

“Streetfighting”

The Rifle Platoon in MOUT

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Since the end of World War II, the world's population and conflicts have moved from the rural countryside to modern cities and their suburbs. The U.S. Army has found itself on this new battlefield, and is shifting greater training emphasis to these likely sites of future conflicts. There is no end in sight for the Army's increasing commitment to this role.

For today's infantryman, more training in military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) is conducted at MOUT sites and tire houses than before. One of the most elaborate training events at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) is the fight in which a brigade combat team attacks to secure a village and return it to host-nation control. This fight, as is so often the case in MOUT, hinges on the ability of rifle squads, platoons, and companies to accomplish their collective tasks. Many rifle platoons at the JRTC are challenged getting from one building to the next.

At platoon level, MOUT can be a short but intense and violent experience that can quickly render the unit combat ineffective. Most casualties do not occur in the buildings themselves; they occur outside while soldiers are crossing between buildings. This article will examine some of the recent trends and propose possible tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to help a platoon train for future urban operations.

Before examining problems for the rifle platoon, we must first consider the terrain. Buildings provide excellent cover against small arms rounds or concealment that masks sandbagging and other force protection steps taken by the defender. Except for downtown areas of cities, buildings are usually separated by open streets and sidewalks that provide little or no cover for the attacker. On the other hand, excellent fields of fire are available to the defender, although engagement distances are almost always 100 meters or less. Because adjacent buildings are much less than 100 meters apart, seizing a foothold in one of them often requires the suppression or obscuration of several others.

For the defender, winning an urban battle requires making the fight as unfair as possible in the first place. A good way

to do this is to defend from buildings that provide cover and concealment for friendly weapons and fields of fire into streets and engagement areas that offer the attacker no cover at all. This setting results in time consuming, deliberate operations that require a high expenditure of ammunition and resources to suppress the enemy. The alternative is the expenditure of soldiers, our most precious resource.

At the platoon level, there are several “fights” we must win to survive in MOUT. For riflemen and team leaders, the fight is to seize a foothold in a given building and clear individual rooms. At squad level, the fight is for a floor or a single small building. The platoon fight revolves around larger buildings and small city blocks. At all levels of this fight we will be crossing open areas and securing footholds.

The platoon is the lowest level at which we begin to see enough combat power to assault buildings while still being able to suppress and provide all around security. The fight requires coordination, which is gained through fire control and distribution, sectors of fire, and fire and maneuver tailored to a

MOUT environment. For the team leader or squad leader, the fight frequently focuses on close-quarters battle tactics to clear rooms and to assault streets. The squad must have platoon support.

Commonly, however, platoons at home station focus on the fight inside the building. Although they accomplish this part successfully, they often suffer attrition getting to the building in the first place. Most casualties in MOUT take place outside the building, where cover and concealment are least available. At the JRTC village, casualties of 70 percent outside buildings are not uncommon. Yet the high-payoff TTPs for surviving outside are the ones we train on the least. Conversely, when we build MOUT training plans that go only from individual to team and squad level—rarely progressing to the outside fight—we set our junior leaders up for failure. Training on clearing rooms at the expense of entering and moving between buildings does us little good if we don't get into the rooms.

Generally speaking, three weapon systems cause almost

*Fire without movement is indecisive
Exposed movement without fire is disastrous. There must be effective fire combined with skillful movement.*

