

# TRAINING NOTES



## MOUT Training and the IPB

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In years past, the United States' Armed Forces have tried to follow a doctrine that would encourage isolating or bypassing urban terrain. As history has shown, however, we have not always been allowed to embrace this doctrinal objective. In some cases, it has been necessary to defend or attack within built-up areas for political or humanitarian reasons, rather than out of military necessity. Urban terrain offers unlimited positions for cover and concealment for a defender, while restricting mobility, observation, or employment of available combat power for the attacker. The defending commander can virtually tailor the terrain to his own design by channeling assault forces.

It has become clear that U.S. military forces will sometimes be required to operate in urban areas. Advances in technology have made it virtually impossible for enemy forces to conceal themselves in open terrain; furthermore, the rapid growth and expansion of urban areas, and populations, have limited the number of areas in which conflicts can be fought without involving non-combatants. Frequently, urban terrain embraces major avenues of communication and transportation facilities and supply, and ownership of these combat multipliers is of great importance to whichever side can control them. Given these facts, we can see that opposition forces will continue to exploit the advantages of seizing and controlling ur-

ban terrain, as well as access and egress to and from it.

As we address this issue of military operations on urban terrain (MOUT), we must no longer consider it a *condition* in which we apply doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures that were developed for open terrain. Instead, we must address the *environment*, with the understanding that it demands an approach based on possibilities, justified by necessity. Moreover, we must prepare soldiers and leaders for operations on what has proved to be the most complex terrain in which they can become involved. History has shown that operations within this environment are manpower and materiel intensive and that MOUT operations mean high casualties. Additionally, the potential of fratricide is dramatically higher on urban terrain. It is pointless to argue that we should not be there; the fact is that virtually every war we have ever fought as a nation has seen soldiers involved in combat on urban terrain. It is time to start answering the question, How do we prepare and train for urban operations?

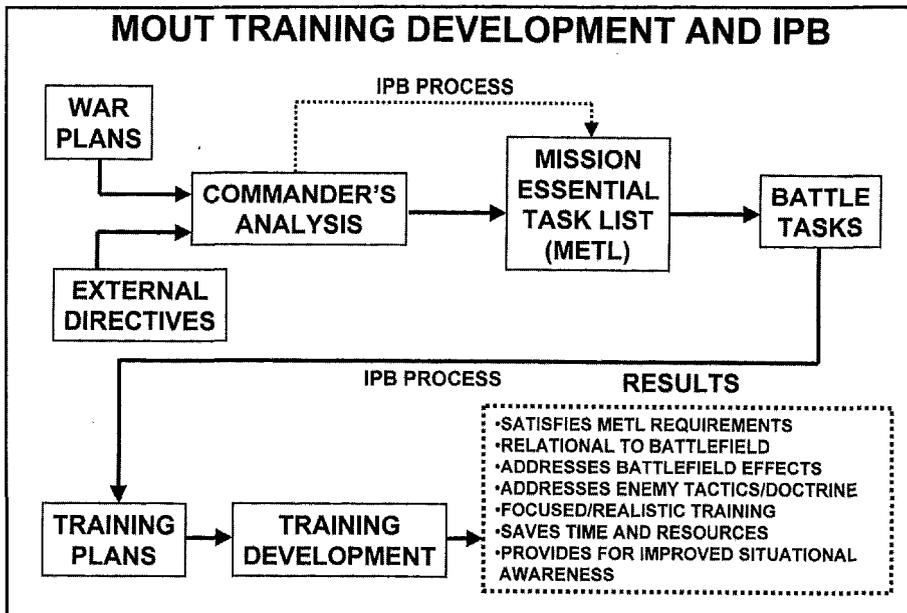
Currently our MOUT doctrine is being revised at both the operational and tactical levels. Many initiatives are under way that will improve our soldiers' capabilities through technology. While these initiatives are critical components of successful operations on urban terrain, initiatives alone do not

lead to success on the battlefield. We must develop the training plans and identify the mission essential task lists (METLs) that address the complexities of the urban environment.

