

---

- For a high-explosive (HE) area troop engagement—done on low rate of fire—kill one target, then make a Z pattern.

- For HE area trucks, done on low rate, remember to kill all the trucks.

- For coax engagements, you have two different types of scenarios: a point target, an RPG team between 300 and 500 meters, and dismounted infantry between 400 and 600 meters. You must use a good Z pattern, or a 15-point crew cut will be assessed.

- For helicopter engagements, 20 rounds are allocated. This is the best engagement in which to save rounds for future engagements. Gunners should fire this engagement on low rate to conserve ammunition, because it only takes five rounds to get a kill.

- The BC should always have his head out of the turret with binoculars scanning for targets in the opposite direction from the gunner. At night, the BC scans for Hoffman devices going off.

- During BC engagements, the gunner should have his head out of the turret scanning for targets and have one hand on the selector switch to switch the BC into HIGH MAG. The BC should try to have the target in the middle of the sight

before the gunner switches to HIGH MAG so he won't lose the target during the switch.

- Gunners and BCs must be able to state how to conduct misfire procedures and ammunition switchover.

- The BC must not say "cease fire" before achieving target kill; he must be sure. If the sensing vehicle is slow, the BC has to make the call.

- On Bradley Table VII, after a crew completes a run, park the vehicle in a spot overlooking the range, monitor the fire frequency and practice engagements. Practice fire commands and BOT by using the crew that is firing. Try using thermal sights and auxiliary sight, and if the BC is new have him track from the BC's position.

- After every engagement, sweep and clear the plenum chamber to prevent malfunctions.

**The driver can make or break a crew; he is responsible for the following:**

- Keeping round count.

- Keeping time. If the crew has a misfire during a defensive engagement and there is confusion in the turret, the driver should say "Driver back" to remind the

crew that he is pulling back the vehicle. Any time there is a pause, the driver should recommend pulling back to keep the vehicle from being exposed.

- Keeping the gunner and the BC calm and relaxed during a run.

- Spotting targets, especially at night when Hoffmans go off.

- Helping spot sensing rounds.

- Always maintaining a steady platform.

With fewer resources today, commanders are challenged in training their new crews. By using the updated FM 23-1 and these gunnery tips, commanders should be able to prepare their crews to succeed in any upcoming Bradley gunnery training. More important, these skills will carry over to combat, where the firing range is unforgiving and the stakes are considerably higher.

---

**Captain Steven A. Shelby** is a mechanized infantry company team observer-controller at the National Training Center. He previously served with the 9th Infantry in Korea and at Fort Ord, and commanded a Bradley company in the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, at Fort Carson. He is a 1985 ROTC graduate of Ohio State University.

---

# Light Infantry Company Defense

**CAPTAIN MATTHEW M. CANFIELD**

Like everything we do in the Army, the defense is a procedural operation. It is built upon certain fundamentals that are shaped by an analysis of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time (METT-T). Regardless of the specifics of a situation, the basic purpose of the defense rarely changes: Cause the enemy attack to fail, and create conditions favorable to a counterattack.

Companies conduct defensive opera-

tions to accomplish the following goals:

- Defeat an enemy attack.
- Gain time to prepare for other operations.

- Allow a higher commander to concentrate forces elsewhere.

- Control key enemy forces as a prelude to offensive operations.

- Retain key or decisive terrain.

While the defense is rarely decisive in itself, it can be used to set up the condi-

tions for a decisive *offense*.

For example, during the U.S. Civil War, Confederate General Robert E. Lee incorporated one or more of these purposes into his strategy in moving from the defense to the offense in the Battle of Fredericksburg (13-15 December 1862) and the Battle of Chancellorsville (1-3 May 1863) in Northern Virginia.

When the Union and Confederate forces met at Fredericksburg, Lee estab-

lished a defensive position on the heights above the Rappahannock River in and just east of the city. The Union Army, under Major General Ambrose Burnside, formed on the opposite bank, forced a river crossing, and conducted a frontal attack up the high ground. Lee defended (the *task*) to destroy (the *purpose*) enemy forces to defeat the enemy attack.

While the battle was an overwhelming victory for Lee, it was not total because the river precluded a counterattack. Because of Lee's success in the defense, however, the Union Army withdrew and ceased offensive operations for the remainder of the winter, allowing Lee to rest his own troops and plan future campaigns. Burnside was subsequently relieved, and General Joe Hooker was placed in command.

