

CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT TECHNIQUES

A large portion of combat in built-up areas takes place at very close quarters, often between small groups of combatants within the confines of a single room. Because of this, individual combat actions can flare up quickly and be over in a matter of seconds. Success or failure is often determined by life or death decisions made and actions taken almost instinctively by individual soldiers and small teams as they encounter differing complex situations in each new room. One of the complexities often encountered particularly during OOTW, is the intermixing of combatants with noncombatants in the same building, often in the same rooms. Employing close quarters combat techniques is often the most effective means of achieving victory while minimizing friendly losses, avoiding unnecessary noncombatant casualties, and conserving ammunition and demolitions for subsequent operations.

K-1. BATTLE DRILLS AND CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT

Close quarters combat techniques do not replace battle drills. They are techniques to be used when the tactical situation calls for room-by-room clearing of a relatively intact building in which enemy combatants and noncombatants may be intermixed. These techniques involve increased risk in order to clear a building methodically, rather than using overwhelming firepower to neutralize all its inhabitants. Certain close quarters combat techniques, such as methods of movement, firing stances, weapon positioning, and reflexive shooting, are useful for all combat in confined areas. Other techniques, such as entering a room without first neutralizing known enemy occupants, are appropriate in only some tactical situations. Generally, if a room or building is occupied by an alerted enemy force that is determined to resist, and if most or all noncombatants are clear, overwhelming firepower should be employed to avoid friendly casualties. In such a situation, supporting fires, demolitions, and fragmentation grenades should be used to neutralize a space before friendly troops enter. In some combat situations, however, the use of heavy supporting fires and demolitions would cause unacceptable collateral damage. In other situations, often during OOTW, enemy combatants are so intermixed with noncombatants that US forces cannot in good conscience use all their available supporting fires, and room-by-room clearing may be necessary. At such times, close quarters combat techniques are most appropriate.

K-2. PRINCIPLES OF CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT

As in all other military operations, battles that occur at close quarters, such as within a room or hallway, must be planned and executed with care. Units must