In Field Manual 25-100, *Training the Force*, we are challenged "to prepare soldiers, leaders and units to deploy, fight, and win in combat at any intensity level, anywhere, anytime." It is with this understanding that we vigorously pursue new and improved ways to ensure that our training plans reflect and support mission requirements. We believe that the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process is a valuable tool for identifying, focusing, and justifying training requirements for urban operations.

While we value the IPB process as a tool for conducting operational planning, it has another unrealized value for the commander. It can be used to determine training requirements for soldiers, leaders, commanders, and their staffs. We conduct the IPB through a four-step process of *defining the battlefield environment, describing the battlefield effects, evaluating the threat, and determining that threat's probable course of action.*

The most impressive benefit when applying the IPB process to training development and analysis is the fact that training requirements become more focused, and critical tasks seem to identify themselves. Additionally, leaders



become more aware of their responsibilities and leader tasks; special teams and individuals begin to realize the importance of their team and individual tasks; and soldiers at all levels have a better understanding of the environment in which they will operate. As we go through this process, various questions and concerns will come to mind.

**Defining the battlefield environment.** We believe that this first step is the most critical of the four-step process. If the leader cannot begin to visualize the environment, he can never begin to understand the training requirements it demands. One of the defining characteristics of the urban environment is its subterranean aspect. When we understand this one characteristic, we can then begin to identify some of the training requirements. As an example, if soldiers are to operate in the maze of underground passages beneath the streets, they will have to be trained on movement in that environment.

**Defining the battlefield effects.** By defining the battlefield effects, we determine what effects the environment will have on those operating in it. This assessment must be applied to soldiers, weapons, equipment, and training, from both the enemy and friendly perspectives. It is not uncommon for a certain characteristic of one environment to have a great effect on one force and little or none on another. One example that we find in subterranean conditions

is limited visibility. Based on this analysis, we may determine the need for additional training in the use of night vision devices.

**Evaluating the threat.** Evaluating the threat will identify doctrine, tactics, high-value targets, and threat capabilities. Identifying these capabilities will help leaders focus and identify their training requirements for urban operations. Again using the subterranean example, if we determine that one enemy tactic is to booby-trap subterranean passages, we will then determine the importance of training our personnel in the detection and neutralization of these devices. This process can also be used at this point in determining whether this area should be avoided; that is, are the risks greater than the advantages? The commander may determine that an area is too risky and choose to isolate it instead of entering it. The time saved by not training on subterranean movement techniques can then be used for other training requirements. On the other hand, if the commander determines that the benefits of controlling the subterranean plane are vital to mission success, he has used the IPB process to identify critical task training.

**Determining enemy courses of action.** During the process of determining the enemy's probable course of action, we attempt to determine his desired end-state or objective. This step in the IPB process allows us to look at our training plan realistically and determine

what effect it may have on that objective. If the plan calls for training on something that will have little or no effect on the enemy's accomplishment of his goals, we will then want to focus our training on an area that does. For example, we could spend a great deal of time training for subterranean operations before discovering that the enemy does not need subterranean passages to achieve his objective. We will have wasted valuable training time and resources and received no benefit from our efforts. This step in the IPB process helps to keep us focused on what is truly important—mission accomplishment.

We have provided some examples of how the IPB process can help leaders identify, focus, and justify training requirements. The accompanying chart will help identify where this process can be incorporated into the development of focused, meaningful training.

Military forces have always applied some form of intelligence analysis to help them plan and conduct operations. If the statement "we fight as we train" is true, it only makes sense to use this same process when developing training requirements. While this process can be applied to any environment or condition, it is critical for urban operations. The complexities found on urban terrain demand this type of approach to ensure that our soldiers are properly trained to fight, survive, and win.

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