George C. Marshall, *Infantry in Battle*

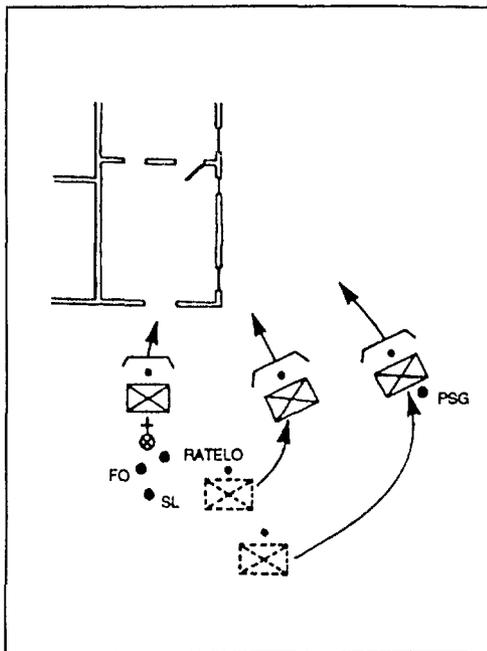


Figure 1. Platoon Attack from ARTEP 7-8 DRILL

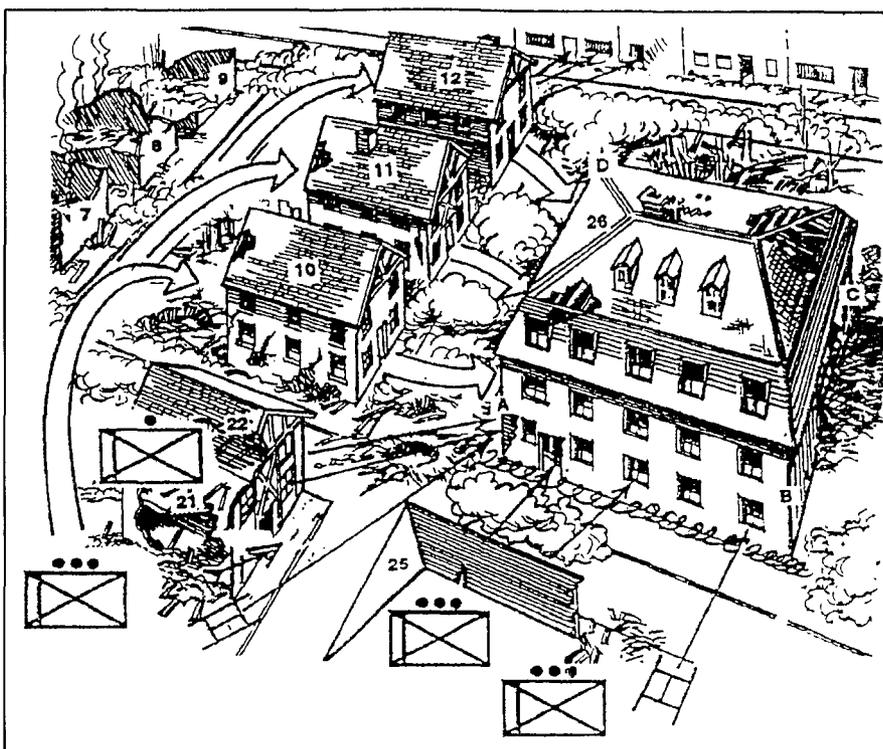


Figure 2. Company Attack from FM 90-10-1

all casualties among rotational units in the MOUT attack—mines and booby traps, indirect fire (usually 82mm mortars), and direct fire from small arms. Direct fire, the biggest casualty producer, is commonly caused by the following:

- Direct fire at a soldier clearing a building, or at a stationary soldier inside a friendly held building.
- Enemy soldiers inside a building defending themselves from a friendly assault (friendly troops in the open).
- Enemy soldiers in a building engaging friendly soldiers in the open, while the friendly troops are attacking a different building, or are otherwise unaware of the source of the fire.

The second and third of these situations are the ones that soldiers train on the least. We should not be surprised that these situations result in most of our losses.

Stated another way, up to 75 percent our casualties are hit when they are not clearing or moving inside buildings. To reduce casualties and increase the chances for mission success, we must do the following:

- Avoid areas where casualties are most likely.
- Spend as little time as possible in areas we can't avoid.
- Implement TTPs to better protect the soldiers who are moving through these high-risk areas.

Our vision of the battlefield is part of the problem. Consider Battle Drill Six, *Enter and Clear a Building* (ARTEP 7-8 Drill). The condition for this task states, "The platoon is moving when it receives fire from the enemy *in a building*." In this example, all elements that are not assaulting are in support-by-fire (SBF) positions, oriented on the objective building (Figure 1). This technique will work if the enemy is in a single, isolated building and does not have mutual support from somewhere else. Any nearby enemy we have not considered could be a real threat to our assault.

Yet in the following example, we see the problem taken a

step further. In Figure 2 (taken from FM 90-10-1), we see a company attacking an enemy strongpoint, labeled *Building 26*. Except for one squad in Building 12, all supporting fires (two rifle platoons, a rifle squad, and two tanks) are oriented solely on the objective building from corners D to A to B.

How is this a problem? In the close confines of the MOUT battlefield, an avenue of approach leading to the objective building can almost always be observed from several adjacent structures, which can also be enemy occupied. By focusing fires and observation on the objective building only, we invite destruction from surprise fire delivered by an alert enemy providing mutual support from nearby. We are then slow to react to this new threat, resulting in multiple casualties in the assault teams as they try to create a foothold. Taken to an extreme, it is not uncommon at the JRTC to see a fire team or squad destroyed while assaulting an empty building.

In Figure 3, we see two platoons clearing a street. The enemy is defending three buildings with a reinforced squad. The squad positions offer mutual support, and their sectors of fire include short range, frontal fire between buildings (dashed lines), and flanking and oblique fire from the sides of buildings (thick lines). Note that the defenders on the east side of Building 11 and the west side of Building 23 are masked from the fire of the friendly platoon that "owns" that building. The enemy crossfire refuses to respect our platoon boundaries. As can be seen, a "by the book" technique will probably result in heavy casualties in the open areas west of Buildings 11 and 22.

The purpose of direct and indirect fires is to allow our assault teams and squads to secure a foothold on the objective building. Suppressing the building itself helps this ef-

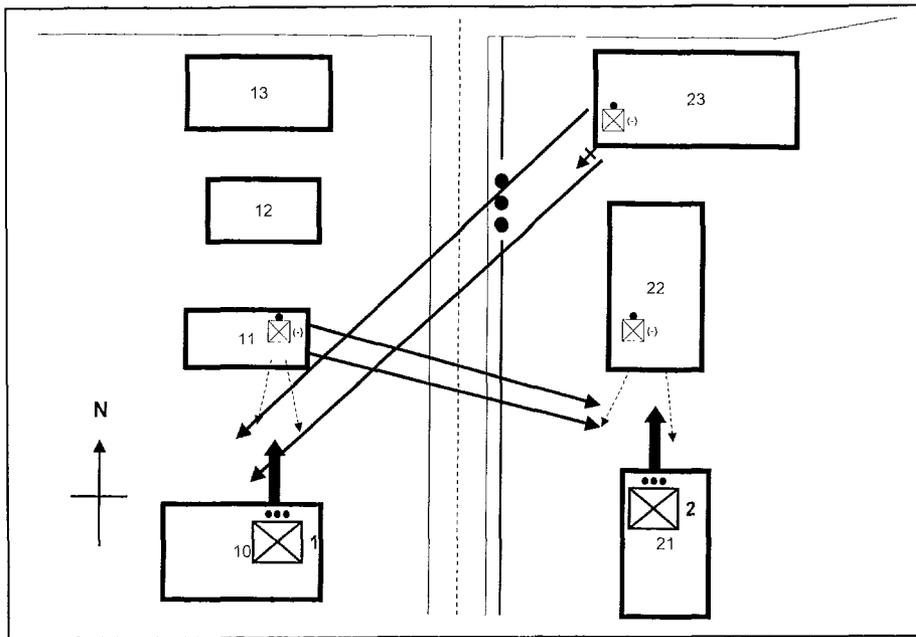


Figure 3. Example of defensive sectors in MOUT.

