



CHAPTER 3

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Section I. INTRODUCTION

3101. GENERAL

This chapter discusses the basic principles employed at company and platoon level in gaining contact with the enemy and attacking him. It includes the tactics and techniques to be used by the company commander and the platoon commander in applying the principles of offensive land combat. The special considerations applying to warfare in jungle, deserts, and mountains are not included but may be found in FMFM 8-1, Special Operations, or in appropriate Army Field Manuals of the 31 series. For doctrine on riverine operations, see FMFM 8-4, Doctrine for Navy/Marine Corps Joint Riverine Operations, and for doctrine on antiguerrilla warfare, see FMFM 8-2, Counterinsurgency Operations.

3102. FUNDAMENTALS OF OFFENSIVE TACTICS

The fundamentals of offensive tactics are the general rules which evolved as commanders applied the principles of war to accomplish offensive missions. The fundamentals do not replace the principles of war, but rather adapt the application of the principles to current doctrine, organization, and state of the art of war.

a. Gain and Maintain Contact.--This fundamental of offensive tactics is applicable when a force is not in contact with the enemy or when the enemy is attempting to move toward or away from the force.

b. Develop the Situation.--Developing the situation is closely allied to gaining and maintaining contact and consists of those actions necessary to determine the strength, location, composition, and disposition

of the enemy that has been encountered. A commander must know what he is fighting.

c. Exploit Known Enemy Weakness.--In situations created by opposing maneuvering forces, each seeking a tactical advantage, the commander avoids enemy strength and reacts with maximum speed to take advantage of known enemy weaknesses to enhance success. Weakness from faulty dispositions, poor morale, insufficient support, or tactical error, as well as a weakness in numerical strength, should be exploited.

d. Seize or Control Key Terrain.--The successful accomplishment of the offensive mission is often dependent upon the early control or neutralization of key terrain. However, to be an advantage, the possession of key terrain must be exploited.

e. Retain the Initiative.--A paramount objective of the commander in the offense is to seize and retain the initiative.

f. Neutralize Enemy Capability to React.--Every effort is made to disrupt and neutralize the enemy's capability to react to the commander's tactical dispositions and maneuver. Isolation of the battlefield and destruction of, or interference with, enemy support and reinforcement actions reduce his responsiveness, reduce risk, enhance the security of friendly forces, and assist in gaining and retaining the initiative.

g. Advance by Fire and Maneuver.--The attack is characterized by fire and maneuver, combined and controlled to create a preponderance of combat power that culminates in a powerful and violent assault in the decisive area.

h. Maintain the Momentum of the Attack.--Once the attack is launched, every effort is made to gain and maintain momentum until the objective is secured; flexibility and speed in the employment of combat power are paramount.

i. Concentrate Superior Combat Power at the Decisive Time and Place.--Successful offensive action requires the massing of superior combat power at the decisive place and time and the rapid application of this power to destroy the enemy.

j. Exploit Success.--Because combat power is relative, commanders exploit any information, tactical success, or advantage that accrues during the attack. Speed of action and reserve combat power are required.

k. Provide for the Security and Integrity of the Force.--Security is necessary whether a force is in bivouac, on the march, or in combat. All units are responsible for their own security, regardless of the security provided by other units.

3103. PHASES OF THE ATTACK

Generally, the attack is planned and executed in three phases: the preparatory phase, the conduct phase, and the consolidation and reorganization phase.

a. Preparatory Phase.--During this phase, preliminary operations are executed which tactically dispose the force to conduct the attack. These include:

(1) Movement to, and concentration of forces in, the forward area prior to the attack (the assembly areas). The commander determines the probability of contact with the enemy. It is his estimate of the probability of contact which determines a formation offering reasonable security to the movement and the speed at which the movement may be conducted. The probability of contact may be considered as follows:

(a) Contact Remote.--The probability of contact is sufficiently slight that administrative considerations outweigh tactical concerns. Limited security is employed and the movement may be conducted rapidly, in nontactical formation, using any type mobility.

(b) Contact Improbable.--The probability of contact with the enemy forces of sufficient strength to cause the unit to deploy has increased to a point at which administrative and tactical considerations govern the situation. Additional security is required as the movement continues. Units are tactically grouped but not fully deployed except for security elements.

(c) Contact Imminent.--The probability of contact with an enemy of sufficient strength to cause complete deployment of the unit for combat has influenced the commander's estimate to the degree that he considers readiness of the unit for tactical employment the paramount consideration. Forward elements may be fully deployed in combat formation.

(2) Final preparation of attack echelon (reorganization, resupply, rest, reconnaissance, plans and orders, training, orientation, coordination, maps, security, rehearsals, etc.).

(3) Development of the enemy position and intensification of intelligence operations.

(4) Execution of deception plan, including feints and demonstrations.

(5) Fires before the attack may be completed and preparation fire initiated as scheduled (to include chemical and nuclear fires and assessment of damage created).

(6) Completion of preparations for relief in place or passage of lines as required.

b. Conduct Phase.--The conduct of the attack involves three separate stages in which "the impulse of force in a decisive direction" is advanced:

(1) Assembly area to line of departure.

(2) Line of departure to final coordination line.

(3) Movement from the final coordination line to the objective.

c. Consolidation and Reorganization.--The purpose of the consolidation and reorganization is to prepare the attacking force for future action. When possible, the seizure of the objective should be followed by immediate continuation of the attack or exploitation of success obtained.

(1) Consolidation.--Consolidation pertains to all measures taken to organize and strengthen a newly captured position as it may be used

against the enemy; initially, a hasty defensive posture is assumed to ward off possible counterattacks. Thereafter, the unit takes necessary action to occupy the objective or, following minimum essential reorganization, to continue the attack depending on its mission. Emphasis is placed on security, displacing and positioning of forces, fire planning, reconnaissance, and reorganization; but these actions should not unnecessarily slow the momentum of the attack if it is to be continued. Reconnaissance elements and motorized or helicopterborne forces maintain contact with the enemy, keep him off balance, and obtain information. Fires beyond the objective protect the reorganization and break up counterattacks.

(2) Reorganization.--Reorganization includes all measures taken to restore order in a unit after combat and to maintain its combat effectiveness in order to prepare the force for further attack or pursuit of the enemy. Reorganization is continuous but is given special emphasis upon seizure of the objective. It includes reporting of unit location and status to higher headquarters, redistribution of personnel, evacuation, resupply, and restoration of control and communications.

d. Flexibility

(1) The interaction and reaction of events and conditions on the battlefield make it necessary for combat units to adapt their actions rapidly to the current situation. This flexibility is especially important in offensive operations where situations created by opposing maneuvering forces seeking a tactical advantage require the commander to modify his plans to meet significant changes and to react with utmost speed. Success in the attack may well hinge on a commander's willingness and ability to modify his original plan.

(2) To achieve the desired flexibility in his plan of attack, the commander must, at least mentally, plan for contingencies in the following situations:

- (a) Continuation of the attack.
- (b) Exploitation.
- (c) Pursuit.
- (d) Failures of the attack on intermediate or final objectives.
- (e) Enemy counterattack.
- (f) Redesignating the main and supporting attack.
- (g) Reconstitute a new reserve force as soon as possible, after employment.

3104. DISTRIBUTION OF FORCES

a. General

(1) Offensive action imposes three different tasks on the commander. They are directly related to the manner in which the commander divides the available combat power in organizing for the attack. The tasks to be accomplished are as follows:

- (a) Locate and hold the enemy in place.
- (b) Maneuver to gain a tactical advantage.
- (c) Attack at the decisive time and place and destroy the enemy.

(2) These tasks are normally accomplished by apportioning the available combat power to the following:

- (a) Main attack.
- (b) Supporting attack.
- (c) Reserves.

b. Main Attack.--The main attack contains the greatest concentration of combat power. Its purpose is to secure the decisive objective and destroy or cause the destruction of the enemy force. The main attack is the commander's bid for victory. The following are primary characteristics of the main attack:

- (1) Directed against a decisive objective.
- (2) Launched on a narrow front.
- (3) Allocated the preponderance of combat power and fire support.
- (4) Reserves positioned to exploit success.

c. Supporting Attack

(1) The supporting attack is conducted in conjunction with the main attack. It is apportioned the combat power necessary to accomplish its mission and is designed to support the main attack as outlined below:

- (a) Holds the enemy in position and/or destroys him.
- (b) Deceives the enemy as to the locations of the main attack.
- (c) Induces the enemy to dissipate his fire support and prematurely shift or commit his reserves.

(2) The differentiation between main and supporting attacks is seldom indicated in the commander's order. This approach provides flexibility to the commander's plan. The supporting attack is characterized by the following:

- (a) Directed against objectives, the seizure of which supports the main attack.
- (b) Conducted on a broader front than the main attack.
- (c) Maximum available firepower is employed forward.

- (d) Few reserves.
- (e) May be an attack by fire for small units.

(3) Unexpected developments may cause the commander to shift the weight of his attack. The supporting attack then becomes the main attack. Modifications to the plan of attack involve reappportioning supporting fires and shifting reserves to exploit the unexpected success of the supporting attack.

d. Reserves

(1) The primary mission of the reserve is to enter offensive action at the proper place and moment to accomplish the assigned mission or exploit success. The reserve must be large enough to exploit success, yet its size should not materially weaken the main attack forces. The reserve should be located in a position from which it can move rapidly to points of probable employment. The initial strength of the reserve varies. Some of the factors influencing the initial size of the reserve are:

- (a) Contemplated missions of the reserve.
- (b) Forces available.
- (c) Type maneuver planned.
- (d) Terrain.
- (e) Possible hostile reactions.
- (f) Clarity of the situation.

(2) When the situation is relatively clear and enemy capabilities are limited, the reserve may constitute a small fraction of the command. When the situation is obscure, the reserve may initially consist of the bulk of the command, prepared for immediate employment at any point as the situation develops. Employment of the reserve at the decisive moment is the commander's principal means to influence the action. Quite often the commander's most difficult and important decision is concerned with time, place, and circumstances of committing the reserve. (See par. 3305g.)

3105. FORMS OF OFFENSIVE MANEUVER

a. General.--Offensive maneuver is the movement made to place combat power in an advantageous position with respect to the enemy, to close with him, and to destroy him. Although maneuver is made with respect to the enemy, the ability to maneuver is closely related to battlefield initiative. The initiative lies with the attacker so long as he retains freedom of action to select the time and place of the engagement. In the final analysis, the tactical advantage being sought through maneuver is the disposition of the friendly force in such a manner as to facilitate the destruction of the enemy.

(1) The commander may orient his attack on the front, flank, or rear of the enemy. Helicopterborne operations that place forces on the enemy's flanks or in his rear can be used during all forms of maneuver.

(2) The basic forms of maneuver are the envelopment, the penetration, and the frontal attack. The frontal attack and the single envelopment are the primary forms of maneuver employed by the company and the platoon. The double envelopment, turning movement, and encirclement are the variations of the envelopment that may be employed by larger units.

(3) The mission of the unit, characteristics of the area of operations, disposition of opposing forces, and relative combat power of opposing forces are analyzed to determine the best form of maneuver. Normally, terrain, time available, friendly dispositions, ability to support the attack, and the enemy situation are the principal factors in determining the form of maneuver.

(4) Terrain, especially, exerts a decisive influence on the selection of the form of maneuver employed by the company or platoon. The interrelationship of terrain features, particularly their relationship to the decisive objective, will directly affect the commander's ability to employ his combat power appropriately. The availability of suitable avenues of approach into and within a position may limit the choices of maneuver. Whenever possible, selected avenues of approach avoid enemy defensive strength.

b. The frontal attack is a form of maneuver in which the attacker strikes the enemy all along his front by the most direct route. The frontal attack is used to overrun and destroy or capture a weaker enemy in position or to fix an enemy force in position in support of a main attack conducted elsewhere. Subordinate units of a force conducting a frontal attack are not restricted to be on line or conducting frontal attacks themselves. During a frontal attack, the commander seeks to create or take advantage of conditions that will permit a more decisive penetration or envelopment of the enemy defensive positions. The frontal attack is the form of maneuver most often employed by the rifle company and platoon. (See fig. 24.)

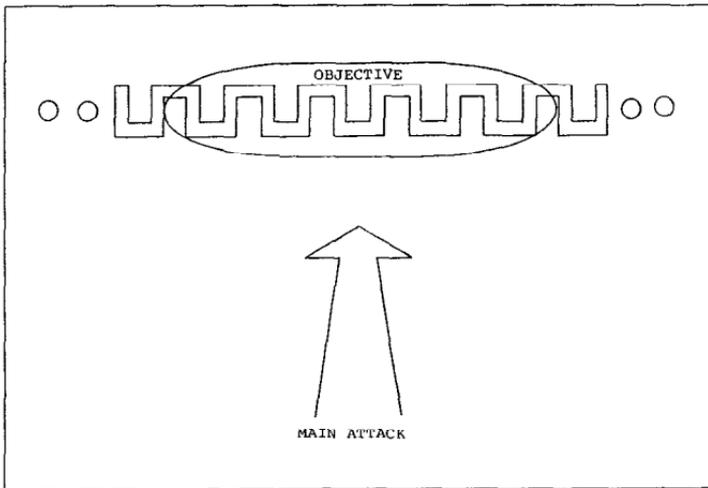


Figure 24.--Frontal Attack.

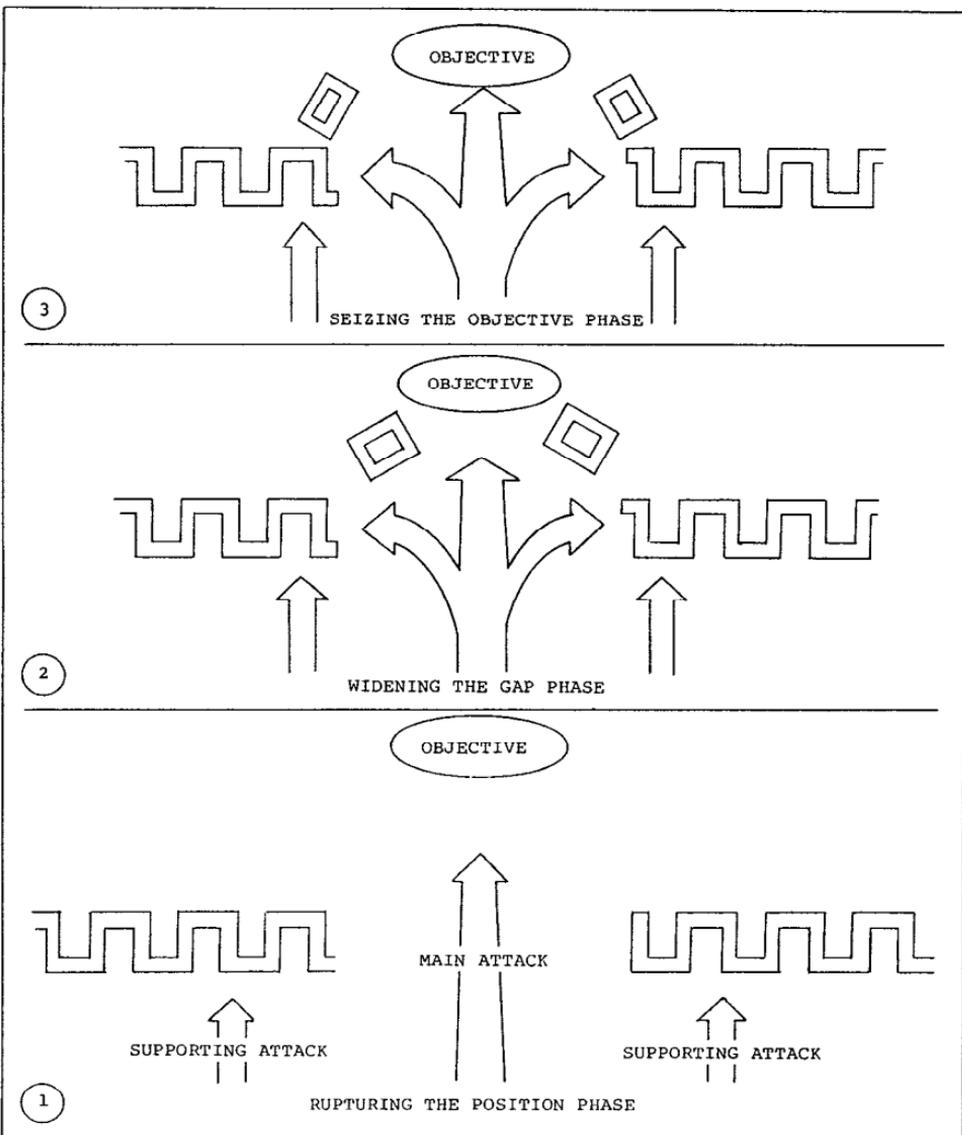


Figure 25.--Three Phases of the Penetration.

c. In the penetration, a powerful main attack passes through the enemy defensive positions on a narrow front while one or more simultaneous supporting attacks exert pressure on a broad front to deceive the enemy and hold him in place. The penetration begins with rupturing the enemy defensive positions to make a gap through them to the enemy rear. The next step is the widening of the gap to permit the employment of additional forces. The final step is the seizing of objectives in the enemy rear that destroy the continuity of the enemy defense. With the employment of helicopters, a penetration may be accomplished by landing a helicopterborne force behind the enemy defensive positions and rupturing them from the rear. While a planned penetration is seldom feasible for a rifle company or platoon, a frontal attack may develop into a penetration. The rifle company and platoon may also take part in a penetration by a larger unit. (See fig. 25.)

d. In the envelopment, the enveloping attack passes around or over the main enemy defensive positions to seize objectives in the enemy's rear. The envelopment causes the enemy to fight in two or more directions, and its success depends on surprise, mobility, and the ability of supporting attacks and deception to hold the enemy in place. In the ground envelopment, the enveloping attack is directed against an assailable flank, a flank that can be circumvented without fighting a major engagement. When committed, the enveloping attack moves rapidly and avoids strong enemy defensive positions to seize assigned objectives in the enemy rear. A vigorous supporting attack holds the enemy in position and prevents him from maneuvering against the enveloping attack. The reserve normally follows the enveloping attack, but the commander is alert to exploit success of the enveloping or supporting attacks. Fire support is used to help hold the enemy in place and prevent his maneuvering against the enveloping attack. Objectives for the enveloping attack are picked to subject the enemy to destruction in position from the flank or rear. Helicopters, which provide the means of delivering fresh troops on or near assigned objectives, may be used to make a vertical envelopment over the main enemy defensive positions. Both the rifle company and platoon are capable of conducting the single envelopment. (See fig. 26.)

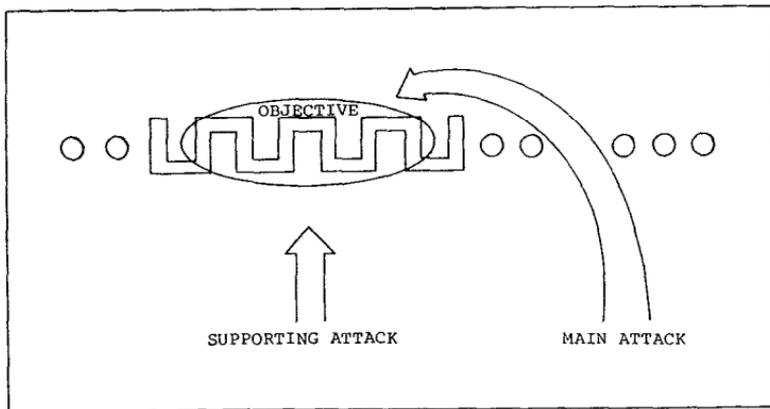


Figure 26.--Envelopment.

Section II. MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

3201. GENERAL

a. Movement to contact is a tactical movement to establish initial contact with the enemy or to reestablish contact which has been lost. It is terminated when physical contact with the enemy is gained or when the march units go into assembly areas to prepare for combat. The unit commander conducting the movement organizes his unit to provide for:

- (1) Rapid movement.
- (2) All-around security.
- (3) Retention of control of the main body.
- (4) Ease of control.

b. The rifle company may conduct the movement to contact as part of the infantry battalion or, in some instances, as an independent force. In either case, the movement may be an uncovered movement or a covered movement.

(1) An uncovered movement to contact is made by the leading element of a force with the mission of gaining or regaining ground contact with the enemy. Information of the enemy and terrain may not be available from friendly ground units to the front. Reconnaissance by the advancing forces must be intensified to compensate for a lack of security elements provided by other forces.

(2) A covered movement to contact is made when adequate security is provided by other forces. A unit usually makes a covered movement to contact for the purpose of relieving or operating with forces already in contact with the enemy.

c. A movement to contact may be made utilizing any means of mobility but generally adopts some form of march column. In conducting a march, certain preparations must be made to ensure that the movement takes place with minimum confusion and delay.

(1) A warning order containing the below information should be issued to allow subordinate units maximum time for preparation:

- (a) Units to be moved.
- (b) Method of movement.
- (c) Time the movement is to start.
- (d) Destination.
- (e) Purpose of the movement.

(2) A reconnaissance of the prospective route is undertaken when the situation and time available permit. The march column commander

prescribes the composition of the reconnaissance party and the extent of the reconnaissance effort. Both depend upon the method of movement, the size of the march column, the enemy situation, and the subsequent missions of the units moved. Some of the purposes of the reconnaissance are to:

- (a) Gain detailed information concerning the characteristics of the route, its length, actual or potential obstacles, and a realistic estimate of the rate of advance permitted by the route.
- (b) Determine the number of guides, guards, and direction markers required and the locations at which they should be posted.
- (c) Determine the amount of engineer support required to make the route passable.
- (d) Locate suitable bivouacs, if necessary.

(3) A march order initiating the movement is issued. It may consist of a short oral briefing followed by a concise, oral order designating the route, destination, schedule, rate of march, formation, and other control measures not covered by unit SOP, or the complexity of the movement may require a more formal treatment of the order in written form which includes overlays, maps, and march tables. The rifle company commander employs the oral march order exclusively whether the company comprises a march element of a larger march column or whether the rifle company commander is the march column commander. Annotations on maps and/or overlays are used to fix march routes.

3202. ROUTE COLUMN

a. General.--When contact is remote, administrative considerations govern and the movement is made in route column. Administrative grouping of foot march elements and administrative loading of troops and equipment into vehicles for motor, rail, helicopter, or other transportation are effected to take advantage of rapid movement and ease of control. The route column regroups tactically when the column commander's estimate of the probability of contact changes from remote to improbable. Units may move by various means over different routes. For instance, a battalion might proceed by rail and its organic motor transport may proceed by one or more roads. As a general rule, the infantry battalion will move on one axis in the movement to contact.

b. Administrative Foot March.--An administrative foot march is made when no enemy interference except by aircraft or long-range weapons is anticipated. Units are administratively grouped for ease of control and speed of movement. Security elements are negligible or nonexistent. The normal formation for a foot march is a route column with one file moving on each side of the road, but it may be a column of threes or fours. The march column commander designates the formation.

(1) Organization for the March.--A command executing a march is basically organized into march units and, as necessary for control, into serials or march columns.

(a) A march unit is a unit of command which moves and halts at the command of a single commander. The march unit usually corresponds to one of the smaller units such as a platoon or company.

(b) A march serial consists of one or more march units organized under the senior officer and given a specific numerical or alphabetical designation to facilitate control. The march units of a serial normally possess the same march characteristics and are governed by the same set of instructions. A serial is usually a battalion or larger unit, but may be a company if the battalion is marching alone.

(c) A march column is composed of the elements of a command moving over the same route. To facilitate control, a column commander is designated. The order of march within the march column is dependent upon the mission, terrain, and probable order of commitment of subordinate units. A column is normally a regiment or larger unit, but may be a battalion if it is marching alone.

(2) Control and Coordination.--The column commander establishes initial control of the march by designating control measures in his march order. To facilitate control, the commander provides for advance and quartering parties, guides, marking of routes, and traffic control. Control measures normally used are described below:

(a) The start point is any designated place at which a column or element thereof is formed by the successive arrival of its various subdivisions and comes under the control of the commander ordering the movement.

(b) The release point is a clearly defined point on a route at which specified elements of a column revert to the command of their respective commanders.

(c) Other critical points may be selected. A critical point is a selected point along the route of march used for reference in giving instructions or any point along the route of march where interference with the troop movement may occur.

(d) A time is prescribed at which the head or tail of the column is to pass the start point and critical points.

(e) Other control measures are used and include the order of march, locations of assembly or bivouac areas, and command posts, as well as communications to be employed on the march.

(3) March Procedures.--Experience has taught that certain march procedures contribute to the well being of the individual Marine and, as a result, to unit proficiency. These procedures include the following:

(a) The normal pace is 30 inches. A pace of 30 inches and a cadence of 106 steps per minute will establish a correct rate of march for most march columns. In order to establish the correct rate, a pace setter is selected. The pace setter is an experienced individual, carrying the same load as the majority of the men, who marches from 4 to 10 meters in advance of the column under the supervision of the officer marching at the head of the column. The pace setter's primary duty is to maintain the rate of march prescribed by the column commander. The proper rate of march is established as the pace setter adjusts his pace and cadence to obtain the prescribed rate. Minor changes in the rate at the head of the column become greatly magnified by the time they are reflected in the rear, resulting in an accordion effect through the column. To reduce the accordion

effect, gradual changes in pace and cadence rather than abrupt alterations should be used in adjusting the rate of march. The order of march should be rotated periodically so that the same units and individuals do not always march at the rear. The most heavily laden units march near the head of the column.

