimic exactly what they are taught in school, generating six-page orders to

direct a two-hour attack. Even squad leaders are taught to write pages of orders. This has planted unrealistic expectations of "adequate planning time" and "proper orders format" in the heads of both leaders and Marines. When you are not granted adequate time in combat, is your order sufficient? Do you or your people now have doubts? A common opinion is that you cannot do a 'proper' or 'real' order unless you have a few hours available. Even the term 'frag order,' mistakenly applied to any verbal order, implies your directive is not a *real* order, but a fragment or offshoot of a properly written plan. A side effect of this model is that the comfort level we have discussing courses of action delays decisiveness and generates uneasiness with rapid decisions that have not been widely discussed or examined.

The second reason our verbal orders technique suffers rests on our inability to stabilize units, stabilize commanders, and train progressively. Cohesive and well-trained units can operate on concise verbal orders because they have shared experiences and expectations, they know each other's capabilities, and can operate well on minimum guidance. Excessively detailed orders are required when a commander lacks familiarity with his unit's background, leadership and capabilities.

The third and most compelling reason we are poor at verbal orders is that most of our exercises and training events lack a capable, thinking opponent. We are not teaching our leaders that combat is a dynamic clash of wills. When our training 'enemy' does not react or willfully attempt to counter our efforts, we learn the dangerous tendency to precisely script our every move. Evidence of this trend can easily be found in orders that include seven or eight sequential tasks for each subordinate, and in matrices that precisely envision six phases for an attack. In the dynamic chaos of actual combat, we will never be able to predict the sequence or the results on the battlefield with such accuracy.

The Marine Corps publishes almost no guidance on verbal orders. We teach few good techniques, we do not demand competence, and we rarely practice. Most of us do not do well when verbal orders are required. On exercises, particularly over the radio, we issue haphazard verbal orders off the top of our heads.

Combat narratives, from World War II through Vietnam, show the Marine Corps has historically operated well on verbal orders. According to MajGen O.K. Steele, the battle for Hue City was fought exclusively on verbal orders. Biographies of wartime leaders, including Patton, Montgomery, Slim, Rommel, and von Mellenthin, show these men were adamant in their insistence on verbal orders. They knew combat as a rapidly changing competitive environment where decentralization and small unit initiative were energized by concise verbal orders.

The details of war plans, amphibious landings, movement plans, and large deliberate operations cannot be communicated by verbal orders. For the rapidly changing environment of combat, however, the Marine Corps needs to be good at verbal orders. This key skill accelerates our tempo and maintains our momentum. A tactical decision is meaningless without the ability to communicate it clearly and rapidly. Your ability to issue a brief, clear, unambiguous order is a difficult but essential combat skill. This requires guidance, training, and practice.

Recommended Verbal Order Technique

The standard for verbal orders should be: **Five sentences, in fifty seconds, while under fire**.

Task Organization. Organize your force before issuing the order. State the time of attachments.

Orientation. One sentence on orientation, if needed, should precede the order to identify any new control measures or reference points.

Situation. Give a one-sentence assessment of what you *think* the enemy is trying to do. Start with **"I think..."**: *"I think those vehicles are the couterattack!"* Your orders make sense if your Marines know what you are thinking. Do not restate the obvious: *"We're under fire!"* Do not restate facts, *interpret* them. What does it mean? Draw conclusions! Then put your analysis in context. How do these enemy actions affect your higher headquarter's intent?

Mission. State the single collective unit mission before assigning any tasks. Start with **"We..."** Use the in-order-to (IOT) format to link mission and intent*: "At 1215, we will seize the pass IOT prevent enemy retreat."* This is the single most important sentence of your order. Choose each word carefully.

Execution. A concept of operations lets everyone know the context of your plan and any support planned. If you jump straight to tasks*, "You buy meat! You buy cheese! You buy vegetables!"*, your people may not know if they are building a salad, a pizza, or a sandwich.