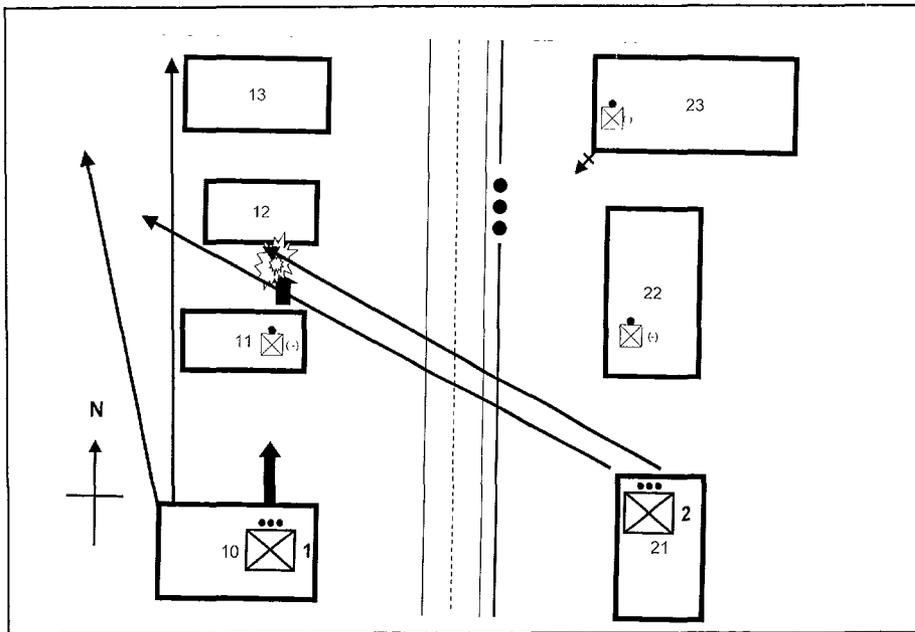


Figure 4. 1st and 2d platoons isolate Building 11.

fort. The adjacent enemy buildings may also have to be suppressed. At the close engagement ranges so common to MOUT, unseen and unengaged enemy can unhinge our plan.

Fire control is very important here. If we leaders don't control our soldiers' fires, they will direct their fires in one of several possible ways: at the closest target, at the most obvious target (the one whose muzzle flash they see clearly), or into areas around them where fire seems to be directed. The result is tunnel vision, which makes the unseen flanking fire from Buildings 11 and 23 so dangerous.

Let's look at 1st Platoon and the assault on Building 11. A common set of task and purpose statements used at the JRTC follows this type of instruction:

- 1st Squad (main effort) secures foothold in Building 11 to allow the platoon to secure the building.

- 2d Squad suppresses Building 11 to allow 1st Squad to secure a foothold in the building.
- 3d Squad suppresses Building 11 to allow 1st Squad to secure a foothold in the building.
- Weapons Squad suppresses Building 11 to allow 1st Squad to secure a foothold in the building.

Since most of our casualties in MOUT take place outside the building, however, the decisive point in the fight will be getting the assault squad across the open area. Maneuvering the assault squad to its entry point will probably lead to success. The underlying purpose of our fires and suppression should be less on just engaging the objective and more on protecting friendly forces crossing the street, an open area, or a gap between buildings. This requires good fire distribution. We want, in the end, to mass the effects of our fires. Twenty soldiers suppressing two soldiers in one building is not massing the fire effects. Twenty soldiers simultaneously suppressing ten soldiers in three buildings is massing fire effects. (We'll look at how to do this later.)

Let's focus on the route to the objective and on protecting the route from enemy fire. At platoon level, there are three steps to a deliberate attack in MOUT:

Isolating the building. Isolation is defined in FM 90-10-1 as "seizing terrain that dominates the area so the enemy cannot supply or reinforce the defenders."

There are two ways to isolate a building. We can do it by completely surrounding the building, or we can do it with fire. Fire is easier, faster, and far more common. By advancing to the flanks of the building, we can use interlocking fire to prevent the enemy from reinforcing or retreating. If we don't do this, the enemy can easily reinforce the building under attack, or withdraw and fight another day if threatened.

Isolation is very important if we are to use second-story entry techniques and fight from the top down. Isolating the objective allows us to use the terrain to our advantage. We push the defender out of his building—where he has both cover and concealment—into the open where he has neither and can easily be destroyed. This requires good adjacent unit coordination and cross-talk. In limited visibility operations, we must use our night-vision goggles and weapon sights to their full capability. The night, which makes it easy

for us to approach and gain entry, also makes it easier for the enemy to escape (Figure 4).

