

CHAPTER 3

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Good cover and concealment in a built-up area gives the defender an advantage. Attackers must fight from the outside into a well-defended position. While a decision to attack a major built-up area usually rests at a level higher than battalion, commanders at all levels must be prepared to fight in such areas.

Section I OFFENSIVE CONSIDERATIONS

A commander must decide if attacking a built-up area is needed to accomplish his mission. He should consider those issues discussed in this section.

3-1. REASONS FOR ATTACKING BUILT-UP AREAS

A commander should consider the following reasons for attacking a built-up area.

a. Cities control key routes of commerce and provide a tactical advantage to the commander who controls them. Control of features, such as bridges, railways, and road networks, can have a significant outcome on future operations. The requirement for a logistics base, especially for a port or airfield, may play a pivotal role during a campaign.

b. The political importance of some built-up areas may justify the use of time and resources to liberate it. Capturing the city could deal the threat a decisive psychological blow and or lift the moral of the people within the city.

c. Though the terrain around a built-up area may facilitate its bypass, the enemy within that urban area may be able to interdict lines of communications. Therefore, the situation may require the enemy force to be contained. Also, the urban area itself may sit on dominating terrain that would hinder bypassing for CS and CSS elements.

d. The results of the commander's and staffs estimate may preclude bypassing as an option. The mission itself may dictate an attack of a built-up area.

3-2. REASONS FOR NOT ATTACKING A BUILT-UP AREA

The unit's mission may allow it to bypass an urban area. The commander should consider the following reasons for not attacking a built-up area.

a. The commander may decide to bypass if he determines that no substantial threat exists in the built-up area that could interdict his unit's ability to accomplish its mission. Also, the commander's intent may dictate that speed is essential to the mission. Since combat in an urban area is time consuming, the commander may choose to bypass the urban area to save time.

b. During the estimate process, the commander and staff may realize that a sufficient force is not available to seize and clear the built-up area. A situation may exist where more than enough forces are available to accomplish the mission but logistically the attack cannot be supported. If the factual and political situation allow it, the commander should avoid attacks on the built-up area.

c. The built-up area is declared an "open city" to prevent civilian casualties or to preserve cultural or historical sites. An open city, by the law of

land warfare, is a city that cannot be defended or attacked. The defender must immediately evacuate the open city and cannot distribute weapons to the city's inhabitants. The attacker assumes administrative control of the city and must treat its citizens as noncombatants in an occupied country.

Section II. CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN A BUILT-UP AREA

Offensive operations in urban areas are based on offensive doctrine modified to conform to the area. Urban combat also imposes a number of demands that are different from ordinary field conditions such as problems with troop requirements, maneuver, and use of equipment. As with all offensive operations, the commander must retain his ability to fix and maneuver against enemy positions.

3-3. TROOP REQUIREMENTS

Due to the nature of combat in built-up areas, more troops are normally needed than in other combat situations. This is mainly due to the requirement to clear buildings in a given zone or objective, refuge control, and the possible increase in the number of friendly casualties.

a. Because of the need to clear buildings and provide security for forces in the attack, the number of troops required to accomplish an offensive mission will be much greater. Some forces must be left behind in a building once it has been cleared to prevent enemy forces from repositioning on or counterattacking friendly forces.

b. Commanders must also consider the soldiers' fatigue. Room clearing techniques are highly physical and will quickly tire a force. Commanders must plan for the relief of their forces before they reach the point of exhaustion.

c. Additional forces may be needed to control the civilians in the built-up area. These forces must protect civilians, provide first aid, and prevent them from interfering with the tactical plan.

d. Fighting in a built-up area normally results in a greater number of friendly casualties than does conventional fighting. The ability to see the enemy is fleeting and confined to very short ranges compared to ordinary field combat. Fratricide can become a serious problem and must be addressed in detail by the commander. Evacuating casualties from the MOUT environment also presents a problem.

3-4. MANEUVER

Combat operations in a built-up area have a slower pace and tempo, and an increase in methodical, synchronized missions. Unlike open terrain, commanders cannot maneuver quickly due to the close, dense environment. Clearing buildings and looking for antiarmor ambushes degrade speed, thus increasing the duration of enemy contact. Due to the dense environment and the restricted ability to use all available weapon systems, synchronization of combat power will be one of the commander's main challenges.

3-5. USE OF EQUIPMENT

Commanders attacking a built-up area must recognize some important limitations in the use of available assets.

a. Normally, the use of indirect fires is much more restricted in built-up areas than in open terrain. Consideration must be given to the effects of the indirect fire on the urban area and the civilian population. When indirect fires are authorized, they must be fired in greater mass to achieve the desired effect. The rubble caused by massive preparatory indirect fires will adversely affect a unit's maneuvers later on in the attack.

b. Communications equipment may not function properly because of the massive construction of buildings and the environment. More graphic control measures and understanding of the commander's intent at all levels become even more important to mission accomplishment.

c. The commander and his staff must consider the effect city lights, fires, and background illumination have on night vision devices. These elements "white out" NVGs and make thermal imagery identification difficult.

Section III. TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Offensive operations in a built-up area are planned and implemented based on the factors of METT-T and established doctrine. At battalion level, the offense takes the form of either a hasty or deliberate attack. Both the hasty and deliberate attacks are characterized by as much planning, reconnaissance, and coordination as time and the situation permit.

3-6. HASTY ATTACK

Battalions and companies conduct hasty attacks as a result of a movement to contact, a meeting engagement, or a chance contact during a movement; after a successful defense or part of a defense; or in a situation where the unit has the opportunity to attack vulnerable enemy forces. When contact is made with the enemy, the commander immediately deploys; suppresses the enemy; attacks through a gap, flank, or weak point; and reports to his higher commander. The preparation for a hasty attack is similar to that of a deliberate attack, but time and resources are limited to what is available. The hasty attack in a built-up area differs from a hasty attack in open terrain because the close nature of the terrain makes command, control, and communications difficult. Also, massing fires to suppress the enemy may be difficult.

a. In built-up areas, incomplete intelligence and concealment may require the maneuver unit to move through, rather than around, the friendly unit fixing the enemy in place. Control and coordination become important to reduce congestion at the edges of the built-up area.

b. On-order missions, be-prepared missions, or fragmentary orders may be given to a force conducting a hasty attack so it can react to a contingency once its objective is secured.

3-7. DELIBERATE ATTACK

A deliberate attack is a fully synchronized operation that employs all available assets against the enemy's defense. It is necessary when enemy positions are well prepared, when the built-up area is large or severely congested, or when the element of surprise is lost. Deliberate attacks are characterized by precise planning based on detailed information, thorough reconnaissance, preparation, and rehearsals.

Given the nature of urban terrain, the deliberate attack of a built-up area is similar to the techniques employed in assaulting a strong point. Attacking the enemy's main strength is avoided and combat power is focused on the weakest point of his defense. A deliberate attack of a built-up area is usually conducted in the following phases:

a. **Reconnoiter the Objective.**

b. **Move to the Objective.**

c. **Isolate the Objective.** Isolating the objective involves seizing terrain that dominates the area so that the enemy cannot supply or reinforce its defenders. This step may be taken at the same time as securing a foothold. If isolating the objective is the first step, the following steps should be enacted quickly so that the defender has no time to react (Figure 3-1).

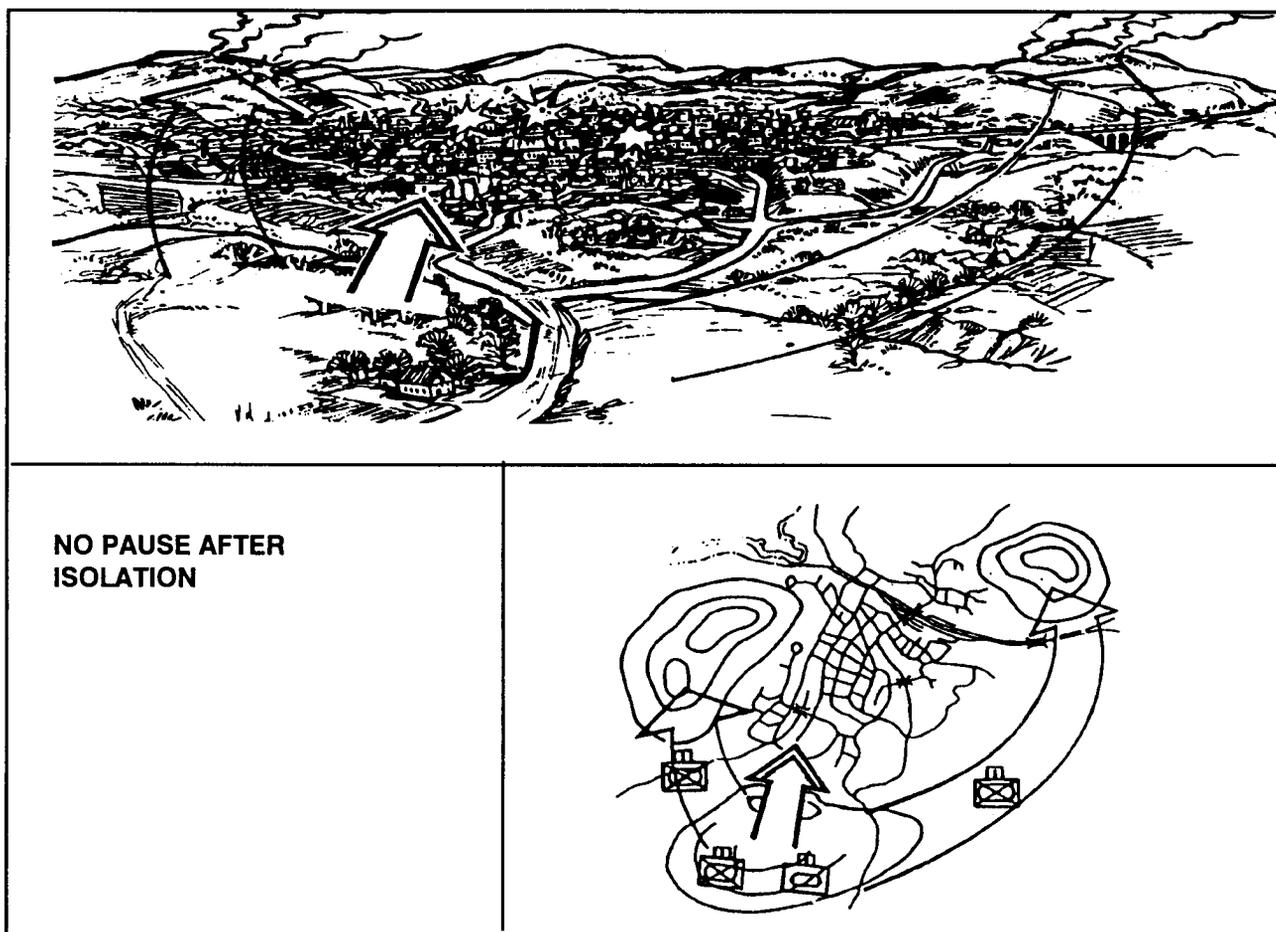


Figure 3-1. Isolation of an area by a battalion task force.

d. **Secure a Foothold.** Securing a foothold involves seizing an intermediate objective that provides cover from enemy fire and a place for attacking troops to enter the built-up area. A foothold is normally one to two city blocks and is an intermediate objective of a company. As the company attacks to secure the foothold, it should be supported by suppressive fire and smoke (Figure 3-2).

