

A Mortar SOP

EDITOR'S NOTE: In our recent issues we have carried a number of articles concerning mortars, and there is another one in this issue. The article that follows is a good

example of an SOP for a 60mm mortar section in a light infantry unit. It was prepared by Sergeant Robert Florek who, when he prepared it, was a mortar sec-

tion leader in Company C, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

MOVEMENT

Mortars deployed as a section, no security element attached. Number 1 gun's assistant gunner will take point. (#2 assistant gunner and #1 assistant gunner will flip-flop positions as point man when ordered to do so by section sergeant or squad leader.) Speed is of the essence: section will operate in the traveling mode. Gunners will secure gun systems to their rucksack frames and have their M16s at the ready.

Sector of fire responsibility:

#1—11 o'clock to 1 o'clock

#2—10 o'clock to 2 o'clock

Note: Must be aware of point man's location at all times.

#3—8 o'clock to 10 o'clock

#4—2 o'clock to 4 o'clock

#5—7 o'clock to 9 o'clock

#6—3 o'clock to 5 o'clock

#7—5 o'clock to 7 o'clock

At halts, weapons will be oriented to those sectors of fire. (REFER TO FIGURE 1 FOR WEDGE FORMATION, FIGURE 2 FOR COLUMN FORMATION.)

Mortars deployed with company as part of headquarters element. Gunners will have mortar systems at the ready with M16s strapped to rucksack frames. (REFER TO FIGURE 3 FOR WEDGE FORMATION, FIGURE 4 FOR COLUMN FORMATION.)

Actions Taken at a Halt: #2 gunner moves left, #1 gunner moves right, positioned about 25 meters apart. Gunners will orient guns in hand-held mode to the direction of travel and index 500 meters on the range indicator, unless distance and direction is called to section by CO, XO, or FSO. Gunners will ensure they have

mask and overhead clearance to fire a mission.

•Assistant gunners will move to ap-

proximately 5 meters from gunners and orient themselves to protect gunners' outside flanks. On a call for fire, assistant

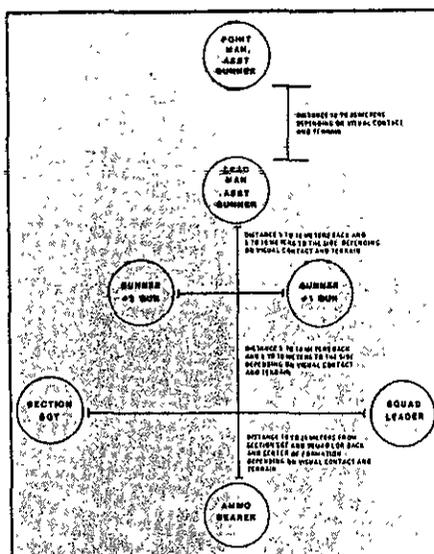


Figure 1. Deployed as section in wedge formation.

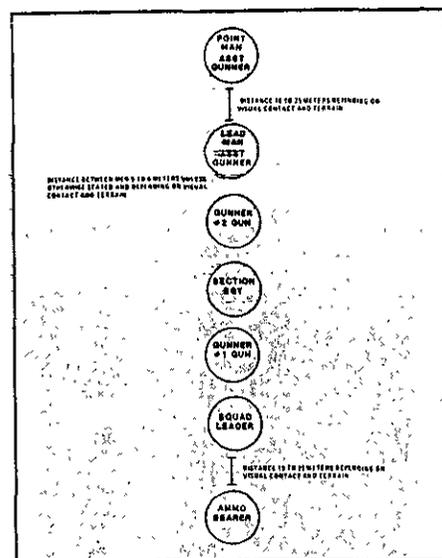


Figure 2. Deployed as section in column formation.

