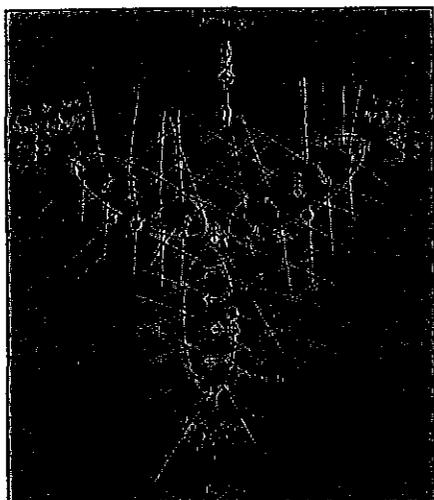


# Platoon "Y" Defense

PLATOON SERGEANT DAVID J. ROBBINS

With the kind of fluid defense future battlefields will demand, and with our potential enemies concentrating on the indirect approach, a 360-degree defense is a mechanized infantry platoon's best hope for survival. The "Y" defense for level terrain, shown in Figure 1, offers this 360-degree defense without requiring the troops to displace under fire to alternate or supplemental positions.

This "Y" defense has several other



advantages as well:

- The backblasts from the antiarmor weapons are directed into killing zones and do not endanger friendly troops.

- The enemy, when assaulting this position, will have to assault two squads on line, no matter which direction he attacks from.

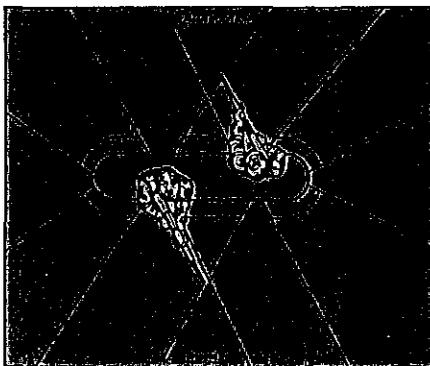
- The defensive position is difficult to suppress with indirect fire, and only one-third of it can be attacked in any one aircraft pass.

- Any leg of the "Y" that the enemy takes can be fired on by the other two squads.

Laying in this defense is fairly simple. (As I envision it, the platoons

should be spaced about 1,000 meters apart and on line.) The only information the platoon leader needs is the location of his defensive position and the direction of the enemy. He gives the first squad leader a heading of 60 degrees, the second squad leader, 180 degrees, the third, 300 degrees, and establishes the platoon's command post at the hub, or the apex, of the defense. These three equal 120-degree sectors are, in fact, the key to the "Y" defense.

The platoon leader then instructs the squad leaders to lay in their squads with two-man positions 30 meters apart. (The terrain will not always permit this exact distance, of course, but the concept must be retained if the defense is to work.) The third position in each sector should be for the squad's APC, the fourth for its Dragon, and the fifth for its machinegun. (The first two positions



are for riflemen.) The machinegun's principal direction of fire should be the squad's magnetic direction.

The squads construct two-man fighting positions so that both men can fire out on both sides or one man can fire from each end (see Figure 2). The construction must allow for the backblasts of the LAWs and Dragons in the size of the apertures. (Sandbags

can be placed in unused apertures and taken down when the men need to fire out of those apertures.) These positions must have overhead cover and must be camouflaged.

As an improvement to this defense, a shallow resupply trench can be dug between positions. Any attached weapons can be placed in added positions in any leg of the defense. The fifth position, the machinegun position, should be heavily mined 50 meters out to channel the attacker into the killing zone. Obviously, the more level the ground is for this defense, the better mutual support the platoon will have.

The individual squad member, once trained in this defense, knows exactly how to prepare his own position, and the only time he leaves that position is to attack toward one of the other squads. And knowing he is mutually supported all around, he can sit in MOPP 4 gear all day, because he does not have to move once the position has been prepared.

The "Y" position can also be used by light infantry units in almost any kind of terrain. And by using it, a well-trained and disciplined group of defenders will find it easier to fend off even the most determined attacker.



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