

**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
THE BASIC SCHOOL  
MARINE CORPS TRAINING COMMAND  
CAMP BARRETT, VIRGINIA 22134-5019**

**URBAN OPERATIONS II  
OFFENSIVE AND  
DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS  
B4R5379  
STUDENT HANDOUT**



## **Urban Operations II - Offensive and Defensive Operations**

**Introduction** - The purpose of this handout is to help you, the student, gain a working knowledge of conducting offensive and defensive operations in an urban environment. This class is intended to build upon foundations built during the previous class, Introduction to Urban Operations.

**Importance** - As the world's population gravitates towards urban areas, the Marine Corps must maintain proficiency at operating in urbanized areas. As officers we must maintain the ability to plan for and execute both offensive and defensive operations along the entire spectrum of conflict in urban terrain. Recent combat operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Europe have proven the need for this skill set. Friendly and threat forces will conduct operations in a three-dimensional battle space. Engagements can occur on the surface, above the surface, or below the surface of the urban area. Also, engagements can occur inside and outside of buildings. Multistory buildings will present the additional possibility of different floors within the same structure being controlled by either friendly or threat forces.

**In this lesson** - In this lesson, the student officer will study offensive and defensive planning, considerations, and operations in relation to the urban fight. This lesson covers the following topics:

TLO/ELO	2
<b>Offense operations in MOUT</b>	2
Types of offensive operations	3
Task organization	4
Mission	5
Offensive SOM/RISS	5
Tactical Control Measures (TCMs)	12
Offensive Fire support	14
Command and Signal	15
Breaching	15
Assault Entries	15
Tasking statements	16
T/O rotation plan	17
<b>Defensive operations in MOUT</b>	17
Mission	17
SOM	18
TDOOTS	18
Elements of the Defense	22
Defensive Fire support	23
Command and Signal	23
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	24
References	24

### **TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)**

1. Given a weapon and functioning as a member of a team, while wearing a fighting load, perform individual actions while clearing a room, in accordance with the fundamentals of room clearing. (TBS-MOUT-1002)
2. Given a squad, an objective within an urban environment, and an order with commanders' intent, lead a squad in urban operations, to accomplish the commanders' intent.. (TBS-MOUT-2001 )

### **ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)**

1. Given a mission, a commander's intent, and a defensive position, select command post location to facilitate command and control. (TBS-DEF-1008b)
2. Given an order from higher, a mental estimate of the situation, and a defensive scheme of maneuver develop a security plan to support the ground scheme of maneuver. (TBS-DEF-1008d)
3. Given a unit, an assigned area or sector from which to defend, develop a platoon engagement area from which to defend to accomplish the mission and meet the commander's intent. (TBS-DEF-1008f)
4. Given an order from higher, conduct tactical planning for an operations order IAW the METT-TC process. (TBS-C2-1002a)
5. Without the aid of references, describe the phases of an urban attack without omission. (TBS-MOUT-2001a)
6. Given a scenario without the aid of references, describe task organization considerations in an urban environment without omission. (TBS-MOUT-2001b)
7. Given a scenario without the aid of references, describe supporting arms employment considerations in an urban environment without omission. (TBS-MOUT-2001c)

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## **Offensive Operations in an Urban Environment**

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Offensive operations in urban areas are based on offensive doctrine modified to conform to the urban terrain. Urban combat also imposes a number of demands that are different from other field conditions such as combined arms integration, fires, maneuver, and use of special equipment. As with all offensive operations, the commander must retain his ability to fix the enemy and maneuver against him. Offensive urban operations normally have a slower pace and tempo than operations in other environments. Unlike open terrain, units cannot maneuver quickly, even when mounted. Missions are methodical.

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### **Types of Offensive Operations**

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Attacks are categorized as either hasty or deliberate. Both hasty and deliberate attacks should take advantage of as much planning, reconnaissance, and coordination as time and the situation permit. Regardless of the size of the attacking force or of the objective to be secured, the phases of the attack (i.e. Recon, Isolate, Gain a Foothold, and Seize the Objective) remain constant.

**1. Hasty Attacks.** Battalions, companies, squads and fire teams conduct hasty attacks as a result of a movement to contact, a meeting engagement, or a chance contact during a movement; after a successful defense or part of a defense; or in a situation where the unit has the opportunity to attack vulnerable enemy forces. When contact is made with the enemy, the commander immediately deploys, suppresses the enemy, attacks through a gap, flank, or critical vulnerability, and reports to his higher commander. The preparation for a hasty attack is similar to that of a deliberate attack, but time and resources are limited to what is available. The hasty attack in an urban area differs from a hasty attack in open terrain because the terrain makes command, control, communications and massing fires to suppress the enemy difficult.

**a.** In urban areas, incomplete intelligence and concealment may require the maneuver unit to move through, rather than around, the friendly unit fixing the enemy in place. Control and coordination become critical to reduce congestion at the edges of the urban area.

**b.** On-order missions, on-call missions, or fragmentary orders may be given to a force conducting a hasty attack so it can react to a contingency once its objective is secured.

**2. Deliberate Attack.** A deliberate attack is a fully synchronized operation employing all available assets against the enemy. It is necessary when enemy positions are well prepared, when the urban area is large or severely congested, or when the element of surprise has been lost. Deliberate attacks are characterized by precise planning based on detailed information, thorough reconnaissance, preparation, and rehearsals. The deliberate attack of an urban area is similar to the technique employed

in assaulting a strong point. Attacking the enemy's main strength is avoided and combat power is focused on the weakest point of his defense.

**3. Consolidation/Reorganization.** Consolidation occurs immediately after each action. Consolidation establishes security and allows the unit to prepare for counterattack and to reorganize. It is extremely important in an urban environment that units consolidate and reorganize rapidly after each engagement. The assault force in a cleared building must be quick to consolidate in order to repel enemy counterattacks and to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into the cleared building. After securing a floor, selected members of the assault force are assigned to cover potential enemy counterattack routes to the building. Reorganization occurs after consolidation. Reorganization actions prepare the unit to continue the mission; many actions occur at the same time.

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## Offensive Task Organization

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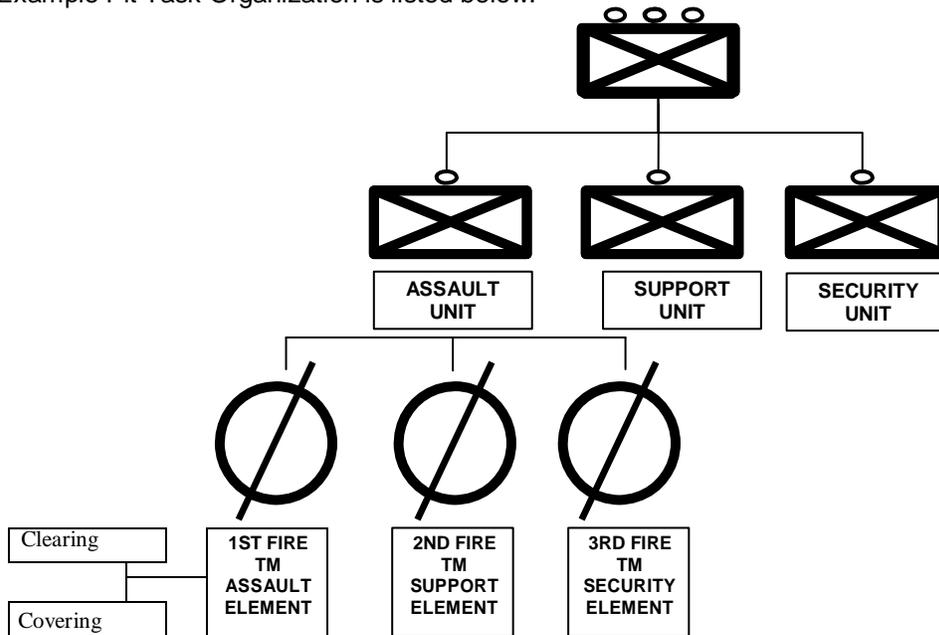
**1. Assault Element.** The purpose of the assault element is to kill, capture, or force the withdrawal of the enemy from an urban objective. The assault element of a company/ platoon/ squad may consist of one or more platoons/ squads or fire teams usually reinforced with engineers and other attachments organic to a infantry battalion. Building and room clearing are conducted at the platoon, squad and fire team level. The assault element must be prepared to breach and to gain entry into buildings.

**2. Support Element.** The purpose of the support element is to provide any support that may be required by the assault element. The support element at the company/platoon/ squad level normally consists of the company's organic assets (platoons, mortars, and antitank weapons), attachments, and units that are under the control of the company commander. This assistance includes, but is not limited to:

- Destroying or suppressing enemy positions with direct-fire weapons
- Setting up support by fire locations; shifting fires, cease.

**3. Security Element.** The purpose of the security element is to isolate without intent from the other buildings, and enabling the assault element to make entry into the objective. The security element of a company, platoon or squad may consist of one or more platoons/squads usually not reinforced. Its not uncommon for the security element to split their forces in order to isolate larger sectors of the Area of Operations (AO).

Example Plt Task Organization is listed below.




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## Offensive Mission

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The Infantry Platoon will normally conduct offensive tasks as part of a company mission. However, there may be times that the platoon will be required to perform an independent offensive operation in support of the main effort. The commander must receive, analyze, and understand the mission before beginning planning.