(b) Distances between units and individuals in the march units should be sufficient to promote march efficiency and to minimize the effect of accordion action. When marching on roads, the distances between individuals may vary from 2 to 5 meters to provide dispersion and sufficient space for marching comfort. In an administrative foot march, the distances between companies and platoons may vary from a few meters through the column to 100 meters between companies and 50 meters between platoons to permit vehicles to pass.

(c) Night marches are characterized by closed formation, more difficult control, and slower rates of march. March routes require more detailed reconnaissance and marking. Control is increased primarily by reducing distances between individuals and units. Guides may be increased over those normally used, depending upon the route selected.

(d) During a march, halts are made at regular intervals to rest personnel and to adjust equipment. Halts are regulated by the march order. All units in the column should be halted at the same time. Company and platoon commanders inspect their troops and equipment during halts. Under normal conditions, a 15-minute halt is made shortly after the march commences to adjust equipment. Following the first halt, a 10-minute halt is made after each 50 minutes of marching.

(4) Security.--In the administrative foot march, the probability of ground contact with the enemy is considered remote. Passive security measures against ground attack and both passive and active measures against air attack are taken in planning the march. Passive measures include the use of concealed or protected routes, night marches, increased interval between march elements, and dispersion when attacked. Active measures include the designation of air sentinels to give warning and the use of organic and attached weapons in defense.

c. Administrative Motor March.--An administrative motor march is the controlled movement of troops in motor vehicles when ground contact with the enemy is not anticipated. The march may be conducted using any type vehicles including tanks, trucks, or assault amphibious vehicles, but is generally performed utilizing a 2½-ton, 6x6 cargo truck. In the administrative march, troop units and their equipment are loaded into the vehicles in administrative groupings. Those passive and active security measures against ground and air attack described for foot marches generally apply to the motor march.

(1) Types of Motor March.--There are three basic types of motor marches which may be utilized in transporting units administratively in the route column:

(a) Close Column.--A close column is one in which the elements are formed as compactly as practicable. Vehicles follow at the least distance which safety, traffic conditions, and the tactical situation permit. This type of column is adopted when a road net must be used to its maximum capacity, when passing through congested areas where maximum control

is required, or for night marches under blackout conditions when visual contact must be maintained between vehicles.

(b) Open Column.--An open column is one in which the elements are widely separated for passive defense and driving safety. Intervals between vehicles should be large enough to permit overtaking vehicles to enter the column when necessary. This type is the best possible compromise between the requirements for maximum route use and tactical dispersion between vehicles. Column control is not as effective as in the close column, but far superior to that of infiltration. Open column marching also reduces fatigue and dust conditions.

(c) Infiltration.--Infiltration is accomplished by dispatching individual vehicles or small groups of vehicles over a specified route, thus giving the march the appearance of casual traffic. This type march reduces interference with other traffic to a minimum. It is used primarily to provide maximum secrecy, deception, and dispersion. Much less control is possible and drivers must be given extensive briefing as to routes, speeds, and traffic restrictions.

(2) Preparation for the March.--Preparation for a motor march is similar to that for a foot march. However, since motor marching is considerably more complex and sensitive to route conditions than is foot marching, more preliminary planning is normally required prior to the execution of a motor march.

(a) A warning order is issued. The purpose and format of this order are similar to the foot march warning order. Somewhat more lead time is given in order to prepare the vehicles for movement.

(b) The amount of reconnaissance effort required depends primarily upon the availability, detail, and reliability of road maps of the area to be traveled. In training areas within the United States, up-to-date and accurate road maps with complete road information are normally available. Therefore, in these areas, the route reconnaissance effort may consist of simply driving the proposed route to verify map mileage figures, to locate any recent detours, and to check proposed rest halt locations on the route for suitability. In combat zones, road information of the rear areas may be comparable to that found in the United States; while in the forward combat area, such information may be so limited that a detailed and extensive route reconnaissance will be required.

(c) As in the foot march, a march order is issued for movements of personnel and equipment from one location to another in a stated length of time.

(3) Entrucking

(a) An entrucking point is the location where a convoy or column, or element thereof, halts for the boarding of personnel. Normally, it is easier to move trucks than troops and their equipment. Therefore, an entrucking point should be selected which requires a minimum of foot marching by the troops. The entrucking point should afford a suitable area for the method of entrucking used and should have ready access to the proposed motor march route. There are many methods of entrucking. These range from detailed preloading plans covering the exact personnel and equipment for each truck, and the exact spot within the entrucking point that each

truck will be loaded, to the hasty move where each truck is loaded in rotation with no previous planning. The method to be used depends on the time available, loading conditions, and the troop leaders' ingenuity.

(b) Individual equipment such as packs and bedding rolls should be loaded aboard the same trucks as the troops in order to avoid loss and confusion in unloading. When trailers are available, they should be used for baggage and equipment and for loading mechanical mules when the march is to be conducted over hard surfaced roads. The mechanical mules are not designed for extensive operation on hard surfaced roads.

(4) Execution of the Motor March.--There are two methods of executing a motor march:

(a) In the single lift method either the open or closed column or infiltration may be used.

(b) The shuttling method is one in which the same vehicles make repeated trips to move troops and supplies.

(5) Halts.--Halts are made for rest, personal comfort and relief, refueling, messing, allowing other traffic to pass, checking vehicles and equipment, etc. Halts may be prescribed by higher echelon orders or by route regulating instructions. When the choice is left to the column commander, a halt of 15 minutes should be made at the end of the first hour. Thereafter, a 10-minute halt every 2 hours is advisable. One-half hour to an hour is normally prescribed for messing and refueling halts.

3203. TACTICAL COLUMN

a. General.--When the column commander's estimate of the probability of contact with the enemy changes from contact remote to contact improbable, he becomes more concerned with the security of the column. Subordinate units within the column are tactically grouped and adequate security to the front, flanks, and rear of the column is provided. If available, helicopters provide transportation for positioning, relieving, and advancing security elements and for aerial observation. The tactical column normally ends in the occupation of an assembly area in which preparations for an attack are made. During the movement, the enemy situation may cause a deployment into an approach march formation or attack formation from the tactical column.

b. Tactical Foot March.--The formation for conducting a tactical foot march is a staggered column of twos. The column is divided into a main body and security elements. With the exception of its tactical organization, the tactical march is conducted as generally described for the administrative foot march in subparagraph 3202b. Figure 27 shows the organization for a typical tactical march.

(1) Main Body

(a) The bulk of the forces comprising the column are tactically grouped in a column which advances on the assigned axis or route of march.

(b) The column formation for the main body permits ease of control and reasonably secure and rapid movement of the force.

(c) The main body provides its own flank security.

(2) Advance Guard

(a) An advance guard is a security detachment that precedes and protects the main body of the march column when it is in a tactical march formation. The advance guard provides for the uninterrupted

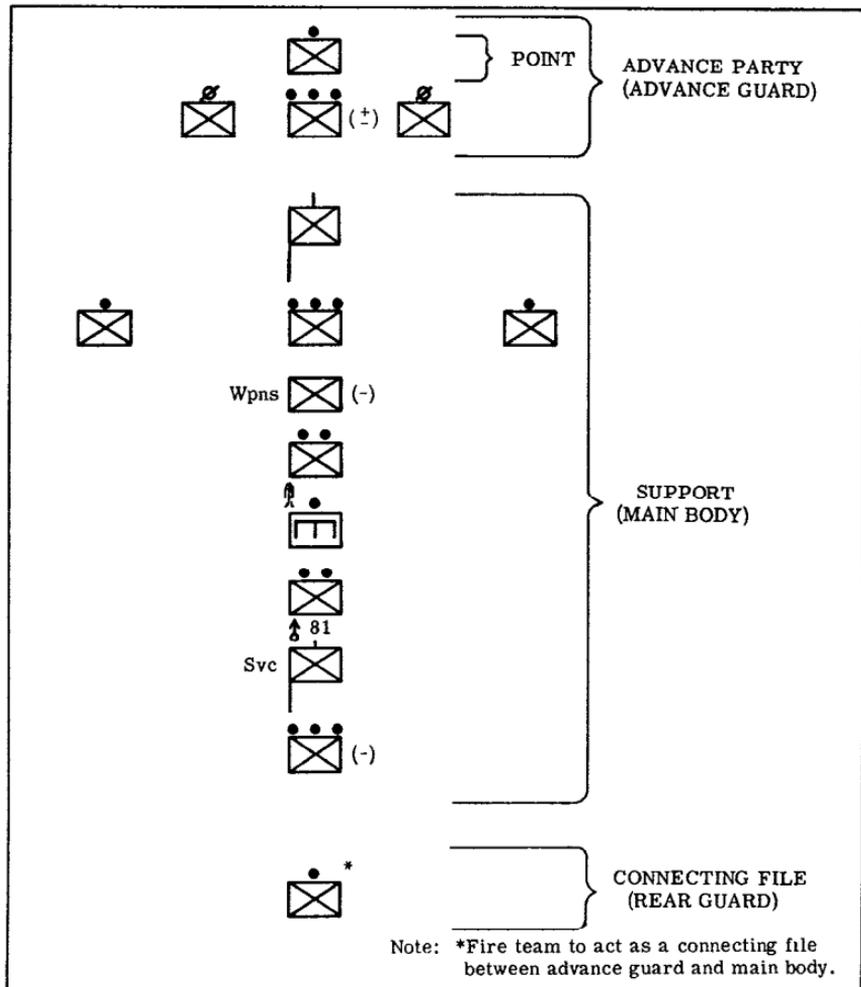


Figure 27.--A Typical Tactical March Column.

advance of the main body. Should the enemy be encountered in such strength as to require deployment of the main body or a portion of it, the advance guard covers the deployment.

(b) The advance guard company is subdivided from front to rear into a point, an advance party, and a support. Flank patrols are dispatched by both the advance party and the support to protect the flanks of their respective elements during the march.

(c) The advance guard for a rifle company marching alone is composed of one rifle platoon, acting as advance party. The advance guard for the rifle company does not contain a support.

(d) The advance guard function for a rifle platoon moving alone is performed by a squad or fire team size security element which precedes the platoon.

(e) The support is the maneuvering element of the advance guard. It comprises the largest part of the advance guard, reinforces the actions of the advance party, and furnishes patrols to protect its flanks.

(3) Advance Party

(a) The advance party is sent forward by the advance guard company and constitutes the reconnoitering element for the support. It accomplishes its security mission by providing and supporting a point and by furnishing its own immediate flank security.

(b) The advance party is generally a force of reinforced platoon strength which drives back enemy patrols and eliminates minor resistance. If enemy strength is such that the advance party is unable to destroy or dislodge him, the advance party covers the deployment of the support.

(4) Point.--The point is a squad size detachment sent forward by the advance party to give rear elements warning of enemy activity to the front. The point confines its activities to the axis of march in reconnoitering to the front and immediate flanks. It engages and drives back small, hostile parties encountered on the march route. When larger enemy units are encountered, the point develops the situation until stopped and covers the deployments of the larger units within the advance guard.

(5) Rear Guard.--The rear guard consists of a rear point and the rear party. The rear guard has no support and is large enough to protect the rear of the tactical column. It relieves the main body of the necessity for engaging in battle, protects the main body, and preserves its freedom of action. The rear guard for a rifle company marching alone normally consists of a rifle squad acting as rear point.

(6) Flank Guards

(a) Each major subdivision of the march column establishes security detachments which protect the flanks of the unit while on the march. A flank guard moves abreast of the main body of the march column and on a route parallel to it. It occupies successive key terrain features covering the routes of hostile approach into the march route of the column.

(b) The flank guard prevents the enemy from bringing effective flanking fire or observation to bear on the main body. Its mission requires it to engage the enemy as necessary. Decisive engagements should be avoided, but the flank guard is expected to fight as long as necessary to prevent exposure of the march column.

(c) The flank guard must move rapidly over greater distances in shorter periods of time than the march column. Often the terrain over which the flank guard moves is much more difficult than that of the march route taken by the column. Frequent relief of the flank guard is necessary. Relieving units station themselves ahead of the flank guard and relief is effected as the flank guard passes through.

(d) The flank guard regulates its movement on the rate of march of the main body. There are three basic techniques of movement which may be employed by the flank guard. The technique selected is dependent upon the rate of march of the main body, the enemy situation, and the terrain.

1 When the main body moves with a slow rate of advance, the flank guard advances by alternate bounds and occupies blocking positions dominating likely avenues of approach into the flank.

2 When movement of the main body is interspersed with frequent, short halts, the flank guard advances by successive bounds and occupies positions blocking avenues of approach into the flank.

3 A constant rate of advance by the main body normally requires the flank guard to advance by continuous movement in an appropriate combat formation.

(7) Security During Halts.--Security of the main body during halts in the march is ensured by the employment of security elements and march outposts.

(a) Consistent with the terrain, the advance guard, rear guard, and flank guards continue to perform their security missions by any combination of the following:

1 Occupying blocking positions located on dominant terrain which permit control of the avenues of approach into the halted main body.

2 Patrolling.

3 Establishing march outposts.

(b) March outposts are observation posts and patrols established for the protection of a command during a halt in a march. The march column commander further augments the security arrangements described in subparagraph (7)(a) by establishing march outposts as required to ensure the security of the command.

(8) Connecting Elements

(a) Contact between the various elements of the tactical march column is the responsibility of the larger unit. The commanders of

larger units establish connecting files or connecting groups to maintain contact with small units dispatched by them in the performance of security missions.

(b) Connecting files are individuals who march in the gaps between security elements and the larger units establishing them to maintain contact and relay messages and information between the two. When small units are charged with the same responsibilities, they are referred to as connecting groups. Connecting groups are usually of fire team size. They are reconstituted after each action involving their parent unit since they rejoin the latter on its commitment.

(c) The primary mission of a connecting file or group is to report the location and situation of the unit with which the file or group is maintaining contact. It may have a secondary mission to report information of its parent unit to the commander of the unit with which it is maintaining contact.

(d) Flank connecting files or groups that maintain contact with units guard or patrol on the flanks. Formation for flank connecting elements permits lateral extension. Connecting files use extended intervals between individuals. Connecting groups use the wedge or skirmishers right (left) formation to maintain contact between units.

(e) Individuals or fire teams used to maintain visual contact between elements in the tactical column are called column connecting files or groups. Connecting elements within the column, regardless of their size, normally use a column formation. They expand and contract this formation as necessary to maintain contact. Visual contact is maintained with the units being connected and within the connecting element itself.

c. Tactical Mechanized March.--Ordinarily, the rifle company conducts mechanized marches as part of the infantry battalion when the battalion moves as a mechanized column marching alone or as part of larger forces. The rifle company may move as a separate mechanized or motorized column when it is properly reinforced and the situation dictates its employment in rapid movements requiring independent action for short periods of time.

(1) Organization

(a) A force of the type required to conduct a mechanized march is task organized and contains the combat, combat support, and combat service support elements necessary to accomplish the mission. The force is a balanced task grouping of tanks and infantry with trucks and LVT's for mounting the infantry.

(b) The mechanized tactical march is organized into a main body, advance guard, and other security elements in the same manner as to the tactical foot march. The security elements are vehicle or helicopter transported and are deployed ahead of and to the flanks of the main body. The majority of the tanks in the task organization are well forward in the formation.

(c) The march column is organized to sustain rapid and uninterrupted movement. The bulk of the combat power is retained in the main body during movement to permit its rapid employment on contact. Care is taken to ensure that tactical units in the main body are mounted in

vehicles of similar cross-country mobility characteristics. If avoidable, a rifle company in the main body should not be partially mounted in assault amphibamphibious vehicles and partially in trucks as the flexibility of the company's employment is greatly reduced. Security elements, particularly the point and flank guard units, are mounted in light vehicles.

(d) The advance guard is a highly mobile task organization of tanks and mechanized infantry. Other support may be included in its task organization such as engineer and antitank units. The advance guard task organization should provide a concentration of firepower with a sustained combat capability, grouped under one commander. The flank protection for an advance guard unit is usually provided for by flank guard units of the main body. Figure 28 is a diagram of a typical advance guard rifle company task organization.

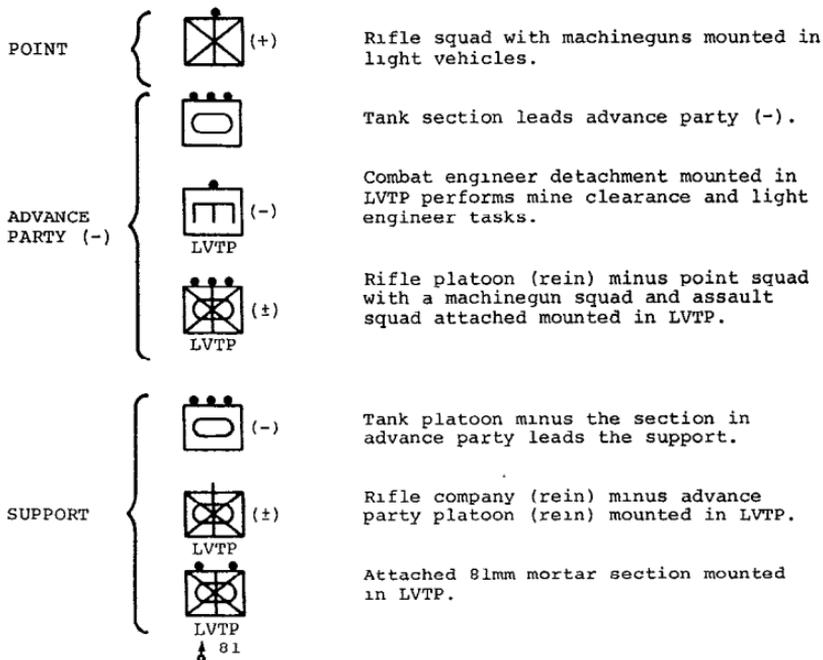


Figure 28.--A Typical Advance Guard Task Organization for Mechanized March.

(e) The advance party is a task organization of infantry, tanks, combat support, and combat service support elements necessary to provide the infantry mobility. The advance party establishes a point, usually mounted in light vehicles, which precedes the advance party by a short time interval. When the availability of vehicles or enemy activity does not permit mounting the point in light vehicles, the point precedes the advance party in other vehicles. The point and advance parties normally do not deploy elements to the flanks, but rely on observation and reconnaissance by fire for security.

(f) In some situations, the infantry battalion may be organized for mechanized movement on two axes. The battalion usually moves in two parallel columns within supporting distance of each other. Reconnaissance elements range ahead of the columns at considerable distances. Mechanized task organizations are formed to provide separate advance parties for each column. Contact is maintained between columns. Both columns are covered by a common rear guard.

(2) Conduct of the March

(a) The march moves as rapidly as the situation permits. The various echelons of the advance guard take rapid and aggressive offensive action to develop the situations encountered during the march.

(b) The point moves by bounds or alternate bounds along the march route in advance of the remainder of the advance party. The point may conduct extensive reconnaissance by fire with machineguns mounted on vehicles and other automatic weapons to develop the situation rapidly when the enemy is encountered or when his location is suspected.

(c) The advance party, minus the units comprising the point, follows the point at a time interval of about 2 minutes when the point is lightly mounted. Tanks are rarely employed with the point, but follow the point as leading element of the advance party in most cases. Rifle elements may ride the tanks as close-in protection when the column is extended and/or the terrain is close. The remaining rifle elements of the advance party are tactically grouped and mounted in assault amphibious vehicles which follow the tanks.

(d) The support follows the advance party at a time interval of about 5 minutes. It is task organized and tactically grouped with the tanks well forward. The tanks are closely followed by rifle units tactically mounted in assault amphibious vehicles.

(e) The main body follows the advance guard at a prescribed time interval and is mounted in assault amphibious vehicles or trucks. Tanks are well forward in the column.

(f) The rear guard follows the main body and is usually a task organization of tanks and mechanized infantry trailing the main body by a prescribed time interval. Its task organization is similar to the advance party. A rear point is established which follows the rear guard by bounds from one point of good rearward observation to the next.

(g) Flank guards are mounted in light vehicles and travel assigned routes parallel to the route of march for the main body. They are normally established by the march column commander and provide flank

security for the entire march column including the advance and rear guards. In difficult terrain when parallel routes for light vehicles are not available, the flank guards may be positioned, relieved, and advanced by employing helicopters. The helicopterborne positioning, relief, and advancement of flank guards is scheduled and controlled by the march column commander.

d. Tactical Motorized March

(1) Formation.--When the enemy's ability to seriously impede movement on the road net is considered slight and contact is improbable, a motorized column may be formed to conduct a tactical march.

(2) Organization

(a) The organization of the motorized march is very similar to that of the mechanized march except that the advance guard, the entire main body, and the rear guard are mounted in light vehicles.

(b) The vehicles comprising the entire motorized march column or vulnerable portions of the column may be hardened to provide additional protection against small arms fire. Additionally, troop elements mounted in each vehicle of the column or mounted in vehicles whose positions are particularly vulnerable may be tactically arranged within vehicles to defend against enemy ambush. Appendix D to this manual describes procedures for hardening motor vehicles and for tactically arranging the troops mounted in a vehicle to take effective counterambush action.

3204. APPROACH MARCH

a. General.--As the column commander's estimate of the probability of contact with the enemy changes to contact imminent, the march column increases its readiness for combat. Units in the main body are task organized and tactically grouped for immediate deployment from the march column. Tactical considerations in the organization of the column outweigh other considerations. Continued movement forward in the tactical column may develop the enemy situation sufficiently for the main body to deploy directly from the column and seize selected objectives, or the enemy situations may be developed so as to result in a partial deployment from the column. The partial deployment increases the march column's readiness for combat as it approaches a location from which to attack decisively. For example, the battalion is marching along in an uncovered movement to contact. The battalion commander may further increase his readiness for combat by ordering the advance guard to continue the march in a deployed, combat formation. The main body follows the deployed company in column to a location from which the battalion initiates the attack.

b. Rifle Company.--The rifle company may participate in the approach march as part of the battalion or as an independent force.

(1) When the rifle company marches as part of the battalion, it may be employed as the advance guard or as part of the main body. In employing the rifle company as part of the battalion main body, the considerations are essentially those of the tactical march.

(2) A rifle company employed as the advance guard in the approach march may conduct itself as described in paragraph 3203 for advance guards, or it may move in a deployed combat formation. The battalion

commander may elect to increase his readiness for combat by deploying one or more companies to protect the further forward movement of the column. In such cases, the advance guard company continues to move forward completely prepared for combat in a fully deployed combat formation. The formation selected is largely determined by the area which must be cleared to ensure the uninterrupted advance of the march elements following in trace. Leading platoons, employing scouting elements and utilizing cover and concealment, clear assigned areas of the march axis.

(3) A rifle company conducting an independent, uncovered movement to contact or moving independently from the battalion assembly area to the company attack position or line of departure may employ approach march techniques. When contact is imminent and the rifle company is moving independently, the company usually moves in column behind a rifle platoon deployed for combat. In short movements from the assembly area to the attack position or line of departure, the company may move in its initial attack formation.

c. Rifle Platoon.--When the rifle platoon is part of a deployed advance guard, it moves forward completely prepared for combat and fully deployed. The formation selected is determined by the area to be cleared, the nature of the terrain, and the rate of movement desired. A leading platoon utilizes maximum cover and concealment in its movements. Scouting elements move at the limit of visibility and within supporting distance of the forward squads to prevent surprise. These elements are under direct control of the rifle platoon commander.

3205. ASSEMBLY AREA

a. General.--The covered movement to contact normally terminates in the occupation of an assembly area. The assembly area is an area in which a command is assembled preparatory to further action.

b. Characteristics.--Desirable characteristics of an assembly area include the following:

- (1) Cover and concealment.
- (2) Adequate space for the dispersion of troops, equipment, and vehicles.
- (3) Ease of access and egress.
- (4) Adaptable to antimechanized defense.
- (5) Located beyond the effective range of enemy mortar and light artillery fires when possible.

c. Organization.--The rifle company occupies an assembly area which is normally designated by the battalion commander. In the assembly area, elements of the company are dispersed to the maximum practicable extent to reduce vulnerability to enemy fires. The company takes maximum advantage of the available cover and concealment. Camouflage discipline is employed. Elements of the company are dispersed to permit all-around defense, and security is posted to prevent surprise ground or air action. Antitank weapons, obstacles, and roadblocks are positioned to provide protection against armor.

d. Preparations.--In the assembly area, preparations for combat are commenced. They are as complete and detailed as the available time and the situation permit. Preparations include the following:

- (1) Weapons are checked, vehicles fueled.
- (2) Additional ammunition is drawn and distributed.
- (3) Equipment not required in the operation is staged for later disposition.
- (4) Special equipment needed for the operation is drawn and issued.
- (5) Troops are allowed to rest to the maximum extent possible consistent with security and preparations for the attack.
- (6) Maps or map substitutes are issued.
- (7) Units attached for the operation may join the command.
- (8) Communication equipment is checked for serviceability and frequencies and call signs are issued.
- (9) Specialized training and rehearsal may be conducted.