Mortars are another way to isolate a building with fire. Close-in fires can prevent the enemy from moving in and around the objective. We will still have to secure a position that allows us to observe the rear of the building to provide observed fires. Otherwise, we will need enough ammunition to fire continuously and should plan accordingly.

Securing a foothold. First, we must identify where we want the foothold to be. We do this by designating the entry point for the building. Next, we must identify the route from our last covered and concealed, or assault, position to the building. This is usually the shortest distance, immediately across the adjacent street, back yard, or alley. At this critical point, we must ask ourselves,

“From what enemy-held buildings can the enemy observe our avenue of approach?” We must then orient observation and fires on those points to break the mutual support between enemy positions. One of the most common situations that results in casualties at the JRTC village is that of a soldier hit by enfilade fire from a building adjacent to the one he is assaulting that is not covered by friendly fire. The enemy will not advertise his positions to us, but will hold his fire to draw us into the open. If adjacent buildings offer fields of fire to our assault route, we must be prepared to cover them with observation and fire. Being able to predict suspected enemy positions by reading the terrain is an important skill to develop.

If we look at our avenue of approach to the entry point from the enemy’s perspective, we can determine which buildings and suspected positions pose the greatest threat. We then assign sectors of fire that direct friendly shooters to the enemy-held buildings identified.

Remember that the purpose behind assigning these sectors of fire is to allow the assault team to get that foothold of a room in a building. We have to suppress the building *and* protect the soldiers along the avenue of approach (crossing the street or open area). There will be many other buildings within 100 meters of ours and the one we are assaulting. These buildings may offer great vantage points not covered by adjacent platoons. The narrow sectors of fire that result from hiding in the recesses of a window or shooting through a loophole mean nearby elements may not be of much help. We must pay special attention to multi-story buildings that offer good vantage points for snipers and forward observers. These are especially valuable to the defenders and are likely to house enemy in force.

This planning takes time—identifying the enemy buildings, designating sectors of fire, and making sure everyone understands the plan. Ideally, for a deliberate attack, we can

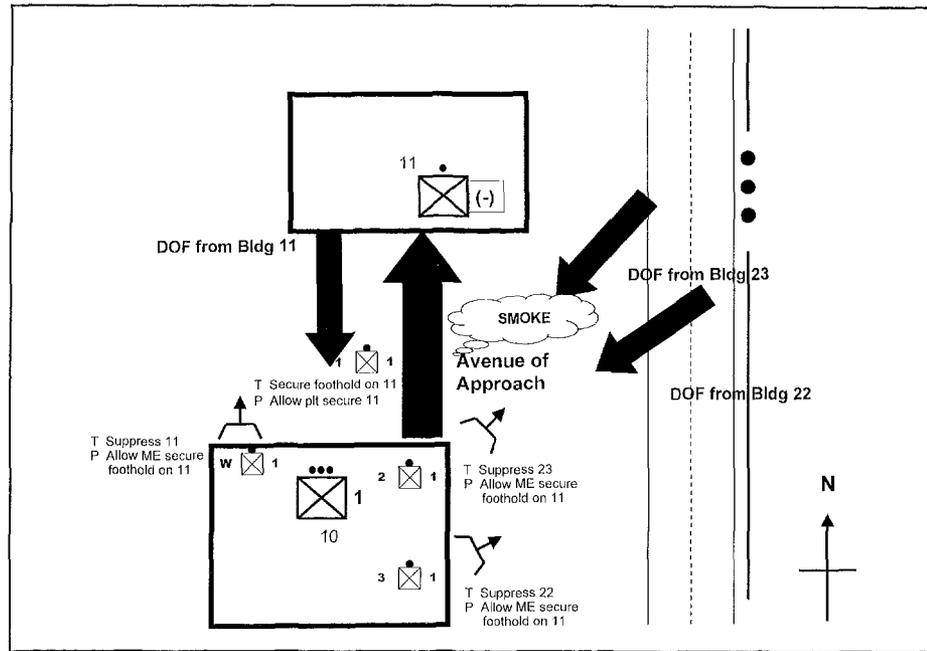


Figure 5. 1st Platoon protects the avenue of approach to Building 11.

do this planning while conducting troop leading procedures in our assembly area. If we don't, we will have to do it under fire. Moving across an open area to assault a building is one of the most dangerous actions in MOUT. In this case, remember the “slow-fast-slow” sequence: *slow, detailed planning* with dissemination of the plan to squad and team leaders; *fast movement* across enemy kill zones (supported by fire), and *slow, thorough clearing* of the enemy-held building. It is better to spend the necessary time while covered and concealed in a friendly building than out in the street. A thorough plan disseminated while the platoon is in the relative safety of a building will enable the soldiers to cross the gap faster. A hasty plan poorly disseminated will not set the conditions for success, but it will result in excess time in the open, casualties, and possible mission failure. Another platoon or squad will have to clear our building for us, which will take more time than doing it right the first time. Looking at the example in Figure 5, a different set of tasks and purposes would be the following:

- 1st Squad (main effort) secures foothold in Building 11 to allow platoon to secure the building.
- 2d Squad suppresses Building 23 to allow 1st Squad to secure foothold in that building.
- 3d Squad suppresses Building 22 to allow 1st squad to secure foothold in Building 11.
- Weapons Squad suppresses Building 11 to allow 1st Squad to secure foothold in Building 11.