Tasks. Phrase each task exactly like a mission statement. Use the IOT format to link mission and intent. Always designate one unit as the main effort. The main effort task needs to parrallel the unit mission. Always designate, and avoid tasking, a reserve. A single "Be Prepared To" statement for the reserve can guide that unit commander in his preparations.

Coordinating Instructions. The final sentence ties up the order with instructions for all hands, usually timing, signals, or locations such as the casualty collection point. Most **Admin & Logisitics** and **Command & Signal** information should be SOP, rarely needed in a verbal order.

The notes for a verbal order, if made at all, should fit on an index card:

> **T/O:** E + CEB + HMG(DS), F, G, 81s, COC
> **O:**
>
> **S:** EN withdrawn, snipers are delay. **HHQ** needs MSR.
> **M:** 1300 ATK E seize RR bridge **IOT** prev EN
> interference with MSR
> **E:** **SoM:** Echo N of boulevard incl, Golf on S.
> Fires: 81s, 2/11
> • Echo. **ME**. Seize RR bridge **IOT** isolate town.
> • Golf. Clear southern sector **IOT** protect ME.
> • Fox. **RES** @ CP R31 with 81s.
> Coord:

Good Orders

The above technique meets all the requirements of a good order. A good order includes:

- An analysis of the situation
- A tie to the higher intent
- A unit mission and intent
- A series of tasks with intents
- A designated main effort
- A designated reserve

Conversely, a good order avoids:

- Excessive "On Order" or "If Then." Too many conditional statements indicate a fragile plan, dependent on many linkages and good communications. In combat, these are the last things you'll have. Do not reserve all decisions to yourself.
- T/O Confusion. Too many independent units also indicates a fragile plan. Complex organizations require detailed orders and good communications to coordinate multiple moving parts. Generally, one organization should be responsible for each separate part of your plan. Be very clear on command relationships.
- Micromanagement (MM)
- More-of-the-obvious (MOTO)
  In any order there are three types of sentences. (1) Mission Specific: *"H-Hour is 0900,"* (2) MM: *"Have your third squad carry extra batteries for your beacons,"* and (3) MOTO: *"Use all means to minimize casualties."* MM statements might be good training advice, but they do NOT belong in your order. Do not step on the command prerogatives of your subordinates. MOTO phrases are self-evident statements that offend your subordinates' sense of competence. Do not restate SOPs. **Every sentence in your order should be mission specific.**

Verbal Order Philosophies

Less is more. Be painstakingly brief and clear. Construct an unambiguous order with the fewest number of carefully chosen words. Kill all adjectives and adverbs. Avoid excessive "Be Prepared To" sentences for future potentialities. Strive to meet the current situation. When another task needs to be accomplished later, issue another order. Avoid "phases" for the same reason. In the disorder of combat, simplicity is strength.

Cohesion and Training are the Pre-requisites. Cohesive and well-trained units have practiced battle drills and standing operating procedures that speed communications and are well understood. The leaders of cohesive units understand the tactical thoughts and expectations of their commander, they know and trust each other's judgment, and they have confidence in the capabilities of their Marines and their small unit leaders who make the crucial decisions on the battlefield. Train your unit and your leaders with these goals in mind.

Trust your people. Know your leaders and assume competence. The level of detail in an order depends on the proficiency of your subordinates. When you rely on you subordinate's self-reliance and judgment on the spot, you create enthusiasm for the task that increases the likelihood of success and the conditions for exploitation of opportunity. An order should contain everything a subordinate must know to carry out the order, and only that. Use the briefback technique to avoid surprises.

Missions and Tasks. Assign a single mission to your unit. Assign a single task to each subordinate. Select only the essential tasks and focus on those. A mission which includes several parts diverts attention from the primary goal.

Intent. Intent equals purpose. The IOT format is the most concise technique to link the mission and the intent. The commander's intent paragraph has no place in a verbal order. Avoid splitting your unit's focus with two intents: *"Seize Hill 160 IOT control the riverline AND permit our unhindered resupply."* The best intent focuses on the enemy, not friendly forces or terrain. Intent is not a tactical task, *"Attack IOT destroy."* The intent is far larger than the tactical task. A good intent will always provide your subordinate with multiple options. Your subordinates then have leeway to take action when the situation changes. Meaningful intent gives your order durability and longevity.