Section III. DAYLIGHT ATTACK

3301. GENERAL

a. The attack is characterized by fire, maneuver, and close combat. The purpose of this section is to provide the rifle company commander and his subordinate commanders with guidance in planning for, executing, and controlling the fire, maneuver, and close combat inherent in the attack of the rifle units during daylight.

b. When the daylight attack is planned, the battalion commander assigns missions to the rifle company, usually expressed in terms of terrain objectives to be seized, control measures, and designation of attached and/or supporting units.

(1) The rifle company may be all or a part of the main attack, the supporting attack, or the reserve of the infantry battalion. The company may be foot mobile, mechanized, or helicopter transported in the attack. When it is a reserve element of the battalion, it may utilize any form of mobility.

(2) The rifle platoon normally attacks as part of a coordinated company action. When appropriately reinforced, it may be employed for short periods of time as an independent force. Using the fires of organic, attached, and supporting weapons to neutralize the enemy, the platoon maneuvers its squads to positions from which to assault the enemy.

3302. TACTICAL CONTROL MEASURES

Infantry battalion, rifle company, and rifle platoon commanders control the maneuver elements of their respective units in the attack by utilizing required control measures. To give subordinate echelons maximum freedom of action, the minimum control measures necessary to ensure that the attack progresses in the desired manner are prescribed. Some of the more frequently used control measures are described below and illustrated in figure 29.

a. Zone of Action.--A zone of action is a tactical subdivision of a larger area the responsibility for which is assigned a tactical unit. It is designated by boundaries on one or both flanks, a line of departure, and a final objective. A unit is free to maneuver and fire throughout its assigned zone in accomplishing its mission. When the commander of a unit desires to enter or fire into the zone of an adjacent unit, he coordinates the matter with the adjacent unit commander and notifies the next higher commander of the action. A unit is not required to clear enemy resistance from its assigned zone of action unless specifically directed. Enemy resistance which does not jeopardize the accomplishment of the unit's mission may be bypassed, provided such action is promptly reported to the next higher commander. When a commander issues oral orders unaccompanied by overlays, the zone of action is described as a frontage measured along the line of departure and boundaries designated along terrain features or the flank of an adjacent unit. A zone of action should include at least one adequate approach to the objective.

b. Boundaries.--Boundaries defining a zone of action extend forward only as far as the particular situation requires and to the rear of the line

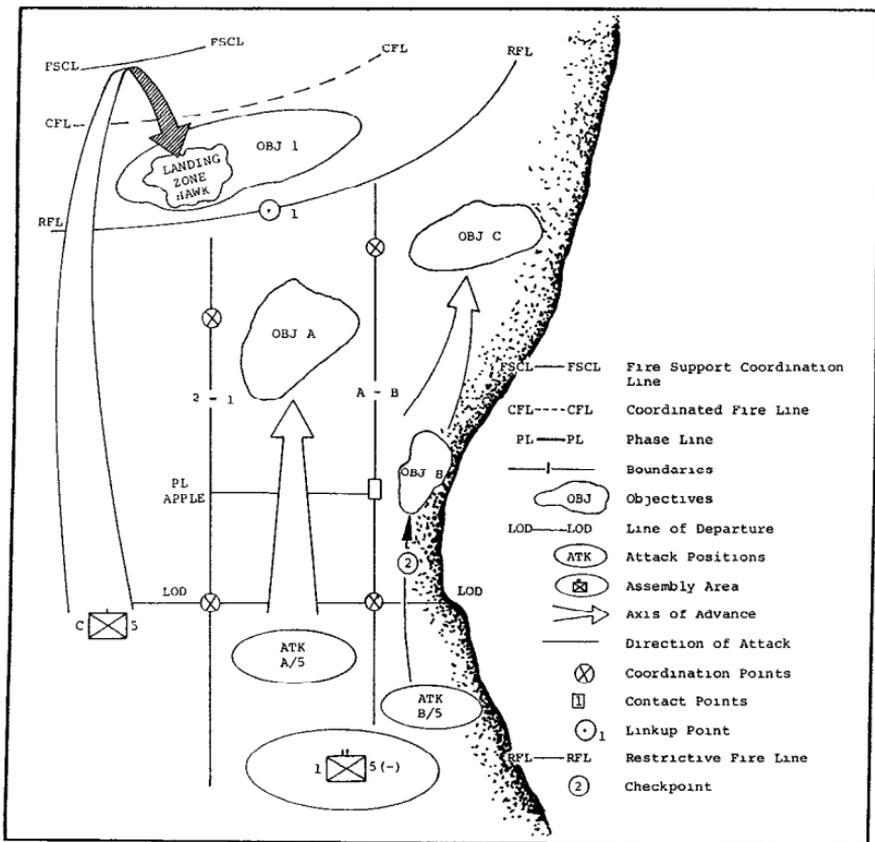


Figure 29.--Control Measures.

of departure a sufficient distance to accommodate the responsible unit's logistic and command facilities. Boundary lines are usually drawn along easily recognizable terrain features in such a manner that division of responsibility for key terrain features is avoided. If one flank is exposed, the commander does not normally designate a boundary on that flank. The commander then determines the width of his zone by analyzing the mission, his mobility, and the ability of his unit to maneuver in the zone without risk of defeat. The presence and locations of reconnaissance elements on the flank further determine the width of the zone of action.

c. **Line of Departure (LOD).**--The line of departure is a line designated to coordinate the beginning of an attack. Desirably, it should be easily recognizable on the ground, generally perpendicular to the direction of the attack, under control of friendly units, and not subject to direct fire or observation by the enemy. For units not in contact, a line of

departure is normally based upon terrain. When the line of departure cannot be fixed on terrain as in a passage of lines, forward friendly dispositions (FFD) may be designated as the line of departure; i.e., LOD is FFD. The present major positions (PPOs) of the unit may be designated as the line of departure; i.e., LOD is PPOs.

(1) The time of attack is usually prescribed in the battalion order unless the company is attacking independently. It is the time at which the leading elements of the attacking platoons must cross the line of departure. In conjunction with the line of departure, the time of attack ensures the company or platoon commander that his attacking element and fire support elements are coordinated at the commencement of the attack.

(2) In some instances, the line of departure specified by the battalion commander may be unsuitable for elements of the company. The company commander may select and use a company line of departure in the vicinity of that prescribed for the battalion. In such instances, the company commander must adjust the time of the attack across the line of departure he selects. The leading attack elements of the company must cross the battalion line of departure at the time prescribed in the battalion order.

(3) When the line of departure is a line held by another unit already in contact, coordination is required to ensure the uninterrupted passage of lines and minimize the time that a lucrative target may be offered. Speed and secrecy must be emphasized in guiding the attacking elements.

d. Attack Position.--The attack position is the last concealed and covered position short of the line of departure which is occupied by an attacking unit. It is the location where final coordination, last-minute preparations, and deployment into the initial attack formation are effected. It should be occupied for the minimum time necessary.

(1) A halt in the attack position is made only when final preparations cannot be completed in the assembly area or during movement from the assembly area. Any unnecessary delay in the attack position needlessly exposes the unit to enemy fires and may reduce the degree of surprise.

(2) The attack position is normally selected by the company commander except when close control is desired by the battalion commander. An attack position offers concealment and cover, is easily recognizable on the ground, permits radio communications to the battalion, and is large enough to accommodate the company when it is dispersed in its initial formation.

e. Axis of Advance.--An axis of advance is a line of advance extending in the direction of the enemy that indicates the general direction along which attacking elements will move. It should extend only as far as this form of control is essential to the overall plan. Normally, it is depicted by a broad arrow from the line of departure to the objective, following an avenue of approach. The axis of advance conveys to the commander to which it is assigned, that his unit is expected to attack along the axis and not allow small enemy forces to delay the advance to and seizure of the objective. It further indicates that the commander may maneuver his forces and place his fires freely to either side of the axis to avoid obstacles, to engage the enemy, or to bypass enemy forces of such strength that could not threaten his security or jeopardize the accomplishment of his mission.

The commander should ensure that such deviation does not interfere with adjacent units, that his unit remains oriented to the objective, and that the location and size of the bypassed enemy forces are reported to higher headquarters. In mechanized operations, this control measure is most frequently used against light, disorganized, or discontinuous enemy resistance, such as may be encountered in the exploitation or pursuit where the need for a closely coordinated attack does not exist.

f. Direction of Attack.--A direction of attack is a specific direction or route which the main attack or center of mass of the unit will follow. The terrain along the direction of attack must be cleared of effective enemy resistance. Because of its restrictive nature, a direction of attack is normally used only when a commander must maintain close control over the maneuver of subordinate elements to accomplish a closely coordinated scheme of maneuver. It is often used to designate the direction of a counter-attack. A direction of attack is depicted graphically by an unlabeled arrow or is described orally with relation to identifiable terrain features or by magnetic azimuth.

g. Phase Line (PL).--A phase line is a line utilized for control and coordination. It is usually located on an easily recognizable terrain feature and extends across a zone of action. Phase lines are used to control the forward movement of units. Units report arrival at and, at times, clearance of phase lines but do not halt unless ordered to do so. A phase line may be used to limit the advance of attacking elements.

h. Objective.--An objective is a locality or geographical feature to be captured or reached in the course of an attack or during movement. Assigned objectives must be seized and controlled.

(1) Objectives may be:

(a) Terrain which dominates all or the major portion of the company or platoon zone of action or axis of advance and which, if occupied by the enemy, would jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission.

(b) Terrain from which a subsequent coordinated attack will be launched.

(c) Terrain required for purposes of controlling the attack as in areas where observation is limited or where distances involved require displacements of supporting weapons.

(2) Terrain features selected as objectives should have as many of the following characteristics as possible:

(a) Easily recognizable on the ground.

(b) Provide for convergence of effort.

(c) Within effective range of indirect fire support.

(d) Of such size as to be controlled by the unit after seizure.

(3) The number of objectives selected should be the minimum required to maintain control, coordination, and the progress of the attack in the manner desired by the commander.

i. Final Coordination Line.--The final coordination line is a line used to coordinate the ceasing and shifting of supporting fires and the final deployment of the assault echelon in preparation for launching an assault against an enemy position. It is located as close to enemy positions on the objective as assaulting troops can move before becoming dangerously exposed to friendly supporting fires. It should be recognizable on the ground and be within 150 meters of enemy positions on the objective. Ideally, the final coordination line should offer concealment and cover, although it should be cleared quickly. When a requirement exists for two or more elements of a unit to assault simultaneously, elements of the assault echelon may be halted momentarily to await the arrival of other elements.

(1) When enemy positions are known and supporting fires can be carefully planned in advance, the company commander may select a tentative final coordination line while planning the attack. He normally does so for objectives on which simultaneous assaults by two or more platoons are planned.

(2) The rifle platoon commander selects tentative final coordination lines for attacks in which the company does not plan coordinated assaults.

(3) Often a tentative final coordination line cannot be designated ahead of time. The final coordination line is selected by the assault element leader during the attack when a tentative line has not been designated. He may also adjust the location of the final coordination line when a tentative line has been previously designated.

j. Restrictive Fire Line (RFL).--The restrictive fire line is a line established between converging friendly forces (one or both may be moving) that prohibits fires or effects from the fires across the line without coordination with the affected force. The RFL is utilized to regulate all supporting fires and airstrikes occurring between forces involved in linkup operations. Neither of the forces involved requests or delivers supporting fires or strikes across the RFL without prior clearance from the other. As the linkup becomes imminent, the RFL is moved as close to the stationary force as possible to allow maximum freedom of action and maneuver of fire support to the linkup force. As the distance between forces is narrowed, coordination of supporting arms becomes more critical. Therefore, the loss of air and naval gunfire in the phases of the linkup is inevitable and the commander must be prepared for restricted use of his supporting artillery and, finally, total reliance upon organic weapons. At this point in the linkup, and thereafter, the responsibility for fire support coordination for the force as a whole must be clearly established. The RFL is selected by the fire support coordinator (FSC) in conjunction with the recommendations of the supporting arms representatives, taking into consideration the plan of operations and the plan of supporting fires. It is reviewed and approved by the commander or his designated representative. As the linkup progresses, it is reviewed, changed, or modified in the same manner as the original line.

k. Coordinated Fire Line (CFL).--The coordinated fire line is a line beyond which conventional surface fire support means (mortars, field artillery, and naval gunfire ships) may fire any time within the zone of the establishing headquarters without additional coordination. Artillery and/or ships do not fire short of the CFL except on request of the supported infantry commander. Beyond the CFL supporting fires may be delivered at any

time without danger to friendly troops. The infantry commander is responsible for selecting the exact location of the CFL and solicits recommendations from his supporting artillery commander and artillery liaison officers. Location of the CFL is based on such factors as the scheme of maneuver, patrol plans, and troop safety.

l. Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL).--The fire support coordination line is used to coordinate tactical air support with ground combat operations. Short of the FSCL, aircraft do not attack ground targets except on request/approval of the appropriate infantry commander; beyond the FSCL, targets may be engaged without specific clearance. The FSCL is established by the commander landing force in consultation with the ground element and tactical air commanders. When an infantry force is deployed beyond the FSCL, an FSCL is established around the detached force. Selection of the FSCL is based on the scheme of maneuver, troop safety, terrain, weather, and type of attack aircraft; it should be easy to identify both on a map and from the air.

m. Base Unit.--A base unit is that unit within a formation upon which the remainder of the formation guides for speed and direction of movement. It is assigned by the commander of the formation of which it is a part. During daylight hours, the unit with the most difficult terrain to cross or the heaviest enemy resistance in its zone of action is normally assigned as a base unit. At night, or under conditions of reduced visibility, the base unit is usually that unit which can most easily maintain its direction and speed. In a column, the base unit is the leading element of the formation.

n. Checkpoints.--Checkpoints are reference points used to facilitate control. Checkpoints may be selected throughout the zone of action or along an axis of advance or direction of attack. By reference to them, a subordinate commander may rapidly and accurately report his successive locations, and a higher commander may designate objectives, line of departure, assembly areas, or other localities to subordinate commanders. For security, random numbering of checkpoints is essential. Checkpoints are particularly useful in fast-moving mounted operations.

o. Contact Points.--Contact points are easily recognized points designated between units where the commander desires the units to make physical contact. Contact points may also be used to delineate areas of responsibility in specific localities when boundaries are obviously unsuitable; e.g., between elements of a flank guard. Contact points may be used during the consolidation of an objective to designate where units will coordinate the organization of the position.

p. Linkup Point.--A linkup point has primary application in the composite helicopterborne/surface-landed operation, but may be used on other occasions as indicated by the situation. Linkup points are selected at which physical contact between the two forces will occur. These points are mutually agreed upon and should be readily recognizable to both forces. They are located where the routes of advance of the linkup force intersect the security elements of the stationary force. Alternate linkup points are established. Enemy action may force linkup to occur at places other than those planned. The number of linkup points established depends upon the capability of the stationary force, the number of routes being used by the linkup force, nature of terrain, and enemy threats to the operation. Troops manning the points, as well as the units contacting them, must be familiar

with procedures for mutual identification and plans for the rapid passage of the advancing units. Assistance by the stationary force includes removing obstacles established to hinder enemy movement, providing guides, and reserving assembly areas for the reorganization of linkup forces.

q. Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR).--A tactical area of responsibility is a defined area of land for which responsibility is specifically assigned to the commander of the area as a measure for control of assigned forces and coordination of support. A commander assigned a TAOR is responsible for the positive control and coordination of all activities within its periphery. TAOR's are employed when conditions of wide unit separation require a distinction between tactical localities which are to be seized and/or defended and the extensive intervening areas which need only be maintained under reconnaissance and surveillance or security.

(1) All fire or maneuver conducted within the TAOR, or whose effects impinge upon it, is coordinated with the commander of the force assigned the TAOR.

(2) The boundary outlining the periphery of the TAOR is located on recognizable terrain and includes terrain features essential to operations of the organization.

3303. PREPARATION FOR THE ATTACK

a. Where feasible, each echelon within the chain of command issues warning orders in order to permit subordinate echelons to conduct early planning and to initiate preparations for the attack. The warning order is usually fragmentary and contains the following information:

- (1) Time of attack.
- (2) Mission.
- (3) Preliminary plan for employment.
- (4) Information pertaining to the issuance of the attack order.
- (5) Necessary administrative instructions.

b. Upon receipt of a warning order, the company commander and platoon commanders carry out the troop leading steps contained in paragraph 1405 and ensure that as many of the preparations for combat contained in paragraph 3205 as possible are carried out.

3304. PLAN OF ATTACK

The plan of attack consists of the scheme of maneuver and a fire support plan. In arriving at the plan of attack, the scheme of maneuver and fire support plan are developed concurrently, based on the commander's estimate of the situation. The available supporting fires are planned to support the scheme of maneuver. The commander ensures that his scheme of maneuver and fire support plan are mutually compatible and capable of being supported logistically and with communications.

3305. SCHEME OF MANEUVER

The scheme of maneuver is the commander's plan for employing his subordinate, attached, and supporting units, other than fire support units, to accomplish the mission. The scheme of maneuver includes provisions for:

a. Distribution of Forces.--Paragraph 3104 contains a brief, general discussion of the distribution of forces.

(1) The rifle company commander distributes his forces to a main attack, a supporting attack, and a reserve. Attacking echelons, fire support echelons, and reserves are specifically designated in the attack order. Usually, the supporting attack is an attack by fire while the main attack is composed of one or more rifle platoons maneuvering to seize assigned terrain objectives.

(2) The rifle platoon commander distributes his forces to the main and supporting attacks. Maneuvering squads and fire support units are specifically designated in the platoon attack order. The rifle platoon does not normally designate a reserve, but preserves a degree of flexibility in the attack by the judicious selection of attack formations. The supporting attack is normally an attack by fire from a designated base of fire and/or fires from external agencies, while the main attack is composed of one or more rifle squads maneuvering to positions from which to assault assigned objectives.

b. Form of Maneuver.--The form of maneuver selected for the attack is largely predicated upon the avenues of approach to the assigned objective and the cover and concealment offered by those avenues. Both the rifle company and the rifle platoon may employ either the frontal attack or the single envelopment in daylight attack.

c. Formation.--The initial attack formation is the disposition of subordinate units as they cross the line of departure. The formation is changed as required during the conduct of the attack. The company commander and the platoon commander plan to employ sufficient combat power to ensure success. Formations are selected which, when combined with the available fire support, provide the margin of superiority in combat power necessary to accomplish the mission.

(1) The company commander determines how many rifle platoons he will use in the attack echelon and how many will be retained in reserve. There are no fixed conditions which determine the most appropriate formation for a given situation.

(a) A formation of one platoon in the attack and two platoons in reserve provides limited firepower to the front and a strong reserve. It may be appropriate when information concerning the enemy is vague or when the company is attacking with one or both flanks exposed. The formation may be utilized when only a single, narrow avenue of approach is available or when attacking to seize a deep objective. The reserve platoons may follow the attacking platoon in company column or they may be positioned abreast to protect one or both exposed flanks of the company. The formation provides infinite variety in the positioning and movement of the reserve platoons and gives the company commander maximum flexibility in maneuver and control.

(b) Two platoons in the attack and one platoon in reserve provide moderate firepower to the front while retaining a reserve large enough to influence the action. This formation may be appropriate when relatively detailed information of the enemy is available.

(c) When three platoons are employed in the attack echelon, the company lacks a reserve with which to influence the action. This formation provides maximum firepower to the front and may be appropriate when a wide area must be cleared rapidly or when the enemy situation is known and the company is attacking in a wide zone of action.

(2) The rifle platoon commander selects an initial attack formation; however, he may be able to foresee changing to other formations as the attack progresses. The choice of formations is affected to a great degree by the available avenues of approach. It is also influenced by the need for security, control, flexibility, and speed. Proximity of the objective may be a factor in selection of the formation. On occasion, the platoon commander prescribes the initial formations within his rifle squads. Formations used by the platoon are:

(a) Platoon Column.--The platoon column facilitates control and favors action to the flanks. It employs minimum firepower forward and is used when speed and control are governing factors and when visibility is limited. It is suitable for advancing through narrow, covered avenues of approach with maximum speed and control.

(b) Platoon Wedge.--The platoon wedge facilitates control, provides good all-around security, and is an extremely flexible formation. It permits the delivery of reasonable firepower to the front or flanks. The wedge is used when the enemy is known to be in the area, but his exact dispositions and strengths are not clear. Additionally, terrain and visibility may require dispersion of the platoon. The wedge tends to prevent the bulk of the platoon from becoming prematurely engaged and permits flexibility in the employment of the squads when contact with the enemy is established.

(c) Platoon Vee.--The platoon vee facilitates movement into the platoon line formation. The vee provides excellent firepower to both the front and the flanks. It is used primarily when the enemy's strength and locations to the front are known. The formation is easily controlled, provides good all-around security, but is less maneuverable than the wedge.

(d) Echelon.--The echelon formation is difficult to control. As a consequence, movements in the echelon are slow and the formation is difficult to maneuver. It provides heavy firepower to the front and in the direction of echelonnement. It is used primarily in protecting an exposed flank. The formation may be echeloned to the right or left.

(e) Line.--The line formation allows the platoon to develop maximum firepower forward. It is difficult to control and maneuver and is most often used in the coordinated assault of all three squads.

d. Control.--In developing the scheme of maneuver, plans for controlling the maneuver elements are considered. Each maneuver element is basically controlled by being given a specific mission prescribing its role in the scheme of maneuver. Missions assigned to attacking platoons and maneuvering rifle squads are usually expressed in terms of terrain objectives

to be seized. Company and platoon commanders control the attack by using the tactical control measures described in paragraph 3302. Only the minimum necessary control measures are imposed in order to preserve freedom of action by subordinate commanders. Both the company and platoon commanders continue to control their respective organizations during the attack. The company commander usually accomplishes this by establishing a vantage point from which he can observe his units and communicate with them. The platoon leader does not normally operate from an OP but selects a position in his platoon formation from which he can best control his attack. Both commanders have assistants that they use in controlling the attack. (See par. 1204.)

e. Continuation of the Attack.--When the attack is to be continued beyond the initial objective, the company commander and the platoon commander make preliminary plans for continuing the attack while formulating the initial plan of attack. Preliminary planning reduces the time required for reconnaissance and troop leading after seizure of the initial objective. The preliminary plan for continuing the attack embodies the essential elements of any plan of attack. Portions of it may be included in the initial attack order to clarify the commander's intention when they serve to complement the basic plan. It is continuously refined as the estimate of the situation on which it was based is altered during the conduct of the initial attack. After the initial objective is seized, the preliminary plan and its refinements are the bases for issuing a fragmentary order implementing a continuation of the attack to seize deeper objectives.

f. Consolidation.--Consolidation is the organization and strengthening of a newly captured position and includes the reorganization of the successful attacking units.

(1) The company commander considers plans for the consolidation of the objective in formulating his scheme of maneuver. The responsibility of the rifle platoons for defending the assigned objective or the assigned portion of the objective is normally implicit in the assignment of their attack missions. For example, a platoon assigned the mission, "attack and seize the left half of objective A," need not be assigned the further mission of consolidating that portion of objective A. The company commander provides specific consolidation instructions only when necessary to clarify or further delineate the platoon's responsibility in that regard. The company consolidation plan designates general position areas and assigns missions to organic and attached weapons over which the company commander has control. When necessary, it may also direct changes in the method of employment of supporting weapons. Proper positioning of the reserve to support consolidation or for continuation of the attack is planned. The company commander contributes to the early reorganization of his unit by planning for and issuing instructions regarding timely resupply, vehicular movement, casualty reporting and evacuation, as well as movement and general location of the command post and security measures.

(2) The rifle platoon commander, even in the absence of specific consolidation instructions, assigns consolidation missions to each rifle squad and attached unit. The plan includes both routine or SOP type security measures, special instructions for security, and preparations to facilitate future actions. The security measures provide for the designation of general position areas, the rapid emplacement of automatic weapons in the best available position to cover reorganization, specific missions for attached weapons, and all special security precautions. Reorganization

is accomplished on the objective by evacuating casualties, reassigning personnel, redistributing and replenishing the ammunition supply, and doing everything possible to prepare the platoon for further combat.

g. Plan for Use of Reserves

(1) The rifle company commander plans to withhold a reserve when the situation permits. Its initial location is often a covered or concealed area a short distance behind the line of departure. The commander plans subsequent, identifiable locations to maintain the reserve far enough forward to ensure its availability, but far enough to the rear to stay out of the attacking platoons' fire fights. The reserve displaces from one location to another on order of the company commander. The company commander may place all or part of the reserve in the zone of the rifle platoon expected to make the best progress, or he may echelon all or part of it toward an exposed flank. If a large gap develops between attacking platoons, he may direct the reserve to follow between them. Appropriate missions include one or more of the following:

- (a) Attack from a new direction.
- (b) Assume the mission of an attacking platoon.
- (c) Protect one or both flanks of the company.
- (d) Mop up a position which has been overrun or bypassed by attacking platoons.
- (e) Maintain contact with adjacent units.
- (f) Protect the reorganization of the attacking platoons.
- (g) Support the attacking platoons or adjacent units by fire.