Breaching obstacles. In breaching, there are two types of obstacles we might face, existing and reinforcing. At platoon level, the most common types are mined wire obstacles employed by the enemy outside the building—the doorway, window, or wall we must pass through to seize the foothold itself.

When the rules of engagement permit, the best way to enter is to make our own hole through the wall. Next best is

a window, with a door being the least desired. If the friendly and enemy-held buildings are adjoining, “mouse-holing” with demolitions is preferable. If the buildings are *not* adjoining, we should use AT4s, light antiarmor weapons (LAWs), or other munitions from the safety of our own building, instead of going into the open to emplace explosives by hand. An effective technique, and one used by the Chechens in Grozny in 1994, is to task organize “rocket teams” under a noncommissioned officer. Using the *pair* or *volley* technique, we can make a breach rapidly and give the enemy the least possible warning. Hollow charge weapons in general are not designed to breach walls, and one may not be enough. High explosive warheads—such as those in the AT8, the shoulder-launched, multipurpose assault weapon (SMAW), and the Carl Gustav—are better able to breach masonry. Main gun rounds from tanks are very effective.

Our casualties in the assault itself will be proportional to the intensity of enemy fire, its accuracy, and the time the assault teams are exposed to enemy fire. Suppressive fire and smoke together minimize the intensity and the accuracy of enemy fire. The breaching fundamentals *suppress, obscure, secure, reduce* (SOSR) will help here: Smoke grenades draw fire, and we can expect the enemy, as a minimum, to shoot blindly into the smoke cloud. Speed of movement and breaching minimize exposure times. Assault teams must move fast and stay dispersed. If possible, they should not stack outside the entry point, but get inside as quickly as possible (Figure 6).

Clearing the building (FM 90-10-1). Once we have seized a foothold in our building, the tactical problem for the defender changes. If the enemy’s morale is low or he is willing to trade space for time, he may elect to withdraw and take up the fight again on the other side of the next street or a suitable clear field of fire. But if the enemy regards the building as key terrain and is willing to fight for it, the fight doesn’t end until the enemy is destroyed in the building. The defenders inside will shift their attention away from our SBF positions across the street and toward our assault force as it clears from room to room.

On the other hand, defenders of adjacent buildings now know where our entry point is, if they can see it. Follow-on

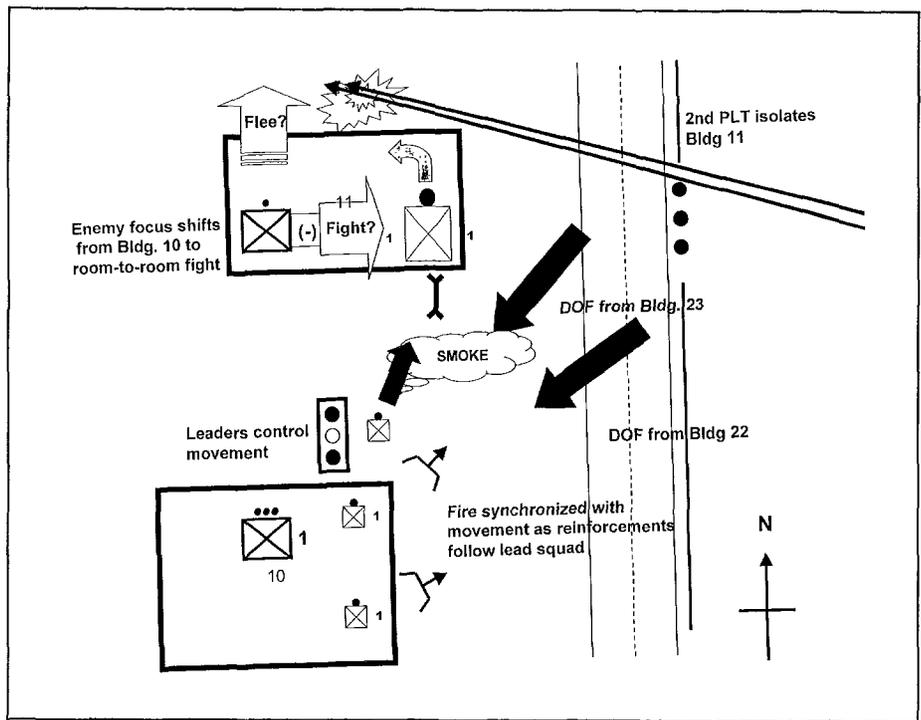


Figure 6. 1st platoon clears Building 11.

