

trust they had given us. Such moments of direct teaching, coaching, and mentoring were the most rewarding parts of the job.

Another rewarding experience was helping units mobilize for Operation *Desert Spring*—the Patriot guard mission in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. We had put a lot of effort into the mission, translating guidance into measurable training objectives and creating a Mission Training Plan we could use to evaluate the lane training. The unit really seemed to appreciate our efforts, and we still get e-mails from the soldiers thanking us for the training and telling us they are putting it to good use

in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Such sincere appreciation was a common strength among the National Guardsmen we worked with and really made us feel good about what we were doing.

A word of caution is necessary, however. The success of the AC/RC program has been built on time. Don't expect instant gratification. You might not feel that you see a lot of results on your watch, but in the long run, the program has greatly improved National Guard's readiness.

**Give It A Try.** I really didn't know what I was getting into when I signed up for the job. I had been an O/C when the JRTC was at Fort Chaffee, so I

knew I would like the area. I knew the job title was battalion commander, and I knew that couldn't be all bad. Beyond that, I figured there had to be a catch. There wasn't. I can't think of anything else I would rather have done for the past two years. I'll bet that you would like it too.

---

**Lieutenant Colonel Kevin J. Dougherty** previously served at the Joint Readiness Training Center, in the 29th Infantry at Fort Benning, the 101st Airborne Division, and the U.S. European Command, and is now Professor of Military Science at the University of Southern Mississippi. He is a 1983 graduate of the United States Military Academy.

---

# Ammunition Management/Resupply For the Light Infantry Mortar

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS BRIAN A. HAMM

The integration and effectiveness of the light mortar is only as good as the ammunition plan, management, and resupply procedures. The amount of ammunition available is an important consideration in the attack of targets. When this is low, missions should be limited to those that contribute to mission accomplishment. When the controlled supply rate (CSR) is high, missions fired may include targets that require the massing of fires without adjustment. The CSR is designed to limit the number of rounds per weapon per day.

CSRs are imposed for two reasons—to conserve ammunition and to avoid a shortage for a tactical operation. During the fire support planning, ammunition requirements must be considered. Thus, it is very important for the mortar section leader to be present to recommend the types and amounts of ammunition that will be required. Combat

experiences in World War II and Korea have shown that an on-hand mix of 70 percent HE, 20 percent WP or smoke, and 10 percent illumination ammunition is the most flexible. The basic load of a light infantry company should be approximately 245 HE, 60 WP, and 45

---

***The basic load of a light infantry company should be approximately 245 HE, 60 WP, and 45 illumination, for a total of 350 rounds, which can be in any combination to best support the mission.***

---

illumination, for a total of 350 rounds, which can be in any combination to best support the mission. The percentage of ammunition used by the unit should be modified by the commander on the basis of the mission. The expenditure of mortar ammunition must be based on

the tactical priorities and ammunition availability.

How do we manage 60mm ammunition at company level (that is, How do we know what we have on the ground at any one time.)?

It is difficult for the commander to keep track of the availability of on-hand mortar ammunition. The primary responsibility should fall on that section sergeant and the FSO/FSNCO for knowing exactly how many rounds are currently carried by the company, where in the company, and what type of rounds. To make it easier for the commander to know what is on the ground, recommended ammunition breakout is as follows: 1st and 2nd squads carry HE pure (2 rounds per man = 36 HE per platoon), and 3rd squad carries illumination and WP (A Team illumination [8 rounds], B Team WP [8 rounds]). This amounts to a basic load of 60mm—not carried by the mortar section—as 108

---

round HE, 24 rounds illumination and WP. Using a very basic tracking card updated by the FSO/FSNCO, the commander can keep track of the availability of 60mm ammunition within the company and realistically plan future operations.