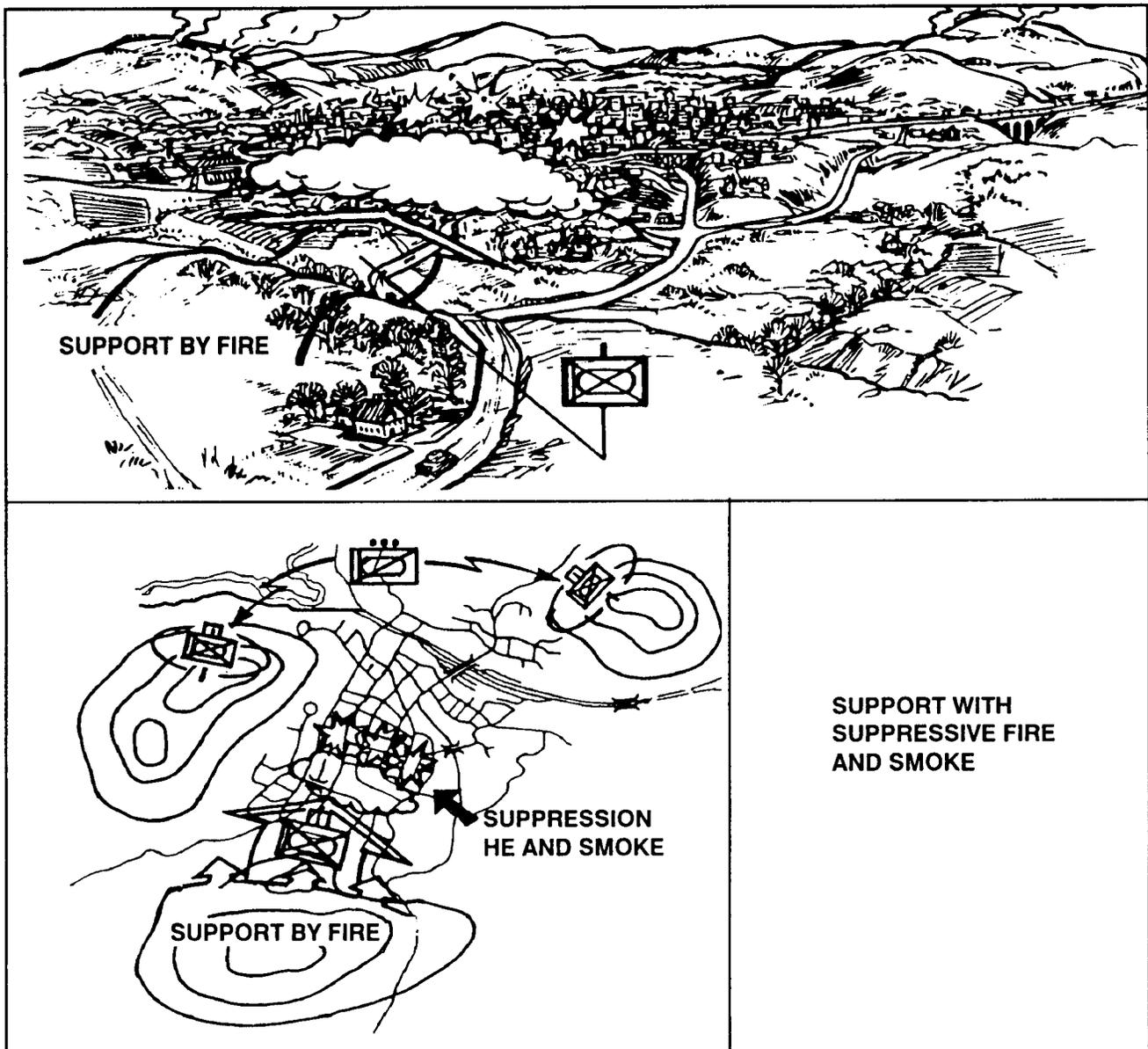


Figure 3-2. Battalion foothold.

e. **Clear a Built-up Area.** Before determining to what extent the built-up area must be cleared, the factors of METT-T must be considered. The commander may decide to clear only those parts necessary for the success of his mission if—

- An objective must be seized quickly.
- Enemy resistance is light or fragmented.
- The buildings in the area are of light construction with large open areas between them. In that case, he would clear only those buildings along the approach to his objective, or only those buildings necessary for security (Figure 3-3, page 3-6).



Figure 3-3. Clearing buildings along the route of an attack.

A unit may have a mission to systematically clear an area of all enemy. Through detailed analysis, the commander may anticipate that he will be opposed by a strong, organized resistance or will be in areas having strongly constructed buildings close together. Therefore, one or two companies may attack on a narrow front against the enemy's weakest sector. They move slowly through the area, clearing systematically from room to room and building to building. The other company supports the clearing units and is prepared to assume their mission (Figure 3-4).

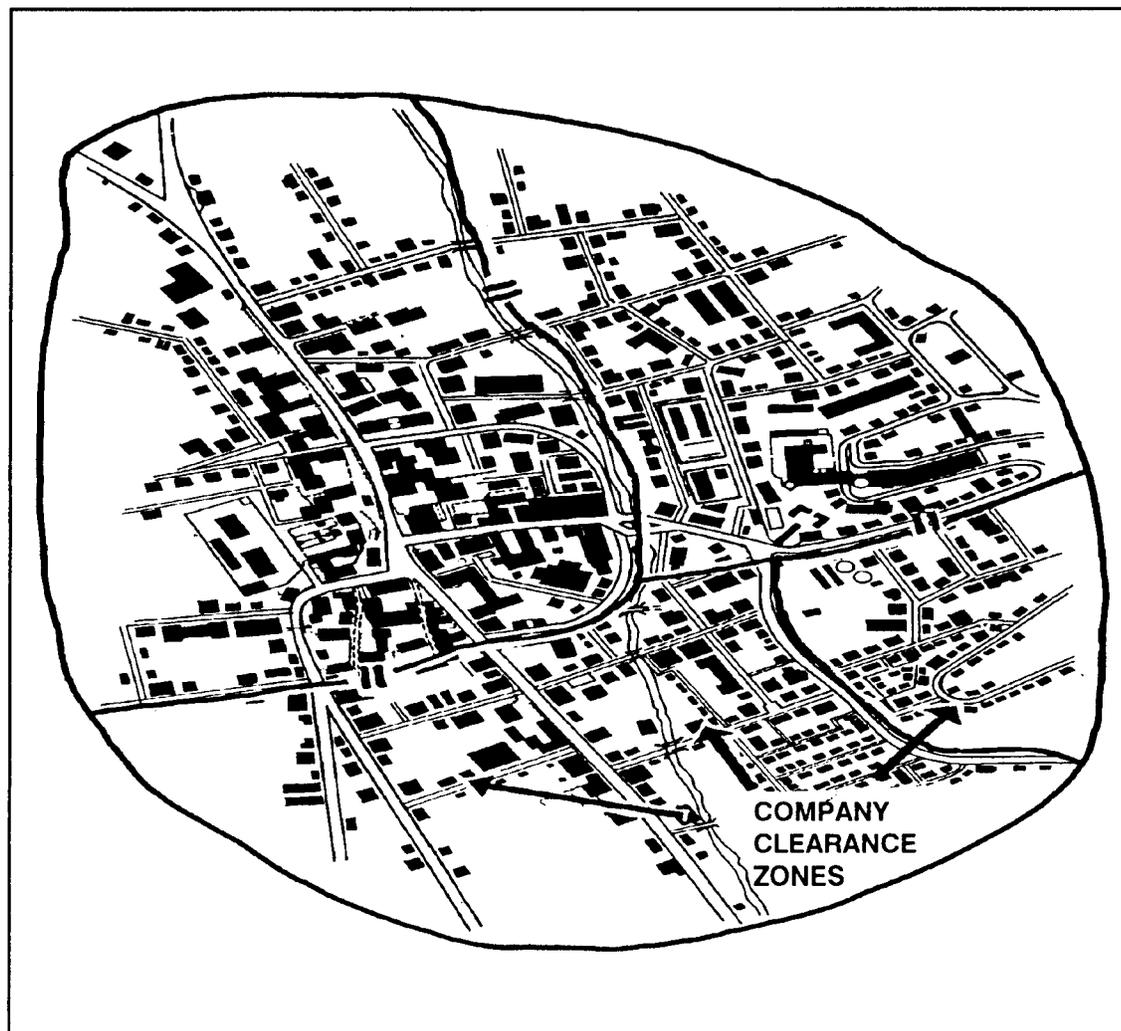


Figure 3-4. Systematic clearance within assigned sectors.

Section IV. METT-T FACTORS

The planning, preparation, and conduct of offensive operations in an urban area are the same as any other offensive operation. An attack plan against a well-defended built-up area must be based on METT-T factors. Commanders must focus on the synchronization of maneuver forces and the fire support plan to accomplish the assigned mission. Combat support and combat service support will play a critical role in the offense. (See Chapters 6 and 7 for further details on CS and CSS.)

3-8. MISSION

When conducting the estimate, commanders and staffs must consider the overall intent of the operation in regard to the requirement for clearance of the urban area. The commander must determine if clearance means every building, block by block, or the seizure of a key objective, which may only require clearing along the axis of advance.

3-9. ENEMY

The enemy is analyzed in detail using the IPB process (FM 34-130). The unique factor the commander must decide on to complete the IPB process is the type threat he is attacking. He must determine if the threat forces are conventional or unconventional. This determines how the battalion or company will task-organize and how combat power will be synchronized to accomplish the mission.

a. **Conventional Forces.** Most third world countries have adopted techniques of urban combat from either the United States or the Commonwealth of Independent States. Therefore, the future threat will consider the motorized or mechanized rifle battalion the most effective unit for urban combat because of its inherent mobility, armor protection, and ability to quickly adapt buildings and other structures for defense.

(1) Threat defenses are organized into two echelons to provide greater depth and reserves. Company strongpoints are prepared for perimeter defense and form the basis for the battalion defensive position. The reserve is located in a separate strongpoint. Ambush locations are established in the gaps of the strongpoints, and dummy strongpoints are constructed to deceive the attacker. Positions for securing and defending the entrances to and exits from underground structures and routes are established. Security positions are prepared forward of first echelon defensive positions.

(2) Within a built-up area, a motorized/mechanized rifle company may defend several buildings with mutually supporting fires or a single large building. Each platoon defends one or two buildings, or one or two floors of a single building.

b. **Unconventional Forces.** Enemy analysis is similar to that for LIC during urban counterinsurgency, counter guerrilla, and counterterrorist operations. (See FMs 34-130 and 7-98 for details of IPB in counterinsurgency operations.)

3-10. TERRAIN

Offensive operations must be tailored to the urban environment based on a detailed analysis of each urban terrain setting, its types of built-up areas, and existing structural form. (See FM 34-130 for details of urban terrain analysis.) Commanders and subordinate leaders must incorporate the following special planning considerations for an urban environment when conducting an offensive operation:

- Military maps that do not provide enough detail for urban terrain analysis or reflect the underground sewer system, subways, underground water system, mass transit routes, and utility generation.
- Natural terrain surrounding the built-up area.
- Key and decisive terrain (stadiums, parks, sports fields, school play grounds, public buildings, and industrial facilities).
- Confined spaces that limit observation, fields of fire, and maneuver, which also prevents the concentration of fires at critical points.
- Covered and concealed routes to the urban area.
- Covered and concealed routes within the built-up area.

- Limited ability to employ maximum combat power due to the need to minimize damage and rubble effects.
- A greater demand for ammunition and rations, thus imposing unusual strains on logistics elements.
- Problems with conducting effective reconnaissance during conventional operations. (Reconnaissance by force becomes the most effective reconnaissance means. This method involves probing a defense with successively larger units until the enemy positions are disclosed and can be successfully attacked. During unconventional operations, the opposite is true. Reconnaissance and security are easily accomplished by both sides and may be unstoppable.)

3-11. TROOPS

In an attack on a large built-up area, a battalion would probably participate as part of an attacking brigade. In that case, the battalion may have to isolate the objective or seize a foothold. If the objective is a smaller built-up area, a battalion or company may accomplish the entire mission independently, assigning subordinate tasks to its companies or platoons. In either case, the maneuver platoons accomplish their entry and clearance tasks as explained in Appendix F.

a. When attacking to seize a foothold, the battalion normally assigns a forward company the first block of buildings as its first objective. When an objective extends to a street, only the near side of the street is included. The company's final objective may be buildings at the far edge of the built-up area or key terrain on the far side. Key buildings or groups of buildings also may be assigned as intermediate objectives. Buildings along the route of attack should be identified by numbers to simplify assigning objectives and reporting (Figure 3-5).