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## Offensive Scheme of Maneuver and RISS

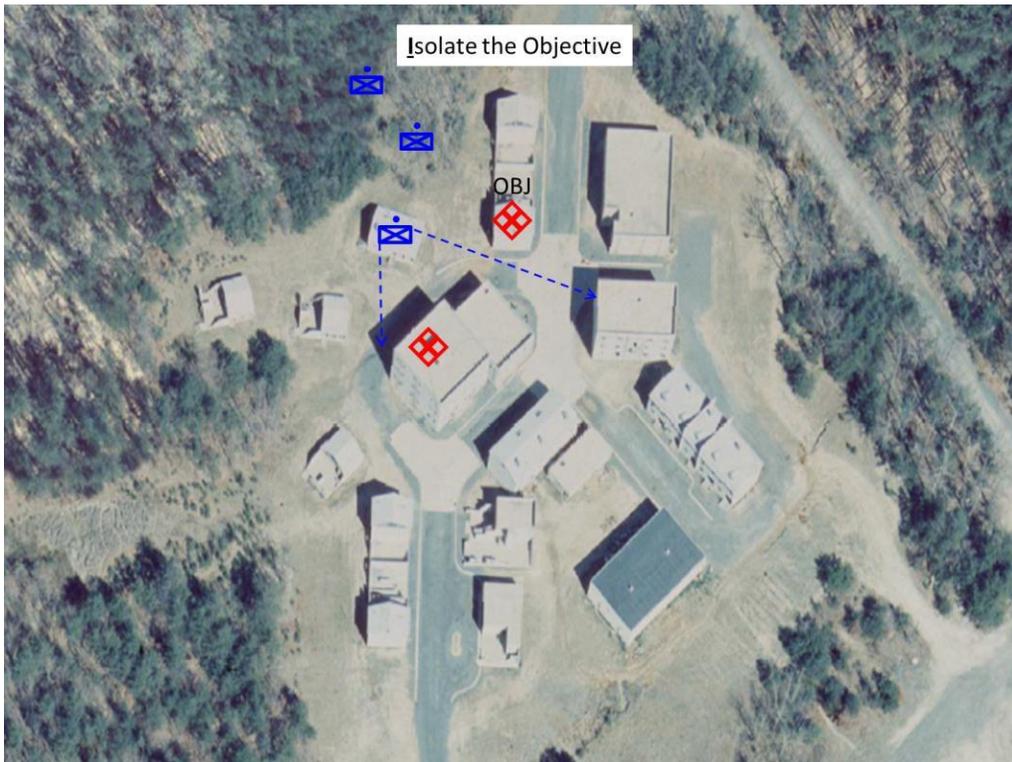
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### RECON, ISOLATION, SECURE A FOOTHOLD, and SEIZE THE OBJECTIVE (RISS).

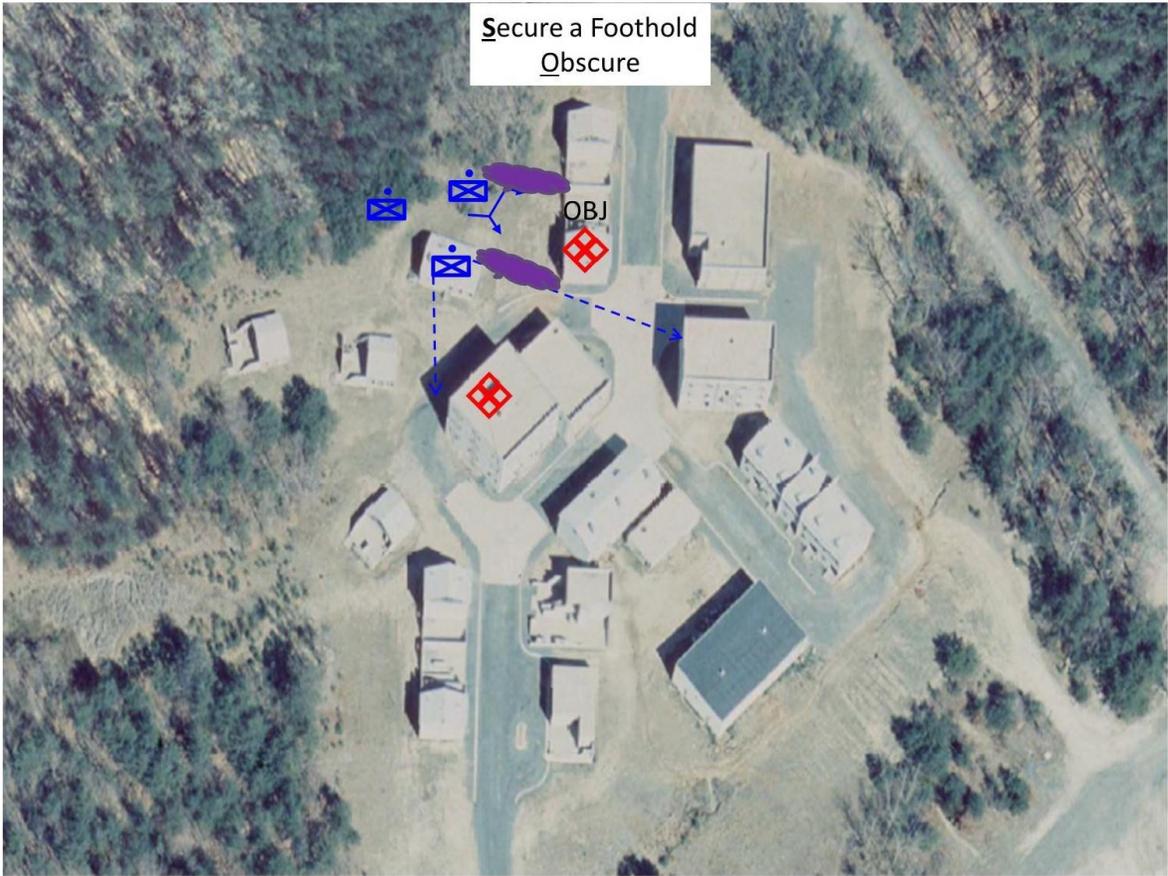
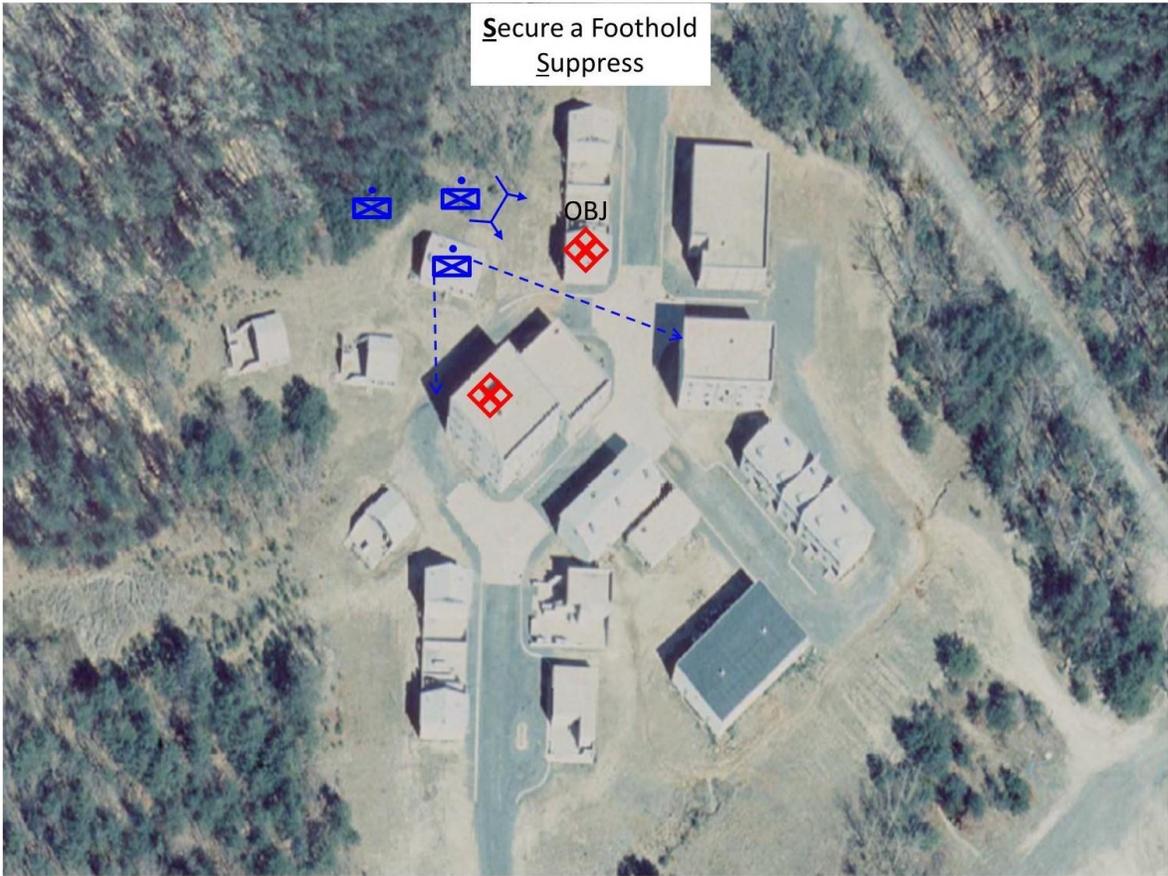
**1. Recon.** The development of any plan requires some reconnaissance. This first phase is imperative, whether doing a map study, using satellite imagery, or getting eyes on the objective. Any recon that can be done prior to crossing the line of departure is beneficial. Priorities of recon include: locating the enemy in the objective building, locating enemy in adjacent buildings, building composition and layout, breach/entry points, avenues of approach, support by fire position, assault position, TCMs. .