Nesting Intents. The intent of each task must be "nested." Supporting efforts support the main effort. The main effort supports the higher headquarters. From the highest headquarters to the leading squad, the intents of all units should cascade so that the actions of each unit contributes to the whole. This is the only way to make a large organization operate in a chaotic environment. Disciplined initiative at each level will contribute to the greater good only if the intent of each order supports the order above it.

Puppet orders. Avoid moving and placing your subordinate commanders: *"Continue moving north and then east to CP51."* You are not moving puppets. You are tasking commanders. Avoid using "orient." The intent of your order should clarify why a certain position or direction is important.

Schedules, target lists, manifests and other data sheets are the results of an order. They are not the order. Issue a verbal order, then develop and submit any lists or manifests needed.

Language. Use inclusive language, *"You are moving with me,"* and avoid exclusive language, *"You are not staying here."* Avoid qualified statements, *"Try to hold,"* or *"As far as possible."* These lessen responsibility. Avoid conditional statements, *"If you can get over the bridge."* Know and use precise tactical terms, the language of your profession. Mission and task statements, especially, need to be clear and correct. Tasks that focus on the enemy, *fix, suppress*, tasks that focus on terrain, *secure, occupy*, and tasks that focus on friendly forces, *overwatch*, have very precise meanings and need to be understood by your Marines. Likewise, when organizing for combat, use the terms *attach, direct support,* and *take command*. Imprecise statements, *"The XO will supervise,"* or *"Machineguns move with 3rd Platoon Sergeant,"* can lead to dangerous confusion in combat.

Command. As far as possible, move to your subordinates and issue verbal orders face to face at a critical observation point on the battlefield. Beyond the words, a leader communicates far more by looking into the eyes of his Marines. When issued over the radio, a verbal order is far less likely to be misunderstood if it is well constructed, succinct and unambiguous. Remember also that issuing the order is only ten percent of the commander's responsibility. Supervision, pushing the plan vigorously to success, is the true role of the commander.

Conclusion

Success on the battlefield goes to the leader who can quickly assess the situation, decide and communicate his decision, and fight his unit effectively. How many verbal orders have you issued in your career? How many have you received? Capture good techniques for verbal orders. Train your leaders. Marine leaders at all levels need as much practice as possible in communicating their decisions. During exercises, wargames, planning conferences, and tactical decision games, critically discuss the order as well as the tactics. The essential skill of issuing clear, concise, unambiguous orders is difficult. It is not a skill you are born with nor is it acquired automatically with rank. Only those who practice in peacetime will be successful leaders in the chaos of combat.

Permission to use this article was granted by the author and the Marine Corps Gazette.

Appendix B   **Orders Shorthand**

1. **Amounts** are numerals in parenthesis.   (7) vehicles
   (20) soldiers

2. **Cardinal directions** are capital letters in parenthesis.

(N)	North
(S)	South
(E)	East
(W)	West
(NE)	Northeast is a single direction
(N)-(S)	North-South is the orientation of a road, river, or other linear terrain feature

3. **Place Names** are capitalized.   SAN RAFAEL
   CASTEL CIELIO

4. **Locations** are Military Grid Reference System (MGRS) six- or eight-digit grid coordinates, with a space between the easting and the northing, either with or without the two-letter prefix.

878 987	
TU 878 987	
9876 6654	
QR 9876 6654	
GS 3617	Grid Square 3617 is a one square kilometer grid. 3617 is the lower left-hand corner.
vic 345 124	Vicinity of…

5. **Distances** are metric, abbreviated.   1800m   meters
   17k   kilometers

6. **Unit Types** are abbreviated.

Tm	Team
Sqd	Squad
Sect	Section
Det	Detachment
Plat	Platoon
Co	Company
Bn	Battalion

7. **Acronyms** and **abbreviations** are capitalized.