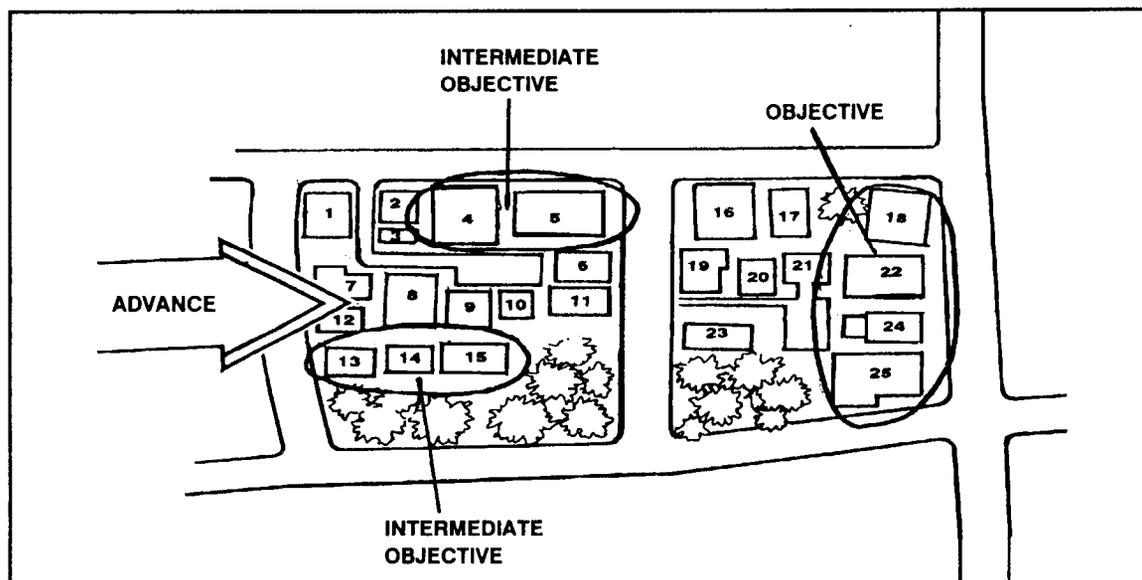


Figure 3-5. Control measures and example of numbering system

f. An attack position may be occupied by forward units for last-minute preparation and coordination. The attack position is often behind or inside the last large building before crossing the LD. The LD should be the near side of either a street or rail line.

g. A unit's assigned frontage for the attack of a built-up area depends on the size of buildings and the resistance anticipated. A company normally attacks on a one-to two-block front, and a battalion on a two-to four-block front, based on city blocks averaging 175 meters in width.

h. The first phase of the attack should be conducted when visibility is poor. Troops should exploit poor visibility to cross open areas, to gain access to rooftops, to infiltrate enemy areas, and to gain a foothold. If the attack must be made when visibility is good, units should use smoke to conceal movement.

i. The formation used in an attack depends on the width and depth of the zone to be cleared, the character of the area, enemy resistance, and the formation adopted by the next higher command.

j. The reserve should be mobile and prepared for commitment. Because of the available cover in built-up areas, the reserve can stay close to forward units. Battalion reserves normally follow one to two blocks to the rear of the lead company. If a company reserve is available, it follows within the same block so that it can immediately influence the attack. A unit with a reserve mission may be called upon to perform one or more of the following tasks:

- Attacking from another direction.
- Exploiting an enemy weakness or friendly success.
- Clearing bypassed enemy positions.
- Securing the rear or a flank.
- Maintaining contact with adjacent units.
- Supporting or counterattacking by fire.

k. The reconnaissance platoon is normally employed to reconnoiter the battalion's flanks and rear. Its capability for reconnaissance and security is somewhat reduced in built-up areas. The reconnaissance platoon can also help isolate a village or small town. They must be prepared to dismount and enter buildings for reconnaissance or for setting up OPs. Infantry platoons and squads conduct reconnaissance patrols and man OPs to supplement the reconnaissance platoon effort.

l. Leading companies may have engineers attached for providing immediate support. Engineers equipped with the M728 combat engineer vehicle (CEV) can quickly clear rubble and other obstructions using the blade or the 165-mm demolition gun. Other tasks given the engineers include:

- Preparing and using explosives to breach walls and obstacles.
- Finding and exploding mines in place or helping to remove them.
- Destroying fortifications to a maximum range of 925 meters with the CEV (165-mm demolition gun).
- Clearing barricades and rubble to ease movement.
- Cratering roads and other countermobility measures.

m. Security in a built-up area presents special problems. All troops must be alert to an enemy that may appear from the flanks, from above, or from underground passages (Figure 3-7).

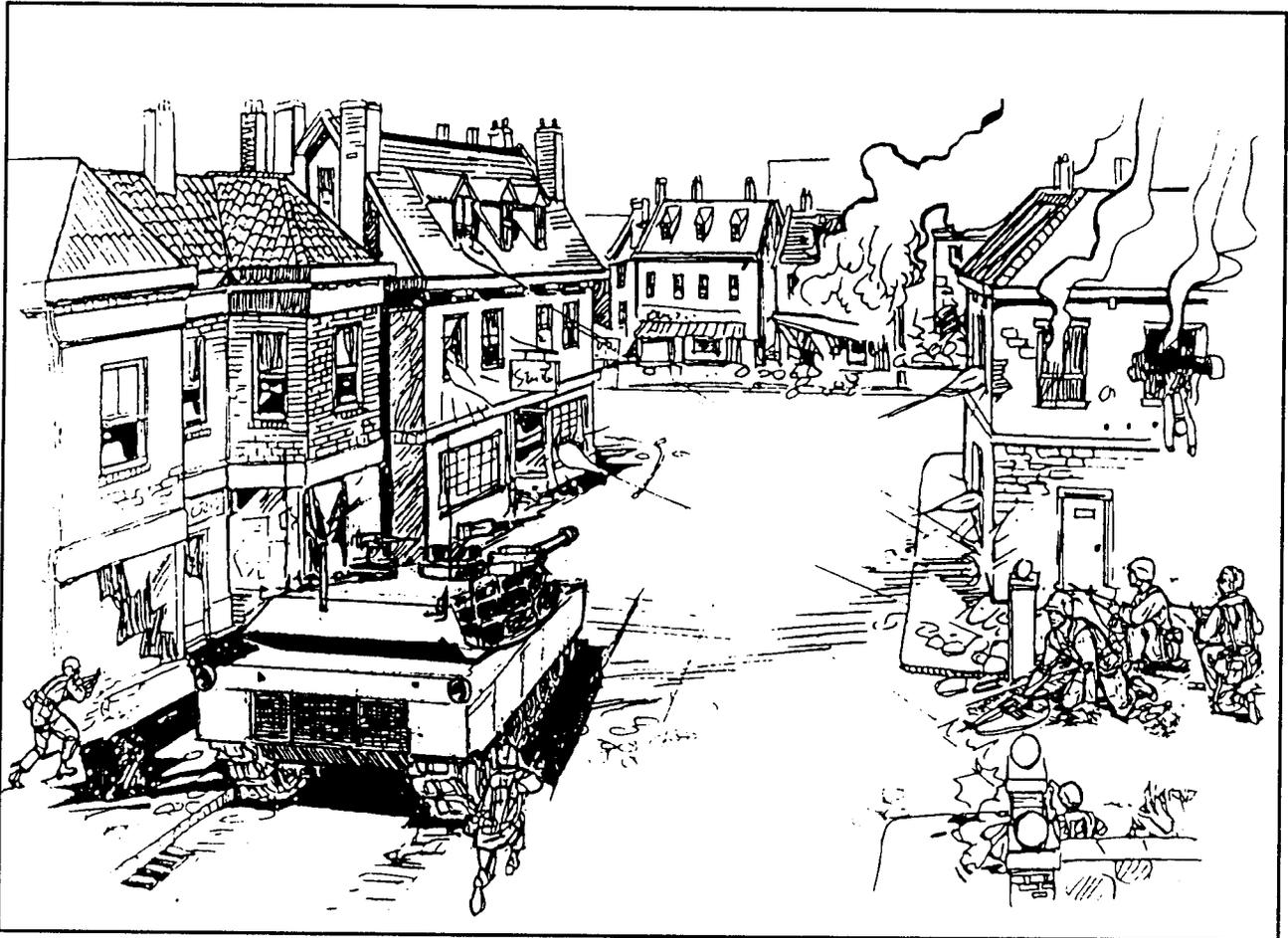


Figure 3-7. Enemy firing from flank.

n. The fire support plan may require extensive air and artillery bombardment to precede the ground attack on a built-up area. This supporting fire suppresses the defender's fire, restricts his movement, and possibly destroys his position. However, use of indirect fire in built-up areas with heavily clad construction creates rubble. This can be used effectively for cover but may also restrict the movements of attacking troops. For that reason, an artillery preparation should be short and violent. Assaulting troops must closely follow the artillery fire to exploit its effect on the defenders. While the enemy is suppressed by the supporting fire, maneuver units move near the FCL. As the attacking force assaults the objective, fires are lifted or shifted to block enemy withdrawal or to prevent the enemy from reinforcing their position.

o. Prior coordination is made to determine the techniques and procedures to use for communication, target identification, and shifting of fires. Additional consideration must be given to the civilian population, houses of

worship, medical centers, schools, public services, and historical monuments. The fire support plan can include the integration of tanks, infantry weapons, artillery, CEVs, and dismounted fires. Fire support can be categorized into indirect and direct fires.

(1) Indirect fire is employed in its normal role of support to the maneuver units.

(a) Indirect artillery fire is planned to isolate objectives, to prevent reinforcement and resupply, to neutralize known and suspected command and observation posts, and to suppress enemy defenders. Due to the restricted nature of urban terrain, most indirect artillery fires will be high-angle.

(b) Mortars are the most responsive indirect fire that can hit targets of opportunity at the close ranges typical of combat in built-up areas. Forward observers move with the forward units to adjust fire on targets as requested by the supported troops.

(2) The direct-fire system is the most effective fire support in built-up areas. Once a target can be located in a building, one or two direct-fire rounds can accomplish what entire salvos of indirect-fire artillery cannot. Direct fire support is key to success in fighting in built-up areas. The best direct fire support is provided by BFVs, but it can also be provided by tanks, howitzers, and or CEVs. (See Chapter 8 for specific weapons effects.) Tanks, howitzers, and CEVs may create rubble and building and street damage that could restrict movement for the attacking force.

(a) Tanks may support by fire when lead units are seizing a foothold. During the attack of a built-up area, tanks overwatch the infantry's initial assault until an entry into the area has been secured. Tanks must be supported by infantry organic weapons to suppress enemy strongpoints and by ATGMs while they move into overwatch positions. The commander must employ tanks to take advantage of the long range of their main armament. This can usually be achieved with tanks employed outside the built-up area, where they remain for the duration of the attack to cover high-speed armor avenues of approach. This is especially true during the isolation phase.

(b) In house-to-house and street fighting, tanks and or BFVs move down the streets protected by the infantry, which clears the area of enemy ATGM weapons. Tanks and BFVs in turn support the infantry by firing their main guns and machine guns from a safe stand-off range to destroy enemy positions. Tanks are the most effective weapon for heavy fire against structures and may be used to clear rubble with dozer blades (Figure 3-8, page 3-14). The BFV can provide sustained, accurate suppressive fires with its 25-mm gun.

(c) Large-caliber artillery rounds that are shot by direct fire are effective for destroying targets in buildings. If available, self-propelled 155-mm howitzers can use direct fire to destroy or neutralize bunkers, heavy fortifications, or enemy positions in reinforced concrete buildings (Figure 3-9, page 3-14). The self-propelled 155-mm can also be used to clear or create avenues of approach. The 105-mm and 203-mm artillery can also be used in this role. However, due to the exposed positions of the gun crew, these are not the preferred artillery pieces used in MOUT operations. In any case, whenever artillery is used in the direct fire role, it must be close to the infantry who will provide security against enemy ground attack. Prior coordination must be accomplished so the bulk of the field artillery unit's shells are switched to HE.



Figure 3-8. Tank in direct fire supported by infantry.