Four months later, in April 1863, after the ground began to thaw, Hooker began a march taking the bulk of his troops from the vicinity of Fredericksburg north and west in an attempt to gain the Confederate rear. Lee reacted to this maneuver by leaving a portion of his army of approximately 10,000 men under Major General Jubal Early in Fredericksburg and moving the rest of his troops west to meet the Union threat. Early's mission was to continue to defend (the *task*) to fix the enemy (the *purpose*) in Fredericksburg to

---

***Regardless of the specifics of a situation, the basic purpose of the defense rarely changes: Cause the enemy attack to fail, and create conditions favorable to a counterattack.***

---

prevent enemy forces from concentrating against Lee near Chancellorsville. Early successfully accomplished his task and purpose and, on 4-5 May, transitioned to the attack when a Union force threatened the Confederate right flank during the exploitation phase of Lee's attack. The result of the battle was a total victory for Lee in one of the most brilliant campaigns ever fought.

The following is a systematic approach a company commander can use in build-

ing his defense. It is not all-inclusive, and it can be modified according to METT-T:

When fighting from a deliberate defense, the commander should incorporate a synchronization matrix into his plan. This matrix will provide his platoons and squads with a detailed script for methodically fighting the enemy according to the way the commander believes the battle will unfold. The plan must allow for maximum flexibility and lethality. The key to success is the effective employment of all fires. This can best be achieved through rehearsals and solid detailed planning. Every soldier in the company should understand which targets he is going to engage (based on his weapon), where and when he will engage them, and what signals will be used.

**Receive the battalion warning order (WARNORD).** The battalion order must include enough detail to begin planning. Then issue the initial company WARNORD. Include details for movement, rehearsals, pre-combat inspections (PCIs), and security of the company, as appropriate.

**Conduct initial commander's estimate (map reconnaissance):** In the initial mission analysis:

- Identify company task and purpose.
- Identify implied, specified, and critical tasks.
- Consider enemy situation, intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB): What is the area of operation or interest? Enemy force type, size, mission? Avenues of approach?

- Status of friendly forces.
- In the initial time analysis:
- Critically analyze battalion timeline if provided; solicit information on battalion scheduled events (such as rehearsals).
  - Make initial estimate of time for company defense; identify time available, critical tasks, and priority.

Begin tentative planning.

**Initiate movement if necessary.** This step is taken whenever necessary to meet requirements in the timeline.

**Start PCIs or rehearsals.** NCOs supervise PCIs or rehearsals on the basis of the detailed WARNORD.

**Conduct initial reconnaissance.** Commander meets the battalion com-

mander in the engagement area (EA) or kill zone to see the ground before issuing the operations order (OPORD).

**Attend battalion OPORD.** Update company WARNORD.

**Do commander's estimate.** Complete mission and time analysis. Then complete tentative plan, refining details from initial estimate and plan. Then finalize company timeline.

**Conduct leaders' reconnaissance.** Leaders must get out on the ground to verify the tentative plan, confirm or deny assumptions made during map reconnais-

---

***Leaders must get out on the ground to verify the tentative plan, confirm or deny assumptions made during map reconnaissance, and get the feel of the ground.***

---

sances, and get the feel of the ground. They must take everything with them that they need to build the engagement area (EA): target reference point markers, engineer tape to mark key weapon and obstacle positions, maps, binoculars, precision lightweight GPS (global positioning system) receiver.

Possible personnel groups for reconnaissance are:

- Commander with radiotelephone operator (RTO), platoon leaders, fire support officer (FSO) with RTO.
- Commander (with RTO), platoon leaders, squad leaders.
- Commander platoon leaders, FSO, security force.

The commander meets with leaders in the EA. He explains to the platoon leaders:

- The company area of operation or area of interest (AO/AI).
  - Where the enemy will enter AO/AI.
  - Enemy force size/speed and order of march.
  - Company task and purpose in battalion scheme (the effect the battalion commander wants from company fires).
  - Proposed task and purpose for each platoon.
  - Tentative company plan.
- He walks the EA and area of responsi-

bility; if time allows, he also walks the terrain from the enemy point of view and gets the feel of the terrain. Then he identifies actual avenues of approach (mounted, dismounted, reconnaissance).

**Build the engagement area.** Mark Dragon and TOW target reference points (TRPs). In deciding where to kill the enemy, consider:

- Where the enemy *wants* to go, where he *can* go, where he *will* go.
- Where his advance can be stopped, where his formations and ability to mass can be disrupted, use and location of choke points, reverse slopes.
- Terrain that allows you to mass fires and maintain dispersion, depth, and mobility while minimizing his.