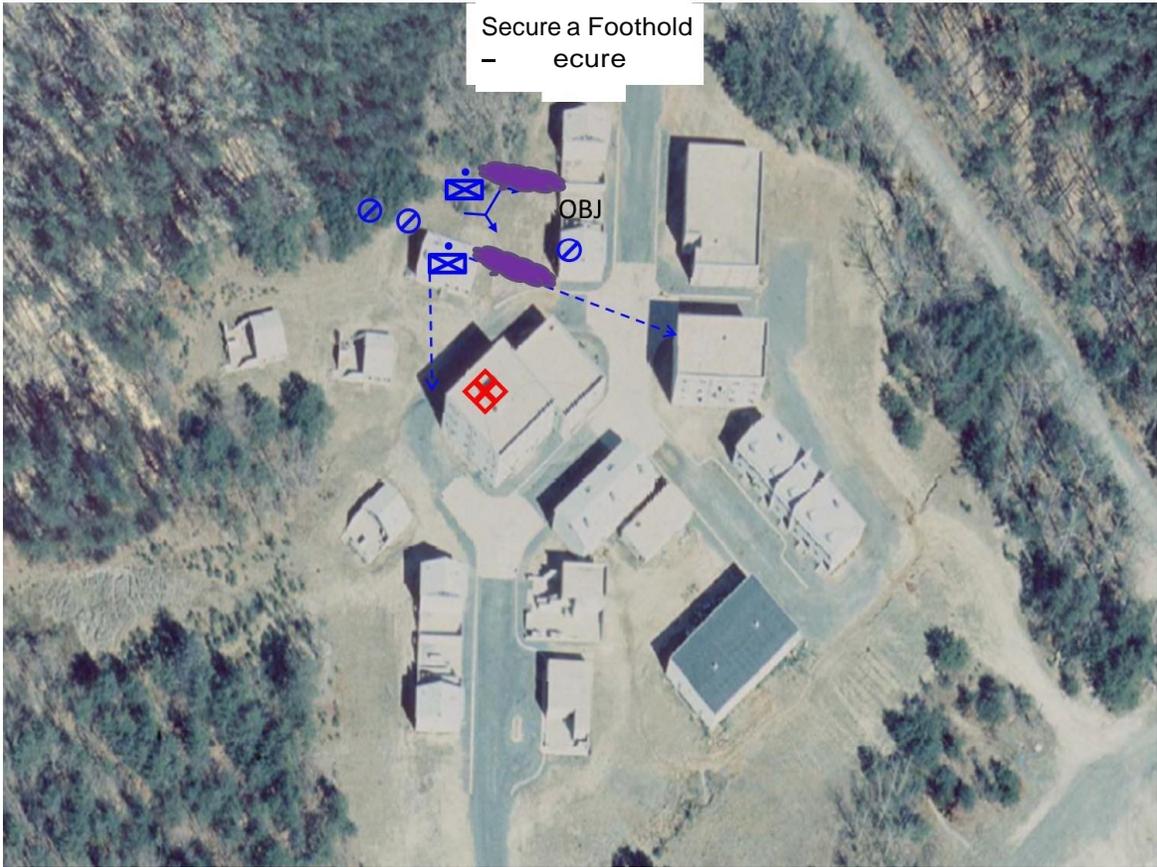


**2. Isolation.** Isolating the objective prevents the enemy from withdrawing or reinforcing as well as suppresses enemy forces in adjacent buildings. Isolation is essential to the success of an attack. During the planning process you must consider the impact adjacent enemy forces can have on your assault unit.

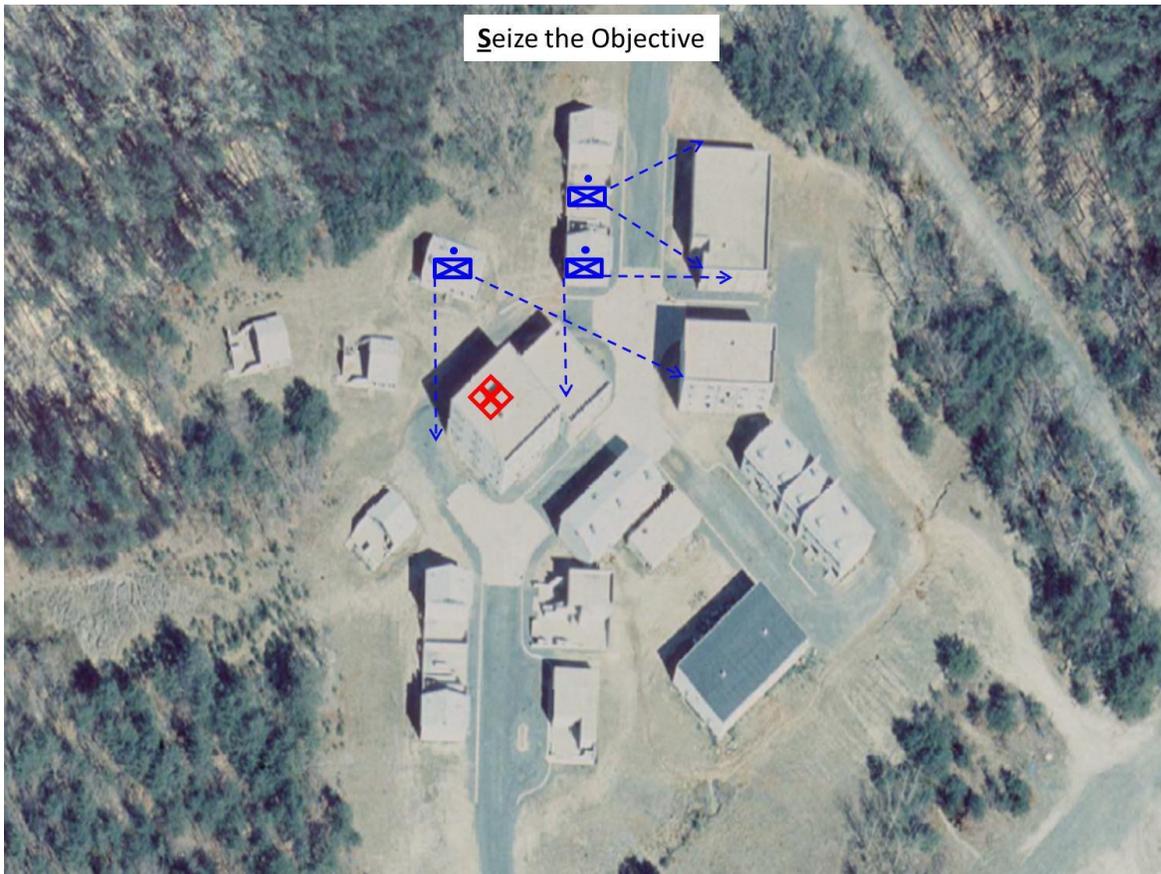


**3. Secure a Foothold.** Whether a room, or a building, or a city block, the foothold is the point from which you will flow your forces into the objective. Securing that foothold must be done quickly. Hit the enemy where he least expects it or cannot defend. We use the acronym SOSR as a guideline for gaining a foothold. A proficient unit will Suppress, Obscure, Secure a local breach site, and then reduce whatever obstacle exists. They are numerous means of reducing urban obstacles and breaching which will be discussed in detail during MOUT Platform Instruction. Units should employ High Explosives (HE) on a fortified position as a part of SOSR to dramatically improve the chances of seizing the objective. HE assists in securing the breach site by destroying enemy directly behind the breach site through the use of rockets, as well as using HE to reduce the obstacle quickly and efficiently through the use of demolitions.





**4. Seize the Objective.** Flow forces through the foothold to systematically seize the objective. A key ingredient to mission accomplishment is the ability to maintain momentum while in the attack. Do not stop or slow the attack until you've seized your objective. Maintaining momentum should not be confused with attempting to generate momentum by reinforcing failure.



Mission: 1<sup>st</sup> PLT: NLT 1200 seize Sector A IOT prevent en from interfering with Company C's clear of MOUT Town.

Tasks:

1<sup>st</sup> Squad: ME (Assault), O/O clear A1 IOT allow 1<sup>st</sup> PLT to seize Sector A. BPT assume the role of Support.

2<sup>nd</sup> Squad: SE1 (Support), O/O support 1<sup>st</sup> Squad by fire by suppressing enemy forces in A1 IOT allow 1<sup>st</sup> Squad to clear A1. BPT assume the role of Security.

3<sup>rd</sup> Squad: SE2 (Security), O/O Isolate A1 IOT allow 1<sup>st</sup> Squad to clear A1. BPT assume the role of Assault.

# Fundamentals of Room Clearing

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**1. Eight Steps of Room Clearing.** These are the detailed steps one uses in order to properly clear an enemy position in a room. These steps fall under the fourth phase of the attack, “Seizing the Objective”, and are sequential. The searching of the room and dead often occur simultaneously but can vary based on the construction of the room and the placement of the presumed dead within it.

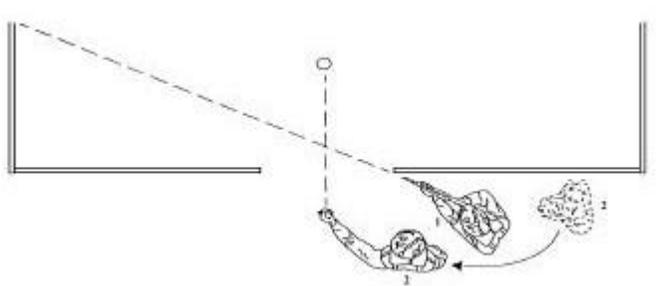
- Dominate
- Eliminate
- Control through Verbiage
- Search the Dead
- Search the Room
- Search the Living
- Transition
- Mark

**Step 1. Dominate.** Rooms can be dominated in several ways; one effective way is to employ grenades which we will discuss below. Rooms can also be dominated by making entry and moving to a dominate position inside. The ability to shoot targets on the move can also effectively dominate a room, meaning that the Marines achieve and maintain an initial advantage over any enemy located inside.