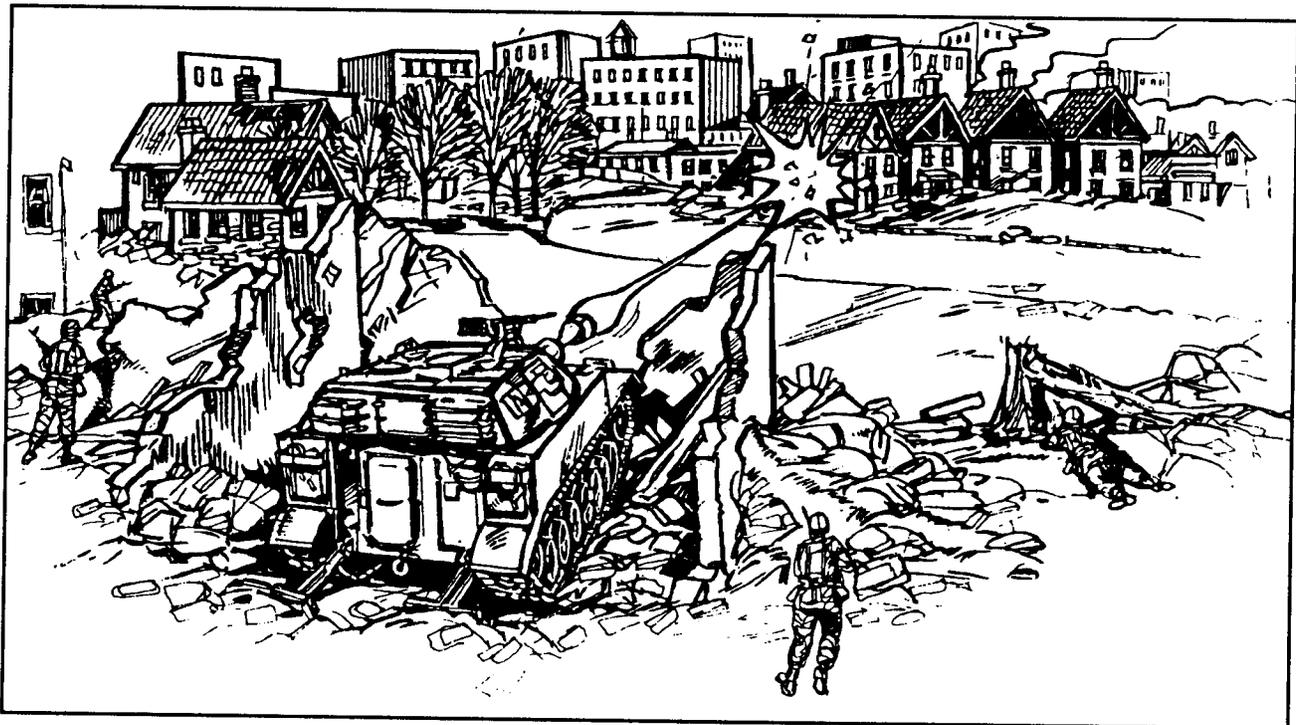


Figure 3-9. Artillery in direct-fire role.

(d) Tanks, self-propelled artillery, and BFVs are vulnerable in built-up areas where streets and alleys provide ready-made fire lanes for defenders. Motorized traffic is greatly restricted, canalized, and vulnerable to ambush and close-range fire. Tanks are at a further disadvantage because their main guns cannot be depressed sufficiently to fire into basements or be elevated to fire into upper floors of buildings at close range (Figure 3-10).

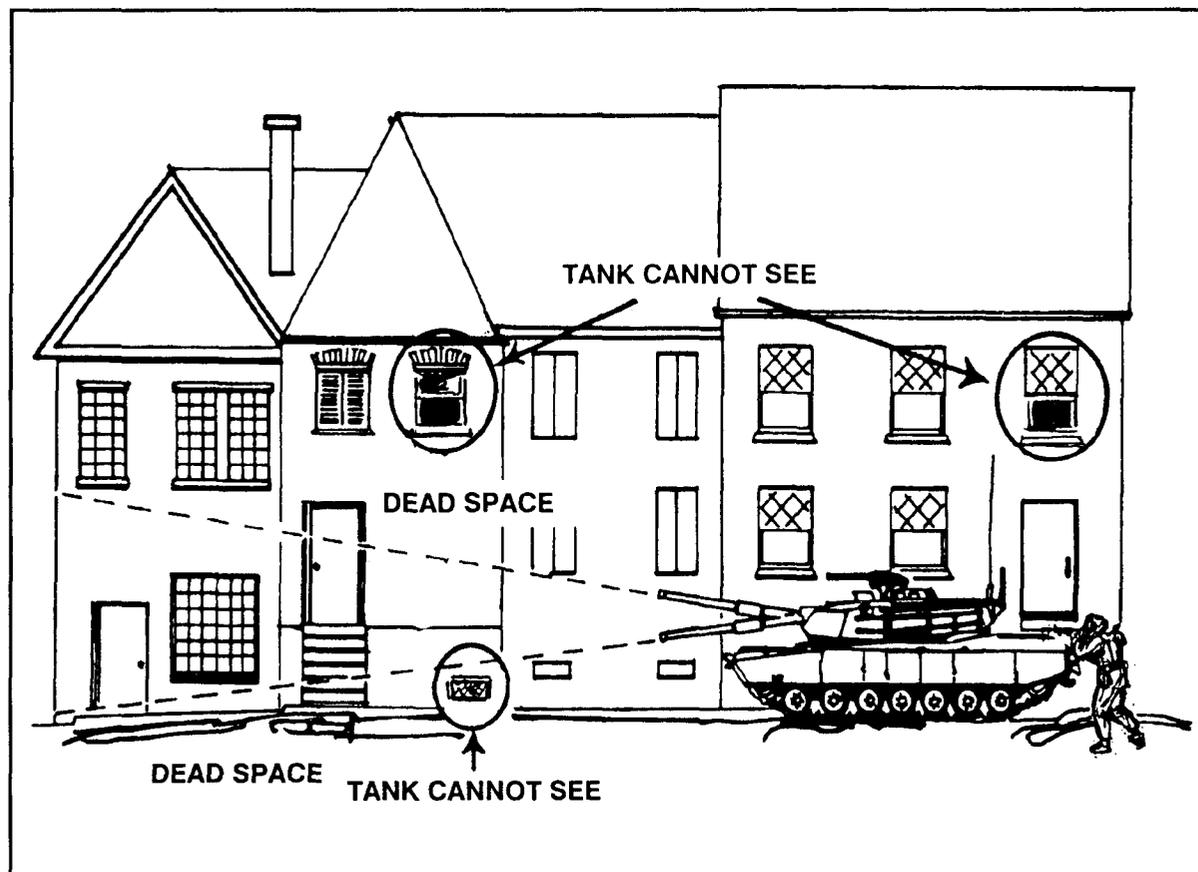


Figure 3-10. Tank dead space.

(e) In movement down narrow streets, or down wider streets with narrow paths through the debris, infantry should move ahead of the tanks, clearing the buildings on each side. The movement of personnel across open areas must be planned with a specific destination in mind. Suppression of enemy positions and smoke to cover infantry movement should also be included in the plan. When needed, tanks move up to places secured by the infantry to hit suitable targets. When that area is cleared, the infantry again moves forward to clear the next area. Due to the restricted movement and limited observation of buttoned-up tanks, the infantry must clear the route in advance of the tanks. The tanks and infantry should use the traveling overwatch movement technique. Infantrymen can communicate with the tank crews by using arm-and-hand signals and radio.

(f) For movement down wider streets, infantry platoons normally have a section of attached tanks with one tank on each side of the street—tanks

should not be employed singly. Other tanks of the attached tank platoon should move behind the infantry and fire at targets in the upper stories of buildings. In wide boulevards, commanders may employ a tank platoon secured by one or more infantry platoons. The infantry can secure the forward movement of the lead tanks, while the rearward tanks overwatch the movement of the lead units.

(g) If an infantry unit must travel streets that are too narrow for this type of tank support, it uses tanks in single file for support. The tanks move and fire to cover each other's approach while the infantry provides ATGM fire from buildings.

(h) Where feasible, tanks may drive inside buildings or behind walls for protection from enemy antitank missile fire. Buildings should first be cleared by the infantry. Ground floors should be checked to ensure they will support the tank or that there is no basement into which the tank could fall and become trapped. When moving, all bridges and overpasses should be checked for mines and booby traps, and for load capacity. Specific infantry elements should be assigned to protect specific tanks.

(i) Direct-fire systems organic to infantry battalions—mainly ATGMs, recoilless rifles (in some units), and LAWs—are initially employed to support the seizure of a foothold. Then, if necessary, they are brought forward to fight enemy armor within the town. Positioning of antitank weapons in buildings must allow for enough space for backblasts. Antitank weapons are not as effective as tank rounds for neutralizing targets behind walls. They neutralize a target only if that target is located directly behind the point of impact. ATGMs are at a greater disadvantage because of their 65-meter arming distance and the possibility of their guiding wires becoming caught on the ground clutter. These factors limit employment in close engagements like those in built-up areas.

p. Snipers are a valuable asset during MOUT operations. In situations where the ROE permit the use of destructive force, snipers can be used as part of the security element to provide accurate, long-range fires. Depending on the commander's concept, snipers can be dedicated to the counter-sniper role or assigned priority targets. If a restrictive ROE is in effect, the sniper may be the best asset the battalion or company commander has to prevent collateral damage. Snipers can also overwatch breaching operations and call for indirect artillery fires. Regardless of the mission, snipers must be equipped with effective observation devices and placed in a key area to be effective. (For more information on the offensive employment of snipers, see Change 1 to FM 71-2, FM 7-20, and TC 23-14.)

3-12. TIME

Offensive operations in built-up areas have a slower pace and tempo of operation. The following issues must be considered when analyzing time available for an attack in urban terrain.

a. Due to the dense environment of urban terrain, more time is required for clearing buildings, blocks, or axes of advance.

b. Troops tire quicker because of stress and additional physical exertion related to clearing.

c. More time must be allowed for thorough reconnaissance and rehearsals. This saves time in the execution of the commander's plan.

Section V. COMMAND AND CONTROL

Units fight separated and isolated from one another in built-up areas. Planning is centralized but execution is decentralized.

3-13. COMMAND

Soldiers and units require mission-type orders that are restrictive in nature. They use detailed control measures to ease decentralized execution. Increased difficulties in command, control, and communications from higher headquarters demand increased responsibility and initiative from junior leaders.

3-14. CONTROL

In built-up areas, radio communications are less effective than field telephones and messengers. Units often fight without continuous communications from higher headquarters, since dependable communications above company level are uncertain. Pyrotechnic signals are hard to see because of buildings and smoke. Voice commands are degraded by the high noise level of battles within and around buildings.

Section VI. BATTALION TASK FORCE ATTACK ON A BUILT-UP AREA

The following are techniques that might be employed by a battalion. These may be independent operations but are normally part of a brigade operation.

3-15. CONDUCT OF DELIBERATE ATTACK

Because companies or company teams may become isolated during the attack, the task force commander should attach some support elements to ensure the success of his plan. Mechanized vehicles (tanks, self-propelled artillery, BFVs, or ITVs) attached to light units must have their own logistics packages. Tanks, BFVs, and ITVs can be used to clear or isolate hardened targets protected by buildings or rubble. Engineers can neutralize obstacles hindering the attack. All of these actions could be modified for use by any type of infantry. The TF commander plans to conduct a deliberate attack by performing the following actions.

a. **Reconnoiter the Objective.** The commander conducts a thorough reconnaissance of the objective with subordinate leaders to complete the attack plan.

b. **Move to the Objective.** The TF moves to the objective using covered and concealed routes to approach gaps or lightly held areas or the enemy's flanks and rear. Reconnaissance elements and security elements detect enemy forces, positions, and obstacles to prevent them from interfering with the attack plan. Obstacles encountered are either breached or bypassed. Enemy elements encountered en route are defeated by subordinate elements.

c. **Isolate the Objective.** The TF commander positions direct and indirect fire elements where they can best support the attack. OPSEC is employed to deceive the enemy as to the time, location, and strength of the attack. The battalion support element provides support to the assault element. The TF commander uses direct and indirect fire support to suppress

and kill the enemy, screen the assault element, protect breaching actions, and isolate the enemy by blocking reinforcements and counterattacks.

d. **Secure a Foothold.** The TF assault element kills, captures, destroys, or forces the withdrawal of all enemy on objectives as required by the commander's intent.

e. **Clear the Built-up Area.** The assault force or other designated forces clear the built-up area using the appropriate technique based on commander's intent.