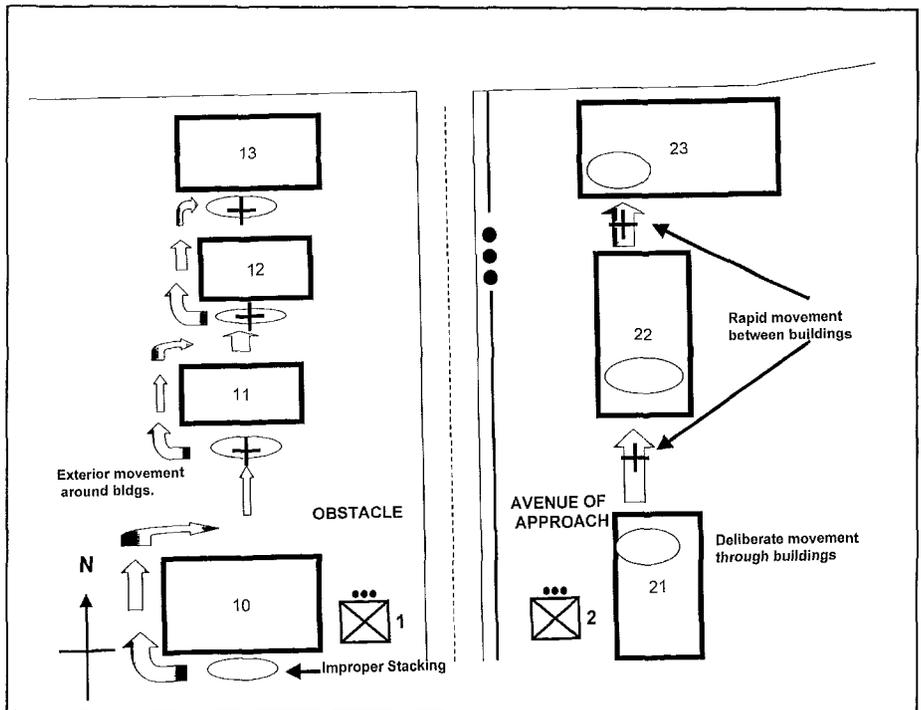


Figure 7. Use of buildings as obstacles and as avenues of approach.

assault teams “run the gauntlet” to reinforce the foothold. There must be a plan for the follow-on teams to enter the building, and a senior leader in the platoon should play “traffic cop” to maintain intervals and dispersion. Fires from SBF positions should shift off the building, but still must focus on identifying and suppressing the enemy and protecting friendly reinforcements. Elements isolating the objective have a difficult task as well and must be prepared for brief sightings of fleeting targets as the enemy makes his escape.

Some shooters should stay oriented on the building until it is completely secured. While many platoons have standing operating procedures (SOPs) that require them to mark every window and door, this never happens in reality. In the heat of battle, room-clearing teams have other things to do. Cleared floors and buildings must be marked, but we should not have an unrealistic expectation of what our clearing team will accomplish.

Moving in MOUT. Many units have proved adept at clearing rooms using the *stack* technique. Correctly employed, stacks allow us to dominate a room with overwhelming firepower in a short time. While room-clearing techniques are outside the scope of this article, one by-product of this one is that leaders like to stack outside on the friendly side of the building so they will have better control of their soldiers. The reasoning seems to be that reduced dispersion is all right, because all distances are compressed in urban operations, but there is a fine line between stacking and bunching up. It is not uncommon at the JRTC to see five to ten soldiers stacked behind every friendly held building when perfectly good cover and concealment are available on the other side of the very wall they're leaning against. This makes soldiers extremely vulnerable to snipers and to airbursts from 82mm mortar fires. Platoon and company command posts, reserve squads, and casualty collection points are some of the biggest offenders. Good forward observers are aware of this trend and will act accordingly. Because buildings offer cover and concealment from enemy fire and observation, they are the best avenue of approach through a city. Stacking outside buildings and moving around exterior walls offer speed, but we put soldiers at risk when we think of buildings only as obstacles to our movement. Remember: If you're doing nothing, don't do it outside.

One technique that can greatly affect our ability to defeat the enemy in MOUT is to enter on the second floor, or fight from the top down. One of the best examples of this was on 20 September 1944, in Nijmegen, Holland. The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, fighting to seize the southern edge of a critical bridge across the Waal River, was faced with dug-in, resolute SS troops, determined to contest every room and building in the Hutier Park area and bridge approaches. Many of the multi-story buildings were adjoining, paralleling the streets leading to the bridge. As a result, the paratroopers were able to fight along the rooftops, entering through the uppermost floors and fighting downward to clear the buildings methodically in succession.

North Vietnamese Army (NVA) defenders in Hue, South Vietnam, used different techniques when the 5th Marine Regiment fought to take back the city in February 1968. In the Citadel, an ancient enclosed fortification, the NVA sought to inflict maximum U.S. casualties but realized that

they would eventually be forced to withdraw. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, attacked to the south, crossing a series of residential streets running east-west, which were labeled, Phase Lines Green, Brown, and so on. The NVA established primary and alternate defensive lines on the south side of these streets.

The marines had to resort to overwhelming firepower to achieve footholds on the enemy-held side of these engagement areas. These footholds invariably started on the ground floors, but once a foothold was established, the NVA refused to fight room by room but quickly withdrew to set up a new defensive line one block to the south. In this case, trading space for a new engagement area was more important to the NVA than losing soldiers trying to prolong the defense of a particular room or building. Marines from the nearby 2d Battalion reported a similar situation. In an assault on the Treasury Building, it took several days to cross the street and establish a foothold, but once they were across, resistance quickly collapsed and the defenders withdrew to alternate positions.

What lessons can we learn from these battles?

The chief advantage of clearing "top down" is that it forces the enemy down to the ground floor and out into the open instead of trapping him on an upper floor where he has no alternative but to make a last stand. The chief drawback to second-story techniques is that they are time-consuming, increase the time soldiers must spend

in the open when buildings do not adjoin, and force us to use ladders or grapnels.

Speed in getting inside a building may take precedence over entry onto an upper-level floor. If the enemy can observe our entry point, obviously, assault teams will become extremely vulnerable. Clearing "top down" requires detailed coordination, and we must be able to secure the entry point from enemy fire.

An important consideration is the enemy mindset. If we enter the building, will he stand and fight to the death, or break contact and withdraw? If the enemy will break contact anyway, the risk involved outside in scaling the building may offset the potential gains. An irregular or guerrilla force in urban fighting may not behave like a regular army unit defending a piece of key terrain.