AA	Anti-Air or Assembly Area	IOT	In Order To...
AT	Anti-Tank	LOC	Line Of Communication
ATK	Attack	ME	Main Effort
BOF	Base Of Fire	MSR	Main Supply Route
BP	Battle Position	NLT	No Later Than…
BPT	Be Prepared To...	O/C	On Call
CAS	Close Air Support	O/O	On Order...
CATK	Counterattack	OPS	Operations
DEF	Defend	POF	Priority of Fire
DS	Direct Support	POS	Position
EA	Engagement Area	REIN	Reinforced
EN	Enemy	RES	Reserve
FIT	Follow In Trace	R/W CAS	Rotary-Wing Close Air Support
FOF	Follow-On Forces	SBF	Support By Fire
FS	Fire Support	SOP	Standing Operating Procedure
F/W CAS	Fixed-Wing Close Air Support	WTH	Withdraw
HHQ	Higher HeadQuarters		

8. **Friendly weapons and equipment** are referred to by capitalized nomenclature or acronyms.

> M1A1
> M-198
> HMMWV
> AAAV

9. **Enemy weapons and equipment** are referred to by capitalized nomenclature or NATO designator.

> BTR-60
> BMP-2
> SAGGER
> HIND

Appendix C

Glossary

Definitions of the following tactical terms, used in this workbook, have been extracted from *FM 101-5-1 Operational Terms and Graphics* and *MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations.*

alternate position	An alternative to the primary position. A position from which a weapon or unit can still perform its mission and cover its assigned sector of fire.
assault	The climax of an attack, closing with the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting.
assault position	The position from which forces assault the objective. The last covered and concealed position before reaching an objective.
attack	An offensive operation characterized by coordinated movement supported by fire.
attack by fire	Fires employed to destroy the enemy from a distance. Usually a counterattack option. An attack by fire is not done in conjunction with a maneuvering force.
base of fire	Suppression from a support-by-fire position to reduce the enemy's ability to interfere with an assaulting unit. See *overwatch* and *support by fire.*
block	To deny the enemy access to a given area of prevent enemy advance in a given direction.
bounding overwatch	A movement technique. The unit moves by bounds. One element is always halted to overwatch another element while it moves.
clear	The removal of enemy forces and elimination of organized resistance in an assigned zone.
combined arms	The simultaneous application of several arms or weapons to achieve an effect on the enemy greater than if each weapon was used separately. The counteractions that the enemy takes to avoid one weapon make him more vulnerable to the other.
concealment	Protection from enemy observation. See *cover.*
cover	Protection from enemy fire. A position has good cover only in relation to a single enemy location. See *concealment.*
covered approach	A route that offers protection from enemy fire.
dead space	An area within the range of a weapon that cannot be covered by fire due to intervening obstacles, the contour of the ground, or the trajectory of the weapon.
destroy	Physically rendering an enemy force combat-ineffective.

Glossary continued

envelopment   A maneuver in which the attacking force passes around the enemy's defensive position to secure an objective to the enemy's rear.

field of fire   The area which a weapon or unit may cover effectively with fire.

fix   To prevent the enemy from moving.

guard   To protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information.

mutual support   Positions that support each other by direct fire, preventing the enemy from assaulting one position without being subjected to the direct fire of another position.

obscuration   To hamper enemy observation by using darkness, weather, or smoke munitions.

overwatch   A technique in which one element is positioned to support by fire the movement of another element

primary position   The position from which a weapon or unit can best perform its mission and cover its assigned sector of fire.

sector of fire   An area that must be covered by the fire of a weapon or unit. Sectors of fire for a weapon or unit in a given position can be split into primary and secondary sectors.

secure   To gain possession of a position or terrain feature, with or without force, and to prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action.

seize   To clear a designated area and gain control of it.

supplementary position   A position from which a weapon or unit can cover a sector of fire that cannot be covered from the *primary* or *alternate position*.

support by fire   A task in which an element engages the enemy by direct fire to support a maneuvering force by establishing a *base of fire*.

suppression   To prevent or degrade enemy fires and observation by direct fire, indirect fire, or obscuration.