**a. Throwing Grenades.** Two techniques are available for using grenades in room clearing. The preferred technique for Marines is to throw a hand grenade into the room so hard that it skips and bounces, making it difficult for the enemy to pick up and throw back. The skip/bounce technique should be used by Marines during training and combat. The least preferred technique is to cook-off a hand grenade by removing the grenade’s safety pin, releasing the safety lever, counting off two seconds by thousands (one thousand and one, one thousand and two), and then throwing the grenade into the room. Cooking-off the grenade will be used only as appropriate during combat. Grenades should be employed through loops holes and mouse holes, as well as windows and doors.

**b. Nonverbal and Verbal Alerts.** To alert all that a grenade will be thrown, a visual showing of the grenade is made to assault element members, and a visual acknowledgment from them is received. A nonverbal alert may ensure that the enemy is surprised when the grenade is thrown. If the situation demands, a voice alert can be used, but the element of surprise may be lost.

When or if a voice alert is used, the voice alert is “**FRAG OUT;**” to alert Marines to the presence of HE when an enemy grenade has been identified, friendly forces shout, “**GRENADE.**” This allows Marines to distinguish between warnings for outgoing and incoming grenades.

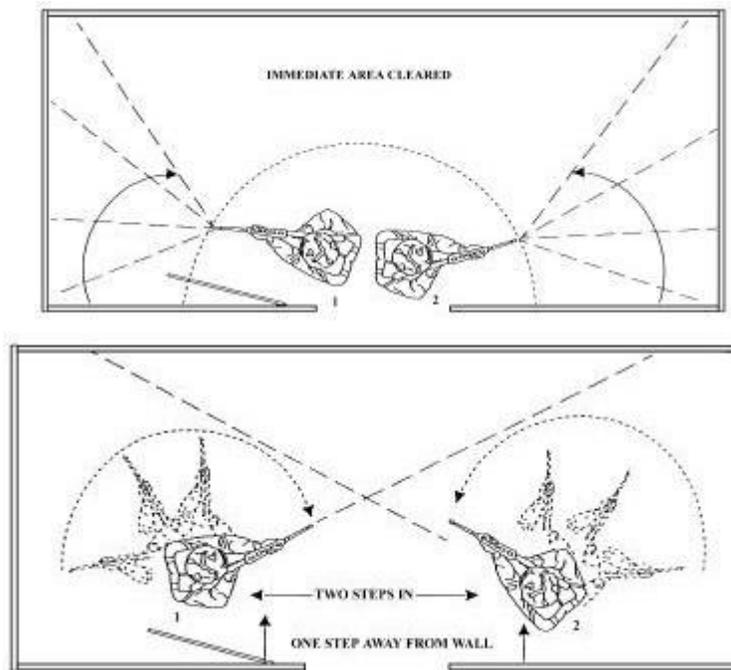


**Step 2. Eliminate.** Marines eliminate threats through rigorously rehearsed room clearing TTP’s. Listed below are several effective methods.

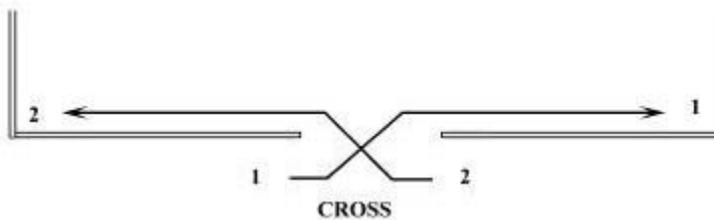
**a. Cross- Buttonhook Combination Method.** After the grenade explodes, Shooter Number One steps across the threshold and clears his immediate area. He engages targets from the ready position. Shooter Number Two follows immediately behind Shooter Number One, buttonhooks, and clears his area. Of note is that Shooter Number One may see or hear something that causes him to cross instead of button hook. Shooter Number One is always correct. Shooter Number Two must quickly adapt and cross or button hook into the area of the room not covered by Shooter Number 1.

Both shooters clear the immediate area and along their respective walls, starting from the nearest respective corner and continuing to the farthest respective corner. Shooters use the pieing technique to systematically clear the room by sector.

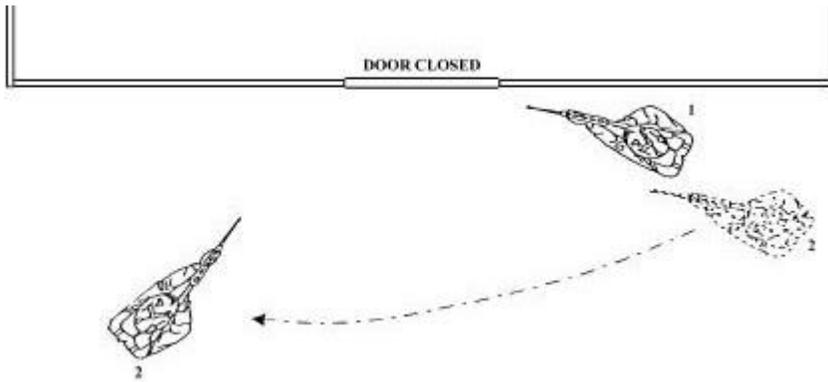
Both shooters then establish a dominant position in the room one step away from the wall and two steps into the room and clear the room by sector, pieing to the opposite side of the room. Meanwhile, the covering team (two-man team) in position outside the room being cleared provides security.



**b. Cross Method.** When employing the cross method, two Marines position themselves on either side of the entryway. Each Marine faces into the room covering the corner of the room opposite his position. On a prearranged signal, each Marine alternately enters the room. Each Marine crosses quickly to the opposite corner while covering the half of the room toward which he is moving. Once in the near corner, he assumes an outboard kneeling position to reduce his silhouette and continues to maintain coverage of his half of the room. He may change the position of his weapon to best cover the room.



**c. Clearing a Room, Door Closed, Split Positions.** Before opening a door, Shooter Number Two of the clearing team positions himself opposite Shooter Number One on the other side of the door and away from the wall in a safe position that allows Shooter Number One to shoot the door-opening mechanism. This positioning allows Shooter Number Two to be in position to immediately move to a wall position opposite Shooter Number One. No matter what method is used to open the door, Shooter Number Two should get in a position on the side of the door opposite Shooter Number One. Utilize the Cross Method to enter room once breach is made.



**Step 3. Control Through Verbiage.** Fighting from room to room is an incredibly chaotic and stressful experience. The fight is controlled through a universally and rigorously rehearsed common language. At a minimum a two man room clear will announce: “Left/Right side Clear”, “Checking overhead”, “Overhead Clear”, “Room all clear”. The clearing team will then announce the plan to search, mark and then transition on to another room.

**Steps 4 through 6. Search the Dead/Room/Living.** Once a room is announced as all clear Marines will conduct a detailed search of any Enemy KIA, EPW’s/detainees or non combatants, and finally of the room itself. Any personnel should be rapidly escorted to the EPW collection point and moved of the objective. The search should be rehearsed, thorough and fast enough to maintain speed and tempo inside the objective.

**Steps 7 and 8. Transition/Mark.** Marines must have a rigorously rehearsed plan to transition the fight from room to room. Once a room has been searched Marines inside prepared to conduct a follow on room clear, they do this by redistributing ammunition, processing any casualties and redeploying into a 2 or 4 man room clearing stack. Before Marines leave they will visually mark the room as clear to friendly forces. Easy means to mark a room include: Spray paint, Chalk, Chemlights, etc.

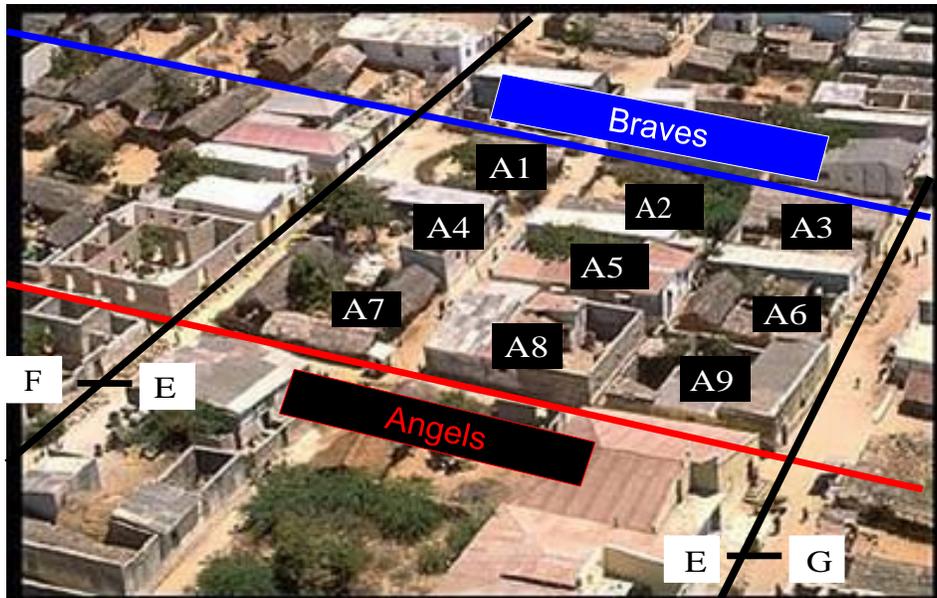
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## Tactical Control Measures (TCMs)

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Commanders should use detailed control measures to facilitate decentralized execution. Increased difficulties in command, control, and communications from higher headquarters demand increased responsibility and initiative from subordinate leaders. Understanding of the commander’s intent two levels up by all leaders becomes even more important to mission accomplishment in an urban environment. Control of the urban battlefield is difficult.