(2) The rifle platoon does not normally designate and withhold a reserve. An attacking rifle platoon preserves its flexibility by using formations which withhold at least one squad from initial contact with the enemy to the front. Advancing the rear squad forward by bounds from one covered or concealed position to the next prevents it from being subjected to enemy fires directed at the leading squad or squads. The squads in the platoon formation move well within supporting distances of one another. The rear squad or squads in the formation are available for employment as maneuver elements or to reinforce the fires of the leading squads. Employing scouts forward of the leading squad or squads and advancing the platoon from cover to cover behind the scouts may be necessary to further preserve the platoon's flexibility. In these situations, the platoon commander must be able to observe and control both the scouts and leading squads in order to make continuing estimates.

h. Security.--Security of his unit is the continuing responsibility of each unit leader in the rifle company. Security measures are planned against enemy air and ground action. Security measures are designed to provide warning in time to permit the necessary deployment of forces or other actions to meet the threat.

(1) The company may attack with one or both flanks exposed. The company commander may position all or part of his reserve to protect an exposed flank. Combat patrols from the reserve may be planned to cover likely avenues of approach into the flank. Reconnaissance patrols, provided with rapid communication means, may be used as flank security elements. Connecting groups which periodically report the location of the flank of an adjacent unit add a degree of security by keeping the company commander informed regarding the situation on the flank.

(2) The close-in security of the command post is provided by personnel available at the command post under the general supervision of the executive officer. The security of the command post is increased when it is located near reserve elements of the company. When the command group operates from an observation post, the gunnery sergeant takes appropriate close-in security measures utilizing command group personnel.

(3) The rifle platoon commander provides for unit security in the attack by the selection of appropriate attack formations, observation, and the employment of scouting elements. Timely and accurate reports of enemy sightings from all levels enable him to make sound estimates for appropriate action.

(4) The weapons platoon commander concerns himself with close-in security of weapons under his control in the attack. He selects firing positions which offer cover or concealment and, where possible, are located in the vicinity of rifle units. Security of weapons units attached to the rifle platoons are the planning responsibilities of the rifle platoon commanders.

3306. FIRE SUPPORT PLAN

In offensive operations, the proper utilization of available fire support is essential to the most efficient and economical accomplishment of the mission. The fire support plan as an element of the plan of attack supports the scheme of maneuver and is developed concurrently with it. The fire support plan includes targets to be engaged, time of delivery of fire, duration of fire, types of fires and weapons to be used, communications, and time of displacement. The plan is based on the scheme of maneuver, information received from higher headquarters, the terrain, information concerning the enemy, and recommendations from fire support unit leaders and forward observers. In developing a fire support plan, such items as the nature of the target, effects desired, weapons capabilities, and availability of ammunition are considered. In general, the fire support plan provides for planned fires to neutralize known and suspected enemy positions in support of the maneuver elements.

a. Prerangement of Fires.--Effective fire support planning is predicated upon the close integration and coordination of the fires which each fire support agency can deliver in support of the attack. The degree of prerangement of these fires is classified as follows:

(1) Preplanned Fires.--Preplanned fires are fires for which firing data is prepared in advance. They may be either scheduled or on call fires.

(a) Scheduled fires are preplanned as to location and time of firing and are usually delivered as preparation fire.

(b) On call fires are preplanned as to location only and are fired on request. These fires are planned on known and suspected enemy locations to cover the movement to the objective, the assault, and the consolidation.

(2) Targets of Opportunity.--Fires on targets of opportunity cannot be prearranged and are requested and fired as new targets appear in areas not covered by preplanned fires.

b. Sequence of Delivery.--In offensive operations, supporting fires are normally planned for and delivered in the following sequence:

(1) Fires prior to the preparation are controlled by higher echelons and include registration fires preparatory to supporting the attack.

(2) Preparation fires consist of an attack by fire on hostile positions through the delivery of a system of scheduled fires prior to, during, and after the attacking echelons have crossed the line of departure. The preparation is coordinated with the scheme of maneuver and is designed to destroy or neutralize enemy installations likely to interfere with the attack, gain superiority over hostile counterfire means, disrupt hostile command and communication systems, and isolate the battle area. Higher commanders usually determine whether a preparation will be fired as well as its duration.

(3) Fires in support of the attack are delivered to assist the movement toward the objective and the assault. All types of weapons are employed in firing on call missions covering known or suspected enemy installations which might affect the maneuver. These fires aid in gaining fire superiority for each successive objective and include fires on targets of opportunity.

(4) Fires to support consolidation of the objective are planned as on call fires to cover logical enemy avenues of approach into the objective and assembly areas which might be used to organize a counterattack. Their purpose is to disrupt his counterattack preparations in the assembly areas and to break up his attack. On call fires are supplemented by fires on targets of opportunity as they appear.

c. Planning Assistance.--The weapons platoon commander, the 81mm mortar forward observer, and the artillery forward observer are the company commander's principal assistants in fire support planning. They make recommendations to the company commander concerning the employment of the fire support agencies at their disposal.

(1) The weapons platoon commander implements the company commander's decision by preparing and issuing an attack order derived from the mission assigned to the weapons platoon. The mission assigned by the company commander usually incorporates the recommendations of the weapons platoon commander.

(2) The forward observers implement the company commander's decision by initiating the requests for fires. Fires requested normally include prearranged fires desired by the company commander and fires requested by the rifle platoons which are approved by the company commander.

d. Company Fire Planning.--Company fire planning involves the use of all available fires, including those of organic, attached, and supporting weapons.

(1) Preparation Fires.--Preparation fires are normally planned at higher echelons. The rifle company commander integrates the fires of weapons over which he has control into these preparation fires. In addition, he makes recommendations to the battalion concerning targets to be included in the preparation.

(2) Fires in Support of Attack.--The company commander plans fires in support of the attack which cover the forward movement of maneuver elements and the assault on the objective. Fires in support of the attack usually consist of a combination of direct fires and on call indirect fires. Provision is made for delivery of the greatest concentration of fires on the objective just prior to the assault. Often the fires available cannot effectively engage all known or suspected enemy positions simultaneously. In such cases, it may be necessary to plan fires designed to successively neutralize enemy positions likely to have the greatest effect on the accomplishment of the mission during various stages of the attack. These fires are planned on call and delivered at appropriate times during the attack. On call fires desired by the attacking platoons are approved or disapproved by the company commander. Approved requests for fires are relayed to the appropriate agencies.

(3) Fires to Support Consolidation.--On call fires are planned to cover the consolidation of objectives. Likely enemy avenues of approach into the objective and probable assembly areas are determined from ground and map reconnaissance. Fires are planned to deny their use to the enemy. The rapid and timely displacement of organic, attached, and supporting weapons to new positions from which to support the consolidation is planned.

(4) Unit in Contact Support.--Fire support from a unit in contact may be made available to an attacking rifle company passing through or around its position. The attacking company commander coordinates with the unit commander and integrates the additional fires into his plan.

(5) Supporting Arms Representative's Responsibility.--As the rifle company commander's chief representatives for supporting arms, the artillery and mortar FO's and the battalion NGF spotter, if available, are responsible for planning and advising in the application of their fire support means. The company commander points out the hostile targets on the ground, expressing his desires as to destruction or neutralization necessary to accomplish the company's mission. He also indicates illumination or smoke requirements, special patterns or effects on the ground, and the desired degree of prearrangement for supporting fires. Target assignments are made within the capabilities of each supporting arm available. Requests for prearranged fires, when approved by the company commander, are submitted to the liaison officers of the respective supporting arms in the infantry battalion FSCC for approval and to the appropriate unit control agency (fire direction center (FDC), combat information center (CIC)).

(a) The rifle company commander approves the individual list of targets prepared by the supporting arms representatives, forward observers, and spotters, ensuring that they meet his expressed desires and those of his platoon commanders prior to submission to the FSCC for integration with other requests.

(b) The supporting arms representatives generally ascertain through concurrent planning that their fire support agencies can or cannot provide the desired fires contained on the list of targets, and whether additional reinforcing means will be available.

(c) The submitted list of targets contains the target descriptions, coordinates, altitudes, sizes of areas, and appropriate remarks. Any requirements for groups or series of fires may be included or arranged with the liaison officer and supporting arms agencies in order to fulfill foreseen or probable requirements for on call fires to cover a particular combat action of the company and/or its elements. These prearranged groups and series of fires preclude lengthy transmissions of requests for several individual targets. (See FMFM 7-4, Field Artillery Support.)

(d) Coordination and integration of the requested fires are effected in the infantry battalion FSCC and the supporting arms control agencies and are forwarded successively to higher echelons for approval. Upon final approval, a completed fire support plan, including the approved company fire support request, is disseminated to elements of the landing force. The FSCC is responsible for advising the company commander of approval or disapproval of his request. Supporting arms representatives, additionally, inform the company commander of approved fires and their target numbers upon receipt by them.

(e) The supporting arms representatives remain near or accompany the company commander throughout the action in order to ensure rapid and responsive fire support. Where the necessity to occupy a vantage point as a position for observation of the company's entire zone of action precludes this, the supporting arms representatives remain in contact with the infantry commander by wire and/or radio.

(6) Platoon Commanders' Responsibilities.--Platoon commanders may request prearranged fires to augment platoon fire support plans. This is particularly significant when a platoon's plan of attack involves the seizure of platoon intermediate objectives. The company commander, upon approving the requested prearranged fires, consolidates them with his own requests and forwards the request as discussed in the preceding paragraph. Platoon commanders are informed of the approval or disapproval of their fires and target numbers.

(7) Control of Fires.--The company commander's fire support plan includes adequate means for controlling the fires supporting the attack. Control means include radio, messenger, and wire communications, and the use of visual signals for calling, checking, or shifting fires.

(a) Direct fire weapons are usually controlled by the use of visual signals, but instructions may be delivered by radio, wire, or messenger.

(b) Indirect fires are controlled by use of the company communication system and forward observer radio or wire nets. The company commander exercises centralized control of indirect fires when the scheme of maneuver dictates. He may decentralize control when the requirements imposed by the scheme of maneuver are less stringent. For example, when the planned scheme of maneuver requires a closely coordinated attack, on-call fires are centrally controlled by the company commander. He calls,

shifts, and checks the fires by direct instructions to the forward observers during the attack. When the scheme of maneuver requires less coordination, less centralized control is exercised. The company commander informs his platoon commanders concerning the details of the fire support plan. Prearranged target locations and their identifying numbers are published in the company attack order. The platoon commanders may then request delivery of planned fires as necessary in conducting their attacks. The company commander monitors the requests and, if he approves them, directs the appropriate forward observer to initiate the fire request. In employing decentralized control, the platoon commander's requests are disapproved when the company commander determines that the fires will endanger units adjacent to the requesting platoon. The company commander and the platoon commanders may call fires on targets of opportunity at any time during the attack regardless of the control employed.

(8) Close Air Support.--The availability of air support is prescribed in the battalion attack order. A forward air control team may operate with the command group of an attacking rifle company. The forward air controller assists the company commander in planning airstrikes against suitable targets. Targets include gun positions, armor and other vehicles, troop concentrations, strongly defended positions, pillboxes, and defended roadblocks. Close air support missions are classified as preplanned or on call.

(a) Preplanned missions are conducted in accordance with an appropriate fire plan in advance of the attack. These missions are usually planned at battalion or higher level. However, the company commander, in planning fire support, may see a requirement for and request an airstrike in support of his attack.

(b) On call missions are air missions to meet specific requests for immediate air attack which arise during the course of battle and cannot be planned in advance. They may be conducted by aircraft awaiting a mission at an airfield (ground alert), on board an aircraft carrier (deck alert), or in the air over the battlefield (air alert). Suitable targets are determined by the company commander on the advice of the forward air controller and the forward observers. The forward air controller requests the strike and directs the aircraft to the target.

e. Rifle Platoon Fire Planning.--The rifle platoon commander's fire plan involves the use of organic, attached, and supporting weapons to support his scheme of maneuver.

(1) The fires of company and higher echelons are planned to support the platoon's attack by neutralizing enemy positions while the platoon maneuvers to close with the enemy. These fires, announced in the company order, are considered by the platoon commander to determine whether they will adequately support his scheme of maneuver. He may request additional prearranged fires to augment the fires of higher echelons. For example, when the platoon commander selects an intermediate objective, he may request mortar or artillery targets be prearranged to support his attack. His requests are submitted to the company commander by radio or messenger. If the company commander and the fire support coordination center approve the requests, the platoon commander is notified of the target numbers assigned these fires. The platoon commander uses the assigned target numbers in subsequent requests for the delivery of prearranged fires.

(2) The platoon commander plans the fires of all attached weapons, as well as those weapons in direct support. His primary concern is to provide close-in and responsive fire support to his maneuver elements as they close with the opposing force. The platoon commander exercises fire control and assigns fire missions and general firing positions to an attached unit. His decisions, in this respect, are largely influenced by the scheme of maneuver, enemy dispositions, fields of fire, and observation. Weapons most likely to be attached to the rifle platoon are 60mm mortars, machineguns, LAAW's, and MPFW's. The platoon commander will assign fire missions to a unit in direct support of his platoon; however, the remaining aspects of tactical control are exercised by the supporting unit commander. Weapons most frequently found in direct support of a rifle platoon are mortars, Dragons, and tanks.

(a) Machineguns are positioned near the line of departure and support the maneuver elements when the nature of the terrain affords observation and fields of fire over the objective and the avenues of approach to it. It may be necessary for the machineguns to accompany the maneuver elements to positions forward of the line of departure from which they can deliver effective fire. If fields of fire and observation are extremely limited, the machineguns may accompany the maneuver elements all the way through the objective as assault weapons.

(b) A platoon commander may employ an assault squad from a base of fire position, or it may be assigned to move with the maneuver element until firing positions are uncovered from which suitable targets may be engaged. When there is no armor threat, the LAAW's fire on other appropriate targets.

(c) An attached 60mm mortar squad may be positioned in proximity to the line of departure or assigned to move with the squad(s) comprising the maneuver element. Positions are selected near the line of departure only when the mortar squad, from that position, can deliver continuous and effective supporting fires without excessive displacements. The platoon commander must position himself to allow him to function as a forward observer and to control the fires of the mortar(s). When suitable firing positions are not available near the line of departure and/or when nonorganic fires are sufficient to ensure initial fire superiority for the maneuver elements, the mortar squad frequently moves with the maneuvering rifle squads in the attack. When the mortar section is in direct support of a rifle platoon, the platoon commander will control the section's fires by assigning fire missions.

(3) Firing missions and general locations for weapons are designated for each attached unit in consolidating the objective. Consolidation missions are assigned in the attack order. Prior liaison with direct support unit leaders will determine the general positions from which they can best support the consolidation. Routes of displacement to positions should permit rapid movement, cover and concealment, and early occupation of positions covering dangerous avenues of approach.

(4) The platoon commander plans to control his fire support by making timely requests for prearranged fires to the company commander, by keeping organic and attached fire support units within reasonable communicating distance, and by relying heavily on visual signals. The platoon sergeant may be employed to coordinate and control supporting fires. Generally, direct fires are controlled by prearranged visual signals and

indirect fires by timely calls via the company communication system. When the company plan of attack requires close coordination of the attacking platoons, the company commander usually retains strict control over the delivery of indirect fires. When less close coordination of attacking platoons is required, the platoon commanders are provided with detailed information concerning the company fire support plan, including prearranged artillery and mortar target locations and identifying numbers. Platoon commanders request delivery of planned fires as necessary. Platoon commanders request fires on targets of opportunity as they appear.

f. **Weapons Platoon Fire Planning.**--The weapons platoon commander performs the troop leading procedures described in paragraph 1403. His preliminary fire support planning is focused upon making an estimate of the situation as a basis for the submission of recommendations to the company commander. Detailed planning commences on receipt of the company order and involves weapons employed in general support.

(1) The weapons platoon commander's basic recommendations propose the methods of employment for the machinegun section, the assault section, and the 60mm mortar section. His recommendations may include general information concerning weapons position areas, fire control, displacements, and consolidation considerations.

(a) Machineguns may be employed in general support when positions are available near the line of departure which afford observation and fields of fire over the avenues of approach and/or the initial company objective. When the enemy situation is indefinite, the machineguns may be positioned in general support to cover the advance of the rifle platoons. They are prepared to fire on predesignated target areas and/or at targets of opportunity. They fire when directed by the company commander. When enemy dispositions and locations are known, the situation usually requires the continuous engagement of known and suspected enemy locations from commencement of the attack until fires are masked. General support is the preferred method of employment, as it provides the company commander maximum flexibility in the application of machinegun fire in support of the attack.

(b) Machineguns are attached to the rifle platoons when fields of fire and observation do not exist near the line of departure or when the closeness of the terrain is likely to isolate an attacking platoon. Close terrain provides extremely limited fields of fire, resulting in a requirement for close-in support of the rifle platoon. Attachment is the method which provides the rifle platoon commander maximum control of close-in machinegun fire. Attachment is appropriate when a rifle platoon attacks alone or attacks with an exposed flank which cannot be otherwise protected. Attachment is also warranted when probable displacements are likely to physically remove a machinegun unit beyond effective communication distance and control of the section.

(c) LAAW's are normally retained in general support whenever possible. LAAW's may be attached to the rifle platoons when they cannot provide adequate fire support and/or antitank protection from general support positions. In close terrain, attachment to the rifle platoons may be required.

(d) The 60mm mortar section is ideally employed in general support. When it has been determined that effective supporting fires cannot

be delivered in support of an attacking platoon while the weapons platoon commander retains tactical control, a mortar squad or squads may be attached to that platoon. When one rifle platoon has an established priority for supporting fires, which can be provided by the section under the control of the weapons platoon commander, the mortar section may be placed in direct support of that platoon. Remaining considerations relating to the 60mm mortar employment are similar to those stated for the machinegun.

(2) Detailed planning includes the selection of firing positions, targets to be engaged, and fire control as well as the selection of general position areas from which to support consolidation of the objective. When the company plans operations involving closely coordinated maneuvers by the rifle platoons, many details of fire support planning at the weapons platoon level must await issuance of the company commander's order. The order may contain amplifying instructions pertaining to fire control and consolidation. Information concerning other planned fires is contained in the company commander's order. Adjustment of the weapons platoon commander's preliminary fire support plan may be necessary to avoid needless duplication of fires. Further, the weapons platoon commander ordinarily coordinates with the rifle platoon commanders after receipt of the company order. One of the purposes of coordination is to establish times and locations at which attached weapons units and their leaders report to the rifle platoons. For these reasons, the weapons platoon commander formulates his detailed plan after receipt of the company commander's order.

(3) The following elements of fire control apply specifically to machineguns but also apply to antitank weapons when employed in a fire support role:

(a) Weapons unit leaders are informed of the time to open fire. Generally, they open fire just prior to or at the time of the attack.

(b) To gain surprise and establish fire superiority quickly, general support weapons open fire simultaneously either on a prearranged signal or at a specified time. When a signal is used, it is described in the weapons platoon commander's order.

(c) Rates of fire are established and announced in the weapons platoon commander's order. Normally, machineguns open fire at the rapid rate and maintain that rate until fire superiority is established. The sustained rate is usually sufficient to maintain fire superiority once it is established.

(d) Lateral and overhead safety limits are determined. Depending upon the company scheme of maneuver and the locations of firing positions, one or both safety limits may be applicable. Safety limits are usually determined and described with relation to identifiable terrain features.

g. Tactical Employment of Machineguns.--The basic unit for the tactical employment of machineguns is the machinegun squad. Of all weapons available to the company commander, the machinegun is capable of delivering the greatest volume of flat trajectory small arms fire. The basic offensive mission of machinegun units is to support the advance of the attacking rifle platoons by fire.

(1) Machinegun fires delivered in offensive combat fall into one or more of four general tactical classifications:

(a) Close support fires are those delivered against enemy positions directly opposing the advance of the attacking platoons.

(b) Long-range fires are fires delivered against targets located beyond the hostile position directly opposing the advance. Machinegun fires are often shifted to deeper targets when close support fires are masked by maneuvering rifle units.

(c) Flank protection fires are machinegun fires which protect an exposed flank of the rifle platoon or rifle company.

(d) Machineguns are employed in the consolidation of objectives by firing to protect the rifle platoons against counterattack.

(2) The machineguns may be assigned either point or area targets. At battle ranges, the machinegun is essentially an area fire weapon and should be assigned point targets only when weapons of greater precision are not available. Targets are assigned to the machinegun squad and not to a single gun whenever possible.

(3) The best position on the ground from which the mission can be accomplished is the primary position for the machinegun squad. Any other position from which the same mission can be fired is an alternate position. Machineguns move to alternate positions when enemy action renders the primary position untenable or when it becomes otherwise unsuitable for continuing the fire mission. An alternate position should be sufficiently removed from the primary position to minimize the effects of enemy fires directed at the primary position. Supplementary positions are necessary when it is anticipated that a machinegun unit may be required to fire a mission in addition to or in lieu of its primary mission. The supplementary position is a position from which a mission other than the primary mission can be accomplished. Firing on enemy troops attacking the flanks or rear of the assigned defense area may be designated as supplementary missions. All three firing positions should offer as many desirable characteristics as possible. Seldom will any position offer all of them and some compromises must be made. The accomplishment of the mission is the most important consideration. A firing position should have as many of the below listed characteristics as possible:

- (a) Fields of fire.
- (b) Observation of friendly maneuvering units.
- (c) Direct fire without premature masking.
- (d) Cover and/or concealment.
- (e) Covered routes for occupation and resupply.
- (f) Sufficient space for dispersing the weapons.
- (g) Availability and accessibility of alternate positions.
- (h) Local security.

(4) When machinegun fires are masked or are shortly to become masked, it is necessary to displace them to new locations. Displacements

are made as rapidly as possible and take maximum advantage of covered and/or concealed routes. Machineguns are displaced by echelon or as a unit depending upon the tactical situation.

(a) Machineguns are displaced by echelon when the tactical situation requires the uninterrupted fire support of attacking rifle elements. At least one machinegun squad remains in position and fires while the others move forward to new firing positions. Once the advanced squad or squads are in new firing positions and prepared to continue their support, the rear unit or units move forward to new positions. Machineguns are normally displaced by squad units.

(b) When an objective is seized, the machineguns have completed their initial primary fire support mission and must either displace to support the consolidation or shift to new targets and continue to support from the same positions. Since machinegun fires protecting against counterattack are extremely important, machineguns are usually displaced as a unit to consolidate the objective.

h. Tactical Employment of LAAW's.--LAAW's are usually positioned to cover avenues of approach that enemy armor could use to disrupt the attack. The LAAW is the close-in antitank defense weapon organic to the company. When the enemy armor threat is slight or avenues of approach for armor are limited, LAAW's may be effectively employed in supporting the attack by firing on appropriate targets within range. The assault squad is the basic unit of tactical employment. The two assault teams of a squad are normally employed in proximity to each other and cover the same avenue of approach. Numerous avenues of approach for armor or limited observation and fields of fire may justify splitting the assault squads in the assignment of separate fire missions by teams. Observation and fields of fire over the avenues of approach for armor or designated targets largely dictate the positioning of LAAW's.

(1) Because enemy reaction to the launcher's backblast makes frequent position changes necessary, alternate positions assume almost equal consideration with primary positions. Desirable characteristics for a LAAW position are outlined below:

- (a) Fields of fire.
- (b) Observation of friendly troops.
- (c) Cover and/or concealment.
- (d) Covered routes for occupation and resupply.
- (e) Available and accessible alternate positions.
- (f) Safety clearance for backblast.
- (g) Local security.

(2) When the assault section/squad fires become masked or are shortly to become masked, or when their weapons are out of effective range, displacement is made as rapidly as possible, taking maximum advantage of covered and/or concealed routes.

i. Tactical Employment of 60mm Mortars.--It must be remembered that the 60mm mortar was not returned to the Marine Corps to replace the need for any other weapon in use at the time of its return. The 60mm mortar was returned to provide the company commander with a weapon which could be used to supplement nonorganic, high-angle fires. When comparing the capabilities of the 60mm mortar with those related high-angle fire weapons, its primary advantage is found in the mortar's rapid response in engaging "targets of opportunity." It is also apparent that the destruction and/or neutralization effect of this weapon does not favorably compare with heavier indirect fire weapons.

(1) Weapons Selection.--Time permitting, weapons providing the most suitable effect on a given target will be employed, thus ensuring achievement of the desired effect on the target. It is for this reason that the 60mm mortar has limited application in delivering prearranged fires. The ability of the 60mm mortar to accompany the maneuver elements of the rifle company causes it to be ideally suited to respond rapidly to targets of opportunity. These mortars are committed to on call missions only when nonorganic fires are incapable of meeting such requirements within the desired time frame. The commitment of the 60mm mortar to scheduled missions reduces the flexibility of the mortar to respond to targets of opportunity. It must be remembered that only a limited amount of ammunition may be carried by a mortar section and resupply of a company in the attack is an ever-present problem. It is for this reason, as well as consideration of the limited effect of the 60mm mortar round, that it will rarely be assigned to deliver scheduled fires.