3-16. SEIZURE OF KEY OBJECTIVE

Many built-up areas are built around key features such as road junctions or bridges. The key feature could be a bridge over a river. A normal deliberate attack would not succeed because it might allow the enemy time to destroy the bridge. Instead, the commander must plan a rapid advance through the built-up area, leaving the task of clearing to following units (Figure 3-11).

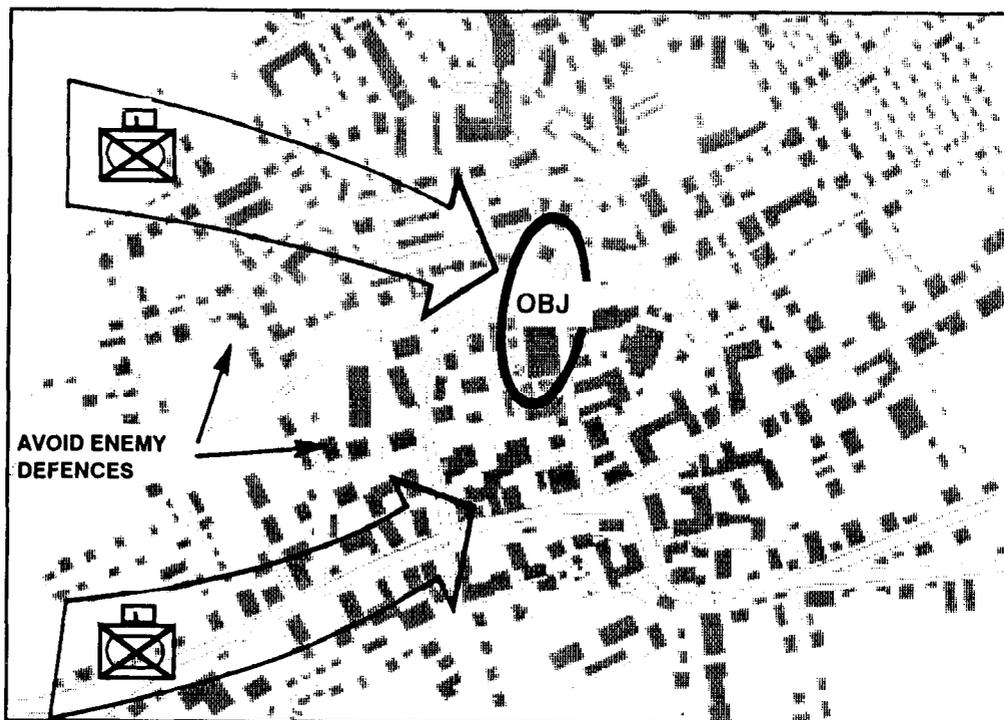


Figure 3-11. Seizure of a key objective.

a. This type of operation has the highest chance of success when the enemy has not had time to set up a well-established defense. Because of the importance of the objective, the prime considerations are to get through the area fast before the enemy can react and to seize the objective while it is still intact.

b. The TF should avoid contact with the enemy. If enemy resistance is encountered, it should be bypassed. Time-consuming combat must be avoided so that the TF can arrive at the bridge as quickly as possible.

c. The TF commander organizes his TF for movement on two axes to allow for more flexibility in reacting to enemy contact. The lead unit on each

axis reconnoiters as it moves. Lead units must find enemy positions, fix them by fire, and quickly bypass them.

d. The units move mounted toward the built-up area. On reaching the edge of the built-up area, troops stay mounted until they meet enemy resistance so as not to slow the advance. Platoons are dropped off to assume blocking positions and to secure the TF advance.

e. Once the objective is seized, the TF establishes a perimeter defense. The companies clear buildings and expand the size of the perimeter until it is large enough to secure the bridge against enemy action. Attached engineers examine the bridge and clear it of any explosives (Figure 3-11).

3-17. INFILTRATION

The following is an example that describes the actions of a light infantry battalion conducting an infiltration with engineers attached. With some modification, it could also apply to a dismounted mechanized infantry battalion.

a. The outskirts of a town may not be strongly defended. Its defenders may have only a series of antiarmor positions, security elements on the principal approach, or positions blocking the approaches to key features in the town. The strongpoints and reserves are deeper in the city.

b. A battalion may be able to seize a part of the town by infiltrating platoons and companies between those enemy positions on the outskirts. Moving by stealth on secondary streets by using the cover and concealment of back alleys and buildings, the battalion may be able to seize key street junctions or terrain features, to isolate enemy positions, and to help following units pass into the built-up area. Such an infiltration should be performed when visibility is poor and no civilians are in the area.

c. The light infantry battalion is best organized into infiltration companies with engineers attached to each company in platoon strength and a reserve consistent with METT-T. Each company should have an infiltration lane based on the commander's estimate of the situation. Depending on the construction of the built-up areas and streets, the infiltration lane may be 500 to 1,500 meters wide.

d. The infiltrating companies advance on foot, with stealth, using available cover and concealment. Mortar and artillery fire can be used to divert the enemy's attention and cover the sound of infiltrating troops.

e. BFVs or TOWs are positioned to cover likely avenues of approach for enemy armored vehicles. The battalion commander may position his antiarmor platoon (light) or company (airborne, air assault) to cover the likely avenues of approach if no BFVs or tanks are available. The reconnaissance platoon and antiarmor company screen the battalion's more vulnerable flanks. Also, the antiarmor company can support by fire if the situation provides an adequate position.

f. As the companies move into the built-up area, they secure their own flanks. Security elements may be dropped off along the route to warn of a flank attack. Engineers assist in breaching or bypassing minefield or obstacles encountered. Enemy positions are avoided but reported.

g. The infiltrating companies proceed until they reach their objective. At that time, they consolidate and reorganize and arrange for mutual support. They patrol to their front and flanks, and establish contact with each

other. The company commander may establish a limit of advance to reduce chances of enemy contact or to ensure safety from friendly forces.

h. If the infiltration places the enemy in an untenable position and he must withdraw, the rest of the battalion is brought forward for the next phase of the operation. If the enemy does not withdraw, the battalion must clear the built-up area before the next phase of the operation (Figure 3-12).



Figure 3-12. Infiltration.

3-18. ROUTE SECURITY

An infantry battalion may have to clear buildings to secure a route through a city. How quickly the battalion can clear the buildings depends on the enemy resistance and the size and number of the buildings. In the outlying area, the forward units proceed by bounds from road junction to road junction. Other platoons provide flank security by moving down parallel streets and by probing to the flanks.

a. Depending on the required speed and enemy situation, the infantry may either move mounted or dismounted. The platoons move down the widest streets, avoiding narrow streets. Each section overmatches the squad to its front, keeping watch on the opposite side of the street. Sections provide their wingman with mutual support. Combat vehicles providing overwatch should be secured by dismounted troops. The rest of the infantry should stay mounted to maximize speed and shock effect until required to dismount due to the enemy situation or upon reaching the objective.

b. When contact with the enemy is made, tanks support as usual. Supporting fire fixes and isolates enemy positions, which dismounted troops maneuver to attack.

c. Phase lines can be used to control the rate of the company's advance and other action. For example, at each phase line, the forward companies might reestablish contact, reorganize, and continue clearing (Figure 3-13).

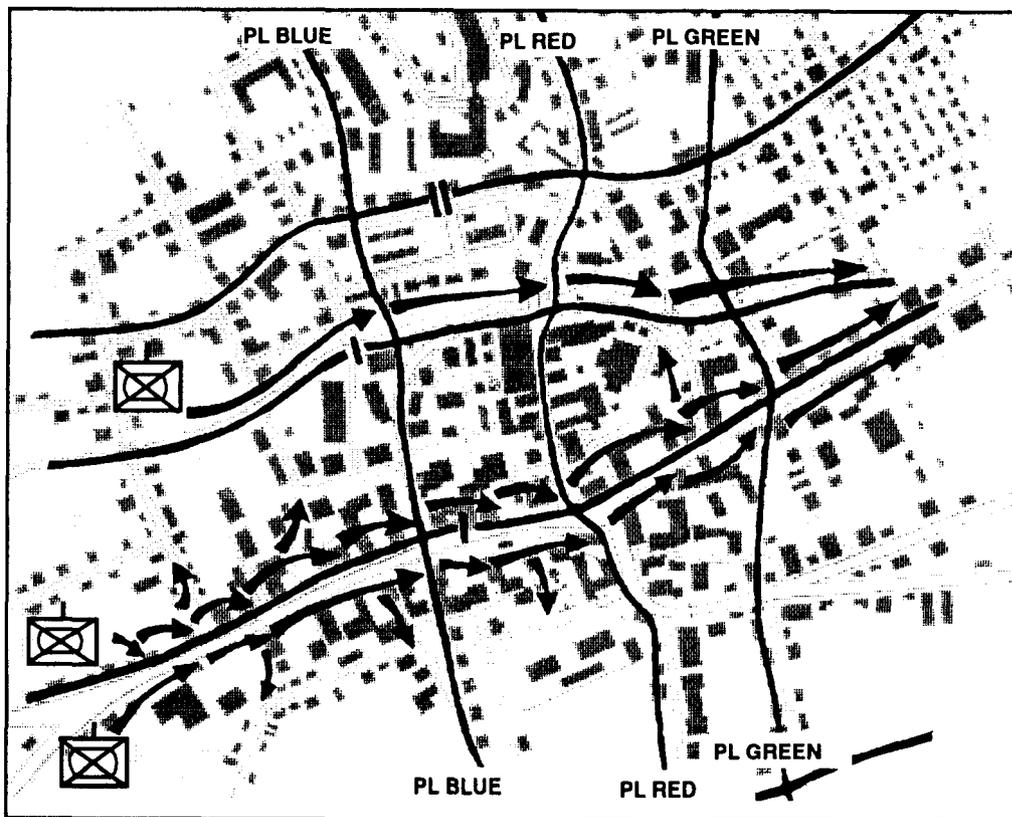


Figure 3-13. Clearing along a route.

Section VII. COMPANY TEAM ATTACK OF A BUILT-UP AREA

The following are techniques that might be employed by a company. These may be independent operations but are normally part of a battalion operation and apply to any type of infantry.

3-19. ATTACK OF A BLOCK

To attack a block in a built-up area, a company should be reinforced with tanks and engineers.

a. This operation is characterized by platoon attacks supported by both direct and indirect fires. Success depends on isolating the enemy positions (which often become platoon objectives), suppressing enemy weapons, seizing a foothold in the block, and clearing the block's buildings room by room.

(1) Task organization of the company team varies because of the nature of the built-up area. For example, a nonmechanized infantry company fighting in the outskirts of a city might organize as follows:

- Two rifle platoons reinforced with engineers—to assault.
- One rifle platoon—reserve.
- One tank platoon—in support of the assaulting rifle platoons.

(2) In a core or core periphery area, that same company might be organized as follows:

- Two rifle platoons, each with engineers and tanks under the platoon leader's operational control (OPCON)—to assault. (The engineers and tanks are placed under the platoon leader's OPCON due to the independent, isolated combat that can be expected in those areas.)
- One platoon—in reserve.
- All available direct and indirect fire weapons should be used to isolate objective buildings. Direct fire down streets and indirect fire in open areas between buildings helps in the objective isolation.

b. Tanks, machine guns, and other direct fire support weapons fire on the objective from covered positions. These weapons should not be fired for prolonged periods from one position. The gunners should use a series of positions and displace from one to another to gain better fields of fire and to avoid being targeted by the enemy. Direct fire support tasks are assigned as follows:

- Machine guns fire along streets and into windows, doors, and so forth.
- BFVs, tanks, TOWs, and Dragons fire at enemy tanks and other armored vehicles.
- Tanks fire at targets protected by walls, make entrances in buildings, and provide backup against enemy tanks, as required.
- Riflemen engage targets of opportunity.

c. Before an assault, the company commander should employ smoke to conceal the assaulting platoons. He secures their flanks with direct fire weapons and by employment of the reserve, if necessary.

(1) Concealed by smoke and supported by direct fire weapons, an assaulting platoon attacks the first isolated building. The platoon must close on the building quickly while the enemy is still stunned by supporting fire. The company commander must closely coordinate the assault with its supporting fire so that the fire is shifted at the last possible moment.