The use of detailed graphic control measures is critical to mission accomplishment and fratricide avoidance in urban terrain. Phase lines can be used to report progress or to control the advance of attacking units. Limits of advance should be considered. Principal streets, rivers, and railroad lines are suitable phase lines or limits of advance. When attacking to seize a foothold, the infantry unit may assign subordinate units the first block of buildings as their first objective. When an objective extends to a street, only the near side of the street is included. The final objective may be buildings or key terrain at the far edge of the built-up area. Key buildings, or groups of buildings, may also be assigned as intermediate objectives. Buildings should be identified by an alpha numbers designator for clarification, specific windows and doorways can also be label to improve situational awareness and improve command and control (example below).



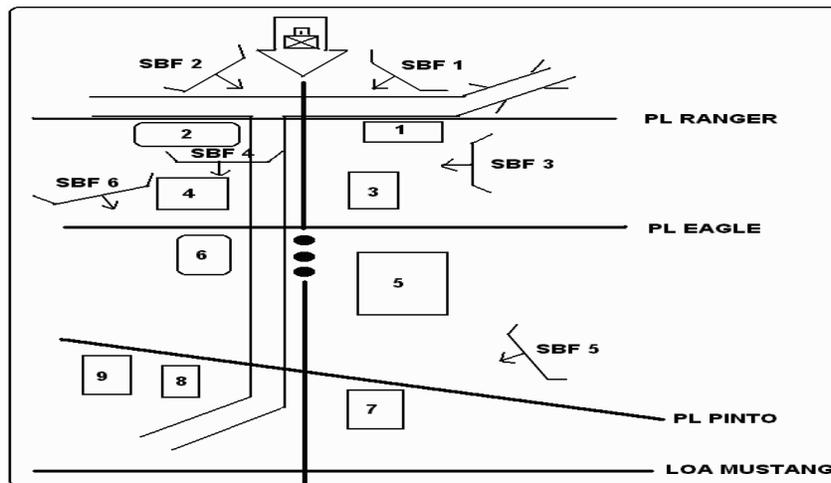
During the seizing phase, bypassing buildings may increase the risk of attack from the rear or flank. It may be necessary for the unit to enter, search, and clear each building in its zone of action. A single building may be an objective for a rifle squad or, if the building is large, for a rifle platoon or company. When the commander's concept of operations is based on speed or when the force is conducting a hasty attack, a unit may be directed to bypass certain positions within its zone.

**1. Phase Lines** Phase lines are control measures used to report progress or to control the advance of attacking units. Phase lines should be oriented on readily identifiable terrain features such as principal streets, rivers, and railroad lines.

**2. Boundaries** Unit boundaries are used to define zones of action and are usually set within blocks so that a street is included in the zone. Both sides of a street should be included within the same unit's boundaries.

**3. Checkpoints and Contact Points.** Checkpoints aid in reporting locations and controlling movement. Contact points are used to designate specific points where units make physical contact. Checkpoints and contact points are designated by each unit as appropriate for command and control at street corners, buildings, railway crossings, bridges, or any other easily identifiable feature.

**4. Attack Position and Line of Departure (LD).** A designated attack position may be occupied by forward units for last-minute preparation and coordination. The attack position is often behind or inside the last large building before crossing the LD. The LD should be located on the near side of an open area running perpendicular to the direction of attack, such as a street or rail line.



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## Offensive Fire Support

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MOUT operations present unique fire support considerations. On urbanized terrain, buildings provide excellent cover and concealment to the enemy while limiting friendly observation and targeting efforts. Targets are generally exposed for brief periods of time and are often in close proximity to friendly forces. Observers will experience difficulty in finding OPs with adequate fields of observation. Terrain masking by tall buildings may restrict the delivery of indirect fires. Collateral damage and rubble effects must be considered during ammunition selection. The importance of effective communications, ROE, control measures, and procedures to prevent fratricide is magnified.

In the offense, fire support plans should include fires to isolate the objective area, support the assault, and support the clearing action. Fires are delivered to isolate and fix the enemy and deny him the use of avenues of approach into and out of the built-up area. Most fires are normally planned and executed at the GCE or higher echelons. At the small unit level, mortars are most responsive fires and often useful for:

- Isolating the enemy to prevent reinforcement and withdrawal
- Clearing Roof Tops of Enemy
- Providing Obscuration
- Providing Illumination during Limited Visibility

Fires are employed to rupture the enemy's established defenses and screen friendly maneuver, in order to maintain the momentum of the attack. Fire support is also allocated to units involved in clearing operations. Fire support plans should incorporate the employment of aerial observers and UAVs to compensate for restrictions to observation and to assist in the delivery of deep fires. Procedures for designating the forward line of own troops (FLOT), marking targets, shifting fires, and communicating in the urban environment should also be considered.

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## **Command and Signal**

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Subordinate units require mission-type orders that are restrictive in nature. Commanders should use detailed control measures to facilitate decentralized execution. Increased difficulties in command, control, and communications from higher headquarters demand increased responsibility and initiative from subordinate leaders. Understanding of the commander's intent two levels up by all leaders becomes even more important to mission accomplishment in an urban environment.

Units often fight without continuous communications, since dependable communications are uncertain. Pyrotechnic signals are hard to see because of buildings and smoke. The high noise level of battles within and around buildings degrades voice alerts. Voice communication can also signal the unit's intention and location to the enemy. Graphic control measures common to other tactical environments are also used in urban combat. These and other control measures ensure coordination throughout the chain of command, enhance the mission, and thus prevent fratricide. Thorough rehearsals and detailed back briefs also enhance control. It is also important that subordinate leaders clearly understand the commander's intent (two levels up) and the desired mission endstate in order to facilitate control. Radio communications in urban areas pose special problems to tactical units. Communications equipment may not function properly because of the massive construction of buildings and the environment. In addition to the physical blockage of line of sight transmissions, there is also the interference from commercial power lines, absorption into structures and the presence of large quantities of metal in structures. Leaders should consider these effects when they allocate time to establish communications.

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## **Breaching**

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Urban combat is by nature a very slow, deliberate affair. Even if the enemy has not prepared the area for a defense, it will take time to secure the city. A well constructed urban defense will slow or stop any attack unless impediments to movement can be quickly removed or bypassed.

Breaching is normally conducted by the assault element. However, a separate breaching element may be created and a platoon or squad may be given this mission and task organized accordingly. The purpose of breaching is to provide the assault element with access to an urban objective. Breaching can be accomplished using explosive, ballistic, thermal, or mechanical methods. Ballistic breaching includes using direct fire weapons; mechanical breaching includes the use of crowbars, axes, saws, sledgehammers, or other mechanical entry devices. Thermal breaching is accomplished through the use of a torch to cut metal items such as door hinges. Attached engineers, or a member of the assault element who has had additional training in mechanical, thermal, ballistic, and explosive breaching techniques, may conduct the breach.

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## **Assault Entry**

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**1. Top Level Entry** - An infantry squad can assault structures using two different methods, each with advantages and disadvantages. The top down assault is the ideal method for clearing a structure. The enemy's defenses might not be prepared for a top down assault and the squad can rapidly overwhelm the enemy. The squad has more momentum when moving down ladder wells. The roof can be

breached in order to drop grenades and explosives on top of the enemy. Residences are sometimes adjoining, like a townhouse, and asymmetrical in construction with rooftops of varying heights. Alleys and walkways are often inaccessible from the main axis of approach, and certainly outside of the reach of tanks, tracks, or up-armored high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV) gun-trucks. Often the enemy's position is not known until entry was gained, so each house required time intensive positioning of forces in order to safely bring supporting heavy fires to bear.

Realistically, however, assaulting from the top down is not the best option for the infantry squad in every situation. When clearing from the top, once the squad makes entry and contact is made, pulling out of the structure is extremely difficult. This limits the squad leader's option for engaging the enemy.

**2. Bottom Level Entry** - In "bottom up" clearing, the squad leader has more options when contact is made. The structure can be cleared with fewer Marines and the clearing is more controlled, whereas the top down technique must always remain in high gear. If casualties occur, they can be pulled out faster and more easily simply because gravity is working for the squad. It is easy for the enemy to hold the second deck and ladder well as the squad moves upward into the enemy's defenses

In conclusion, there should not be a standard assault method. The squad leader should understand the advantages and disadvantages of each, assess each structure quickly, make a decision on which method to employ, and then take actions that maximize its advantages while minimizing its disadvantages. All unit leaders must understand geometries of fires, surface danger zones for all infantry and tank weapons, and have a thorough understanding of weapons capabilities and limitations—to include enemy weapons/ weapons systems.

**3. Vehicle Elevated Entry** - More complicated than bottom level entry due to coordination with vehicles and their security. Marines are able to enter buildings from the second or third level forcing the enemy down and out into the street where the supporting and security forces are located.

**4. Assisted Lifted Entry** - Although very effective and simple to perform there are many problems with conducting a lifted entry. Assisted lifted entry requires that at least one Marine remains in the street to perform the desired the lift for the other members of their unit.

**5. Ladder Assisted Entry** - Very similar pros and cons to both the vehicle and assisted lift entry, however more logistical requirements must be coordinated for a basic dismounted patrol.

**6. Helicopter-Borne Entry** - Although the most desired way to conduct an assault entry (top down), this is also the most difficult entry to coordinate and execute. In order to conduct this type of maneuver a helicopter is required to insert troops onto the roof of the building and allow them to clear from top down.

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## Offensive Tasking Statements

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Due to the complexity of the SOM for attacking a fortified position (RISS) a simple and logical means of tasking Assault/Support/Security Units is listed below. In the example, each unit is assigned as ME/SE that correlates to the final assault on the objective. If necessary, a Platoon Commander can assign multiple tasks and purposes to a single unit. This form of tasking should be tied into a planned rotation of the task organization listed below.