In training where the multiple integrated laser engagement system (MILES) is used by both sides, fighting to the last man in the last room is commonplace. But this will be far less likely against a real foe, especially in larger cities that offer dozens of alternate defensive lines. In our defensive training, we practice moving to alternate and supplementary positions if the primary positions become untenable. We should not assume that an enemy soldier will act like an E-type silhouette at the local tire house and passively accept destruction at the hands of our clearing teams. He probably

Maneuvers that are possible and dis-positions that are essential are indelibly written on the ground. Badly off, indeed, is the leader who is unable to read this writing. His lot must inevitably be of blunder, defeat, and disaster.

George C. Marshall, *Infantry in Battle*

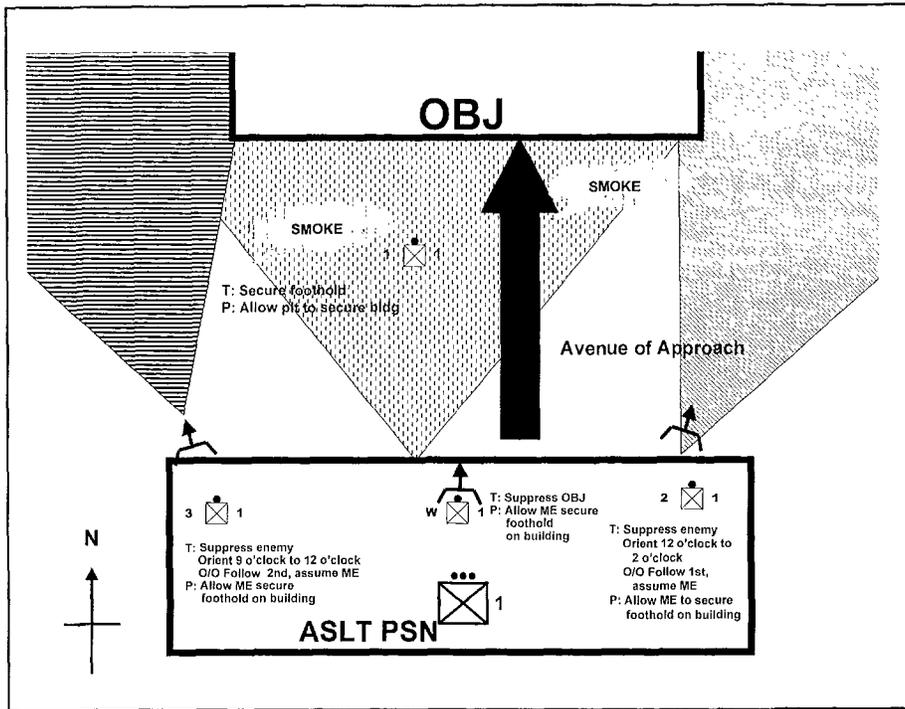


Figure 8. 1st platoon contingency planning—hasty attack

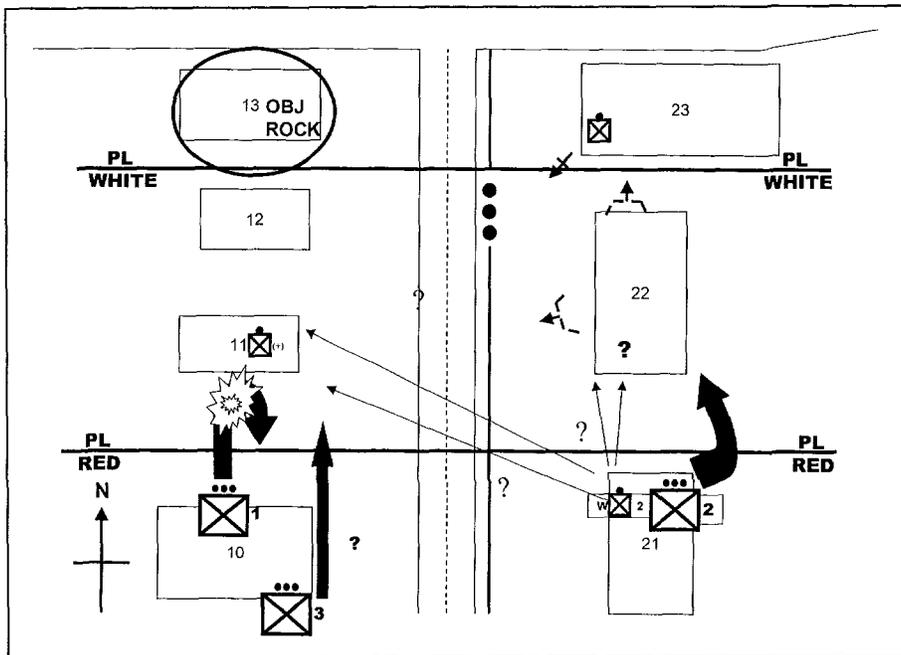


Figure 9. Situational Awareness

will not defend someone else's living room or kitchen to the bitter end if he can run out the back and put some open ground behind him.

Another consideration is the makeup of the building itself. In Nijmegen, downtown buildings were so close together that U.S. paratroopers could leap from one rooftop to another. If we are trying to fight top down and drive the enemy out into the street, we should take the time to cover enemy withdrawal routes with fire to prevent them from escaping to set up a new defense. There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods. The decision on whether or not to

seek a foothold at ground level is best made by the man on the spot, and on the basis of the circumstances.