(2) Targets.--The 60mm mortar is suitable for employment against the same general type of targets in the attack as is the 81mm mortar. The high explosive (HE) round does not have a penetrating capability and should not be employed against hardened or fortified targets. Point targets within 900 meters of the guns may be engaged effectively. Because of the problem of ammunition supply, and resupply, the 60mm mortar is fired at known targets and is normally not employed against suspected targets, as is the 81mm mortar.

(3) In the Attack.--In the attack, the 60mm mortar is extremely flexible in achieving firing positions which afford the weapon and its crew adequate cover and concealment. Because of its low silhouette, this weapon presents a reduced target to the enemy. Folds and relief in the terrain will normally provide the weapon with adequate protection against flat trajectory fires. In offensive operations, such as movement to contact or combat patrols where the direct lay or handheld techniques are frequently employed, firing positions may be exposed. Considerations in establishing a permanent firing position in support of the attack are as follows:

(a) No less than 35 meters between squads to provide passive security against incoming fires.

(b) As close as feasible to the line of departure and not further than 300 meters to its rear, to exploit the weapon's limited range to the maximum extent.

(c) Mask clearance of overhead obstructions, natural or artificial, must be considered to ensure safety and maximum area coverage.

(d) Covered routes of supply and communications, and routes between primary and alternate positions.

(4) Displacement.--When the mortar section is employed in general or direct support, displacement in the attack is normally ordered by the company commander through the weapons platoon commander. However, if displacement is necessary and the company commander is not available, the weapons platoon commander orders displacement on his own initiative. In the attached role, the mortar squad(s) will be displaced on order of the rifle platoon commander.

(a) Time of Displacement.--Displacement is ordered when friendly troops mask the fire of the mortar(s), when displacement will increase observation and potential target selection, before assault units outdistance the effective range of the mortars, or when all known lucrative targets are beyond the effective range of the mortar.

(b) Method of Displacement

1 Section

a Echelon.--When a requirement exists for continuous fire support, the section will conduct an echelon displacement. Depending on the circumstances, one squad may displace while the other two remain in firing positions, or two squads may displace while one squad remains in position. During periods of the attack where there are no fire missions for the mortar section, the weapons platoon commander, acting through the section leader, takes advantage of lull in fire support requirements to order the displacement of one or more squads to new firing positions. This facilitates the delivery of effective supporting fires when fire missions are once again received.

b Unit.--When a mortar section can no longer effectively deliver supporting fires from its primary position, and the speed with which a displacement can be effected is of primary concern, the section will normally displace by unit. Such is frequently the case when the displacement is conducted to support consolidation of an objective. Displacements in this situation are normally initiated when the mortar fires are masked by the assaulting infantry. It is mandatory that heavier weapons be available to pursue the enemy by fire and deliver initial fires in support of consolidation during the section's displacement.

2 Squad.--Because there is only one 60mm mortar contained within each mortar squad, the terms echelon and unit displacement have virtually no application. The attached mortar squad is employed as close as practical to the point of infantry action. This is accomplished by ordering displacements to keep the mortar within supporting range of the attacking squads, to ensure that fires in support of consolidation are rapidly available.

(c) Displacement Planning.--Displacement will be planned to take place under the cover of nonorganic supporting weapons and at a time when it is anticipated enemy contact will be the lightest. Displacements should be planned to take place so as to ensure maximum fires are available to support consolidation.

j. Displacement Instructions.--The commander details his instructions for displacement of all crew-served weapons with his unit, organic or attached, in his operation order. The following instructions are included:

(1) Method.--Displacement by unit or by echelon is directed. If displacement is accomplished by echelon, the order states which units will remain in place to cover the initial displacement.

(2) Time and/or Signal.--This is used to initiate the displacement.

(3) Route.--Definite routes are assigned for all units to ensure efficient and rapid displacement.

(4) Objective.--The displacement objective is normally the next position for firing. Sufficient room for dispersion should be available in order to minimize the effects of enemy fire.

3307. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. General.--The attack is conducted aggressively, closing rapidly with the enemy in order to keep him off balance until the objective is seized. Leaders at all echelons make continuing estimates of the situation in order to remain flexible and alter plans as required by new and unforeseen situations.

b. Movement From Assembly Area.--Under most conditions, the company commander and platoon commanders control movement from the assembly area. Concurrent completion of troop leading steps and movement from the assembly area may be necessary. Under such circumstances, movement forward from the assembly area toward the line of departure may be made under control of the executive officer or the first sergeant and the platoon guides.

(1) Company Considerations.--The rifle company times its departure from the assembly area so that movement to and across the line of departure is continuous except when an attack position is used. When an attack position is used, the movement is timed to permit the occupation of the attack position for the minimum period consistent with effective coordination and control of the attack. Movement from the assembly area or the attack position across the line of departure is regulated so that the leading elements of the company cross at the time of the attack. The order of march should facilitate deployment into the initial attack formation or occupation of the attack position, as appropriate. The rifle company may move forward using multiple routes to facilitate deployment while on the move. Weapons platoon elements and attached weapons may precede the company in order to occupy firing positions when security is provided by rifle elements.

(2) Rifle Platoon Considerations.--The rifle platoons may move forward from the assembly area under the company control on a single route, or each platoon may move on a separate route. If an attack position is used, the platoons occupy assigned areas and maintain security in their initial attack formations. When an attack position is not used, deployment into initial attack formations is accomplished during movement from the assembly area. All forward movements are ordered by the company commander and timed so that leading elements of attacking platoons cross the line of departure at the time of the attack.

(3) Weapons Platoon Considerations.--Weapons platoon elements, accompanied by appropriate security elements, may move forward from the

assembly area or attack position in advance of the company to occupy firing positions in the vicinity of the line of departure. When initial firing positions are in proximity to each other, the weapons units usually move over one route. Widely separated firing positions may necessitate movements on multiple routes.

c. Advance by Fire and Maneuver.--At the time of the attack, the attacking platoons cross the line of departure and move rapidly toward their assigned objectives. Their movements take maximum advantage of the cover and concealment offered by the avenues of approach to the objective and the protection afforded by supporting fires. If effective enemy resistance is encountered en route to the objective, attacking platoons close rapidly by conducting fire and maneuver, assault, and destroy the enemy. When the enemy resistance encountered does not affect the accomplishment of the mission, the rifle platoon bypasses the resistance and notifies the company commander. The platoon commander's decision to bypass the enemy position is made with due regard for the tactical control measures imposed by the company commander. Normally, platoons not stopped by enemy fire continue to advance even though adjacent units are halted. The advance can then outflank enemy positions holding up adjacent units, thus permitting the delivery of flanking fires and maneuver against the enemy's flanks and rear.

(1) Company Commander.--The company commander keeps abreast of the attack in progress by observation and communications with his platoon commanders and attached and supporting unit leaders. Throughout the attack, he coordinates the movement of all elements of his company including attachments and the fires of supporting weapons. The reserve is displaced as appropriate to maintain it in suitable positions from which it can be rapidly committed. The company commander anticipates situations requiring the possible commitment of his reserve and plans accordingly. As flank security requirements of the company change during the attack, the company commander adjusts security measures. He orders timely displacements of the command group to maintain effective control of the attack. The command post displaces as the company commander directs to permit continuous logistic and administrative support of the attack. The company commander acts upon the recommendations of supporting weapons unit leaders in ordering timely displacements to support the attack echelon.

(2) Rifle Platoon Commander.--The platoon commander selects the position in the platoon attack formation from which he can best observe and control the squads. He continually revises his estimate of the situation as the attack progresses and employs fire and maneuver as appropriate. He coordinates the fire and maneuver of the leading squad or squads when enemy resistance is encountered en route to the objective. When more than one squad is required to overcome the resistance, the platoon commander initiates further fire and maneuver by issuing fragmentary orders. When the tactical control measures imposed by the company commander permit, it may be possible to bypass the enemy positions. When a position is bypassed, the company commander is notified.

(3) Weapons Platoon Commander.--The weapons platoon commander locates himself where he can best assist the company commander. He is usually near the company commander where he can observe the advance of the rifle platoons and can communicate with the elements of the weapons platoon employed in general support. Throughout the attack, the weapons platoon commander makes timely recommendations to the company commander concerning

employment of his platoon. He recommends changes in the methods of employment to meet changed situations. He also informs the company commander of the need for displacement and recommends methods of displacement. The platoon sergeant directly supervises the employment of general support elements of the platoon through the section leaders. He further arranges timely resupply of ammunition in keeping with the existing status of on-position supplies for general support elements of the platoon.

d. Assault.--The distance from the objective at which the assault commences is influenced by the safety limits for supporting fires and the casualty producing effects of enemy fires. A final coordination line is selected which permits assault elements to deploy into the assault formation as close to the objective as possible without taking excessive casualties from enemy fires or undue hazard from supporting fires. A tentative final coordination line may be designated in the attack order. The exact location from which the assault is launched is determined by the assault element leader. When a coordinated assault by two platoons is planned, the company commander selects the location. Supporting fires on the enemy positions increase in intensity as the assault elements approach the final coordination line. Whenever possible, assaulting units deploy in assault formations and launch the assault without a halt at the final coordination line. The assault moves at a rate consistent with the visibility, slope of the objective, ground conditions, state of troop training, and physical condition of assault troops. The assault's momentum is maintained until assaulting units clear the enemy positions and move over the objective far enough to deliver fire on withdrawing enemy elements and to protect against counterattack.

(1) Rifle Platoon.--Assaulting squads of an attacking rifle platoon are formed in squads abreast upon reaching the final coordination line. The platoon may assault with one, two, or all three rifle squads depending upon the situation. The assault is initiated on order or signal. The assault signal at platoon level and above is usually a visual signal. The rifle squad's actions in the assault are described in FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad.

(2) Supporting Fires.--The shifting or ceasing of supporting fires is effected after commencement of assault fires and is normally controlled by the company commander. As the assault is launched, fires that endanger assaulting units are ceased or shifted. Generally, indirect fires are ceased or shifted first and direct fire weapons continue to fire until masked by the assault.

e. Pursuit by Fire.--The assaulting units pursue the withdrawing enemy with small arms, mortar, artillery, or naval gunfire. Units plan and request supporting fires on withdrawing forces in order to continue the pursuit by fire on forces which have reached positions defiladed from small arms. The pursuit by fire begins for each unit as soon as that unit's objective has been seized. Fire on individuals and units withdrawing prior to seizing the objective is part of the attack or assault. The pursuit by fire may continue simultaneously with the initial stages of consolidation and ceases when the withdrawing enemy elements have been destroyed or no longer present targets.

3308. CONSOLIDATION

a. General.--Consolidation commences as soon as the objective is seized. Consolidation plans contained in the attack order are revised as

necessary. When the attack is to be continued beyond the initial objective, the halt on the initial objective is as short as possible. Consistent with orders from the next higher echelon, the duration of the halt varies from a minimum of the time required for issuance of orders to subordinate units to that required for a thorough reorganization and resupply.

b. Security Measures.--The first considerations of the commander after seizing the objective, and while the pursuit by fire is being conducted, are to ensure that he holds his gains and that he does not miss any opportunity that will facilitate future actions. To protect the objective, he takes all actions necessary to defeat an enemy counterattack.

(1) The company commander's most immediate concerns are the dispositions of the leading rifle platoons and the timely displacement of organic, attached, and supporting weapons to preselected position areas from which they can repulse a counterattack. The reserve may be positioned to protect an exposed flank or to extend the depth of the position. Local security and patrols are employed to the front and flanks to maintain contact with the enemy and with adjacent units. Fire plans in support of the position are improved and redistribution of weapons and units is accomplished as personal reconnaissance dictates.

(2) The rifle platoon commander's most pressing initial concerns are the dispositions of the squads which conduct the assault and the displacement and positioning of the base of fire, if employed. The platoon's security precautions are preplanned and are included in the attack order. However, after a personal reconnaissance, the platoon commander redistributes his squads and/or attached weapons and requests changes in fire support from the company.

c. Reorganization.--Reorganization is continuous throughout the attack and during consolidation. It includes the reassignment of personnel to key billets made vacant by casualties, reestablishment of the chain of command, and redistribution of ammunition. During reorganization after seizure of the objective, the situation, strength, and ammunition status are reported to the next higher commander. Casualties are evacuated. Enemy information is reported and prisoners of war are handled in accordance with the battalion SOP.

(1) When necessary, the company commander may relieve one or both of the frontline platoons of responsibility for a position so that they may be withdrawn to covered or concealed positions to reorganize.

(2) In many instances, the rifle platoon's frontage on the objective is relatively narrow and the use of three squads to hold the position is not necessary. This is particularly true when the platoon objective is assaulted by either one or two rifle squads. Base of fire squads or squads not previously committed in the attack may be employed to relieve frontline squads. Relieved squads are withdrawn to the first available cover to reorganize.

3309. EXPLOITATION

a. General.--Exploitation is the following up of gains to take full advantage of success in battle. It is designed to destroy the enemy's ability to reconstitute an organized defense or to engage in an orderly retrograde movement. Exploitation ranges from that of pursuing small local

forces to the pursuit of large enemy forces. It is characterized by rapid advances against lessening resistance. Its purpose may be to take an objective deep in the enemy's rear or to pursue a retreating enemy force.

b. Company Exploitation

(1) When the company participates in an exploiting action, it may be mounted or dismounted. In either case, exploitation is characterized by rapid movement. Helicopters may be profitably used to lift an exploiting force to prevent enemy withdrawal, or to attack positions to the enemy rear or flanks. Operations are quickly executed to exploit the mobility and flexibility of the helicopter.

(2) Employment of mechanized infantry or motorized march columns for rapid movement are excellent methods of exploiting success. Particular emphasis is placed on the organization for combat, logistic support, and security required. Normally, the company participates as part of a larger force in this type of operation.

c. Pursuit.--Physical pursuit is undertaken by higher echelons when the enemy is no longer able to maintain his positions and endeavors to escape destruction by retreat. The decision to physically pursue the enemy rests with the battalion commander or higher echelons. It may be defined as an offensive action against a retreating enemy employing direct pressure or a combination of direct pressure and encirclement intended to annihilate him. The enemy is afforded no opportunity to reorganize his forces for defense.

(1) The rifle company participates in the pursuit as part of a larger force. It may function to maintain direct pressure by continuing to attack as ordered or it may be a participant in tactical movements to reestablish contact with the enemy. The rifle company, appropriately supported by some means of rapid mobility, may participate in tactical movements and attacks as part of the encirclement. The encirclement seizes objectives on the axes of enemy retreat to prevent his escape and permit his destruction between the two forces.

(2) The infantry battalion may conduct localized physical pursuit within its area of operation. When the battalion conducts limited physical pursuit, an appropriately reinforced rifle company may comprise the entire direct pressure or encircling force.

3310. RESERVE RIFLE PLATOON

a. General.--At least one rifle platoon is withheld from action as the company reserve whenever possible. The reserve is available for employment at a decisive moment. The opportunities for decisively committing the reserve are usually of extremely short duration and require timely decisions and rapid reactions. It is incumbent upon the reserve platoon commander to be thoroughly aware of the company plan of attack and to keep abreast of the company's situation in the attack. When rapid changes in the situation can be foreseen, it may be necessary to locate the reserve platoon commander with the company command group to ensure rapid reaction.

b. Primary Missions.--The reserve is most frequently committed at a decisive moment to ensure the success of the attack or to maintain its

momentum. Preferably, the company commander commits his reserve against enemy weakness to exploit an advantage gained by the attack. The company commander commits the reserve by fragmentary order, notifies the battalion, and reconstitutes a reserve as quickly as possible. Appropriate tasks may include one or more of the following:

(1) Attack From a New Direction.--The company commander commits his reserve to maintain or regain momentum of the attack, maneuvering the reserve against the enemy flank or rear.

(2) Assume the Mission of an Attacking Platoon.--When an attacking platoon has become disorganized or ineffective because of casualties, the reserve platoon may be used to replace it. If possible, the reserve should be committed from a new direction rather than through the disorganized platoon in contact. A successful attack by the reserve may restore lost momentum to the company attack. When circumstances require attacking through the platoon in contact, the rapid movement of subordinate units in gaps between the other platoon's major dispositions is stressed.

(3) Protect One or Both Flanks.--Normally, the reserve protects the company's exposed flanks utilizing combat patrols. The company commander may prescribe the size of combat patrols used to protect the flanks. He usually controls them through the reserve platoon commander and coordinates their movements with the actions of the attacking platoons. Splitting the reserve platoon into two combat patrols, each protecting one flank of the company, materially reduces the rapidity with which the reserve can be committed to the attack. When the terrain permits, the reserve platoon may move successively to positions from which the exposed flank can be covered. Other terrain situations may dictate echelonment of the reserve platoon or part of it to cover the flank.

(4) Mopup Operations.--The reserve platoon or its elements may be used to eliminate pockets of enemy resistance in the company zone of action which have been bypassed by the attacking platoons. In fast moving situations, reserves may be committed to clear the enemy from positions on the objective which have been bypassed.

(5) Maintain Contact With Adjacent Units.--The reserve platoon maintains contact between its parent company and adjacent companies. It may also be assigned to maintain contact between widely separated platoons of the same company. The reserve platoon commander establishes connecting groups to maintain contact between widely separated platoons of the same company. The reserve platoon commander establishes connecting groups to maintain contact between units. The connecting groups may serve as scouting elements for the reserve platoon when it advances in the gap between the attacking platoons.

(6) Protect Reorganization.--The reserve platoon or its elements may be employed in a variety of roles to protect reorganization of the attacking platoons:

- (a) Protect an open flank.
- (b) Complete a company perimeter defense.
- (c) Outpost and patrol the front and flanks of the reor-

ganization.

(c) Operations against the hostile rear to extend an envelopment or exploit a successful envelopment.

(d) Assume the mission of an attacking company.

(e) Eliminate enemy resistance bypassed by the attacking echelon or subsequently developed to the rear of the attacking echelon.

(f) Protect the battalion's flanks and rear.

(g) Maintain contact with adjacent units.

(h) Assist adjacent units when such action favors the accomplishment of the battalion mission.

b. Conduct.--During the attack, the battalion commander may require the reserve company commander to accompany him until the reserve is committed. He also may require the company commander to make recommendations concerning subsequent locations or to otherwise assist in the preparation of plans for employment of the company.

(1) The company commander, whether physically located with the battalion commander or with his company, keeps himself informed of the battalion situation at all times. He seeks information by maintaining close contact with the battalion, monitoring the battalion tactical net, and by personal reconnaissance. He anticipates missions likely to be assigned and prepares plans accordingly. Subordinates are kept informed.

(2) The reserve company is normally committed by a battalion fragmentary order. The order may or may not relate to a previously prepared plan.

(3) When committed, a reserve company is automatically relieved of reserve missions unless otherwise directed.

Section IV. NIGHT ATTACK

3401. GENERAL

a. General.--Night attacks are a normal part of operations and become increasingly important as enemy firepower increases. Night attacks are employed to achieve one or more of the following purposes:

- (1) To achieve tactical surprise.
- (2) To complete or exploit a prior success.
- (3) To maintain pressure against the enemy.
- (4) To avoid heavy losses which would likely result from daylight attacks conducted under the same conditions.
- (5) To compensate for an inferiority in combat power.
- (6) To seize terrain considered vital to the conduct of subsequent daylight operations.

b. Plans.--Although the plan for a night attack should be as simple as possible, the attack order may be lengthy and detailed because of the unusual number of specific control measures and special instructions which are necessary. In conjunction with the order, a thorough day and night terrain orientation is of the utmost importance. The plan for a night attack must include preparation, employment, distribution, and maintenance of night-viewing devices and surveillance equipment.

c. Characteristics

(1) Night combat generally is characterized by a decrease in the ability to place aimed fire on the enemy; a corresponding increase in the importance of close combat, volume of fire, and the fires of fixed weapons which are laid on definite targets or target areas by daylight; and difficulty in the maintenance of control, direction, and contact. Utilization of night sights and viewing devices can minimize these problems. Despite these difficulties, the night attack gives the attacker a psychological advantage in that it magnifies the defender's doubts, apprehensions, and fear of the unknown.

(2) The difficulties of night attack are further reduced by adequate planning and preparation and by thorough training in night operations. Normally, more time is required to plan and coordinate a night attack than a daylight attack. Thorough ground and/or air reconnaissance both day and night, by leaders of all echelons, is highly desirable. Because of difficulties in control, the scheme of maneuver for a night attack should be simple.

d. Types.--Night attacks may be classified as illuminated or non-illuminated operations.

(1) The illuminated attack is planned using the general techniques of daylight attacks and employing fire support and illumination.

The degree to which daylight techniques are employed in the scheme of maneuver is predicated upon the condition of visibility resulting from the use of illumination.

(2) The nonilluminated attack is conducted by stealth to maintain secrecy and achieve surprise in closing with the enemy before he discovers the attack. A complete plan of fires and illumination is developed to support the attack. The fires and illumination are not employed until the attack is discovered by the enemy.

e. Applicability.--This section deals primarily with the techniques employed by the rifle company and platoon in the nonilluminated operation. Certain of the techniques may be applicable to other forms of night attack. This section treats specifically the rifle company's planning and conduct of the night attack by stealth when the company attacks alone or as part of the infantry battalion.

3402. TACTICAL CONTROL MEASURES

a. General.--The degree of visibility largely determines the measures taken to ensure control. The reduced ability to control maneuver normally requires the company to move generally in columns and lines over open terrain. Easily identifiable terrain features are used as control measures whenever possible. Terrain features not easily identifiable in darkness are marked by artificial means; e.g., engineer tape. Control measures emphasized in a night attack are:

(1) Assembly Area.--The assembly area is normally assigned by the battalion commander. It may be closer to the line of departure than for a daylight attack.

(2) Release Points.--A release point is a point(s) at which a higher commander releases control of a unit to its commander. The battalion commander designates the company release point, the company commander designates the platoon release point, and the platoon leader designates the squad release point. Platoon and squad release points are located to provide a gradual deployment during movement to the probable line of deployment. They should be located far enough back to allow attacking units to complete their lateral movement before reaching the probable line of deployment, yet far enough forward to permit centralized control as long as possible.

(3) Attack Position.--An attack position is normally designated but seldom used in a night attack. The attack position should be in defilade but need not offer as much concealment as in daylight; it should permit easy entrance and exit. The company occupies the attack position only for the minimum time required to receive final instructions, to ensure coordination and/or to pick up special equipment.

(4) Point(s) and Line of Departure.--The company commander normally selects a specific point(s) of departure where the company will cross the line of departure.

(5) Routes.--The company commander selects the route to be used from the company release point to the platoon release point(s); the platoon leader selects the route from the platoon release point to the squad release point(s). Normally, selection in both cases is made on the basis of

observation of the area from a position to the rear of the line of departure. The route from the platoon release point to the squad release point is usually announced as a direction. The routes from the squad release point to the probable line of deployment are also announced as directions for squad movement. Guides are normally used to assist in the movement to the probable line of deployment.

(6) Probable Line of Deployment.--The probable line of deployment, normally selected by the battalion commander, is the location on the ground where the company commander plans to complete final deployment prior to moving out with platoons on line. The probable line of deployment should coincide with some terrain feature(s) visible at night. It should be generally perpendicular to the direction of the attack and as close to known enemy positions on the objective as it is estimated the company can move without being detected. If the enemy has obstacles in front of his position, the probable line of deployment should be on the enemy side of the obstacle, if feasible. The company commander selects the probable line of deployment if the battalion commander does not do so.

(7) Zones of Action and Objectives.--The company is normally assigned a zone of action and, in addition, may be assigned a direction or azimuth of attack. The company objective for a night attack is usually smaller than for a daylight attack so that the company can clear it in a single assault. The company commander usually assigns platoon zones of action by designating a portion of the probable line of deployment and an objective for each platoon. The frontage of 80 to 100 meters is considered adequate for each platoon. A rifle company would then have a frontage of 200 to 300 meters, depending on the number of platoons which were coordinated in the assault. Platoon objectives should also be small enough to be seized and cleared in a single assault. Assigned objectives should be designated by unmistakable terrain features. Intermediate objectives are not normally assigned for night attacks.

(8) Limit of Advance.--A limit of advance is a terrain feature easily recognized in the dark (stream, road, edge of woods, etc.) beyond which attacking elements will not advance. It is far enough beyond the objective to allow security elements room to operate. The limit of advance may be prescribed by the battalion or company commander.

(9) Time of Attack.--Often, an attack is made late at night so that initial objectives can be seized by daylight and the attack continued at that time. If the objective is relatively deep, or if the company mission requires immediate continuation of the attack, the attack may begin early at night and continue to the final objective during darkness. If the objective is to be seized and held, it also may begin early at night.