### Example tasking statements per squad

#### **-1st Squad: (SE#2):**

**-Task 1:** You are the ASLT unit. On order Seize A1.

**-Purpose 1:** IOT eliminate all enemy from A1, and set up a SBF on buildings A2-A3

**-Task 2:** Upon seizing A1 you will rotate to the SUPT unit. On Order Suppress the Enemy on A2-A3.  
OS shift/OS Cease Fire

**-Purpose 2:** IOT allow 3rd squad to enter A2-A3.

**-Task 3:** Upon 3rd squad's seizure of A2-A3 you are the SEC unit, OS Isolate A4.

**-Purpose 3:** IOT prevent enemy interference with 2<sup>nd</sup> squad

### Example attachment tasking statements

**Assault Squad:** SE#3: GS PLT. O/O Breach the door to A1 IOT allow 1st Squad to enter A1. You will travel with the HQ element. BPT conduct follow-on breaches in Sector A.

**Machine Gun Squad:** SE#4: GS PLT. O/O Isolate A1 IOT prevent en from interfering with 1st Squad's seizure of A1. BPT suppress and isolate enemy positions in support of follow-on operations in sector A.

Tgt Precedence: Technical vehicles, Enemy rockets, MG positions, buildings being seized.

Engagement Criteria: As 1<sup>st</sup> squad exposes themselves to move into A1, MG's will increase rates of fire from their SPF location.

When briefing tasks in the order process, all tasks for Part 1 will be briefed. Next the Platoon Commander will walk the dog on the terrain model for Part 1. Following Part 1, the Platoon Commander will brief all tasks for Part 2, and walk the dog for Part 2. The Platoon Commander will repeat this until all Parts of the attack have been completely briefed by Part.

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## Rotation Plan

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Similar to a MTC, having the ability to rotate your Task Organization can facilitate maintaining speed and tempo during operations. All units (Assault/Support/Security) must be prepared to conduct the roles and responsibilities of each other to best support the SOM. There is no rule stating when to rotate, however forward planning for your units to rotate due to casualties or sizes of building is a good idea.

Plan for one to two rotations of the task organization, as the assault unit makes entry into a structure and seizes it, they will then become either the support or security element. Allowing or beginning the rotation plan where the previously assigned Support element becomes the Security element and the previous Security unit moves to seize the next structure as the Assault element.

- **Have a plan for follow-on rotations (Aslt-Supt-Sec)**
- **Explain the criteria/events that will initiate the rotation**
- **Don't create too many rotations, simpler is sometimes better**

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## Defensive Operations

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### Mission

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The immediate purpose of a defensive operation is to defeat an enemy attack and gain the initiative for offensive operations. The infantry company, platoon and squad may also conduct the defense to achieve one or more of the following purposes.

- Gain time.
- Deny the enemy key terrain.-Retain key terrain.
- Control avenues of approach.
- Support other operations (Economy of Force).
- Preoccupy the enemy in one area while friendly forces attack him in another.
- Erode enemy forces at a rapid rate while reinforcing friendly operations.

The defense of an urban area should be organized around key terrain features, buildings, and areas that preserve the integrity of the defense and provide the defender ease of movement. The defender must organize and plan his defense considering factors of mission, enemy, terrain, troops and time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC).

Procedures and principles for planning and organizing the defense of an urban area are the same as for other defensive operations. In developing a defensive plan, the defender considers METT-TC factors with emphasis on fire support, preparation time, work priorities, and control measures. Planning for the defense of an urban area must be detailed and centralized. As in the offense, execution is decentralized as the battle develops, and the enemy forces assault the buildings and rooms. Therefore, it is imperative that all leaders understand the mission endstate and the commanders' intent, two levels up.

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## Scheme of Maneuver

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The platoon commander continues to call for indirect fires as the enemy approaches. The platoon begins to engage the enemy at their weapon systems' maximum effective range. They attempt to mass fires and initiate them simultaneously to achieve maximum weapons effects. Indirect fires and obstacles integrated with direct fires should disrupt the enemy's formations, channel him toward EAs, prevent or severely limit his ability to observe the location of friendly positions, and destroy him as he attempts to breach tactical and or protective obstacles. The forward observer or platoon leader will be prepared to give terminal guidance to attack aviation if available and committed into his area of operations.

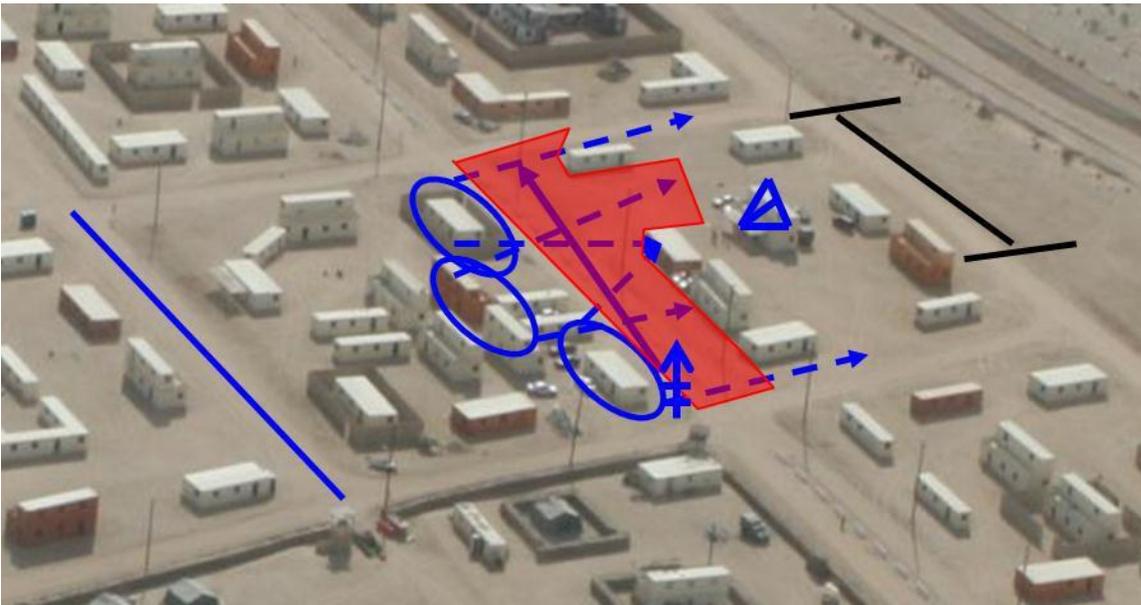
### 1. TDOOTS

#### a. Types of Defense

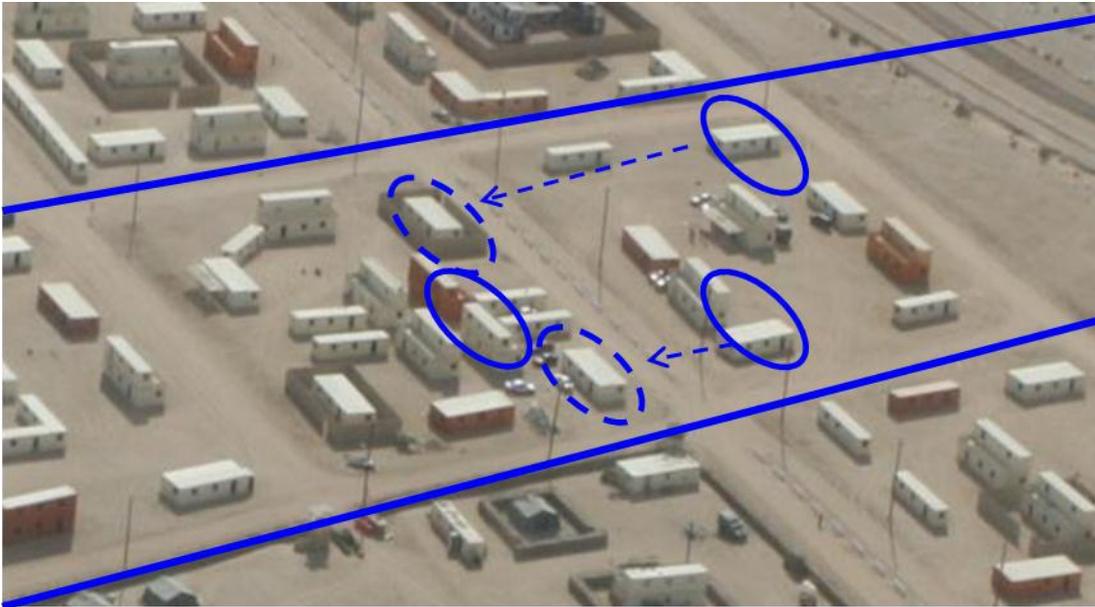
##### (1) Block from a Battle Position

A rifle platoon may be given the mission to provide or conduct a strongpoint defense of a building, part of a building, or a group of small buildings. The platoon's defense is normally integrated into the rifle company's defense. It makes the best use of its weapons and supporting fires, organizes all-around defense, and counterattacks or calls for fire to eject an enemy that has a foothold. The platoon commander analyzes his defensive sector to recommend to the company commander the best use of obstacles and supporting fires.

The platoon should be organized into a series of firing positions located to cover avenues of approach, cover obstacles, and provide mutual support. Overwatch may be located on the upper floors of the buildings.