(2) The squads and platoons clear each building as described in Appendix. After seizing the block, the company consolidates and reorganizes to repel a counterattack or to continue the attack.

(3) A mechanized infantry company team would be organized on similar lines. The assault platoons should be dismounted. The BFV and tanks can provide direct fire support (Figure 3-14).

(4) The company commander may or may not use the technique of numbering the buildings in the area of the attack. In the assault of a strongpoint, the strongpoint itself may have the corners lettered to identify enemy forces.

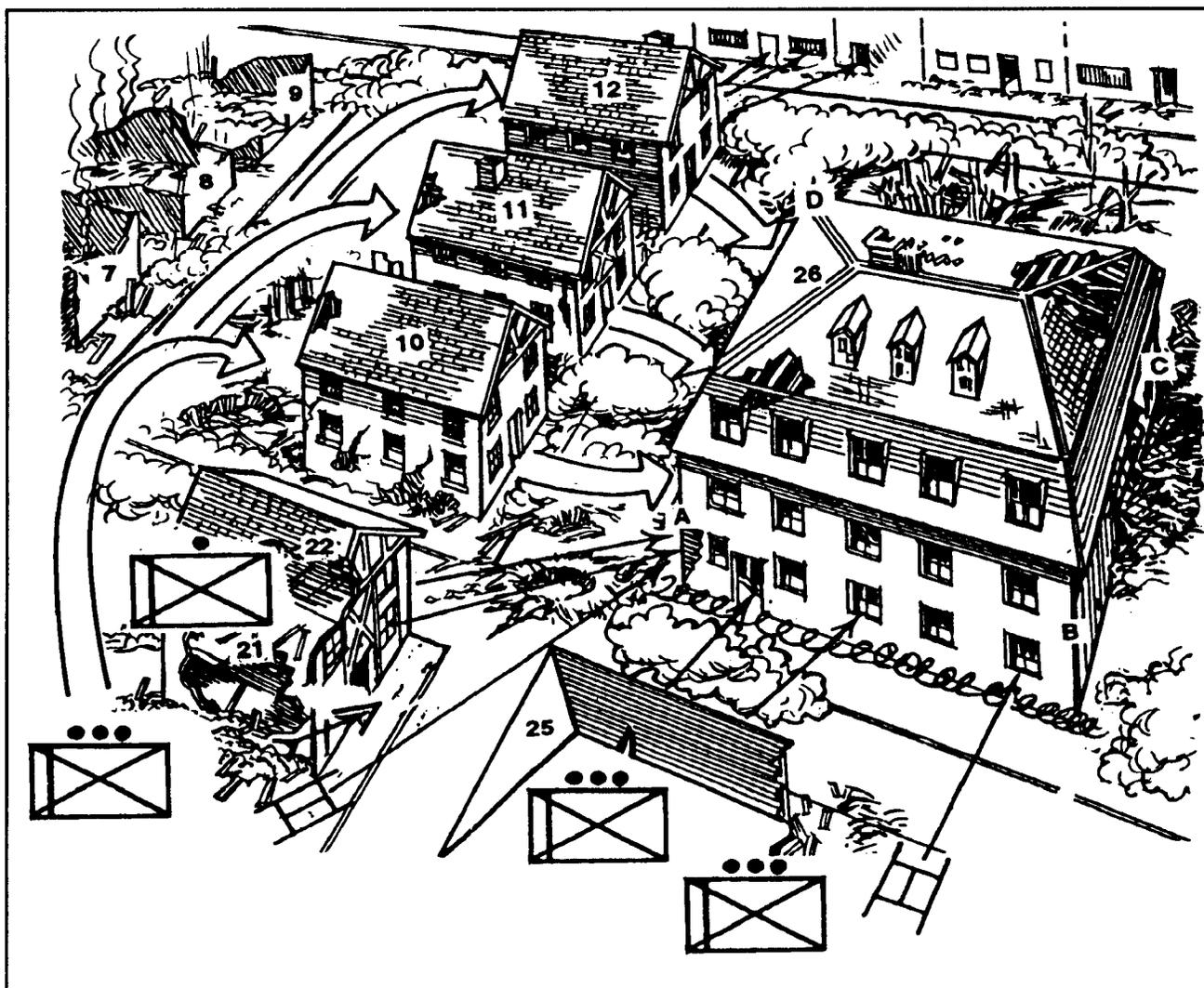


Figure 3-14. Company attack of a stronghold.

3-20. ATTACK OF AN ENEMY OUTPOST

The following discussion provides a technique for conduct of a hasty attack on an enemy outpost. The company team commander makes a quick assessment of the factors of METT-T and reacts appropriately to support the commander's intent.

a. The company team commander uses a form of fire and movement. His tanks, BFVs, MK 19s or M2HBs mounted on HMMWVs, and TOWs assume support-by-fire positions from which they can fire on the outpost, keep the enemy from escaping, and destroy any reinforcements.

b. The rifle platoons then move into the area. They do not attack head on, but from a covered route so as to hit the outpost at a vulnerable point. As the platoons approach the outpost, smoke is employed to screen their movement and supporting fires are shifted. Once the platoons close on the outpost, they clear the buildings quickly and consolidate. The company is then ready to continue operations (Figure 3-15, page 3-24).

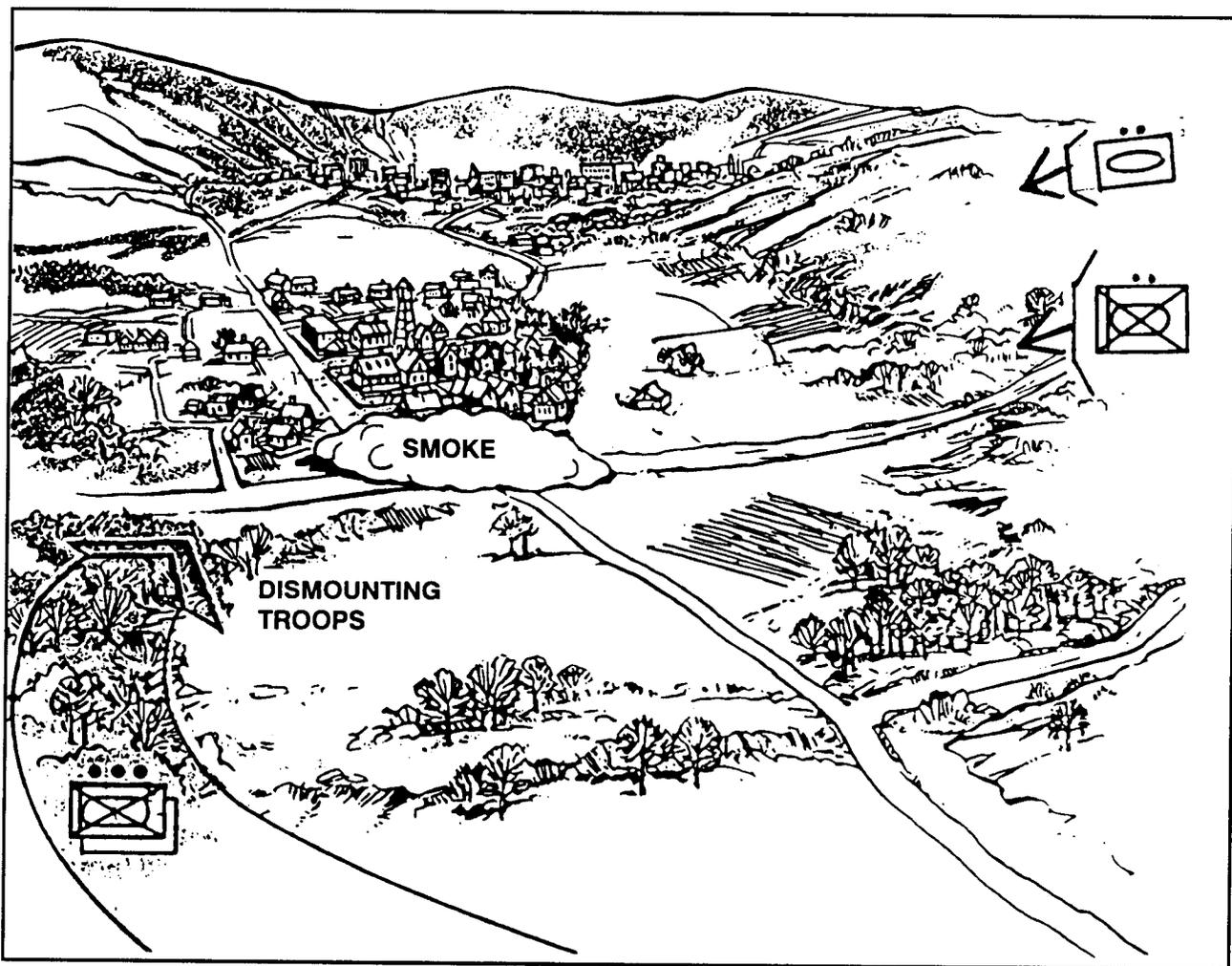


Figure 3-15. Hasty attack of an outpost.

3-21. SEIZURE OF A TRAFFIC CIRCLE

A company may have to seize a traffic circle either to secure it for friendly use or to deny it to the enemy (Figure 3-16). This operation consists of seizing and clearing the buildings that control the traffic circle bringing direct-fire weapons into position to cover it. Routes to overwatch positions for direct fire weapons may have to first be cleared of mines. Enemy avenues of approach into the flanks of the position may have to be mined to prevent enemy use.

a. After gathering all available intelligence on the terrain, enemy, and population, the commander plans for the following steps:

- Isolate the objectives.
- Seize and clear the buildings along the traffic circle under cover of tanks, ATGMs, and machine guns.
- Consolidate and prepare for counterattack.

b. Friendly troops should not venture into the traffic circle until it is under friendly control. A traffic circle is a natural kill zone.

- c. The company should be organized as follows:
- A security element (charged with isolating the traffic circle).
 - An assault element reinforced with engineers.
 - A support element (providing direct fire support for the assault element) made up of the company's BFVs, TOWs, MK 19s or M2HBs mounted on HMMWVs, and attached tanks occupying an attack-by-fire position.
 - A reserve.

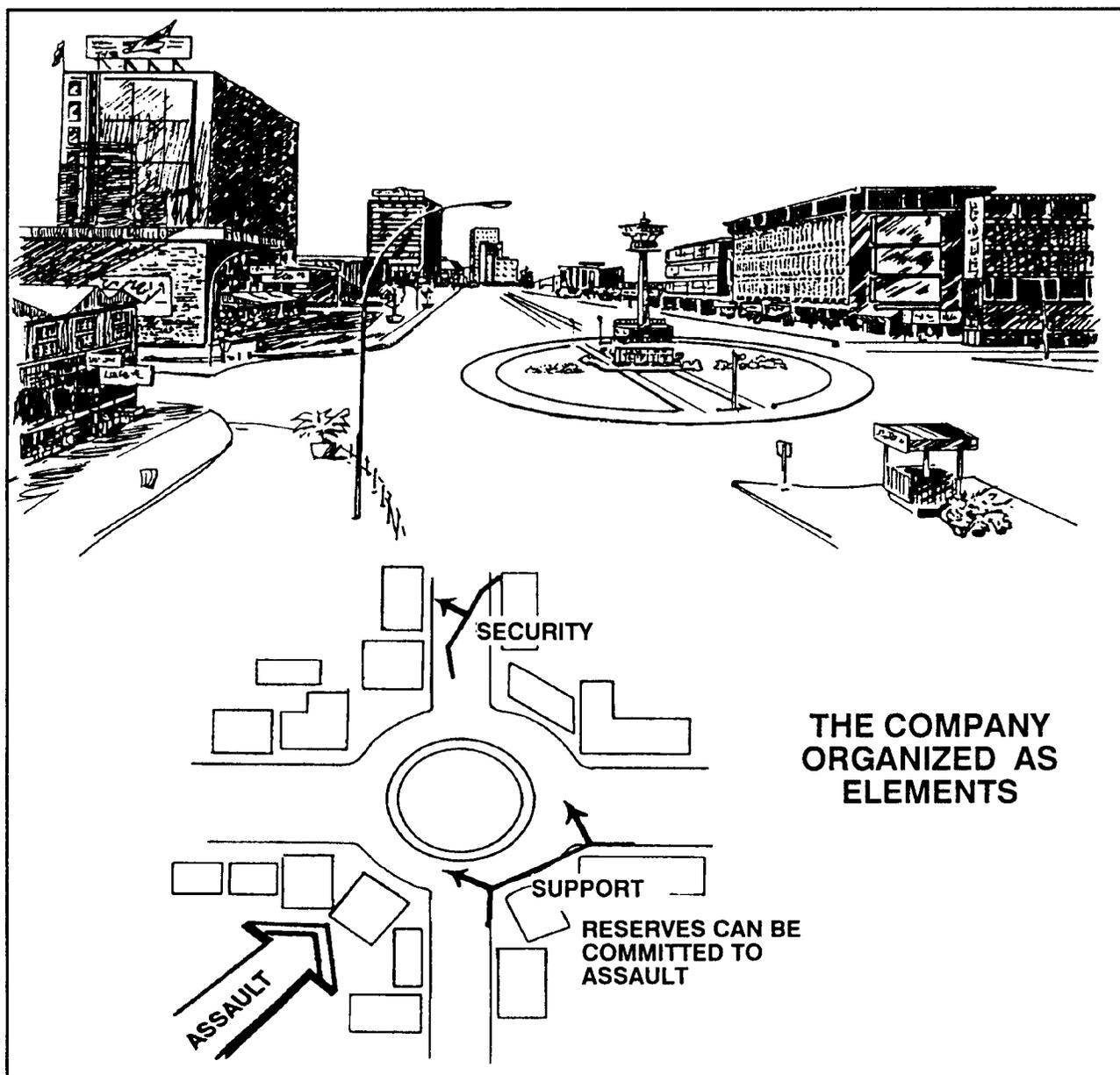


Figure 3-16. Seizure of a traffic circle.