Physically mark TRPs for massing fires on specific avenues of approach, and use TRPs for controlling platoon fires.

Identify and mark proposed obstacle locations, consider obstacles that turn, fix, block, or disrupt in concert with platoon task and purpose:

- Channel enemy into the EA, or keep him there.
- Disrupt his attack formations. Make armor vehicles “button up.” Cause him to kick out his dismounts early.
- Slow his rate of advance.
- Protect the platoon battle position (BP).

Obstacles and TRPs are physically marked for this phase; engineer stakes are useful for this purpose. Marking should be in accordance with battalion tactical standing operating procedure (SOP) and clearly visible to all so that weapons’ range and ability to hit TRPs and obstacles in the EA can be verified when positions are selected and weapons are sited.

Planned obstacles should be marked with engineer tape from begin point to end point. This enables a platoon to see the orientation of the obstacles and serves as an exact location for the engineers laying them.

**Select platoon positions.** Identify the proposed BP from the enemy side. Move to the proposed position and adjust it so TRPs can be seen and ranged by weapons. Identify each crew-served weapon position, and mark its location on the ground:

- Squad locations are based on the pro-

posed task and purpose of the platoon.

- Weapons are positioned to hit the EA, TRPs, and obstacles that should be visible to the BP if properly marked. Positions should be selected when viewed at ground level to verify line of sight to the TRPs and obstacles when dug in.

- Position weapons to provide mutual support and interlocking sectors of fire within the EA and platoon kill zones. Squad leaders position M203s to cover dead space in the squad front.

- Position key weapons to provide coverage of the platoon EA or kill zone

---

***When fighting from a deliberate defense, the commander should incorporate a synchronization matrix into his plan.***

---

in depth. Depth is built using terrain in relation to the EA or kill zone and enemy. Consider indirect fires, obstacles, M203s, wire, mines, claymores, and hand grenades to engage the enemy in depth and continue to engage him as he gets closer.

- Position platoon forward observers (FOs) to observe indirect fire targets.
- Consider natural covered and concealed routes into and out of the BP.
- Avoid positioning key weapons and soldiers directly in the path of potential enemy vehicular attack routes.

Key weapon locations should be selected in daylight when METT-T allows. The commander may allow platoon leaders to select positions or may help them, depending on the level of training and the time available. If subordinate leaders are present during the reconnaissance, they can begin making range cards and sector sketches. Observation posts (OPs) should be as far out as possible to determine enemy avenues of approach and enemy formation size. Although wire communication with them is best, the situation may require FM radio. Good OP selection and coverage in depth are critical.

**Develop initial company fire plan.**

Consider the IPB:

- How the enemy wants to attack, his formations, and speed.

- What do you expect to see first? Where? Do all your squad leaders know?
- Integrate with terrain and weather.
- Plan for battlefield obscuration (smoke).

Is there a battalion plan? Are there battalion control measures—EAs, TRPs, coordinating fire lines, maximum engagement lines?

Where do you want to kill the enemy; where is the company EA, maximum engagement line?

When do you want to kill the enemy; who will initiate or shift fires and how?

- Event (trigger) line.
- On command (radio). Always plan redundant signals.
- Timed.

How will you control fires to focus and distribute them laterally and in depth?

- TRPs.
- Sectors (squads).
- EAs (platoons).
- Near half or far half.
- Target array.
- Quadrants.
- Engagement priorities, weapons priorities (Dragon, AT4, LAW, M60, M203).
- Volley fire.

How will you integrate indirect fire; where and when?

- Use of company mortars, battalion mortars, direct support artillery.
- Plan targets forward of, on, and behind the BP.
- Prioritize targets.
- Select critical targets.
- Determine triggers and targets in priority.

How will you maximize the principles of direct fire?

- Cover all targets.
- Avoid double kills.
- Fire first.
- Maximize weapon capabilities.
- Most dangerous first.
- Stand off from effects of friendly weapons and enemy systems.
- Suppression versus destruction (linked directly to the task and purpose from next higher level).

- Prevent fratricide (leave lanes open for scouts, bring in OPs).

Designate techniques of engagement:

- Simultaneous.
- Alternating.

- Observed.

Designate patterns of fire:

- Cross fire.
- Frontal.
- Depth.

**Issue OPORD to key leaders while overlooking the EA.**

**Occupy the battle position and site weapons (in accordance with tactical SOP).** Link up with company brought up under control of executive officer and first sergeant (XO/1SG).