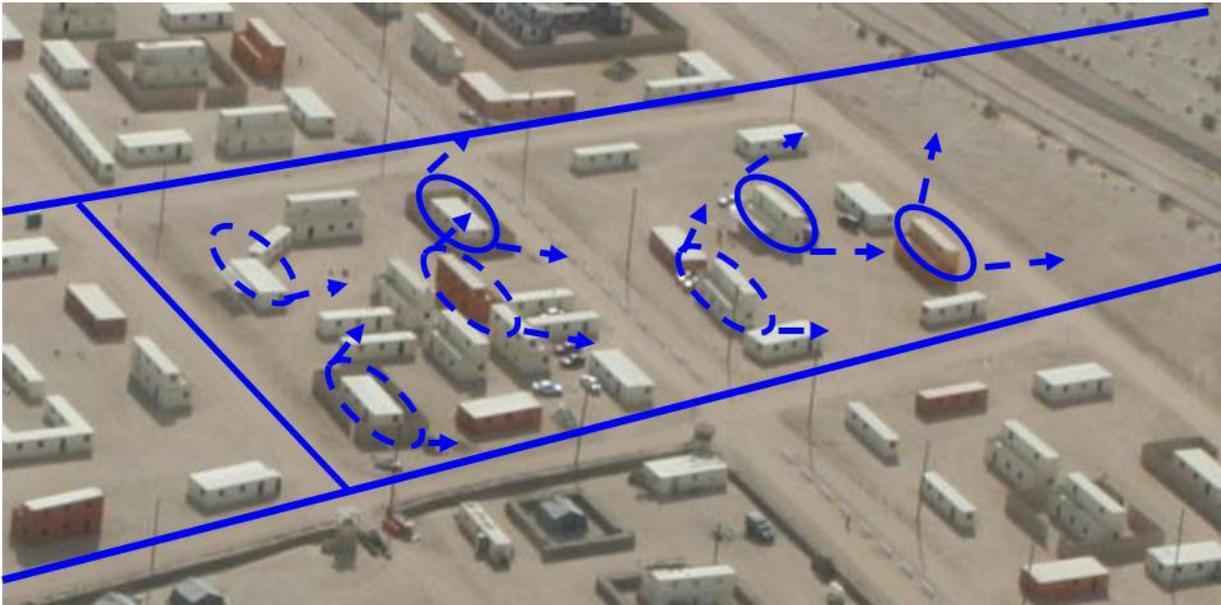
## (2) Block in Sector



## (3) Delay in Sector

A delay is an operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without becoming decisively engaged (MCWP 3-1). The delay can be oriented either on the enemy or on specified terrain such as a prominent building or industrial complex. A delay in a built-up area may consist of a combination of ambushes and alternating or successive battle positions

Battle positions should be placed where heavy weapons, antiarmor weapons, and machine guns will have the best fields of fire. Such locations are normally found at major street intersections, parks, and the edge of open residential areas. Battle positions should be carefully and deliberately prepared, reinforced by obstacles, and supported by indirect fire weapons. Battle positions are designed to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy and cause him to deploy for a deliberate attack.



**(4) Fighting Positions - A critical defensive task in combat in built-up areas is the selection and preparation of fighting positions.**

**Considerations.** Leaders should consider the following factors when establishing fighting positions:

**Protection.** Leaders should select buildings that provide protection from direct and indirect fires.

Reinforced concrete buildings with three or more floors provide suitable protection, while buildings constructed of wood, paneling, or other light materials require reinforcement to gain sufficient protection. One- to two-story buildings without strongly constructed cellars are vulnerable to indirect fires and require construction of overhead protection for each firing position.

**Dispersion.** Normally, a position should not be established in a single building when it is possible to occupy two or more buildings that permit mutually supporting fires. A position in one building without mutual support is vulnerable to bypass, isolation, and subsequent destruction from any direction.

**Concealment.** The fighting position should be concealed. Buildings that are obvious defensive positions should not be selected. The occupation of exposed buildings may be necessary because of requirements for security and fields of fire. Therefore, reinforcement of the structure must be accomplished to provide suitable protection within the building.

**(e) Fields of Fire.** Positions should be mutually supporting and have interlocking fields of fire in direction of the enemy. Clearing fields of fire may require the destruction of adjacent buildings by using explosives or engineer equipment,. Care should be taken to avoid high lighting the building as a defensive position.

**Covered Routes.** Defensive positions should try to have at least one covered route that permits resupply, MEDEVAC, reinforcement, or withdrawal from the building. The route can be established by one of the following means: through walls to adjacent buildings, through underground systems, through communications trenches Behind protective buildings.

**Observation.** The building should permit observation of enemy avenues of approach and adjacent defensive sectors.

**Fire Hazard.** Avoid selecting positions in buildings that are a fire hazard. If flammable structures must be occupied, the danger of fire can be reduced by wetting the structure, laying an inch of sand on the floors, and providing fire extinguishers and firefighting equipment. Routes of escape should also be prepared in case of fire.

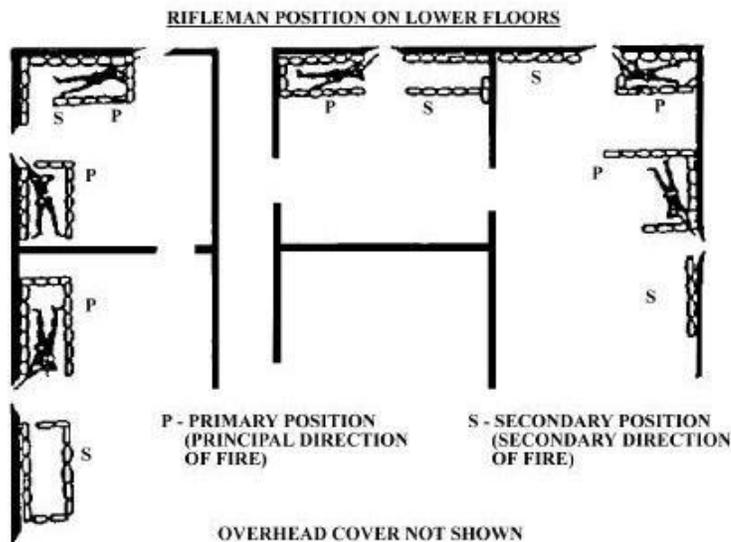
**Time.** The time available to prepare the defense is one of the most critical factor. If enough time is insufficient, buildings that require extensive preparation should not be used. Conversely, buildings located in less desirable areas that require little improvement may be a better choice for a defensive position.

**Preparation.** Preparation of fighting positions depends time, proper selection of the defensive position, and availability of appropriate materials.

**Selecting Positions.** Each weapon should be assigned a primary sector of fire to cover enemy approaches. Alternate positions will cover the same sector of fire as the primary position. These positions are usually located in an adjacent room on the same floor (Figures D-1A, D-1B, and D-1C). Each weapon must be assigned a supplementary position (to engage attacks from other directions) and an FPL.

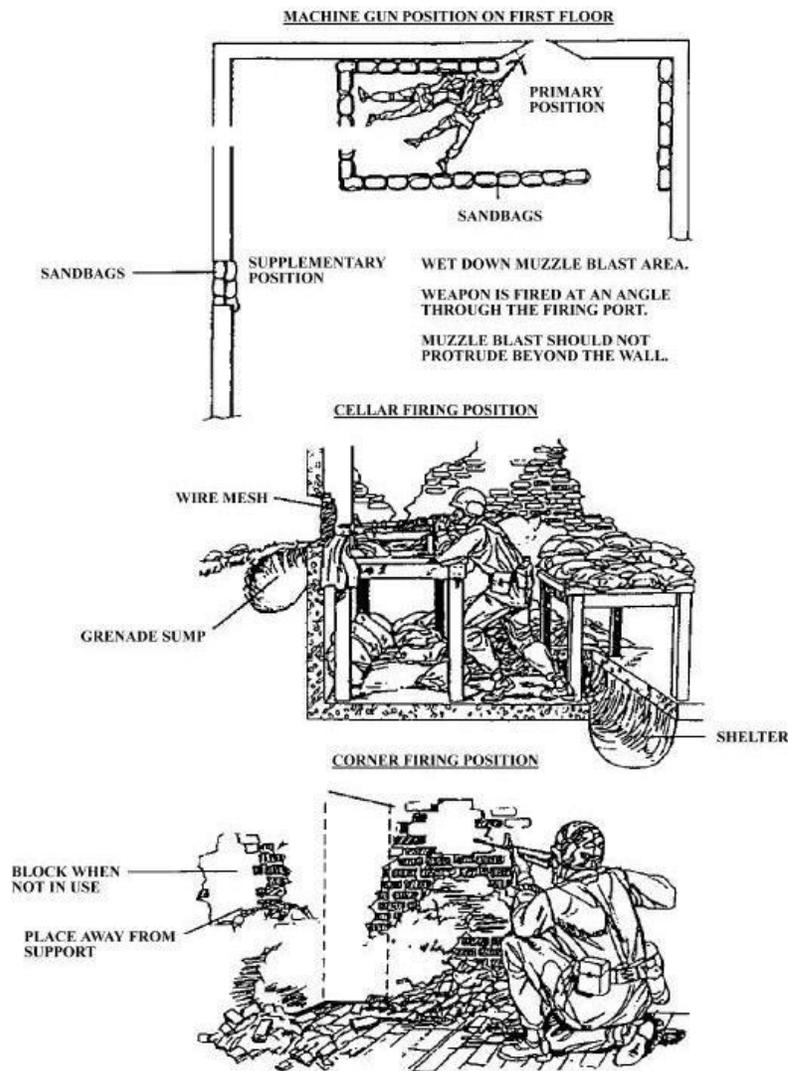
**Building Positions.** There are many ways to establish a fighting position in a building.

**Window Position.** Marines should kneel or stand on either side of a window. To fire downward from upper floors, tables or similar objects can be placed against the wall to provide additional elevation, but they must be positioned to prevent the weapon from protruding through the window (Figure D-2). Leaders should inspect positions to determine the width of sector that each position can engage.



INDIVIDUAL POSITION





## 2. Distribution of Forces

The Main Effort and Supporting Efforts are determined in an urban defense. The ME can be weighted with additional combat power to include direct/indirect fire weapon systems, anti armor weapon systems, etc.