d. At various stages in this operation, those roles may change. For example, the assault element may clear buildings until the support element can no longer support it. Then the reserve can be committed to the assault. It may also happen that one of the assault elements is in a better position to isolate the traffic circle. At that time, the isolating element would become part of the assault element.

3-22. SEIZURE OF KEY TERRAIN

Key terrain dominates an avenue of approach or is a location which, if held by either friendly forces or the enemy, will directly affect the operation. A bridge or overpass that spans a canal, a building complex, or, in some cases, the population itself are examples of key terrain in a city. Therefore, seizing such a crossing point intact and securing it for friendly use is a likely mission for an infantry company.

a. For this mission, an infantry company should—

- Clear the buildings on the near bank that permit a clear view of the bridge and provide good fields of fire for supporting weapons.
- Quickly suppress enemy weapons on the far bank with direct fire.
- Use screening smoke to limit enemy observation and reduce interference with friendly direct fires.
- Seize a bridgehead (buildings that dominate the bridge) on the far bank by an assault across the bridge.
- Secure a perimeter around the bridge so that the engineers can clear any obstacle and remove demolitions on the bridge.

b. The first step in seizing a bridge is to clear the buildings on the near bank. The commander must find out which buildings dominate the approaches to the bridge. Buildings that permit him to employ LAWs, Dragons, machine guns, and riflemen are cleared while supporting fire prevents the enemy from reinforcing his troops on the far bank and keeps enemy demolition parties away from the bridge.

c. In suppressing the enemy's positions on the far bank, priority is given to those positions from which the enemy can fire directly down the bridge. Tanks, BFVs, TOWs, and machine guns mounted on HMMWVs in the light infantry antiarmor platoon or the airborne or air assault antiarmor company are effective in this role. TOWs, Dragons, and, in some cases, LAWs can be used against enemy tanks covering the bridge. The company FSO should plan artillery and mortar fires to suppress infantry and antitank weapons.

d. The objectives of the assaulting platoons are buildings that dominate the approaches to the bridge. One or two platoons assault across the bridge using all available cover while concealed by smoke. They are supported by the rest of the company and attached tanks. Once on the other side, they call for the shift of supporting fire and start clearing buildings. When the first buildings are cleared, supporting fire is shifted again and the assault continues until all the buildings in the objective area are cleared.

e. At this point, the engineers clear the bridge and its approaches of all mines, demolitions, and obstacles. The company commander may expand his perimeter to prepare for counterattack. Once the bridge is cleared, the tanks and other support vehicles are brought across to the far bank (Figure 3-17).

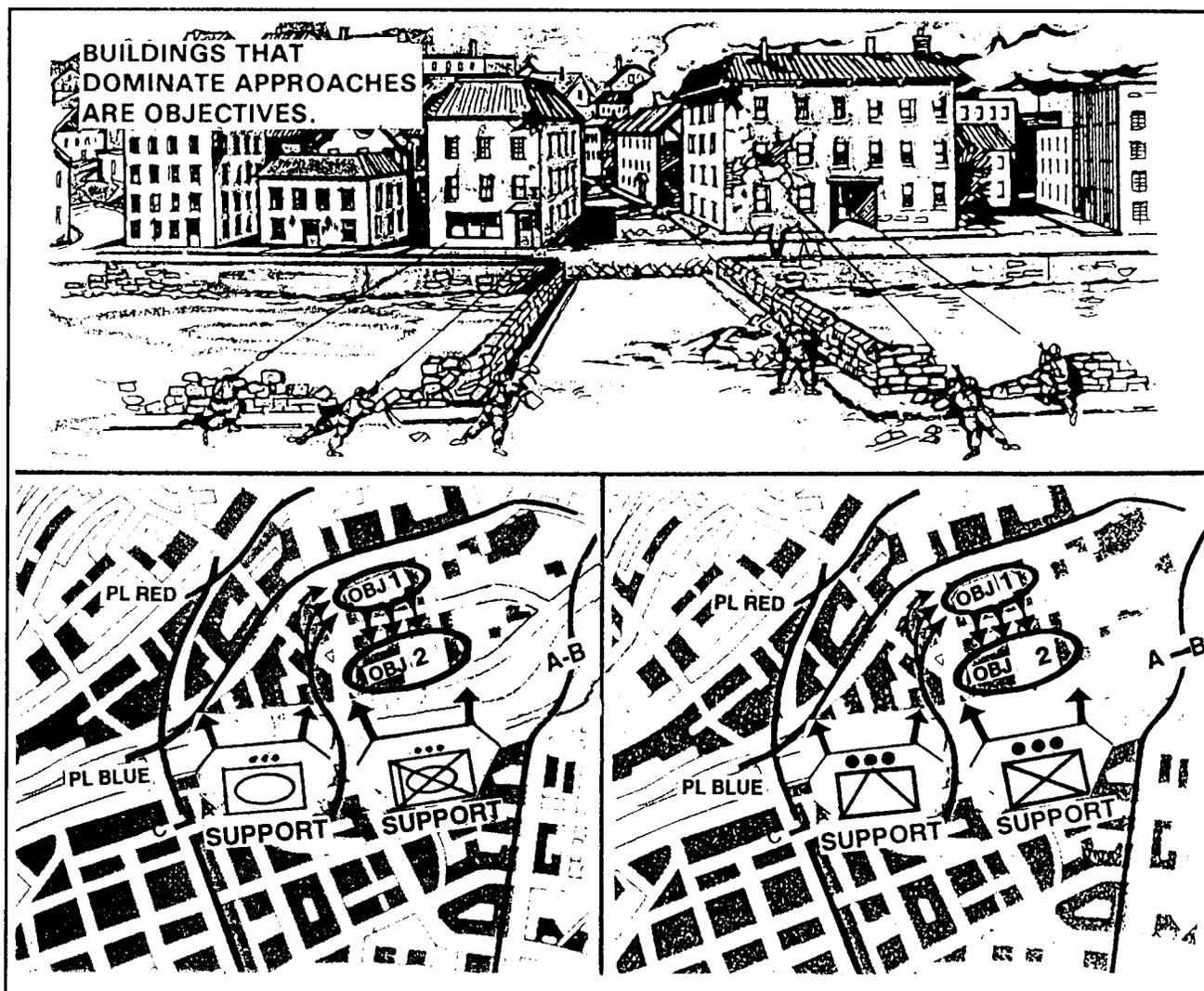


Figure 3-17. Seizure of a bridge.

3-23. RECONNAISSANCE

In a fast-moving situation, a company may have a movement to contact through a built-up area along a highway. Similarly, a company may have to reconnoiter such a route to prepare for a battalion task force attack. This type of mission can be accomplished by an infantry company of any type with an attached tank platoon, if available.

a. This operation is characterized by alternating periods of rapid movement to quickly cover distances and much slower movement for security. The speed of movement selected depends on the terrain and enemy situation.

b. In open areas where rapid movement is possible, a tank section should lead. In closer terrain, the infantry should lead while overmatched by the tanks. Another infantry platoon and the other tank section should move on a parallel street. Artillery fire should be planned along the route. Engineers accompany the lead platoon on the main route to help clear obstacles and mines.

c. The team should seize the key points on the highway (crossroads, bridges, and overpasses, and so forth) by a combination of actions:

- Between key points, the team moves with the infantry mounted when contact is not likely.
- At key points or when enemy contact is likely, the team moves dismounted to clear enemy positions or to secure the key point. Tanks and other combat vehicles support the dismounted troops.

d. In peripheral or strip areas, this advance should be on one axis with the lead unit well forward and security elements checking side streets as they are reached. In the city core, this operation is conducted as a coordinated movement on two or three axes for more flank security.

e. Enemy positions can be either destroyed by the team itself or, if the need for speed is great, bypassed, reported, and left to following units.

f. The subunits of the team must coordinate their action. The company commander reports all information collected to the battalion task force (Figure 3-18).

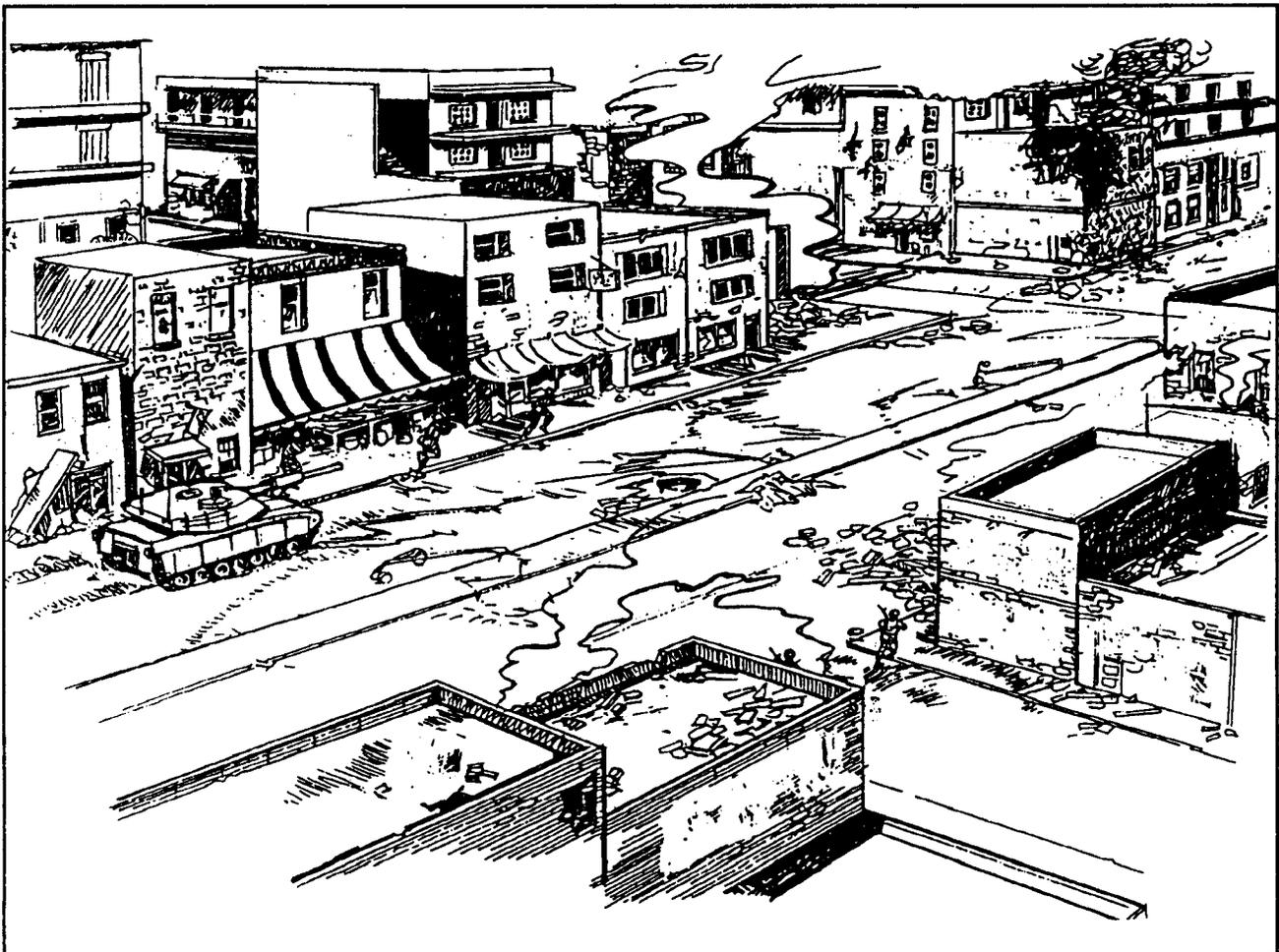


Figure 3-18. Route reconnaissance for a movement to contact along a highway through a city (commercial ribbon).