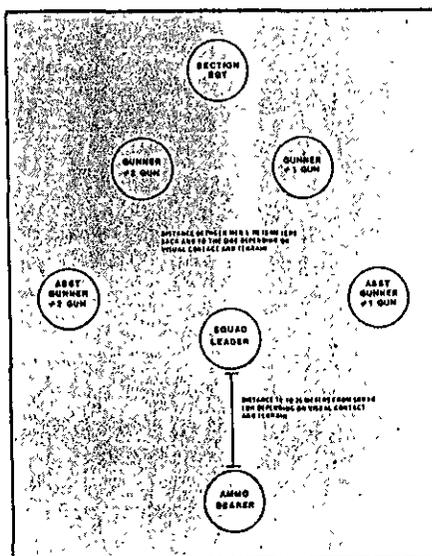


Figure 3. Deployed as part of headquarters element in wedge formation.

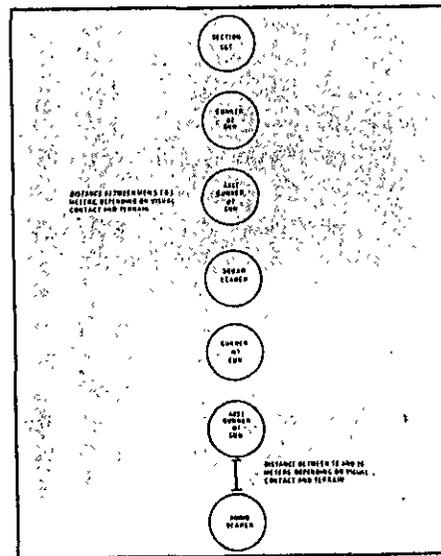


Figure 4. Deployed as part of headquarters element in column formation.

TRAINING NOTES

gunner will remove rounds from gunner's rucksack frame first.

- Squad leader will move to #1 gun, ensure that mask and overhead clearance is good and that range and direction is correct, and then orient himself to protect gunner's rear.

- Section sergeant will move to #2 gun, ensure that mask and overhead clearance is good and that range and direction is correct, and then orient himself to protect gunner's rear.

- Ammunition bearer will center himself between guns laterally and maintain a distance of about 15 meters to the rear. He will orient himself to provide rear security to mortar section.

(NOTE: A two-round FFE from section will be fired; gunners' rounds on rucksack frames will be prepared on a Charge 1.)

Action at Danger Crossings: Same as Actions at a Halt until headquarters element starts to move toward danger area. Mortars move when headquarters element moves and cross danger area as a section. Changes will be directed by CO, XO, or FSO.

DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

Mortars will move into center of perimeter, orient gun systems in hand-held mode, direction toward base of triangle at distance of 500 meters. Number 2 gun will move left, and #1 gun will move right about 25 meters from #2.

- Squad leader and section sergeant will make sure direction and distance is correct and mask and overhead clearance is good. Guns will remain in hand-held mode until triangle is adjusted.

- Assistant gunners will remain with gun systems.

- Section sergeant will meet with XO or FSO to determine primary, alternate, and supplementary mortar positions. Once mortar positions are determined, section sergeant will put in #2 gun first; mortars will set up in the indirect mode with direction and distance.

- Ammunition bearer will be with #1 gun, which will remain in hand-held mode until #2 gun is set and ready to fire missions.

- Section sergeant will also show #2 gunner the alternate and supplementary

positions and give him the distance and direction for those positions.

- Section sergeant will then get the squad leader from #1 gun and the entire crew and move them into their primary position, to include the ammunition bearer.

- Section sergeant will lay in #1 gun and then show squad leader the alternate and supplementary positions along with direction and distance for each.

- Ammunition bearer will take roll of wire and TA-1s and set up communications between the two mortars. He will remain with #2 gun and take orders from either section sergeant or gunner. He will also set up communications with CP for XO with TA-1.

On command, mortar crews will take gun system out of action:

- Gunners will set up in the hand-held mode in the direction of the last command and distance; rucksack frames will be loaded and ready to move.

- Assistant gunner will have rucksack frame loaded and ready to move.