(10) Other Control Measures.--Additional measures which may be used to facilitate control in a night attack include:

(a) Use of an azimuth, mortar or artillery marking rounds, or tracers to assist in maintaining direction.

(b) Use of guides and connecting files.

(c) Designation of a base element on which other units base their movement.

(d) Use of radar, night-vision devices, binoculars, and flashlights with colored filters.

(e) Prescribing intervals and distances to be maintained between individuals, squads, and platoons.

(f) Identification of leaders and friendly troops by use of luminous buttons or tape, white armbands, etc.

(g) Use of radio. This means of control is normally restricted until after the attack is discovered. The company commander may use wire and/or messengers for communications with his platoon leaders.

(h) Pyrotechnics may be used as emergency control signals, but their indiscriminate use may alert the enemy.

b. Reconnaissance.--If possible, all leaders reconnoiter during daylight, dusk, and darkness. Reconnoitering during different conditions of light ensures maximum familiarity with the terrain. The company commander normally limits the size of reconnaissance patrols and prescribes other limitations on reconnaissance essential to the maintenance of secrecy. Night-vision devices should be used to assist in reconnaissance and to detect the enemy use of such equipment.

c. Surprise and Secrecy.--Positive measures are taken to ensure secrecy and increase surprise. In addition to limitations on reconnaissance patrolling, the movement of vehicles and weapons is held to a minimum. Light and noise discipline is rigidly enforced. Registration of weapons is avoided or accomplished in a way which will not indicate intentions to the enemy. A technique which may be utilized is to fire the registration adjustment over an extended time. Significant change in any type of activity is avoided.

3403. PLAN OF ATTACK

a. General.--The plan of attack is much more detailed and comprehensive than for the daylight attack and requires considerably more time to develop. Close coordination between adjacent units and with available fire support agencies is required at the lowest echelons.

b. Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver provides for the employment of subordinate, attached, and supporting units other than fire support units in the conduct of a frontal attack. Figure 30 is a schematic diagram of a typical scheme of maneuver for the rifle company.

c. Formation

(1) To assist in control, the column formation is used as far forward as practicable. If possible, deployment of the rifle squads in squad line is delayed until the company is within assaulting distance of the enemy positions. The principal considerations in the selection of a formation are visibility, distance to the objective, and anticipated enemy reaction. Based upon these considerations, the company normally crosses the line of departure either in a column of platoon columns or in a line of platoon columns. Generally, the single file formation is avoided.

(a) If visibility is poor, distance to the objective is great, or early contact with the enemy is not expected, the company may

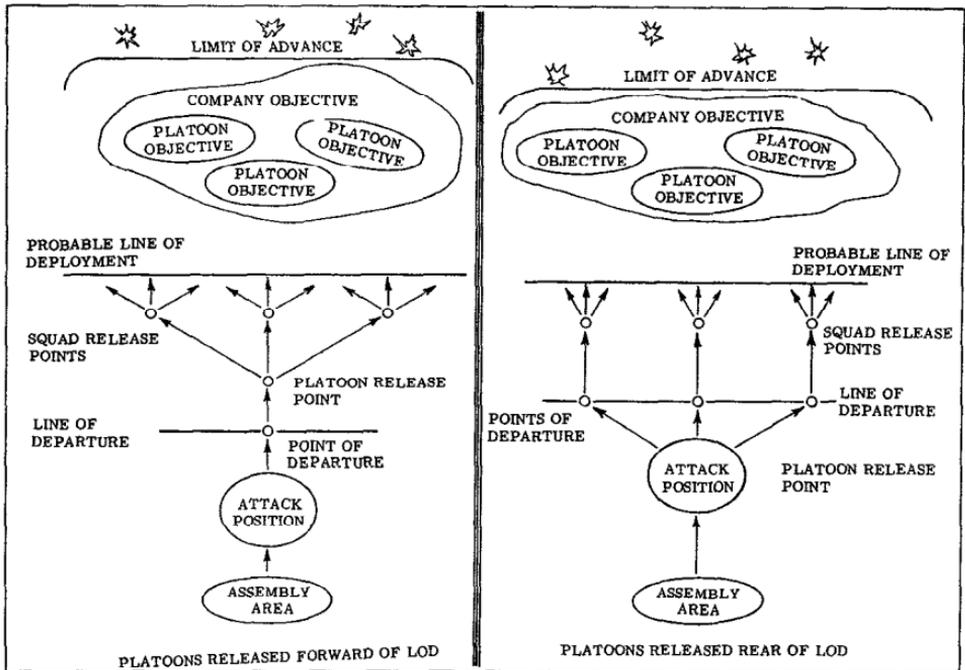


Figure 30.--Rifle Company Night Attack.

cross the line of departure in a column using one point of departure. This formation is retained until the platoon release point is reached unless enemy action forces earlier deployment.

(b) If visibility permits control of a more open formation, the distance to the objective is short, or early contact with the enemy is expected, it may be desirable to advance from the line of departure in a company line of platoon columns using three points of departure.

(c) If the company is in contact with the enemy and the distance to the objective is short, it will be necessary to have the leading squads move forward from their positions in squad line. In this case, the line of departure is, in effect, the probable line of deployment.

(2) The company commander normally employs all three rifle platoons in the assault. Under conditions of reduced visibility, the effective use of a reserve as a maneuver element is extremely difficult because of the difficulties of control and coordination. A reserve is withheld only when the company zone of action is extremely narrow or when there is a dangerously exposed flank or rear. If a reserve is designated to provide flank or rear security, the company commander may direct it to follow the attacking echelon closely, or he may leave it on the line of departure and have it brought forward on signal.

d. Communications.--The use of radio is normally restricted until after the attack is discovered or until deployment on the probable line of deployment is effected. The company tactical radio net usually invokes radio listening silence until the platoons are finally deployed or are positively discovered. Radio brevity codes may be employed to report readiness at the line of deployment. The principal means of communications within the company and platoon during movement to the probable line of deployment is by messenger.

e. Patrolling and Security.--Patrols are normally sent out before a night attack to reconnoiter the routes forward, to secure release points, and to gather knowledge of the terrain and information about the enemy. In addition, selected patrol members will act as guides to facilitate ease of movement. A patrol of from four to six men is generally sent from each platoon. The platoon leader will brief the platoon patrol leader on the route forward from the platoon release point to squad release points, the location of squad release points, and the platoon position on the probable line of deployment. The platoon leader may give specific instruction on the positioning of patrol personnel on the probable line of deployment so these personnel can aid the platoon in deploying. Platoon patrol leaders are briefed by the company commander on the route forward to the platoon release point, on terrain and enemy information desired, on locations of all platoon positions on the probable line of deployment, on actions to be taken in case the enemy is encountered before reaching (or on) the probable line of deployment, the guide system he desires, and on anything else that will assist in the accomplishment of their mission. The platoon patrols will normally be consolidated into a single company patrol with the company commander designating one patrol leader to coordinate the efforts of the platoon elements. The company commander may direct patrol leaders to leave some members of their patrols to secure the probable line of deployment while the remainder return to act as guides. The designated company patrol leader will normally remain at the platoon release point where he can best control the platoon patrols and coordinate the guide effort. Designated platoon patrol members (guides) will meet their platoons at the platoon release point and guide them to the squad release points and then to the probable line of deployment. Frontal and flank security is provided during the movement from the line of departure to the probable line of deployment. The size of these security elements varies with the amount of detailed information available on the enemy, the terrain, and likely enemy counteraction. The distance at which these security elements operate depends primarily on the commander's ability to control them.

f. Rehearsal.--The company commander should rehearse his plan of attack over similar terrain during daylight, and at dusk, if possible. This rehearsal is used to complete plans, ensure that all members of the unit are thoroughly familiar with the plan of attack, and to gain self-confidence in the nonilluminated method of attack. Unit commanders make corrections and adjust plans as necessary.

g. Fire Support Plan.--Night attacks may or may not be supported by fire depending on the degree of surprise to be achieved. In an attack against a well organized position where the possibility of achieving surprise is remote, preparation fires, fires in support of the attack, and fires to support the consolidation are employed. Use of supporting fires under these circumstances closely parallels a daylight attack. In an attack against a hastily organized position where the possibility of surprise is good, fires in support of the attack and fires to support the

consolidation are planned but are employed only when it becomes necessary. Even though the attack is to be made by stealth, complete plans are made for supporting fires and illumination. Weapons are positioned and registered, but their fires are normally placed on call and delivered on order of the company commander. When more than one company comprises the attack echelon, the battalion commander may prescribe conditions under which supporting fires and illumination may be requested.

(1) Fire Planning

(a) Fire planning for the night attack is essentially the same as for attacking in daylight. Registration is held to a minimum and coincides with other normal fires in the same general area so as not to sacrifice surprise.

(b) Indirect fire weapons are registered and all firing data completed in daylight.

(c) Direct fire weapons such as tanks and machineguns are positioned and laid on targets during daylight. Provisions are made to displace them forward over predesignated routes to predetermined positions on the objective from which to support the consolidation.

(d) Whenever possible, coordination is effected to employ the weapons of forward units to support the attack. When attacking through another company, the company commander coordinates with the company in contact and incorporates its machineguns and other suitable direct fire weapons into his planned fires. Normally, the unit in contact places these fire support elements in direct support of the attacking company until seizure of the objective.

(e) Machineguns organic to the attacking company are attached to and move with the rifle platoons. Their employment in the assault increases the assault fire capabilities of the rifle platoons. Moving with the company ensures their immediate availability en route and during the consolidation. When the distance from the line of departure to the objective is short and weapons are not available from other companies, organic machineguns may be emplaced in the vicinity of the line of departure to provide direct fire support.

(f) The assault section closely follows the attack to predesignated positions on the objective from which to support the consolidation. LAAW's do not ordinarily support the attack by fire.

(g) The 60mm mortar section normally will be employed in general support and will follow in trace of one of the attacking platoons, usually with the weapons platoon (-). During the assault, the company commander may have the section established in positions in the vicinity of the probable line of deployment to provide illumination and possibly engage targets of opportunity under illumination. The mortars will move to the objective immediately after seizure and engage targets of opportunity during pursuit by fire and consolidation. When nonorganic supporting fires are insufficient to ensure fire superiority for the attacking company, the mortars may be positioned near the line of departure to provide continuous fire support throughout the attack. This employment is contingent on the availability of firing positions within supporting range of known targets or danger areas.

(2) Illumination Planning

(a) The battalion commander normally determines the degree of illumination to be provided. During the attack by stealth, illumination is not employed during the advance to the probable line of deployment. During the assault, direct illumination by searchlights and flares may be used to blind and confuse the enemy. Illumination used to aid in consolidating the objective is normally limited to indirect illumination. Battlefield illumination may be furnished by the employment of ground signals, mortars, artillery, naval gunfire, aircraft flares, and searchlights.

(b) Illumination by searchlight is divided into classes--direct and indirect. Positioning is accomplished during daylight. It can be employed in three ways (see fig. 31):

1 With direct illumination, the lights occupy positions which permit a direct line of sight coverage of the objective. The light produced approximates daylight.

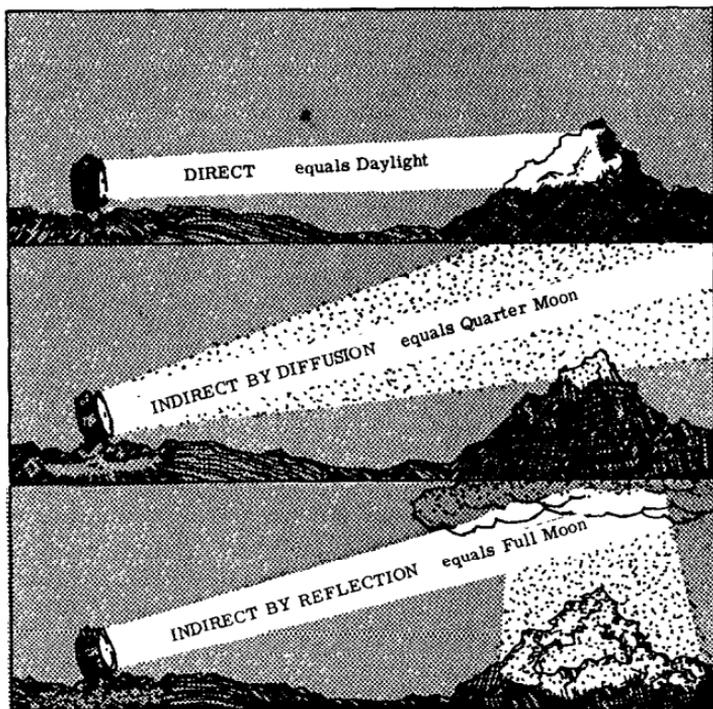


Figure 31.--Searchlight Employment.

2 Illumination by diffusion is indirect lighting which approximates the intensity of a quarter-moon. The beam is directed at a minimum elevation above the ground which causes the area beneath and to the flanks of the beam to be illuminated by the light diffused from atmospheric particles.

3 Illumination by reflection is another means of indirect lighting. It approximates that of a full moon. The searchlight beam is directed against low-lying clouds. The area illuminated receives light reflected from the clouds as well as diffused light.

3404. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. Attack Position.--Guides are used and routes are marked as necessary to aid movement into the attack position or to the line of departure when an attack position is not used. The company occupies the attack position for the minimum time needed to effect final coordination and last minute instructions. Returning members of the security patrol usually rejoin their respective platoons in the attack position after reporting to the company commander.

b. Movement to Platoon Release Point.--The company commander leads the company to the platoon release point. Platoon commanders march at the heads of their units to facilitate control. Frontal, flank, and rear security is maintained. Once the line of departure is crossed, movement is continuous and the rate of advance is slow enough to permit silent movement.

c. Advance to Probable Line of Deployment.--Movement is continuous through the platoon release point. When released, the platoons proceed on separate routes to the squad release point and then to the probable line of deployment. Each platoon provides forward, flank, and rear security elements.

(1) The company command group usually follows closely in trace of one of the rifle platoons to a predesignated position in the vicinity of the probable line of deployment.

(2) The assault section follows the company command group to a predesignated location short of the probable line of deployment when not employed in protecting a flank from an armor threat.

(3) Enemy elements encountered are eliminated as silently as possible during the approach to the probable line of deployment.

(4) Flare discipline is employed during the entire movement to the probable line of deployment.

(5) If the movement is positively discovered, the platoons are released and move on their independent routes to the probable line of deployment. They deploy from the platoon column as necessary to overcome enemy resistance on their respective routes.

d. Actions at the Probable Line of Deployment.--On arriving at the probable line of deployment, the squads deploy in line formation with fire teams as skirmishers. Enemy elements which may endanger deployment are eliminated as silently as possible just prior to arrival of the squads. Guides and security patrol members assist in the deployment and rejoin their squads.

The platoon commanders report their completed deployments and readiness to continue the operation to the company commander by radio brevity codes and/or messenger. Flare discipline is usually employed at the probable line of deployment.

e. Movement Forward.--Movement forward of the probable line of deployment commences on order of the company commander. The company commander may employ a radio brevity code, messenger, and/or movement of the base platoon to initiate further movement. The company continues the advance by moving silently forward in line without firing, but does not normally employ flare discipline forward of the probable line of deployment. When the attack is discovered, the assault is begun on signal from the company commander.

f. Assault.--Scattered firing by the enemy must not be construed as a loss of surprise and the company committed to a premature assault. The assault is normally initiated by the company commander. Unmistakable visual signals and voice commands are used. The authority to signal the assault because of enemy action may be delegated to the platoon commanders at the company commander's discretion. The assault is conducted aggressively. The importance of developing a large volume of fire is emphasized. Assault fire must establish the fire superiority normally provided for by other fires in daylight. Tracer ammunition may be used to aid accuracy and to demoralize the enemy. The company commander calls for supporting fires to isolate the objective and for available illumination. The assault is carried forward to the far military crest of the objective or to another prescribed limit short of the limit of advance.

3405. CONSOLIDATION

Consolidation is conducted in a manner similar to that for daylight operations. The reduced visibility must be taken into consideration when assigning defensive sectors. Also, the lack of visibility may require that the organized mopup of enemy forces be delayed until daylight. However, immediate action must be taken against enemy forces interfering with the consolidation.

Section V. TANK-INFANTRY ATTACK

3501. GENERAL

a. The speed, maneuverability, and communication facilities of tank units permit the rapid massing of mobile firepower at a locally decisive point. Tanks are employed with infantry in a balanced tank-infantry team to exploit the mobility, firepower, speed, and shock action of the tank to the maximum. The infantry elements provide close-in protection for the tanks from enemy antitank weapons and tank-killer teams. The tanks and infantry complement each other through mutual support and cooperation which emphasize the offensive capabilities of each arm. The separation of tanks and infantry is limited to the time and distance within which they are mutually supporting.

b. Terrain is the greatest limitation in the employment of tanks. Swamps, dense woods, steep slopes, and unfordable bodies of water slow or stop tank movement; however, minimum engineering efforts may sometimes overcome obstacles considered impassable by the enemy. The tanks' engine and track noise often give warning of their presence making tactical surprise difficult to achieve. A degree of surprise may be obtained, however, by utilizing the tanks' speed and maneuverability to advance rapidly under the cover of artillery fire, air support, or naval gunfire. Additionally, surprise may be realized by utilizing the least favorable avenue of approach for armor and attacking from an unexpected direction.

c. Tank units may be attached to, placed in direct support of, or placed in general support of infantry units. See paragraph 1302 for a discussion of these methods of employment. When employed with a rifle company, the tank unit is normally in direct support. The size of the supporting tank unit varies with the terrain, enemy situation, friendly situation, mission, etc., but will normally be a platoon of five tanks or a section of two or three tanks. Tanks should not be employed in less than sections.

d. The supporting tank unit commander is responsible for establishing the initial liaison with the supported unit commander. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of both commanders to maintain close and continuous coordination throughout the planning and attack.

3502. MUTUAL PROTECTION

Each element of the tank-infantry team provides a degree of mutual protection to the other element. The tank provides direct fire support with its main armament and machineguns. It is also capable of breaching wire entanglements and antipersonnel minefields. The tank, however, is not capable of fully protecting itself against enemy tank-killer teams because of its limited visibility. The accompanying infantry must provide this protection and generally uses one or a combination of the methods shown in figure 32, consistent with the nature of the terrain.

3503. METHODS OF ATTACK

a. General.--Whether the tanks are attached or in direct support, the rifle company commander uses any combination of three methods of attack

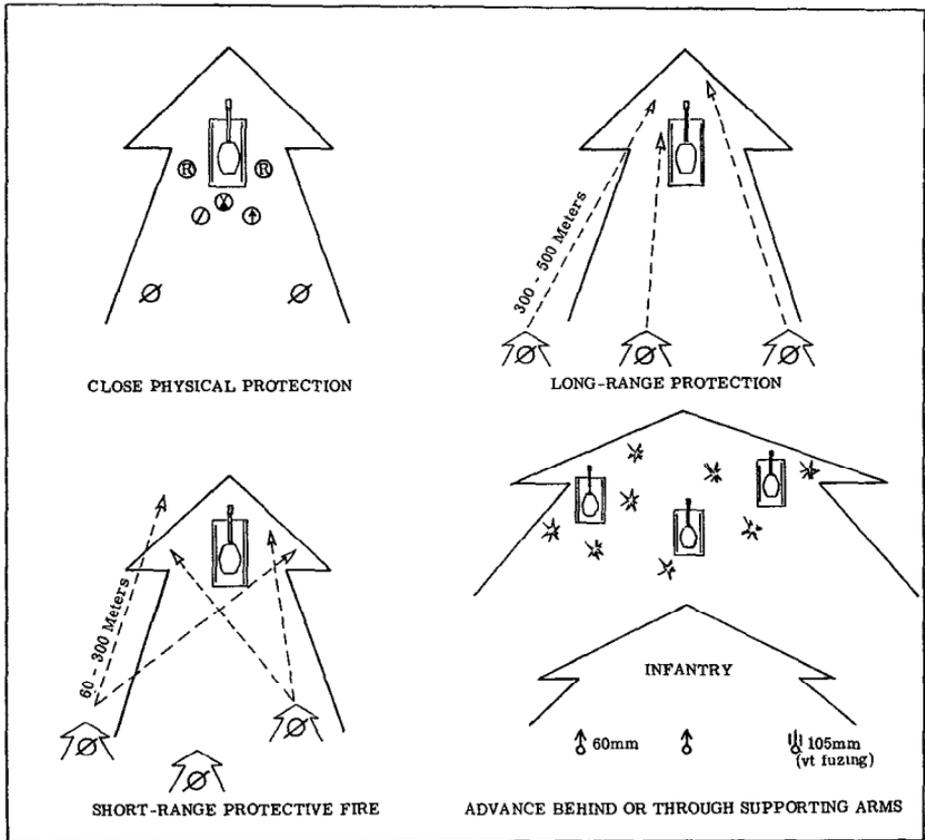


Figure 32.--Tank Protection Measures.

in employing the tanks. The three methods are the single axis attack, the converging axis attack, and support by fire. The combination of methods employed in the attack and the techniques of their application are varied to take maximum advantage of the tank's mobility, firepower, speed, and shock action. The three methods are appropriate for the rifle company or platoon.

(1) Single Axis Attack

(a) When maneuver, visibility, and fields of fire are restricted, the tanks and the infantry usually advance together within

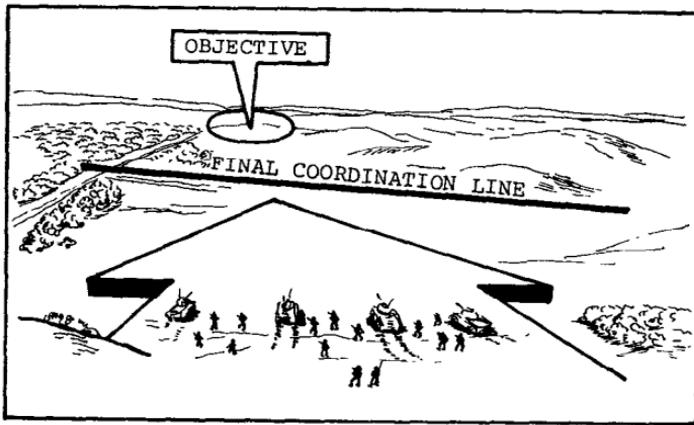


Figure 33.--Single Axis Attack.

mutually supporting distance of each other. Preferably, the tanks precede the infantry at the same speed. As the advance progresses, the relative positions of the tanks and infantry are adjusted according to the terrain and the enemy situation. This technique permits close coordination and maximum mutual support but sacrifices the speed and mobility of the tanks. Consequently, the shock action of the tanks is decreased and their vulnerability to enemy counteraction is increased.

(b) When good visibility and fields of fire are available, the tanks may initially support the advance of the infantry by fire. As the infantry approaches the final coordination line, the infantry commander orders the tanks forward for the assault. The movement of the tanks may be so timed that they pass through the infantry and assault under artillery and mortar air bursts. The infantry assault closely follows. The movement of the tanks may also be timed to join the infantry at the final coordination line for a simultaneous assault of the tanks and the infantry. The tanks lead the assault to take maximum advantage of their firepower and shock action and to prevent the infantry from masking their fires. In either case, proper timing must prevent prolonged halts at the final coordination line. (See fig. 33.)

(2) Converging Axes Attack.--Two different axes are used by the tank-infantry team to approach a common objective in attacking on converging axes. The adoption of the converging axes method depends primarily on the availability of suitable avenues of approach for the tanks and the infantry. Normally, the tanks follow the terrain most appropriate for their employment, while the infantry advance follows an axis offering cover and/or concealment. The tanks initially support the infantry advance by fire. The movement of the tanks is timed so that they assault the objective slightly in advance of the infantry to take maximum advantage of their shock effect. Tanks and infantry may also assault at the same time. When both axes are suitable for the employment of tanks, tank-infantry teams may also attack on each axis. One axis contains a force which is predominantly infantry supported by tanks. The other axis employs a force of tanks supported by

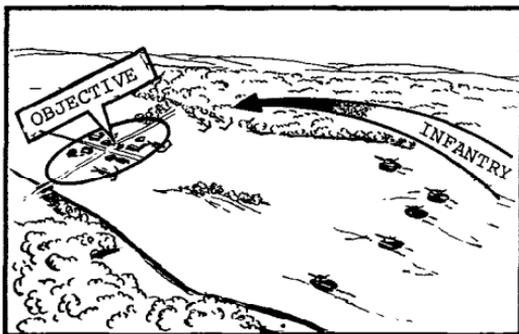


Figure 34.--Converging Axes Attack.

a minimum force of infantry. The converging axes attack is the preferred method as it achieves maximum firepower and shock action. It is economical in the use of troops and equipment and forces the enemy to fight simultaneously in two directions. Coordination of the assault presents the greatest difficulty. (See fig. 34.)

b. Support by Fire.--The support by fire method consists of an infantry attack to seize the objective while the tanks support the attack by fire. Having the tanks support by fire is the least desirable method for their employment and is used only when conditions exist which preclude their physical presence in the assault. This method is adopted when obstacles exist which must be uncovered in the attack to protect breaching parties, or when the attack includes the seizure of terrain impassable to tanks. In attacks of this type, the infantry loses the mobility, shock action, and close support of the tanks. The infantry is unsupported in the assault when the tanks cease or shift fire. The tanks are not available on the objective to cover the consolidation.