### AMMUNITION RESUPPLY

Even as good as it sounds by doctrine, we know a light infantry company cannot carry a basic load of 350 rounds of mortar ammunition. Companies at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) routinely begin rotations with as few as 40 to 60 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition and almost never get a resupply. When executing the defense, it is with a very small amount of ammunition. To keep the company resupplied with mortar rounds, the company executive officer (XO) and the first sergeant and mortar section sergeant must work together on a daily basis. They must forecast the appropriate number of rounds to be fired daily and make it a standard part of logistics. If the number resupplied is more than the number fired, the ammunition can be kept in the combat trains or carried in the company vehicle until needed. This allows the company to maintain its initial load of ammunition on the basis of the SOP or the current tactical mission. When defense sectors are identified, another basic load can be brought forward.

Although units generally manage to get mortar ammunition onto the battlefield, getting it to the mortar firing positions has been the problem. The fix to ammunition management and resupply must be obtained through a detailed company level control procedure (SOP) for the distribution, drop-off, and retrieval of mortar ammunition. Target suppression is a common task for the mortars. Field Manual (FM) 7-90, *Tactical Employment of Mortars*, recommends firing five rounds from each tube against a platoon-size enemy element, which should inflict 20 percent casualties. This means that the fire for effect (FFE) should never be less than 10 rounds and will often require much more. This is only one example for one mission. A 60mm mortar section can fire 350 rounds in approximately 9 to 10

minutes at a sustained rate of fire.

How do we get the ammunition to the mortar section?

- **Line squads drop when called for ammunition:** Using his quick reference card, the mortar section sergeant and the FSO/FSNCO can call for the squads or teams that carry the required ammunition to be dropped off at the mortar firing point location. This works well in the defense, as well as air assaults and airborne assaults as units require time to assemble and thus will have time to drop ammunition with the mortars. This can be chaotic if the landing plans are changed.

- **Co-locate ruck drops with mortar firing point:** The most success I saw at the JRTC was when in the attack, co-locating the company (or a platoon) ruck drop with the mortars. This allows

---

*Co-locating the company (or a platoon) ruck drop with the mortars allows the mortars direct access to the ammunition they might require.*

---

the mortars direct access to the ammunition they might require. It works very well when mortars are supporting an attack from an established company tactical assembly area, where platoon ruck drops can be established. Thus, mortars have three mortar round caches, in effect. This allows them to shoot, then displace to the next ruck drop, which in most cases would be 150 to 250 meters away from the last firing point. This gives the mortars greater flexibility in supporting the attack. The driving constraint in this method is the maximum range of the 60mm mortar, especially if older, non-ballistically matched lots are issued, where WP and illumination have a maximum range of 950-1500 meters. This method can also succeed when the mortars are task organized under a platoon for security purposes, and establish a mortar firing position in the vicinity of that platoon's objective release point (ORP).

- **Gator-based:** The final method is a gator-based mortar section. Most units in the Army now have two gators per rifle company. These gators support

the installation of a power conditioner, power-amp, low profile antennae, and ASIP/SINCGARS radios. Depending on the enemy situational template, gators allow the mortars to carry more ammunition (in my experience, up to 90 additional rounds) than their rucks would normally allow them to carry on their person. Using gators for this purpose also has the benefit of true basic load, as the platoons would still carry their breakdown as listed above, plus the additional 90 or so rounds carried on the gators. Putting a CVC on the head of more responsive fires as his ears are tuned to the company command net or the fires net waiting for the call.

**Once our ammunition is dropped with the mortars and is not used, how do we get it together and move it again?**

A few ideas on this one when time and situation do not allow the company's sub-units to move back and pick up their ammunition:

- **Each team leader, in addition to the two rounds of 60mm ammunition he is carrying, also carries an aviator's kit bag, which is dropped off with the mortar section when that element drops its ammunition.** This allows three things: The ammunition for that sub-unit can be collected together, and two men (maybe one) can pick them up in a single bag to move back to the parent element; allows for ease in cache; and aviator's kit bags can easily be hung on the front rack of a gator or HMMWV, or thrown in the back. And the type and number of rounds can be annotated by attaching a toe tag to the handle; this enables the section sergeant/FSO/FSNCO to update their reference cards quickly.

- **Mortars carry a poleless litter:** This allows up to 25 rounds of 60mm ammunition to be laid within the litter, strap the litter closed, and two men within the mortar section (with some extra effort) can move the rounds that had been dropped but not fired back to the parent element.