## 3. Orientation

The goal of the defense is to place the enemy in a combined arms dilemma. An urban defense uses the terrain to achieve this. Pre-existing urban structures and urban canyons can be used to create an effective Engagement Area. Leaders must understand the impact of terrain on the effects of the defense, taking into account topics discussed in Urban Ops I to include: building composition, weapons effects and employment, FSP and communications.

## 4. Occupation Plan

The occupation phase of the defense includes moving from one location to the defensive location. A quartering party under company control normally leads this movement to clear the defensive position and prepares it for occupation. The platoon plans, reconnoiters, and then occupies the defensive position. The battalion establishes security forces. The remaining forces prepare the defense. To facilitate maximum time for planning, occupying, and preparing the defense, unit leaders at all levels must understand their duties and responsibilities, including priorities of work.

Occupation and preparation of the defense site is conducted concurrently with the development of the engagement area. The platoon occupies defensive positions IAW the company commander's plan and the results of the platoon's reconnaissance. To ensure an effective and efficient occupation, the reconnaissance element marks the friendly positions. These tentative positions are then entered on the fire plan sketch. Each squad moves in or is led in by a guide to its marker. Once in position, each squad

leader checks his position location. As the platoon occupies its positions, the platoon commander manages the positioning of each squad to ensure they locate in accordance with the scheme of maneuver. If the platoon commander notes discrepancies between actual positioning of the squads and his plan, he makes the corrections. Security is placed out in front of the platoon. The platoon commander must personally walk the fighting positions to ensure that everyone understands their role in the defense and that the following are IAW scheme of maneuver:

- Weapons orientation and general sectors of fire.
- Crew served weapons positions.
- Rifle squads' positions in relation to each other.

### **5. Tactical Control Measures (TCMs)**

The use of graphic control measures to synchronize actions become even more important to mission accomplishment in an urban environment. Trigger lines can be used to report the enemy's location or to control the advance of counterattacking units. Principal streets, rivers, and railroad lines are suitable phase lines, which should be clearly and uniformly marked on the near or far side of the street or open area. Checkpoints aid in reporting locations and controlling movement. Contact points are used to designate specific points where units make physical contact. Target reference points (TRPs) can facilitate fire control. Many of these points can be designated street intersections. These and other control measures ensure coordination throughout the chain of command.

### **6. Security Plan**

Urban terrain places new constraints and considerations on an effective security plan. On more complex terrain LP/OP's will be closer to squad battle positions. Security patrols may need to be reinforced to account for numerous danger areas and threats presented by UO.

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## **Elements of the Defense**

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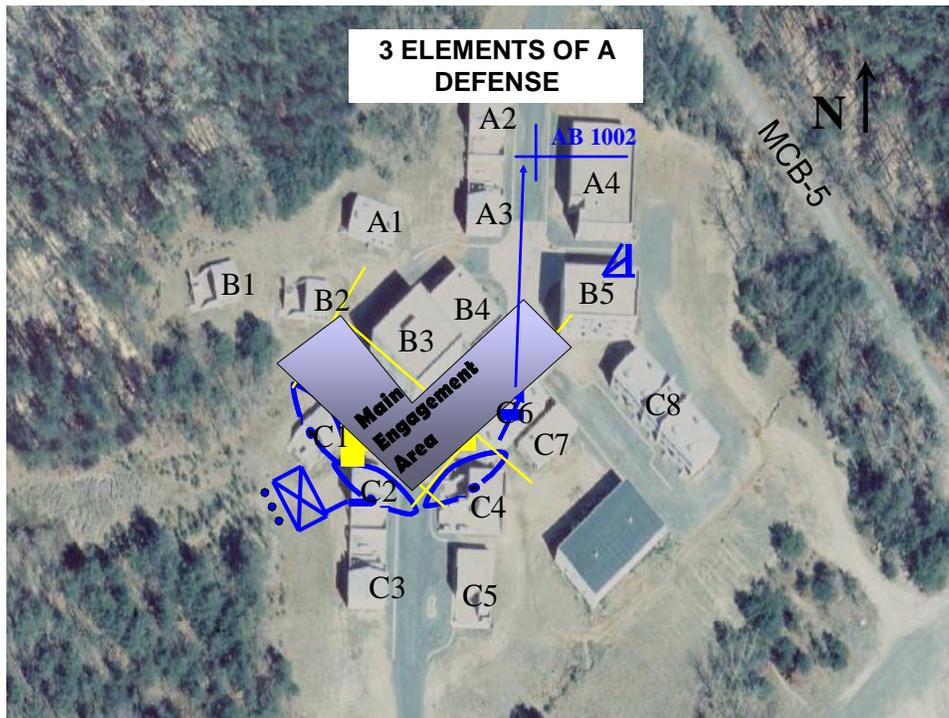
**1. Squad Battle Positions.** The infantry battalion is normally assigned a sector to defend. However, depending on METT-TC, it may be assigned to defend from a battle position or strongpoint. The battalion will usually assign its companies to either a battle position, a strongpoint, or a sector. These battle positions, strong points, or sectors are placed along avenues of approach to block or restrict the enemy's movement.

Depending on the type of built-up area, a company may be employed on the forward edge of the flanks of the area. This forces the enemy to deploy early without decisive engagement because it deceives the enemy as to the true location of the main defense. Other companies may then be employed in a series of battle positions and/or strong points in the center of the city or town. In all cases, mutual support between positions is vital. Companies and platoons should have designated alternate and supplementary positions.

Once the rifle platoon commander has received his battle position or sector, he then selects the positions for his squads and crew-served weapons. Squad positions within the built-up area may be separated by rooms within buildings or be deployed in different buildings. Squad positions must be mutually supporting and allow for overlapping sectors of fire

**2. Main Engagement Area.** The decisive battle is fought in the main engagement area. However, the commander may deploy units on the forward edges of the engagement area or in battle positions in depth. The defensive scheme should include forces to defend along the flanks. The commander normally employs security forces to the front to provide early warning and to deny the enemy intelligence on the unit's defensive dispositions.

**3. Command Post.** This is a location that you can best command and control your troops from. This location should have a great view of the selected main engagement area IOT allow the platoon commander or squad leader the opportunity to coordinate fires. This location should be centralized and known by all members of the defense in the case they need to communicate with the CP. As the defense continues to improve and expand the location of the CP may have to be relocated IOT maintain command and control over the entire defense.




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## Fire Support

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MOUT operations present unique fire support considerations. On urbanized terrain, buildings provide excellent cover and concealment to the enemy while limiting friendly observation and targeting efforts. Targets are generally exposed for brief periods of time and are often in close proximity to friendly forces. Observers will experience difficulty in finding OP's with adequate fields of observation. Terrain masking by tall buildings may restrict the delivery of indirect fires. Collateral damage and rubble effects must be considered during ammunition selection. The importance of effective communications, ROE, control measures, and procedures to prevent fratricide is magnified.

In the defense, fire support plans address fires to disrupt and slow the enemy attack. Fires are delivered at maximum ranges along avenues of approach to separate armor and infantry forces, to canalize the enemy into killing zones, and to deny the enemy use of key facilities in the city, such as communications and transportation facilities. Defensive fires planned at lower echelons support fighting within the built-up area. Defensive fire support plans identify fire support coordination procedures necessary to execute the delivery of fire support.

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## Command and Signal

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In all defensive situations, commanders should position themselves well forward so that they can control the action. In urban terrain, this is even more critical due to obstacles, poor visibility, difficulty in communication, and intense fighting. Other key leaders may be placed in positions to report to the commander and to make critical, time-sensitive decisions.

**Communications Restrictions.** Radio communications is initially the primary means of communication for controlling the defense of an urban area and for enforcing security. Structures and a high concentration of electrical power lines may degrade radio communication in urban areas. Wire is employed and used as the primary means of communications as time permits. However, wire can be compromised if interdicted by the enemy. Messengers can be used as another means of communication. Visual signals may also be used but are often not effective because of the screening effects of buildings and walls. Signals must be planned, widely disseminated, and understood by all assigned and attached units. Increased battle noise makes the effective use of sound signals difficult.

## Summary

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The fundamentals of defensive operations do not change in an urban fight. There are many factors that must be considered when planning for and executing defensive operations in an urban environment, but a proper planning will help the commander ensure that all aspects of the fight are addressed. As in any defensive operation, the devil is in the details. A successful defensive operation requires a commander who is able to conduct a detailed METT-TC, develop a well-thought out centralized plan, and ensure that his or her subordinates are capable of decentralized execution.

## References

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Reference Number or Author	Reference Title
MCDP 1	Warfighting
MCDP 1-0	Marine Corps Operations
MCWP 3-11.1	Marine Rifle Company/Platoon
MCWP 3-35.3	Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT)
MCRP 3-11.1B	Small Unit Leader's Guide to Weather and Terrain
MCRP 3-16C	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Fire Support for the Combined Arms Commander
MCWP 3-33.5	Joint Marine Corps/Army COIN Manual
MCWP 3-11.3	Scouting and Patrolling
TTECG	Mojave Viper Urban Warfare Training CD-ROM
CQB School	Curriculum Materials and Student Handouts
B4R5379	Urban Operations II – Offensive and Defensive Operations Basic Officer Course

## Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

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Term or Acronym	Definition or Identification
GEOMETRY OF FIRES	- Active and continuous placement of units, Marines, and sectors of fire to ensure that, in the moment when fires are needed, the ability to fire is not masked by Marines or by innocents.
GUARDIAN ANGEL/COVERT OVERWATCH	- These are the alert Marines placed in ambush, unseen by the enemy, watching over their units. The purpose of these Marines is to occupy a position of advantage over any approaching hostile force or individual.
QUICK REACTIONFORCE	- A unit that is on an alert status and capable of responding throughout an assigned area of operations in order to provide assistance across the spectrum of conflict.
HESCO BARRIERS	- Canvas and wire mesh containers filled with loose dirt designed to provide cover from enemy fire.

