



adversary's deficiencies to assure of us of victory, we do need to recognize that he is neither invincible nor incapable of making mistakes. Despite his advantages of language, appearance, familiarity with the environment, and his status as an "insider" as it were, the very factors that normally work in favor of the insurgent can cause him to become complacent and in fact lead to his downfall.

The failure of this raid on an important target can be traced at least in part to complacency which resulted in the failure to formulate a detailed, rehearsed plan. Much of the planning was left to a collaborator, many of whom are unreliable at best, and this led to a loss of control once the operation was underway. The 120-man Mujahideen raiding party should have been able to sweep over the objective, but did not. No provision had been made for a covering force to either reinforce the attackers on order, or to create a diversion to permit the main element to either execute the mission or break contact.

The raiders' ignorance of the location of all Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) soldiers in the objective prior to and during the assault proved fatal when one sleeping guard awoke and took the raiders under fire. By not isolating the objective and rehearsing the attacking force on specific missions on the objective, the raiders left too much to chance and lost valuable time.

While the Mujahideen did not achieve anything beyond limited objectives and the evacuation of their dead and wounded, the DRA forces did not cover themselves in glory either. Lax security permitted the attackers to infiltrate virtually undetected and come within minutes of burning down a key communications facility. Constant vigilance, access control, and trained reaction forces could have stopped the attack at the outset, but did not.

As our own operations further reduce the numbers of personnel and the amounts of materiel available to insurgents, they will forsake conventional operations to an ever-greater degree, turning instead to the use of limited raids, ambushes, and improvised explosive devices. By employing solid, proven security measures and becoming ourselves more innovative in the way we anticipate and preempt attacks, we can finally remove this means of inflicting losses in Soldiers and materiel on coalition forces.

## Winning the MOUT Fight

# Isolation and Setting the Conditions

MAJOR BRETT JENKINSON

The purpose of this article is to provide tactical commanders and leaders with tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to win the military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) fight. In accordance with Army Field Manual (FM) 90-10-1 (with Change 1), *The Infantryman's Guide to Combat in Built-Up Areas*, the third phase of the MOUT deliberate attack is "isolation." Perhaps the least understood phase of the MOUT attack, isolation of the objective area is the key to success in the MOUT fight.

FM 90-10-1 gives the isolation phase cursory attention by defining it as "seizing terrain that dominates the area so that the enemy cannot supply or reinforce its defenders." This description connotes the "outer ring" of the old cordon and search task. However, for the assaulting element, isolation requires specific TTP well inside the "outer ring" to ensure the unit can reach its foothold with minimal casualties.

### BACKGROUND

The Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) at Hohenfels, Germany, hosts the Army's only MOUT Leader's Course, a unit-tailored course that enables leadership at the battalion level and below to master MOUT skills. It offers leaders in-depth classroom instruction and three to five days of hands-on practice to help them understand the MOUT fight. It spans tactical applications of MOUT from fire and maneuver in a built-up area through the planning, coordination, integration, synchronization, and execution of MOUT.

The MOUT Leader's Course teaches that commanders must remain focused on the basics of fire and maneuver outside buildings, use of smoke, and how to properly isolate the objective area prior to the first clearing team entering a building. These skills must be mastered first before immersing the unit in the particulars of close quarters combat (CQC); unit leaders must know how to set the conditions for success.

The conduct of the MOUT Leader's Course and other rotational unit MOUT attacks provided the opportunity to observe more than 50 MOUT fights that occurred over the course of two years. From this experience, one phase of the MOUT deliberate attack clearly stands out as the key to the assaulting units' success or failure at the tactical level – isolation. While not the most exciting phase of the MOUT attack, it is the true tactician's TTP for winning the fight.

Most units attending the MOUT Leader's Course expect to spend the majority of their training time rehearsing CQC. Although Change 1 to FM 90-10-1 provides definitive methods for CQC, these techniques are not the "end-all" tactical skill for conventional units to ensure success. CQC, in accordance with Change 1 to FM 90-10-1, is a difficult, technical skill that requires hours of rehearsal and thousands of rounds in a shoot-house to master.

According to Ranger Training Circular 350-1-2, the average Ranger squad rifleman fires 14,500 rounds per year, 75 percent of which are fired at 25 meters or less. No conventional Army unit has either the resources or the time to conduct such a rigorous marksmanship program. The Rangers are, without