- Ammunition bearer will roll up wire and give it to squad leader of #1 gun along with TA-1s; he will have rucksack packed

and on his back when this happens.

- Squad leader will then give the section sergeant an UP once wire is secure, as this will be the last task performed.

- Section sergeant will then report to his commander that section is ready to move.

DELIBERATE DEFENSE

Priority of Work:

- Section sergeant lays mortar section in direction of fire prior to digging in, usually to the front of selected mortar position.

- Section sergeant and squad leader make final decision on mortar position. They will center M2 compass over the middle of the proposed pit and get the direction of fire for that pit.

- Assistant gunner will measure the mortar pit along with the squad room (crew living room) and begin to cut or dig mortar fighting position.

- Section sergeant and squad leader will set up M16 plotting boards and determine data for FPF.

- Gunner will index FPF data on gun system and prepare ammunition for FPF after registration mission.

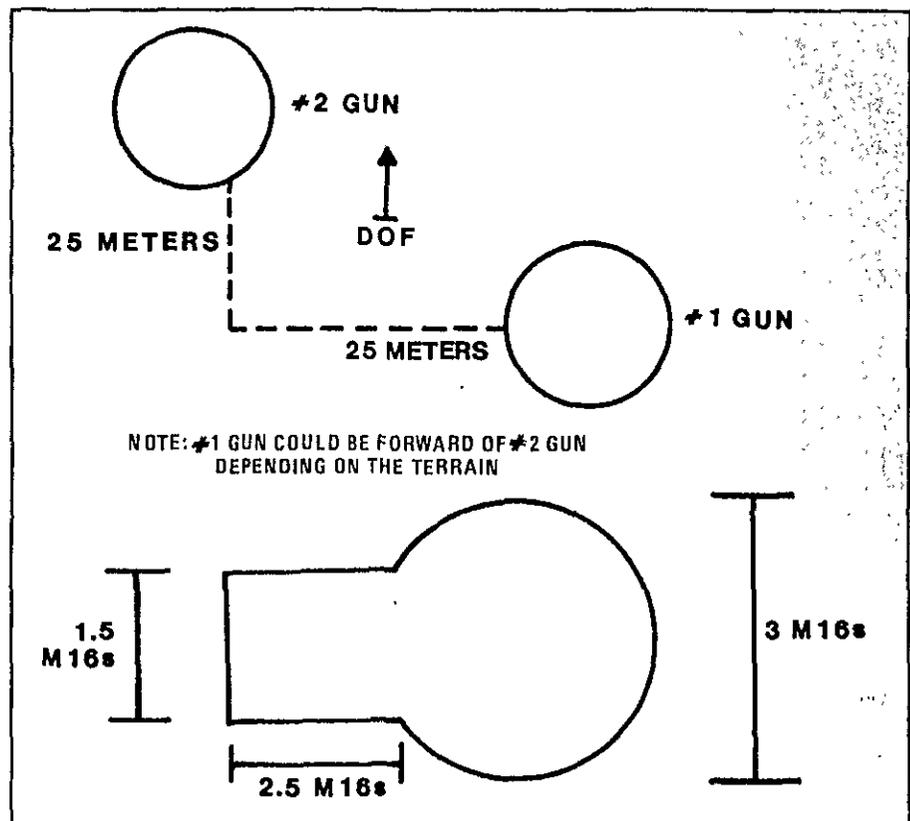


Figure 5. Deliberate Defense.