3504. PLAN OF ATTACK

a. General.--The plan of attack for the tank-infantry team is similar to that for the daylight attack in that it embodies a scheme of maneuver and fire support plan. They are developed concurrently, based on the infantry commander's estimate of the situation.

b. Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver is formulated from the considerations discussed in paragraph 3305 for the daylight attack and a consideration of the methods of tank-infantry attack. The rifle company commander and the unit leader of the attached or supporting tank unit conduct a joint reconnaissance. During the reconnaissance, the tank unit leader makes specific recommendations to the company commander concerning tank employment from the standpoints of terrain, the enemy situation, and the number and types of tanks available. The company commander incorporates the recommendations of the tank unit leader into his estimate of the situation, completes the estimate, and arrives at a decision. His decision includes the method or combination of methods of attack for the tank-infantry team. Whenever practicable, the company commander retains the tank unit in a general support role and plans his maneuver to take maximum advantage of

the shock action and firepower attained by the employment of tanks in mass. Where the company zone of action is too restricted to facilitate the movement of massed armor, tanks may be placed in direct support of the attacking rifle platoon(s). In such a case, a joint reconnaissance is made by the unit leaders involved prior to arriving at the plan of attack.

c. Fire Support Plan.--Fire support planning for the tank-infantry attack proceeds generally as described for the daylight attack in paragraph 3306. Certain special fire support considerations are involved in the employment of the tank-infantry team.

(1) Fires must be planned to protect the tanks from enemy tank-killer teams. These fires may be any combination of small arms and artillery or mortar time fire. Machineguns may be effectively employed in protecting tank movements. Their range materially reduces the number of displacements necessary to continuously support the tanks. Fires to protect and cover tank movements are particularly important when the scheme of maneuver requires the tanks to traverse ground not previously uncovered by the infantry advance.

(2) Fire planing must provide for the destruction or neutralization of known and suspected enemy antitank weapons. Fire plans must be flexible enough to provide for the immediate engagement of enemy antitank weapons positions disclosed during the attack.

(3) The fire support plan employs the fire and maneuver capabilities of tanks to the maximum. Fires from the tank's main armament and its machineguns are incorporated into the fire support plan. Tanks may participate in preparation fires, fires in support of the attack, assault fires, and fires to support consolidation. The relative effectiveness of their fire support is directly related to the method or methods of attack required by the scheme of maneuver.

3505. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. General.--The attack is conducted aggressively to close with the enemy as rapidly as possible with a combined force of tanks and infantry. Ideally, the tanks lead the infantry through the assault of the objective.

b. Movement from Assembly Areas.--The techniques employed in assembling and moving the tank-infantry team to the line of departure may vary.

(1) The tank-infantry team may be formed and occupy a common assembly area. When the terrain permits and the assembly area is close to the line of departure, the team moves forward to and across the line of departure in its initial attack formation. When routes to the line of departure are limited and/or the assembly area is remote from the line of departure, the tank-infantry team moves forward to an attack position in an approach march formation. Deployment into the initial attack formation is effected in the attack position.

(2) The tank and infantry components of the team may occupy separate assembly areas. The respective commanders, having effected coordinated planning, may arrange to move their respective components from separate assembly areas to a common attack position at which the tank-infantry team is physically formed. Such movements require execution sufficiently in advance of the attack to effect close coordination in the attack position.

This technique is usually employed at the company level when the prospective plan of attack is simple and under company control.

c. Advance and Assault.--The advance by fire and maneuver and the assault are conducted as described in paragraphs 3307 and 3502. Care is taken to ensure the coordinated advance and assault of the infantry and tank elements comprising the team.

3506. CONSOLIDATION

a. Consolidation is conducted in the manner described for the daylight attack in paragraph 3308. The tanks are withdrawn from their points of furthest advance in the assault to hull defilade positions on the objective. The tank unit's consolidation missions are assigned prior to commencement of the attack. The tank unit leader predesignates positions on the objective from which to accomplish the assigned consolidation missions.

b. In some situations, the presence of tanks on the objective may permit the rifle unit commander to withdraw the major portion of the rifle unit to covered positions for reorganization. The firepower afforded by the tanks in consolidation may be sufficient to defend the objective when augmented by adequate infantry to provide close-in protection for the tanks. This is of particular value when an early continuation of the attack is planned.

Section VI. MECHANIZED INFANTRY ATTACK

3601. GENERAL

a. The mechanized company may be employed independently or as part of a battalion mechanized force to accomplish one or more of the following missions:

- (1) Rapid seizure of deep objectives.
- (2) Envelopment and seizure of enemy positions.
- (3) Pursuit and/or cutoff of withdrawing enemy.
- (4) Exploitation of battalion successes.
- (5) Linkup with helicopterborne forces.

b. In the amphibious operation, the company normally lands as part of a larger force whether it conducts independent mechanized operations ashore or participates as part of a larger mechanized force.

c. The purpose of this section is to provide the rifle company commander and his platoon commanders with guidance in planning and executing the coordinated mechanized attack. Vehicle availability and planned employment on dismounting may require alteration of the techniques discussed.

3602. METHODS OF ATTACK

a. General.--The mechanized rifle company is a balanced fire and maneuver team composed of tanks, assault amphibious vehicles, and the rifle company. The entire grouping is controlled by the rifle company commander from the commencement of planning until the team is dissolved on order from higher headquarters. Similarly, the rifle platoon and its supporting assault amphibious vehicles are a balanced maneuver team. In some instances, tanks may be placed in support of the platoon to permit fire and maneuver at platoon level. In organizing the rifle company for the mechanized attack, the company commander is normally directly supported by a platoon of tanks, a platoon of assault amphibious vehicles, and a command vehicle. He normally retains the tanks and the command vehicle under his control and apportions the assault amphibious vehicles in direct support of the platoons. When possible, apportionments to the attacking echelon are sufficient to tactically mount one attacking rifle squad in each assault amphibious vehicle. The weapons platoon and the reserve rifle platoon are mounted in the remaining vehicles. Desirably, the entire rifle company is mounted in vehicles of similar land mobility characteristics.

b. Same Route.--In the mechanized attack, mounted infantry and tanks both advance simultaneously or the infantry may follow the tanks by bounds. (See fig. 35.) The tanks lead using their firepower to prevent undue exposure of the assault amphibious vehicles. The tanks and infantry may advance in any formation within mutual supporting distance.

c. Multiple Routes.--In some situations, it may be necessary or desirable for mechanized infantry and tanks to move on two routes. This is

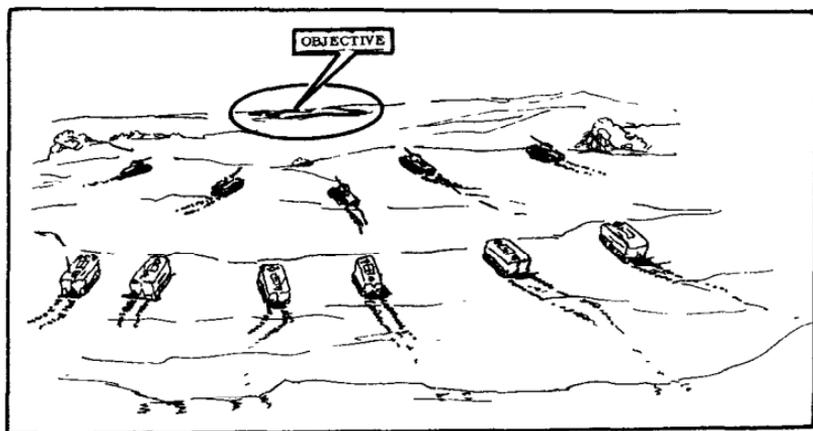


Figure 35.--Mounted Infantry and Tanks Advancing.

usually the case when exploiting the amphibious capability of the assault amphibious vehicle in crossing streams, rivers, lakes, etc. In such cases, the tanks support the attack by fire and join the infantry as soon as practicable. Once the infantry and tanks are reunited, the attack continues on a single route. When a single avenue of approach is too narrow to accommodate the entire attack echelon, tanks and mounted infantry may advance on multiple routes in closing with the enemy. Normally, a maximum of two routes are used in the advance. Tanks and infantry advance on both fronts.

3603. PLAN OF ATTACK

a. General.--The plan of attack for mechanized operations is similar to the daylight attack.

b. Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver is developed generally as discussed in paragraph 3305 for the daylight attack and a consideration of the methods of mechanized infantry attack. The following considerations are important in formulating the scheme of maneuver:

(1) Enemy.--Enemy defenses have considerable effect on the selection of routes and on the ability to move mounted in the attack. Enemy armor, antitank defenses, and positions with overhead cover are particularly important. Mounted movements in proximity to enemy covered positions are not practicable due to the relative ineffectiveness of air burst artillery and mortar fire in neutralizing them. Dismounted action forward of the line of departure is usually required to destroy or neutralize enemy armor, antitank defenses, and obstacles prior to initiating action at the assigned objective. Against hastily prepared positions with weak antitank defenses, however, mounted movement may be practicable all the way to the objective.

(2) Terrain.--Terrain is considered with respect to its trafficability for tracked vehicles and for wheeled vehicles logistically

supporting operations. Also, close terrain may force the infantry to dismount in order to provide the necessary close-in protection.

(3) Control.--The attack is controlled by adequate communications, affording subordinate leaders effective control of supporting vehicles, the selection of appropriate formations, and the use of tactical control measures.

(a) Vehicle Control.--Each rifle squad leader assumes tactical control of the vehicle in which his squad is mounted. The rifle platoon commander maintains tactical control over the three vehicles in which his platoon is mounted. The company commander normally exercises control from his assault amphibious vehicle.

(b) Communications.--Communications in the attack consist of radio and visual signals. Each assault amphibious vehicle is equipped with a radio set. The company tactical net is established utilizing the radios in appropriate vehicles during the mounted stages of the attack and reverts to the conventional net on dismounting.

(c) Formations.--The formations employed by the rifle company and the rifle platoon during dismounted stages of the attack are identical to those employed in the normal daylight attack. The formations employed when mounted in assault amphibious vehicles are similar:

1 Company Formations.--The considerations in selecting an attack formation are basically the same as for dismounted attack. The formation normally used when mounted is two platoons in the attack and one in reserve. A column formation is used more frequently for mechanized attack than for a dismounted attack. The mechanized rifle company often attacks to seize deep objectives when the enemy situation is relatively obscure. When necessary and when vehicles are available, all three platoons may be employed in the attack echelon. The weapons platoon and the reserve rifle platoon are seldom tactically mounted as their employment normally involves movement to a specified location by vehicle and dismounted action on commitment.

2 Platoon Formations.--The mechanized rifle platoon may employ various formations during mounted stages of the attack. The vehicle in which the platoon commander rides is normally the lead vehicle of the formation and is the base vehicle for movements in changing formations.

(d) Tactical Control Measures.--Special considerations are involved in the selection and/or use of certain tactical control measures. Tactical control measures not normally used in other forms of attack are required in the mechanized attack. Control measures not discussed are used in their normal manner; e.g., checkpoints and phase lines have the same significance.

1 Axis of Advance.--The company is normally assigned an axis of advance in the mechanized attack and may assign axes to the attacking platoons.

2 Zone of Action.--The company may be assigned a zone of action. A mechanized rifle company is rarely required to clear a zone. The company commander may assign zones of action to attacking platoons even

when the company is assigned an axis of advance. Zones are wide enough to permit vehicle maneuver and are considerably wider than for other attacks.

3 Intermediate Objectives.--Intermediate objectives tend to slow the attack and negate the mechanized capability of rapid and steady advance. They are designated less frequently in mechanized attack than in other forms of attack.

4 Dismount Area.--The company commander designates a dismount area forward of the line of departure in which his attacking platoons dismount from assault amphibious vehicles and immediately continue the attack on foot. The dismount area may be short of the final coordination line, at the line, or on the objective. It should be a concealed or covered area, if possible, and it should be located as far forward as the terrain and the enemy situation permit. In selecting the dismount area, the company commander estimates how far forward the attack echelon can move mounted before becoming vulnerable to effective enemy counteraction. He also considers the support afforded by the tanks and other fires as well as the terrain. The area selected during planning is tentative and may be changed during the attack. The dismount area is located on the objective only when tanks accompany the advance and it is estimated that enemy strength can be effectively neutralized by fire.

c. Fire Support Plan.--Since the movement of the mechanized attack echelon is rapid, detailed planning and coordination of supporting fires are essential to permit the timely delivery, shifting, and ceasing of fires. The plan provides for maximum delivery of fires during the period in which the infantry is active in the dismount area and just prior to the assault. Flexibility of the fire support plan is mandatory to meet unforeseen situations. Fire support planning proceeds generally as described in paragraph 4306 for the daylight attack and includes the additional considerations listed below:

(1) Protection Fires.--Since the tanks normally lead the mounted advance of the infantry, protecting the tanks by fire is a primary concern in fire support planning. Fires to protect the assault amphibious vehicles are a lesser, but important, requirement.

(a) Time Fire.--When the tanks lead the assault amphibious vehicles by sufficient distance, artillery and mortar air bursts may be used to protect the tanks. These fires should not be used to protect assault amphibious vehicles.

(b) Vehicle Fires.--The machineguns mounted in the cupolas of the assault amphibious vehicles may provide sufficient protective fires for the tanks. Their effectiveness is largely dictated by the terrain and the distance at which the tanks are leading the mounted infantry. The cupola machineguns may also be employed in mutual support between assault amphibious vehicles.

(2) Weapons Platoon.--The depth of the maneuver forward of the line of departure usually prevents the effective employment of the machinegun section during the mounted advance. The availability of tanks markedly decreases the importance of the assault section as an antitank defense means. For these reasons, the planned employment of the weapons platoon in the mechanized attack is limited to actions following its arrival in the dismount areas or other forward locations which it can effectively

support the attack. Normally, the assault section is employed only in consolidation unless its demolition capability is to be exploited.

(3) Tank Fires.--The fire support plan exploits the fire and maneuver capabilities of the tanks to the maximum. Tank fires are incorporated into the fire support plan.

(4) Neutralization Fires.--The destruction or neutralization of known and suspected antitank weapons must be provided for. The flexibility of the plan must permit the immediate engagement of enemy antitank weapons located during the attack.

(5) Screening Smoke.--The use of smoke is considered in screening the mounted advance and activities in the dismount area.

3604. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. Movement forward and across the line of departure is continuous. If a halt in the attack position is necessary, it should be as short as possible. The movement from the attack position to the line of departure is made in the initial attack formation.

b. Movement forward of the line of departure is made as rapidly as the terrain, speed of the vehicles, and the use of supporting fires permit.

c. During the advance the infantry dismounts for action when the situation requires. The infantry also dismounts to provide close physical protection for the tanks and assault amphibious vehicles when passing through close terrain, then remounts and continues the mechanized advance.

d. Upon reaching the dismount area, the vehicles halt under available cover and the infantry dismounts. The attack then continues as a dismounted daylight attack or as a tank-infantry attack.

3605. CONSOLIDATION

a. After seizing the objective, the attacking force consolidates in much the same way as in a daylight attack or tank-infantry attack. The assault amphibious vehicles are ordered forward from the dismount area to a covered area in the immediate vicinity of the objective or to hull-defilade positions from which they can provide machinegun fire. Some assault amphibious vehicles may be positioned to provide security to the flanks and rear.

b. As in the tank-infantry attack, the availability of firepower on the objective may permit rifle units to be withdrawn to covered positions for reorganization. Close-in protection requirements for the tanks and assault amphibious vehicles usually govern the rifle unit strength which may be withdrawn.

Section VII. ATTACK OF FORTIFIED AREAS

3701. GENERAL

a. Fortifications provide a base for offensive operations or a series of strong defensive positions for the protection of vital areas. They cause the attacker to mass and present a profitable target. The attacker's task of reducing fortifications results in dissipation of his combat power, thereby making him vulnerable to counterattack.

b. Fortified works of some nature are invariably constructed when military forces have a defensive mission. Depending upon the time and resources available for their construction, they may range in complexity from simple, hastily prepared log or earth bunkers constructed from locally available materials to permanent concrete and steel emplacements with fixed embrasures or steel turrets, intricate underground passages, and elaborate troop quarters.

c. This section discusses the tactics and techniques employed by the rifle company and the rifle platoons when participating in the attack of a fortified area consisting of mutually supporting bunkers and formidable obstacles.

3702. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

a. General.--The attack of a fortified area is difficult and requires special consideration. The defender has the advantage of protection against all types of fire, prepared obstacles, carefully planned fires, and thoroughly rehearsed counterattack plans. For these reasons, fortified areas are normally bypassed by the main attacking forces and are contained by minimum forces. Actions to reduce the bypassed area may include siege or an attack from the rear.

b. Enemy Weaknesses.--There are certain disadvantages to defending a fortified area. The attacker must take maximum advantage of enemy weaknesses in planning and executing his attack. These weaknesses include:

(1) Lack of Mobility.--Each emplacement or bunker within a fortified area is permanently established and cannot be relocated or altered to meet changing situations.

(2) Openings.--Emplacements are weakest at and near the embrasures, air vents, and doorways leading in and out of them.

(3) Lack of Visibility.--A single embrasure in an emplacement can normally cover a 60-degree sector of observation and fire. The number of embrasures which can be constructed per emplacement is limited because the strength of overhead cover decreases correspondingly with the increase in the number of embrasures. This lack of visibility requires emplacements to depend upon each other for mutual support. The ability of a fortified area to maintain a coordinated defense depends upon the mutually supporting emplacements remaining intact. The defense becomes progressively less effective as emplacements are neutralized or captured.

c. Basic Principles.--The attack of a fortified area usually follows the basic principles of the daylight attack but may employ night

principles to exploit successful daylight attack or to seize key bunkers prior to daylight. The character and extent of the defense normally dictate the degree of special preparation necessary for the attack and whether it is initiated in daylight or in darkness. Greater than normal emphasis is placed on the following:

(1) Zones of Action.--Since the penetration is the normal form of maneuver employed by larger units in attacking a fortified area, the rifle company and rifle platoon are directed to clear their zones of action, particularly when participating as part of the main attack. This is done to eliminate enemy interference in rear of the main attack which might affect forces assigned to widen the gap or exploit the penetration. Zones of action assigned the rifle company and the platoon are narrower than normal. Specific frontages will be determined by the mission, the enemy situation, number of bunkers to be cleared, the number of troops, types and amount of special equipment available, etc.

(2) Missions.--Missions assigned the rifle company and the rifle platoon involve clearing their specified zones of action and seizing terrain objectives. A sequence for the reduction of known bunkers is normally assigned to insure that:

(a) Fortifications which are mutually supporting are attacked simultaneously.

(b) Maximum mutual support between attacking units is maintained.

(c) A maximum number of emplacements are attacked from the rear or from a blind side.

(d) The zone of action is cleared.

(3) Mass.--A primary purpose of a fortified area is to cause the attacker to mass and present lucrative targets. Plans for the attack must minimize this danger, consistent with the accomplishment of the mission.

(4) Information.--Detailed intelligence is required upon which to base training, rehearsals, and plans. The essential elements of information require efforts at all levels to determine the following:

(a) Exact location and extent of individual fortifications.

(b) Locations and numbers of embrasures, field of fire, and types of weapons therein.

(c) Locations of entrances, exits, and air vents in each emplacement.

(d) Directions of fire and types of fixed weapons.

(e) Extent of underground fortifications.

(f) Locations of natural and artificial obstacles.

(g) Locations of weak spots in the defense.

(h) Location of reserves.

(5) Planning.--Planning and preparation are centralized at the company level for decentralized execution by the rifle platoons. Plans are detailed, concurrent, and parallel.

(6) Captured Positions.--Unless required for use by the attacker, captured enemy armament and fortifications are moved or destroyed to prevent their use by the enemy if recaptured.

(7) Task Organization.--Each attacking unit within the infantry battalion, including the rifle squad, is task organized to accomplish its mission. The rifle company may be reinforced with tanks, engineers, and/or Dragons and MPFW's. The platoon (and squad) may also be reinforced as necessary by the above and weapons from the company weapons platoon. The use of demolitions and MPFW's during the attack of fortified positions is most advantageous.

3703. PLAN OF ATTACK

a. General.--At company and platoon level the plan of attack is a scheme of maneuver integrated and coordinated with a fire support plan similar to the daylight attack. The special considerations discussed in paragraph 3702 are incorporated into the estimate of the situation, as appropriate.

b. Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver at both the company and platoon level is normally a frontal attack immediately preceded by obstacle breaching operations. It provides for:

(1) Breaching obstacles to provide clear approaches for assault elements.

(2) Seizing mutually supporting emplacements simultaneously, if possible.

(3) Reduction of emplacements within the zone of action in the sequence prescribed by the next higher echelon.

(4) Seizure and consolidation of assigned terrain objectives.

(5) Designation of both company and platoon reserves with the additional mission of protecting the flanks and rear of the penetration.

c. Fire Support Plan.--Fire support planning is very similar to planning for the daylight attack but is more detailed and comprehensive. Fire support usually commences with an intense preparation. Fire support elements of both the rifle company and rifle platoon participate in the preparation to cover concurrent obstacle breaching operations conducted by maneuver elements.

(1) Company level fire support planning must provide fires which are closely integrated with the support requirements of the attacking platoons and adjacent units. The company commander ensures that his fire support plan provides for:

(a) Adequate support of obstacle breaching operations conducted by the attacking platoons.

(b) Simultaneous engagement of all known or suspected enemy positions and embrasures capable of firing in support of the emplacements under attack.

(c) Delivery of previously coordinated fires in support of adjacent units as required by the respective schemes of maneuver.

(d) Mutual support between attacking platoons.

(2) Platoon level fire support planning provides for the close fire support of obstacle breaching and assault elements. Within his fire support capabilities, the platoon commander plans for the simultaneous engagement of known and suspected enemy positions and embrasures capable of firing in support of the emplacements under attack. Additional fires are requested from the company commander and, when approved, are prearranged with the appropriate fire support unit. Mutual support between attacking squads and with adjacent platoons is arranged as necessary. A diversity of targets usually requires the platoon commander to employ machineguns, rockets, and MPFW's by teams rather than squads. This is particularly true of machineguns and rockets when the platoon withholds a reserve.

d. Rehearsal.--The entire plan of attack is rehearsed in detail when time permits. Leaders at all echelons are thoroughly familiarized with the plan of attack, its sequence, and its timing. Unit commanders make corrections and adjust plans as necessary.

3704. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. The attack usually commences with an intense air, naval gunfire, and artillery preparation. During the preparation, routes are cleared of obstacles to permit the passage of attacking squads. Assault elements advance as rapidly as possible under available supporting fires. Direct fire weapons engage the embrasures and other openings in the emplacements. Close supporting fires are directed toward supporting the advance of assault units to positions from which to assault and destroy assigned emplacements. Fires are continued as long as troop safety permits and are shifted or ceased by prearranged visual signal. Assault units approach assigned emplacements from a blind side, assault, and destroy them employing white phosphorous and demolitions. If the fortifications are protected by wire, wire breaching elements accompany the assault and clear routes through the wire. FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad, describes the assault of a single emplacement.

b. Consolidation is conducted generally as described in paragraph 3308 for the daylight attack. Supporting weapons may displace to new positions from which to support a continuation of the attack. Attacking platoons consolidate their respective emplacement areas and continue the attack until the final objective is seized. Reserve squads of attacking platoons and the reserve platoon take the necessary steps to prevent captured emplacements from being reoccupied in the wake of the attack. Battalion reserves may ultimately assume this responsibility. On seizure of the final objective, the attacking companies and platoons consolidate their gains while other forces widen the gap created. Other units may attack through the consolidating units to exploit the penetration.

Section VIII. ATTACK OF BUILT-UP AREAS

3801. GENERAL

The attack of a built-up area assumes specialized characteristics not normally associated with the conventional attack. Such attacks may be equated to the amphibious operation in that they require semi-independent actions of small units and extremely detailed planning to offset the difficulties imposed by the nature of the operational environment. The purpose of this section is to provide the rifle company commander and his subordinates with guidance in the planning and execution of the attack in a built-up area. The type construction encountered in the area may require a blending of the techniques discussed here with those of the daylight attack and the attack of fortified areas.

3802. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

a. Certain general definitions are basic to a discussion of combat in built-up areas. (See fig. 36.)

(1) Built-Up Areas.--A built-up area is any group of buildings designed for habitation or for commercial purposes such as a village, town, or city. A built-up area may become a battle area because its location controls routes of movement or because it contains valuable industrial or political installations.

(2) Block-Type Construction.--Block-type construction is that type construction in which few or no gaps exist between buildings such as in business districts or large towns or cities.

(3) Detached or Semidetached Building Areas.--These are areas of towns and cities in which the buildings are spaced relatively close together as in residential areas with a high density of individual and duplex buildings.