Maintaining flexibility. At the JRTC, it is common to see platoon leaders receive a mission to secure a certain building as part of the company mission. They spend most of their planning time on a set-piece, deliberate attack, identifying SBF positions and breach points and task organizing appropriately. On the objective, one of two things almost always happens:

- A friendly unit has been rendered combat ineffective and fails to secure its objective. As a result, the platoon must conduct a hasty attack to secure one or more buildings on the way to its objective.

- The platoon secures its objective and—due to friendly casualties elsewhere—receives a follow-on mission to continue the attack.

Usually these additional missions come as a surprise. Common problems on the objective include hasty reconnaissance and failure to read the urban terrain. These hasty plans frequently result in tunnel vision. Fires are oriented almost exclusively on the building to be assaulted. As a result, rifle platoons are more likely to become disoriented and increasingly vulnerable to fires from unexpected directions.

Regardless of the objective building assigned, leaders should conduct contingency planning to include a hasty attack on a building other than the assigned objective. Rehearsals should include assigning sectors of fire, using suppression and obscuration to protect the avenue of approach to the objective, and designating entry points, breaching techniques, and marking. Battalion scouts will not be able to identify every obstacle, and the platoon should always be

prepared to conduct an in-stride or assault breach.

When possible, contingency tasks for the squads should mirror the tasks assigned for the original objective. In Figure 8 for example, squads are assigned sectors of fire and tasks for the assault that generally mirror the plan for the original assault on Building 11, thus minimizing confusion. This is not intended to create a “cookie cutter” effect, but to increase security. Whenever possible, we must refine the plan on the basis of the enemy situation, the terrain of nearby buildings, and reports of which buildings are known to be occupied by friendly or enemy troops.

Maintaining situational awareness. The enemy will not advertise his presence; we will get a true picture of his dispositions and intent only after making contact. Because of the close engagement distances common in MOUT, hidden enemy can inflict severe losses in a short time. If leaders are not aware of what is happening around them, the attack is likely to be overcome by events. A frequent situation is for a platoon or company to be given a "follow-on" mission to pass through a unit in contact and continue the attack to an intermediate or final objective. The follow-on unit is briefed on what buildings will be secured as part of setting the condition for their attack. The enemy, unfortunately, doesn't follow the plan. If the conditions are not set and the follow-on unit is not aware of what is happening, fire is received from buildings on which SBF elements are not oriented. The results are grim.

Let's look at the example in Figure 9: The company commander has directed 1st and 2d Platoons to attack in sector. To provide control, he has designated two phase lines, Red and White. Neither platoon is allowed to cross its phase line without permission. The 3d Platoon will follow 1st Platoon and, on order, assume the main effort and seize the company objective, Building 13. The company commander sees the order of attack as Building 11-22-12-13-23.

Unfortunately, the plan goes awry. 1st Platoon is engaged by a reinforced squad in Building 11 and a squad with a machinegun firing from Building 23. Casualties mount, and 1st Platoon is rendered combat ineffective. Building 22, on the other hand, appears to be lightly held. 2d Platoon is directed to secure 22 and suppress the enemy in 23 and 11. 3d Platoon is directed to renew the assault on 11 after 2d Platoon attacks.

The use of phase lines in this example represents a way to keep one platoon from outdistancing the other. It is difficult to advance down one side of the street without securing both. In this example, two platoons bounding side by side provide security to each other's flanks. Notice also that moving with the grain, parallel to the street from building to building, is safer than crossing the street, or moving across the grain.

In this case the 2d Platoon leader has a decision to make. Originally, he did not plan on having to suppress the enemy in 11, because that building should have been cleared by 1st Platoon before he jumped off. If 2d Platoon does not reori-

ent at least some of its fires onto the east side of 11, the result could be disastrous. It may require both 3d and 2d Platoons to gain the fire superiority necessary to advance to 22, or 3d Platoon may have to attack 11 a second time. In any case, if 2d Platoon is not maintaining good communication and situational awareness, the soldiers will be in deep trouble if the enemy in Building 11 reorients to the east. Building 22 itself may not require as much suppression as 11, even though 22 is the objective of the platoon attack. It is not uncommon to see one failed platoon attack adversely affect several other platoons nearby, especially if all concerned continue blindly along the original path.

The 3d Platoon leader has decisions to make as well. Building 13 does not resemble 11 or 12. The platoon takes up firing positions in the rooms on the north side of Building 10, while the platoon leader tries to find someone in 1st Platoon to update him on the situation. It will take some time to come up with a new plan; by the time 3d Platoon secures Building 12, it is at 50 percent strength and must reorganize because the original assault squad has taken heavy casualties.

Urban operations are complex. Effective combat units are able to identify the high-payoff tasks required to accomplish their mission, establish solid SOPs, and train to standard. Movement between buildings is where most of the casualties occur in the JRTC village. This problem is a direct result of a lack of understanding of the nature of MOUT and lack of training emphasis on the specific collective tasks required. Units that emphasize movement between buildings, and achieve a level of proficiency at this task, will be attacking the source of the single greatest cause of casualties in MOUT. To do this, we must understand how the enemy fights, focus on the relationship between fire and movement in cities, and maintain continuous security as well as a sense of tempo and tactical patience. If we succeed here, we will be able to reduce casualties and set up our squads for success as they close with the enemy. We will then be well on our way to accomplishing our mission.

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