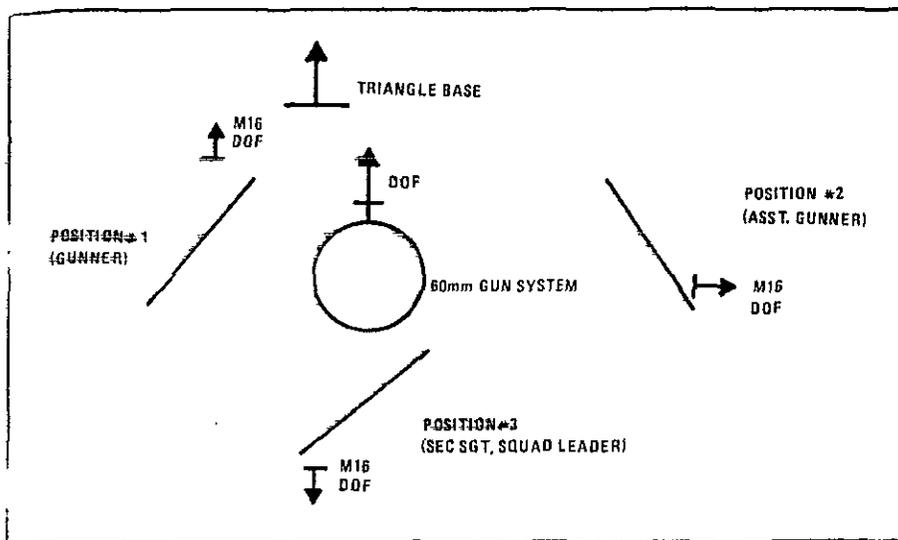


Figure 6. Hasty Defense.

- Gunners will start gathering camouflage and overhead cover.

- A workable rotation will then be instituted between digging, gathering camouflage, cleaning weapons, and filling sand bags.

Positions: If company is to establish a deliberate defense, gun systems will remain in base plate mode and will be oriented in direction of fire. Mortar posi-

tions will be approximately 25 meters apart in width and depth (Figure 5). Terrain will dictate positions.

Each position will be dug in three stages: mortar pit, squad room, and ammunition storage.

- Pit will be 3 M16 lengths wide, depth 1 M16 length (from butt plate to front sight post).

- Squad room will be 1½ M16s wide,

2½ M16s long, and at least 1½ M16s deep. If more than 4 men are to be at one mortar pit, another squad room must be constructed.

HASTY DEFENSE

Defensive Fighting Position: Once the company moves to the objective or into the defense, the section sergeant and CO, XO, or FSO determine the primary positions for mortar section (Figure 6). The mortars will be set up according to defense SOP. When both gun systems are in the indirect mode and communications are established, hasty fighting positions will be dug according to company SOP. Since the mortars will normally be inside the company defensive perimeter, it is very important to know locations of CP, FSO, CO trains, and platoon individual fighting positions.

Each mortar gun crew will establish a 360-degree defense around its system. Hasty positions will be between 5 and 10 meters from the gun system, and direction of fire for the M16 will be established by section sergeant or ranking man.

Antiarmor Fire Distribution

LIEUTENANT DAVID E. JOHNSON

Regardless of their specific unit missions, antiarmor leaders everywhere have the same basic problems: Their mission usually requires them to occupy hasty battle positions with little time to mark trigger lines or target reference points. Because our doctrine calls for antiarmor vehicle positions to be 300-500 meters apart, communication is difficult at best. In addition, there is usually no time to cache rounds to supplement the vehicles' limited basic load, so it becomes even more important not to waste rounds on multiple engagements of a single target.

For these reasons, a good direct fire distribution SOP is critical to the success of an antiarmor mission.

The fire distribution techniques offered here were refined from the "pattern fire" control method introduced in TC 7-24 and were successfully demonstrated during an NTC rotation and numerous local exercises. They were developed for a HMMWV TOW platoon (motorized) consisting of five vehicles, each armed with the TOW-2 system and carrying a basic load of six missiles. The five vehicles were organized into two sections and

a command vehicle, with the platoon sergeant as senior section leader.

Nevertheless, the techniques can be readily adapted to any unit that has an antiarmor mission and can help other antiarmor leaders develop their own SOPs.

First, control measures must be established so that everyone—friend and foe alike—can be easily identified. Each platoon vehicle is identified by bumper number and platoon color: First platoon is red; second platoon is white; third platoon is blue; fourth platoon is green; and