Section VIII. PLATOON ATTACK OF A BUILT-UP AREA

Platoons seldom perform independent operations in combat in built-up areas, but because of the type of combat to be expected, they can become isolated and seem to be alone. This section discusses techniques that might be employed by a platoon under such conditions. These operations are conducted as part of a company operation.

3-24. ATTACK OF A BUILDING

The most common platoon offensive mission in a built-up area is the attack of a building. The platoon must kill the defenders and secure the building.

a. The attack involves isolating the building to prevent the escape or reinforcement of its defenders normally coordinated at company level); suppressing the defenders with BFV 25-mm main gun, tank, machine gun, and mortar fire; entering the building at the least-defended point or through a hole breached by tank fire; and clearing the building. To clear it, troops normally go quickly to the top floor and clear from the top down. There must be close coordination between the assault and support elements of the platoon using radios, telephones, arm-and-hand signals, or pyrotechnics.

(1) If a platoon is attacking a building independently, it should be organized with an assault element, support element, and security element to cover its flanks and rear. In addition to its own support element, the platoon can be supported by BFVs or tanks and other elements of the company.

(2) If one platoon is attacking, supported by the rest of the company, security may be provided by the other rifle platoons. The assault has three steps:

STEP 1: Isolate the building.

STEP 2: Enter the building (secure a foothold).

STEP 3: Clear the building methodically room by room and floor by floor.

(3) The clearing is performed by the rifle squads, which pass successively through each other (leapfrogging) as rooms and floors are secured. Platoons that clear buildings should be reinforced with engineers to help with demolition clearing (Figure 3-19, page 3-30).

3-25. MOVEMENT DOWN A STREET

When moving in built-up areas, a platoon follows the same principles of movement as in other areas. However, some movement techniques must be modified to adjust to a built-up area. This discussion focuses on the movement down the street of the lead platoon of a rifle company, either mechanized or nonmechanized.

a. The platoon members must be prepared to return fire immediately. They must also be alert for any signs of the enemy and report this information promptly.

b. The speed of movement depends on the type of operation, terrain, and degree of enemy resistance. In outlying or lightly defended areas, a mechanized infantry platoon proceeds along the street mounted, but sends dismounted men forward to reconnoiter key points (crossroads, bridges). In the center of a built-up area or in situations when there is heavy fighting, the platoon moves on foot with two squads leading—one on each side of the

road, using all cover. They move through the buildings, if feasible, to avoid exposure on the streets. The squads give each other mutual support.

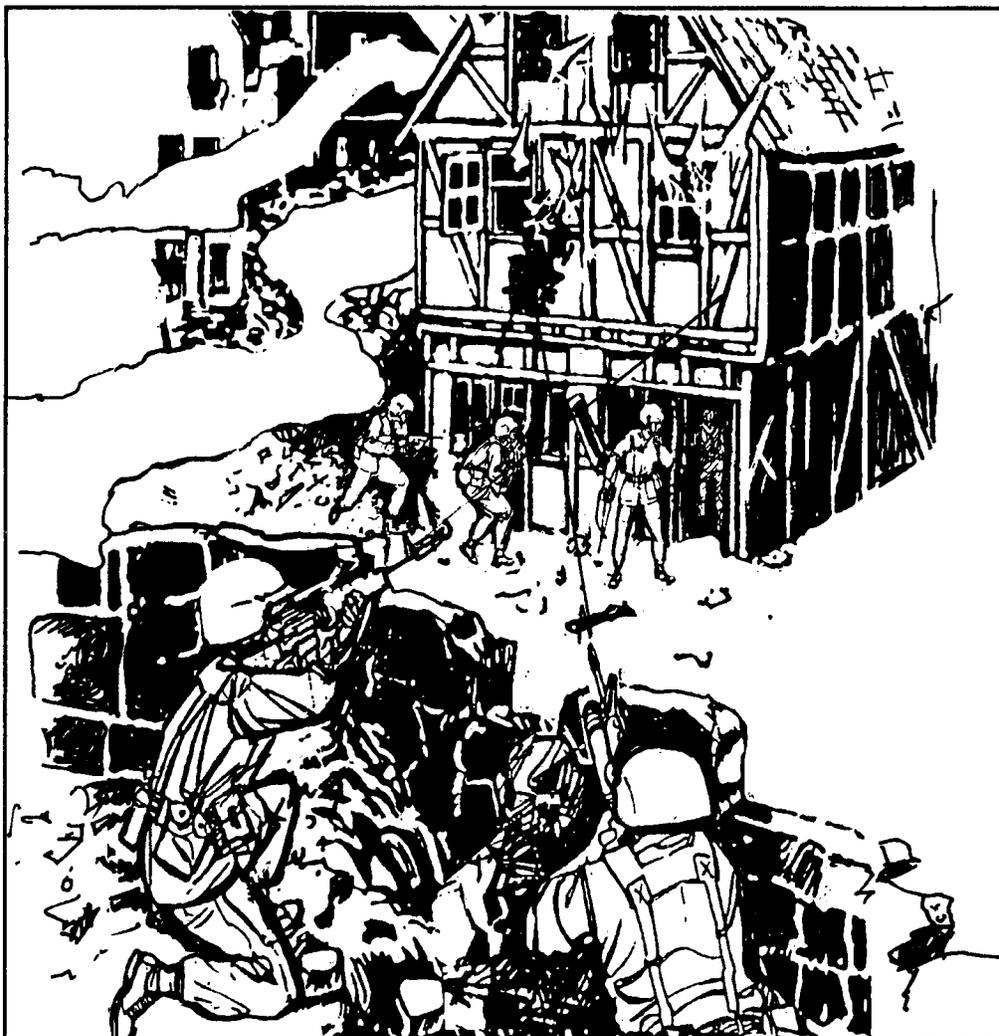


Figure 3-19. Attack of a building.

c. Enemy action against the platoon might consist of an ambush on the street, enfilade fire down the streets, sniper fire from rooftops, or artillery or mortar fire.

d. For protection from those dangers, the platoon should move through buildings and along walls, use tanks for fire support and station men on the roofs or upper stairs for overwatch, and search for defenders in all three dimensions.

e. The platoon should move in two elements: a maneuver element (one squad on narrow streets, two squads on wide streets), which moves forward, scouts danger areas, and closes with the enemy; and an overwatch element (the rest of the platoon and its supporting weapons), which moves behind the maneuver element, secures the flanks and rear, and provides fire support. These two elements, or parts of them, can exchange roles (Figure 3-20).

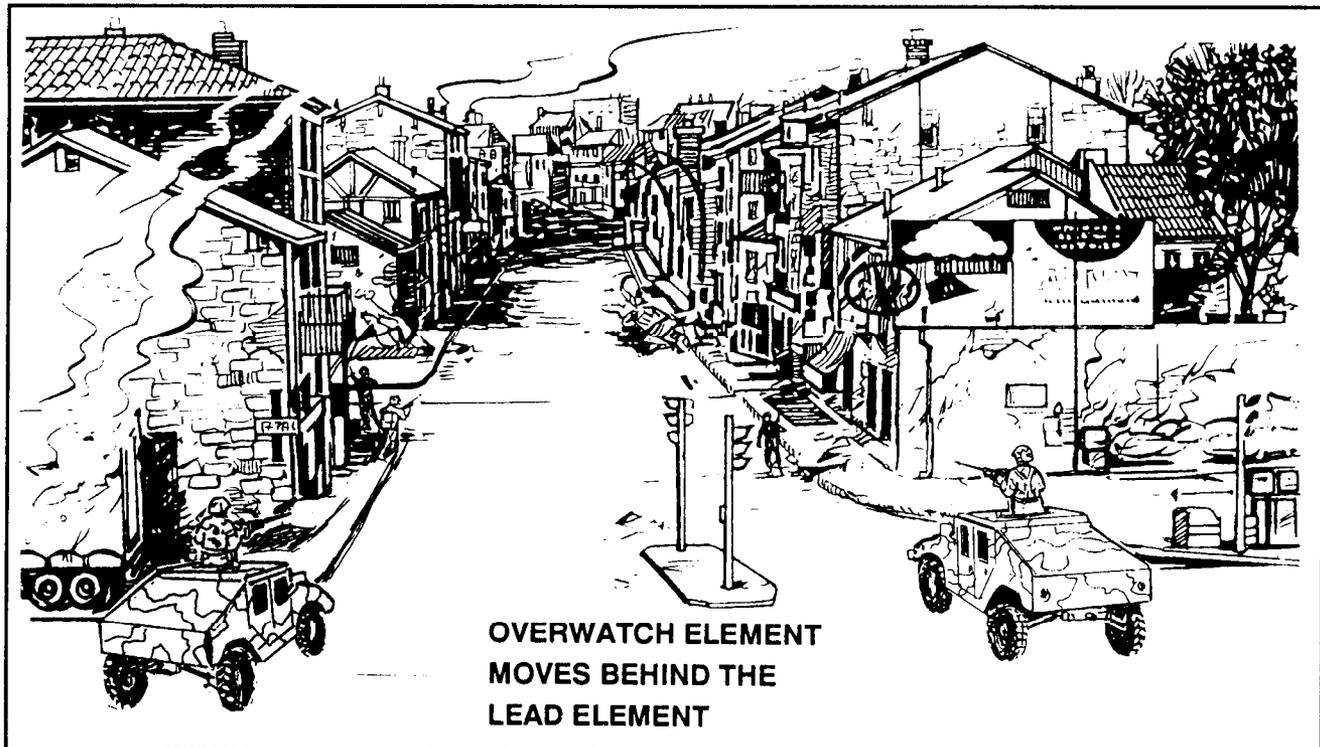


Figure 3-20. Movement down a street.

3-26. COUNTERATTACKS

A platoon may be given the mission of counterattacking for one of two reasons: to recapture a defensive position or a key point, destroying or ejecting an enemy foothold; or to stop an enemy attack by striking his flank, forcing him to stop and adopt a hasty defense.

a. Platoon counterattacks are planned at company level to meet each probable enemy penetration. They must be well coordinated and executed violently. Preferably, counterattacks should be directed at an enemy flank and supported with direct and indirect fire.

b. In outlying areas, where the terrain is relatively open, a mechanized infantry platoon accompanied by tanks can approach the counterattack objective mounted for speed. The tanks destroy the enemy's tanks and heavy weapons while the infantry dismounts to clear the objective. In central or more congested areas, the tanks progress deliberately, from point to point, providing close support to the dismounted troops. Counterattacks require the following:

- An analysis of the probable avenues of enemy approach.
- Reconnaissance and rehearsal along each counterattack route and of each proposed overwatch position.
- Construction of obstacles and fighting positions to canalize or block the enemy.
- Gaps or lanes through these obstacles if the counterattacks are to be quick enough to affect the action.

- Rapid and aggressive execution—leaders must set the example.
- Flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances.
- An analysis of the probable counter-counterattack routes by the enemy.
- A fire support plan for the counterattack and possible counter-counterattack.