- Platoon leaders brief squad leaders on basic plan.
- Execute company security plan (local and OPs).

When tying in (company, platoon, squad) unit, right flank remains static; left flank ties into adjacent unit's right flank; units to the rear send patrols forward to tie in their left and right flanks with elements to the front.

At night, engage all targets first with indirect fire to avoid detection. Hold off crew-served weapons as long as possible. Report obstacles and minefields at 50 percent and 100 percent completion. The primary means of communication is wire, but once the engagement is initiated, primary communications are FM.

Priorities of work are:

- According to tactical SOP.
- Squad leaders personally site key weapons to verify that each weapon can hit targets.
- Coordinate with adjacent squads and platoons to confirm or deny the ability to have overlapping or interlocking sectors of fire. Identify dead space.
- Identify and mark trigger lines.
- Minimize position signature.

**Arrange CSS (XO/1SG).** Coordinate for CSS requirements through support platoon or S-4: LOGPAC, pre-stock, Class IV, additional support.

**Rehearse engagement area.** Priority of rehearsals is based on the most likely enemy course of action (COA), the most dangerous enemy COA, and counterattack or employment of reserve (always consider your fire plan, communications, and CSS during rehearsals).

- The purpose is to ensure that every leader and soldier understands the plan and can hit intended areas with direct fire.
- Rehearsals are controlled by the

commander over the radio or land line from his position in the BP; each soldier or member of the chain of command positions himself where he plans to fight the battle and talks to the commander by radio or land line.

- Rehearsals are conducted by the XO (with company trains vehicles or actual combat vehicles), driving through each part of the EA and on each avenue of approach; companies and platoons practice

---

***Priority of rehearsals is based on the most likely enemy course of action (COA), the most dangerous enemy COA, and counterattack or employment of reserve.***

---

initiating and controlling fires (with FO and FSO) and illustrating how obstacles and indirect fires are integrated with direct fires.

- Rehearse movement to alternate and supplementary positions (day and night).
- FSO and FOs verify and identify trigger lines for indirect fires to the commander and timing for impact of the rounds.
- Rehearsal is conducted at crawl, walk, run pace (day and night). The goal is to have a full rehearsal using the enemy's most rapid rate of advance.
- Adjustments to the company plan and positions are made during and following the rehearsal and before finalizing the fire plan.

**Finalize the company fire plan.** Adjust the plan on the basis of the rehearsal. This is the focal point of the entire company defense.

**Prepare positions.** Be prepared for small emplacement excavators and bulldozers to arrive at any time. Ensure a thorough plan for controlling blade assets and eliminating down time. Establish a responsible party to control assets and a time schedule (XO or 1SG). Before digging, ensure that weapon positions are verified at ground level.

**Recon alternate and supplemental positions.** Repeat procedures for reconnaissance and building the EA.

**Update OPORD with fragmentary order.** Update every three to five hours

in different parts of the BP to supervise, and to let squad leaders and team leaders see each area. Platoon leaders brief the commander on standard areas during each meeting:

- Maintenance of weapons and equipment status.
- Personnel status.
- Progress of fighting position completion.
- Progress of obstacle construction.
- Any problems or required support.

Commander briefs the following areas:

- Changes to the plan.
- Updates to the enemy situation.
- Updates on the company timeline.

FSO, XO, 1SG, medics, air defense personnel, engineers (as applicable) brief changes and updates to the basic OPORD.

**Continue to prepare BP and rehearse.** Finally, commanders and platoon leaders should ask themselves the following questions at the end of the planning process, again during the preparation of the defense, and again before the battle begins:

- How do my task and purpose support the higher headquarters' task and purpose?
- What is the most important aspect of the terrain in regard to my mission?
- How do I plan to take advantage of enemy strengths and weaknesses in this defense?
- What concerns me most in accomplishing this mission?
- How do I visualize the fight unfolding?

The company defense is a link in the defense of the battalion and brigade's area of responsibility. To ensure the link is a strong one, the company defense must be meticulously planned and executed. A properly conducted defense will meet its intent of disrupting an enemy attack while buying time and allowing a commander to retain key terrain, concentrate forces, and decisively defeat the enemy.

---

**Captain Matthew M. Canfield** is an observer-controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk. He previously served in the 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry, in Korea and led rifle and mortar platoons in the 3d U.S. Infantry. He is a 1987 ROTC graduate of the University of Florida.

---