- **In any case:** Locating the mortar firing point with a unit's ruck drop alleviates many of these problems.

One of the greatest challenges for the company commander is planning and

integrating indirect mortar fires. To succeed, the mortar section sergeant must be present during all planning, orders, and rehearsals. The company commander must use the expertise of the mortar section sergeant, who in return must understand the tactical employment of the mortar to best support the company's mission. The mortar section sergeant can advise the commander on the one-half to two-thirds range criteria, mortar location, and decide whether hand-held or conventional

mode will best suit the mission. The mortar section sergeant will also recommend the amount and type of ammunition the company and platoons should carry, based on METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops and time). All of this information should help the company commander develop courses of action and wargaming to integrate the mortars to their fullest capability.

In summary, ammunition management, resupply techniques and integration must be exercised routinely during

all field training exercises. Through careful planning and a thorough knowledge of the 60mm mortar, it will remain the most effective, efficient, and flexible weapon provided to the light infantry, air assault, airborne, and ranger battalions on the battlefield.

---

**Sergeant First Class Brian A. Hamm** has served as a mortar section sergeant, a mortar platoon sergeant, and a mortar observer-controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

---

# Tactical Decision Game #2-01

SUBMITTED BY MAJOR FRANK W. BREWSTER II

*The passage of a river by a main force, against an enterprising and active enemy on the opposite shore, is always an operation of the greatest difficulty, and not infrequently accompanied with the most bloody results.*

*Lieutenant Henry W. Halleck, 1846*

---

**Situation**—You are the commander of B/2-8 IN (M) consisting of two mechanized rifle platoons, an armor platoon, a headquarters element, and an attached engineer platoon. You are an M2A2/M1A2 equipped company/team and are 100% on personnel and equipment. You have had 24 hours to prepare your positions.

The 241st motorized rifle regiment (MRR) has been attacking as a part of the 4th motorized rifle division (MRD). They have had good success, but are now under pressure to conduct a deliberate river crossing and continue their attack in support of 5th MRD, the Corps' main effort. The 241st attacked in advanced guard formation, with the 54th motorized rifle battalion (MRB) acting as a supporting effort in the North vic Buttertown to fix elements west of the town to facilitate the cross-

ing of 56th MRB south of Jackson Lake. The 54th is a BMP-2/T-72 equipped unit, and is currently estimated at 85% strength on personnel and equipment.

Your battalion had hastily moved forward to deny enemy crossing of the Barksdale River. You are a supporting effort with a task of blocking enemy movement westward along the mobility corridors exiting Buttertown in order to prevent Team C, the TF main effort, from being enveloped from the north. Alpha Company is arrayed to the south of Team C, to prevent the main effort's envelopment from the south. The brigade commander intends to destroy breaching assets, retain key terrain, and disrupt crossing attempts.

It is early December, and the temperature inversions have created a good deal of fog along the river and low-lying areas. This early morning fog hampered your target acquisition and enabled the 54th MRB to push some combat power across the river and establish far side security. Your 2nd platoon sustained casualties in the process of defending forward in Buttertown. They report one M2 destroyed, one M2 mobility down, and nine assorted WIAs.

They reported destroying three BMP-2s and one T-72. They are currently enroute to their prepared positions on Lookout Hill.

Your commander now believes that the enemy intends to use the 54th to secure a bridgehead over the Barksdale River vic Buttertown in order to pass the 56th westward. The TF commander tells you he is sending you the reserve platoon for employment (3/A/2-8 IN (M)). He also lets you know you now have priority of fires (FA) within the TF. They have near 100% of their basic load of HE but are capable of effecting only 30 minutes of smoke. The TF commander has authorized you to nominate a FASCAM target to be fired by a GS Arty BN as well. His intent is to disrupt enemy breaching operations, retain key terrain, and block enemy penetrations. The reserve platoon will be at your location in 11 minutes.

**REQUIREMENT**—Take 15 minutes to develop the orders you would pass to your subordinates. Make sure you include guidance for supporting arms and a sketch of your plan. Then provide a brief explanation.

---