(4) Isolated Housing Areas.--Isolated housing areas include villages, hamlets, suburban houses, or other small clusters of buildings which are surrounded by large, open areas.

(5) Critical Areas.--Critical areas are locations within a built-up area that may require special coordination to overcome. Open areas between buildings, superhighways, wide streets, railroads, and other terrain features which provide the enemy an advantage in observation and fire may become critical areas. Buildings bordering these terrain features are included in the critical areas.

(6) Key Building.--A key building is a structure which contains an important governmental agency or public utility or is one of distinct cultural, political, or historical value. City halls, telephone exchanges, telegraph offices, waterworks, transportation facilities, hospitals, museums, and cathedrals are examples of key buildings. Plans for seizure of such structures provide for minimum damage to the facilities housed therein.

b. The general construction of a built-up area imposes tactical considerations of a specialized nature on both the attacker and defender. These are discussed below primarily as they affect the attacker.

(1) Control.--Buildings in a built-up area interfere with radio communications. Wire and messengers are frequently the only reliable means. Because of restrictions on communications and observation, control is difficult and is decentralized. Initiative of small unit leaders assumes added importance.

(2) Military Aspects of Terrain.--The military aspects of the terrain hinge upon unusual characteristics which are unique to built-up areas.

(a) Observation and Fields of Fire.--Observation and fields of fire are restricted to the narrow lanes provided by streets and alleys. Observation is further restricted by the use of smoke or by the dust and smoke created during the fighting; therefore, it may be necessary to seize some of the taller buildings for use as observation posts. The rubble and debris resulting from destruction of buildings severely restricts existing fields of fire.

(b) Cover and Concealment.--Built-up areas offer excellent cover and concealment for both the attacker and the defender. The defender has an important advantage in that the attacker must expose himself to move through the area. The effectiveness of the cover depends upon the density of the buildings and the nature of their construction. Buildings with basements or two or more stories offer good overhead cover from supporting arms fire.

(c) Obstacles.--Buildings set close together in geometric patterns present obstacles to both troops and vehicles. Streets, particularly in block-type construction areas, are relatively easy to barricade and cover by fire. Rubble created by air, naval gunfire, artillery, and direct fire weapons may constitute obstacles to the progress of the attack.

(d) Key Terrain.--Key terrain in built-up areas includes strongly constructed buildings or groups of buildings which cover good avenues of approach, bridges, and hubs of underground sewerage and subway systems.

(e) Avenues of Approach.--The best avenue of approach in terms of cover and concealment is often through existing buildings. Streets, alleys, and underground sewerage and subway systems constitute avenues of approach which invite movement, but are readymade fire lanes and killing zones for enemy direct fire weapons. Vehicle movement is restricted to streets and alleys where they are subject to ambush.

(3) Fire Support.--Poor observation with its resulting limitations on adjustment of fire and the proximity of friendly and enemy forces in contact renders indirect fire support difficult. Direct fire weapons normally provide the bulk of the close fire support during the attack. The attacker must use supporting weapons carefully and consider the possibility of creating obstacles to his own advance or hindering the maneuver of higher or adjacent units.

(4) Security.--Basements, underground passages, and upper floors create a requirement for security above and below as well as to the front, flanks, and rear.

(5) Night Operations.--Under cover of darkness, streets can be crossed more safely and small patrols can infiltrate between defended areas

or defended buildings. These patrols may perform reconnaissance missions or conduct combat operations to eliminate enemy positions. Large scale night operations are avoided. Small local night attacks may position units for daylight operations, secure buildings or areas required for continued daylight operations, or eliminate enemy strongpoints.

3803. PHASES OF ATTACK

a. The attack of a built-up area is divided into three phases:

(1) Phase I.--Phase I is designed to isolate the built-up area by seizing terrain features which dominate the approaches. Because enemy defenses or terrain obstacles may prevent complete isolation, the attacker must secure positions outside the built-up area from which he can support entry into it and its step-by-step seizure. This phase of the attack is planned and conducted in a manner similar to other attacks.

(2) Phase II.--Phase II consists of the advance to the edge of the built-up area and the seizure of a foothold. Normally, this foothold consists of the seizure of buildings on its near edge which deny the enemy observation and direct fire on the attacker's approaches to the town. The planning and conduct of this phase are much the same as for attacks of strong defensive positions and may assume many of the characteristics of an attack against a fortified area.

(3) Phase III.--Phase III consists of the advance through the built-up area to clear it of enemy. During this phase the attack assumes its more specialized characteristics. It ends when the entire built-up area is cleared.

b. Phase I may be accomplished concurrently with phases II and III by large forces. There is no discernible pause following completion of phase II before phase III is initiated. As the planning and conduct of phases I and II are similar to other attacks, the remainder of the discussion in this section is devoted to phase III, clearance of the built-up area.

3804. PLAN OF ATTACK

a. General.--The plan of attack consists of the scheme of maneuver and a fire support plan which emphasizes the use of direct fire weapons in the close support of attacking echelons. As in other attacks, the scheme of maneuver and the fire support plan are developed concurrently. The tactical considerations resulting from the peculiarities of the built-up area are included in the estimate of the situation.

b. Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver is closely integrated with the fire support plan and emphasizes mutual support between adjacent attacking units.

(1) Rifle Company.--The rifle company commander is usually required to attack frontally within a zone of action, which must be cleared. The company is normally assigned key buildings, groups of buildings, or blocks of buildings as objectives, and in turn, plans to assign groups of buildings or single large buildings as platoon objectives. When an objective extends to a street, only the near side of the street should be included. Each building within the zone of action must be entered and

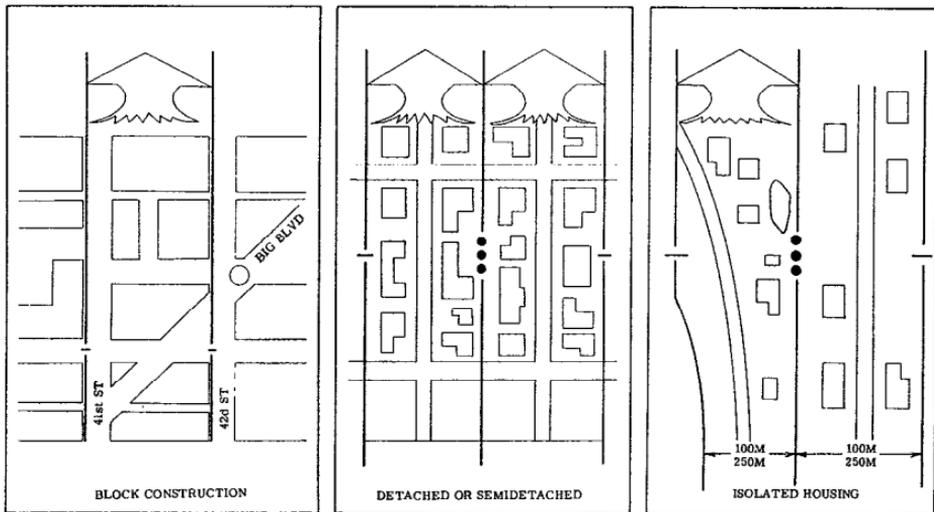


Figure 36.--Typical Company and Platoon Frontages.

searched in order to be assured that the enemy is cleared. Phase lines may be employed to enhance control and regulate the advance of attacking platoons.

(a) Formations.--The attack formation depends upon the width and depth of the zone of action, the type construction of the area, and anticipated enemy resistance. Normally, the rifle company employs two platoons in the attack and one in the reserve. The reserve protects the flanks and rear of the company.

(b) Frontages.--Frontages assigned to the rifle company depend upon the enemy strength, size of buildings, and the type construction of the area. In isolated housing areas, the company may be assigned normal frontages. In areas of detached and semidetached construction, the company frontage consists of two streets including all buildings fronting on both streets. In block-type construction, the rifle company is assigned a zone of action one block wide inclusive of the street on one flank and exclusive of the street on the other. Figure 36 shows typical frontages for the rifle company and platoon and provides guidance to the company commander in assigning zones of action to attacking platoons.

(2) Rifle Platoon.--The rifle platoon commander plans to attack frontally to clear the assigned zone of action. The platoon is normally assigned groups of buildings or single large buildings as platoon objectives. Correspondingly, the platoon commander assigns individual buildings or portions of large buildings as squad objectives. Numbering buildings within the platoon zone of action facilitates the assignment of objectives and simplifies reports of their seizure.

(a) Formations.--The rifle platoon normally designates and withholds a reserve and employs two squads in its attacking echelon, particularly when attacking in block-type construction or in areas of detached and semidetached construction. In isolated housing areas, the platoon attack formations may assume the character of those used in other attacks.

(b) Frontages.--Frontages assigned attacking rifle platoons may vary, depending primarily upon the type construction characteristic of the area under attack. Figure 36 shows typical platoon frontages for the various type constructions. The frontages assigned the rifle squads are also determined largely by the type construction encountered. In isolated housing areas squad frontages are normal. In areas consisting of detached and semidetached buildings, a squad is normally assigned a frontage sufficient to include the buildings fronting on one side of the street. In block type construction, squad frontages are assigned consistent with the building or portion thereof assigned the squad as an objective. In some instances a direction of attack may be assigned to ensure entry into the building at the desired location.

c. Fire Support Plan.--Fire support planning is similar to planning for the daylight attack but relies more extensively on the use of direct fire weapons in close support of the attack. Indirect fires are primarily planned to engage deeper targets and to screen the attack with smoke. Mutual support between adjacent squads and platoons is required and integration of schemes of maneuver with mutual fire support requirements is planned in detail. (See fig. 37.)

(1) Support.--Tanks; Dragons; and tube launched, optically tracked, wire command link, guided missile system (TOW) platoons are attached to or support the rifle company and increase its direct fire support capability. Vehicle mounted weapons are restricted to movement in streets and alleys and must be protected by infantry. Restricted observation and fields of fire require their employment from positions well forward in the attack.

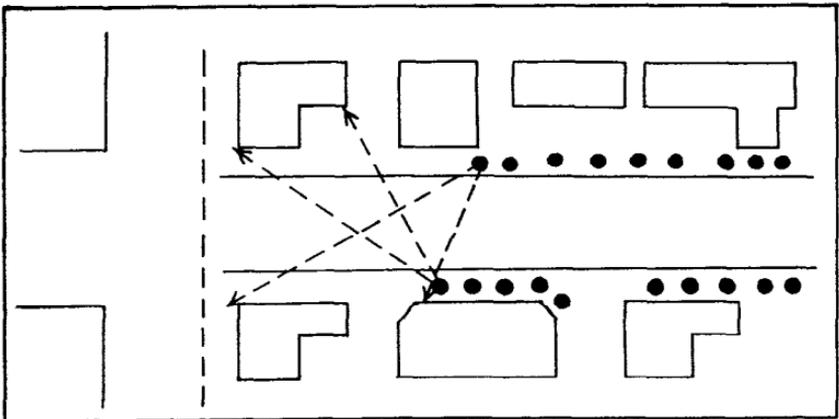


Figure 37.--Mutual Support.

(2) Automatic weapons and machineguns are positioned to create killing zones down streets and across open areas. Their fires are coordinated with the scheme of maneuver to ensure ceasing or shifting fires when attacking units are crossing or otherwise employing the zones.

(3) LAAW's are normally attached to the rifle platoons and, in addition to their antimechanized role, are used to breach buildings and street barricades.

(4) 60mm mortars are positioned to cover potential withdrawal routes and avenues which might be used to reinforce the area.

3805. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. Phase III of the attack may be either a systematic block-by-block, house-to-house reduction of the built-up area or a rapid advance through the town with clearance of specific critical areas and key buildings. In either case, the rifle company normally attacks to seize assigned objectives in a systematic manner, when committed.

b. Direct fire weapons engage known and suspected enemy locations in support of searching parties and covering parties entering and clearing individual buildings. FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad, describes the techniques of house-to-house fighting employed by searching and covering parties.

c. Consolidation takes place as each unit objective is seized. Attention is given to placing weapons in firing positions to cover all avenues of approach. Plans are made or completed for the continuation of the attack. The three dimensional nature of security must be stressed during consolidation. Avenues of approach from above and below the objective share equal importance with those from the front, flanks, and rear. Consolidation plans must provide appropriate coverage of these approaches.

Section IX. RIVER-CROSSING OPERATIONS

3901. GENERAL

a. This section discusses the roles of the Marine rifle company and its rifle platoons as a part of larger forces in the attack of a river line. It provides the rifle company officer with guidance in planning and executing the river crossing. The purpose of a river-crossing operation is to move an attacking force rapidly across a river obstacle so that it may continue its attack to seize assigned objectives. The characteristics and restrictions peculiar to this type operation are as follows:

- (1) Specialized equipment and personnel are required.
- (2) Limited areas suitable for crossing often tend to canalize the attack.
- (3) Control of units is complicated by the nature of the obstacle itself, the restrictions imposed by space, and the employment of combat support units requiring detailed command coordination.
- (4) Tactical courses of action are limited, since deployment and firepower are restricted while the troops are astride the river.
- (5) Once forces are committed to action, it is difficult to deviate from the initial plan.

b. There are two general types of river crossings, hasty and deliberate.

(1) Hasty Crossing.--A crossing is termed hasty when it can be conducted as a continuation of the attack, with a minimum loss of momentum, by the same large forces which executed the advance to the river line. A hasty crossing is normally conducted when enemy defenses on the far bank are weak or when bridges or fords are captured before the enemy has a chance to destroy them. This type of crossing is characterized by speed, surprise, and minimum concentration of personnel and equipment. It is made with the crossing means available and requires prior planning to include necessary task organization and allocation of crossing means.

(2) Deliberate Crossing.--The deliberate crossing is characterized by some delay, more detailed preparations and planning, and the employment of extensive and specialized crossing means in the face of a determined enemy defense.

3902. CONCEPT

a. In a river crossing the effectiveness of the river as an obstacle is reduced through surprise and deception and by the speed of the attack and buildup of combat power on the hostile shore. Tactical deceptions such as feints and demonstrations are coordinated by higher echelons to confuse and mislead the enemy.

b. A river crossing is usually made on a wide front to facilitate dispersion, rapid crossing, and deception. The size of the initial wave is limited solely by the available crossing means and sites.

c. When possible, assault units cross in helicopters and/or assault amphibious vehicles and seize relatively deep objectives. The surface units rapidly link up with the helicopterborne forces. When helicopters and/or assault amphibious vehicles are not available or their use is not feasible, the assault units cross in boats. In this case, they have limited mobility and are assigned initial objectives close to the river.

d. The attacker must rapidly seize objectives on the far bank and clear it so that rafts, bridges, and other crossing means may be constructed. When attacking units cross in helicopters or assault amphibious vehicles to seize deep objectives, the river line clearing task is normally assigned to reserve forces.

3903. CROSSING IN ASSAULT AMPHIBIOUS VEHICLES

a. General.--The assault amphibious vehicle may be employed in both the hasty crossing and the deliberate crossing. Normally, an assault amphibian platoon supports the rifle company in a river crossing. The infantry/tractor team may cross the river and seize objectives close to the far side employing techniques similar to those described for the amphibious assault. It may also be organized to cross and conduct mechanized attacks against deep objectives and/or linkup with helicopterborne forces.

b. Planning.--The company commander and the assault amphibian platoon commander conduct a joint reconnaissance to select routes forward and suitable sites for the tractors to enter and leave the water, to determine conditions of the river and its bank, and to locate underwater obstacles. The company commander selects and designates a portion of the near bank for each platoon to enter the water. Based on the downstream drift and the planned scheme of maneuver, he selects and designates an area on the far bank at which each platoon will land. The rifle platoon commanders reconnoiter jointly with vehicle crew chiefs to confirm routes and select specific sites at which each vehicle will enter the water within the assigned portion of the near bank. Where necessary and appropriate, a specific landing point for each vehicle on the far shore is selected.

(1) Amphibious Technique.--When the rifle company effects a river crossing to seize close objectives, the amphibious technique is employed. The company is organized into boat teams, embarked in assault amphibious vehicles, and crosses in whatever formation for landing the company commander selects. The assault companies normally cross in waves and do not rely on shuttling. When the waves are landed on the far shore, troops debar and attack as described in chapter 2 for the amphibious operation. Tanks and Dragons may support by fire until other crossing means become available. The machinegun section may initially support the crossing by fire from the near bank and, when fires are masked, mount vehicles and cross to new positions on the far shore.

(2) Mechanized Crossing.--When the rifle company crosses a river to seize deep objectives and/or effect linkup with helicopterborne forces, it is normally organized as described in section VI for mechanized infantry attack. The mechanized rifle company plans its crossings in the manner described above, seizes initial objectives, and when joined by the tanks, attacks mechanized to seize the deep objectives.

c. Conduct of the Attack.--The initial attack on the far bank of the river is conducted as described for the amphibious operation in chapter 2 and may continue as described elsewhere in this chapter.

(1) Movement forward from the assembly area is continuous and is conducted rapidly over multiple routes. An attack position is seldom used. The near bank of the river is normally designated as the line of departure.

(2) The company commander initially controls the crossing from a vantage point on the near bank. He crosses immediately after the successful crossing of the first wave. When the initial wave is heavily opposed, the reserve may cross at a lightly defended site and attack the enemy flank or rear.

3904. CROSSING IN BOATS

a. General.--An assault rifle company crossing by boat usually has the initial mission of seizing terrain from which to prevent the enemy's delivery of effective direct small arms fire on the crossing site. Boat crossings are normally made under conditions of reduced visibility. Boats are provided from external sources.

b. Planning.--The company commander and as many subordinate leaders as possible, to include boat team commanders, reconnoiter the ground as the situation and available time permit. They make every effort to ensure that their reconnaissance activities do not compromise the secrecy of the operation. Items of particular concern during the reconnaissance are routes forward, the attack positions, boat positions and launching sites, and condition of the banks and the river. An engineer officer usually assists the company commander during this period, making recommendations and providing technical assistance. The company commander selects a portion of the near bank where each platoon will begin its crossing and designates landing areas on the far bank. The platoon commanders select the specific launching site for each of their boats and landing sites on the far bank.

(1) Attack Position.--The battalion commander normally selects the company attack position. It is generally the location where troops and the boats are brought together. The company commander assigns portions of the attack position to each.

(2) Boat Positions.--The company commander and supporting boat unit commander decide where to position the boats in preparation for the crossing. Normally, they are placed in the attack position close enough to the river to permit easy carry by the platoons. When the attack position is more than 300 meters from the river, boat positions closer to the river are selected. Boats for each platoon are placed directly in rear of their launching sites.

(3) Crossing Means.--An attacking rifle company is normally supported by sufficient assault boats to permit crossing without shuttling. Except for rubber boats authorized for the force reconnaissance company and the reconnaissance battalion of the Marine division, rubber boats are not available in the Fleet Marine Force. The boats above can carry a total of seven persons including the coxswain. It is anticipated that when a river crossing requires the use of rubber boats (assault boats), they will be provided by the U.S. Army or other external sources. They may be provided with or without boat crews. When boat crews are not assigned, the company commander conducts special training in boat handling operations.

(4) Engineer Support.--Coordination with supporting engineers is essential at all times during the operation. The engineers position the boats, furnish crews, and provide technical assistance. They may furnish guides to assist the boat teams in reaching the boats when the rifle company commander directs. An engineer crew of three men normally operates each assault boat, with two in the bow and one in the stern. The coxswain steers and has technical control of the boat. The infantry boat team commander has tactical control of the boat and directs the tactical maneuvering of the boat to its landing site. The engineer crew assists the boat team in embarking, paddling, and debarking. After the boat team debarks, the engineer crew returns the boat to the near bank for subsequent use.

(5) Formation.--The company usually crosses and assaults with three platoons in the first wave. No reserve is retained when its movement in time to influence the action cannot be ensured. After seizure of initial objectives, the company commander designates a reserve and alters the formation for continuing the attack.

(6) Rehearsal.--Whenever time, terrain, and equipment permit, full-scale rehearsals are conducted to closely simulate the crossing. If conditions do not permit a full-scale rehearsal, the company commander requests assault boats for dryland training. The training should include designating paddlers and nonpaddlers, carrying the boats, and simulating launching, loading, and debarking.

c. Conduct of the Attack

(1) Boat teams are organized and all plans and orders for the crossing are completed in the assembly area. The movement from the assembly area to the attack position is made on foot. It is made as rapidly and with as much secrecy as possible. The order of march is designed to permit continuous movement into and out of the attack position. Engineer guides meet the platoons in the attack position and guide them directly to their boats. The boat teams halt no more than momentarily as they pick up their boats and move into the water. They launch and load their boats, then paddle across the river without a halt and with maximum speed. They do not fire their weapons while crossing. Riflemen either paddle or hold weapons for those who do paddle. When they reach the far bank, they debark and attack as in the amphibious operation.

(2) The company commander remains on the near bank where he can best observe the action as the first wave crosses. As soon as the first wave has crossed, debarked, and cleared the far bank, he orders the second wave to cross. He crosses with the command group in the second wave.

Section X. INFILTRATION

31001. GENERAL

a. Tactical infiltration is a form of penetration in which an attacking force moves by stealth through the enemy defenses without rupturing the position. Infiltration may be accomplished by dismounted infantry, helicopterborne forces, and--exceptionally, by mechanized forces. It involves the movement of forces into the enemy rear by small groups, their assembly, and the preplanned attack of one or more objectives. The purpose of the infiltration is to deploy strong forces in the enemy rear for decisive tasks while exposing only small forces to enemy fires during the passage through the enemy defenses. The rifle company usually participates in tactical infiltration as part of the battalion attack. The infiltrating company may constitute all or part of the battalion main or supporting attacks.

b. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance to the rifle company officer in the general principles of planning and conducting the attack by infiltration. Other operations such as the raid and reconnaissance in force may be conducted by infiltration.

31002. PLAN OF ATTACK

a. General.--An infiltration is an operation involving a relatively long period of time and requires detailed planning and thorough briefings. The terrain used should limit the enemy's observation and use of surveillance devices. Woods, swamps, and broken ground are best suited for infiltration. Conditions of reduced visibility increase the chances of success.

b. Basic Considerations.--In addition to the nature of the terrain, certain basic considerations are an integral part of the decision to conduct the attack by infiltration.

(1) Enemy.--The enemy dispositions must present a dispersed force with gaps existing between units. Even so, it may be necessary for higher echelons to conduct deceptions and diversionary measures against an alert enemy.

(2) Objective.--Objectives for infiltration are key terrain features which, when seized, restrict the movement of enemy reserves or isolate his defensive positions.

(3) Control.--Infiltration is difficult to control and coordinate. Deviations from plans are difficult to coordinate during the operation. Close coordination must be effected between fire support agencies, infiltration forces, and forces conducting linkup. The nature of the operation dictates maximum dissemination of information.

c. Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver involves the infiltration of platoon or squad size groups through the enemy defenses along predesignated infiltration lanes. The groups rendezvous at prescribed points in the enemy rear and conduct a previously planned and coordinated attack to seize the assigned objective. The planning, preparation, and conduct of each infiltration group is the same as for a separate patrol until the

rendezvous point is reached. The attack after rendezvous is conducted as described in sections III and IV of this chapter.

d. Control Measures.--Certain control measures not normally used in other attacks are employed to control infiltration.

(1) Infiltration Lanes.--Infiltration lanes extend through known or likely gaps in the enemy defenses and indicate the directions and widths of the areas allocated to infiltration groups. Each group is assigned a separate lane.

(2) Rendezvous Points.--Rendezvous points are locations concealed from possible enemy detection where infiltration units are to assemble at a prescribed time. They are secured by the first groups arriving and are used to rendezvous infiltrating units prior to the attack. Both primary and secondary rendezvous points are normally designated. The rendezvous point may be used as an attack position or a separate attack position may also be designated.

(3) Time of Infiltration.--Time of infiltration is the time at which infiltration is commenced and is selected to take advantage of reduced visibility. It is the time at which infiltration groups cross the line of departure, enter infiltration lanes, and infiltrate. The attack is timed to best support the plans of higher headquarters.

(4) Other Control Measures.--Other control measures such as checkpoints, direction of attack, restrictive fire lines, etc., may be directed.

(5) Fire Support Plan.--Fire support planning proceeds in a manner similar to that of other attacks. Fires are not normally planned in the infiltration lanes but may be preplanned on call to support movements from the rendezvous to the attack position or to provide deception. The weapons platoon elements are attached to the rifle platoons for infiltration as teams or squads. Plans may require their detachment after rendezvous to support the company attack.

31003. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK

a. At the time of release, infiltration groups move forward from their respective release points under control of group leaders. These are covered movements, timed to pass through friendly forces and cross the higher headquarter's line of departure at the time of infiltration.

b. The infiltration groups move by stealth through the infiltration lanes to the rendezvous points. Artillery fires are used as necessary to distract the enemy. The groups avoid contact by withdrawing or moving around the enemy. FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad, contains additional information relating to infiltration groups.

c. At the rendezvous points, groups assemble and attack preparations are completed. Final preparations compensate for unsuccessful infiltration by missing groups. The company may rendezvous at a single point or it may rendezvous at several platoon points.

d. The company may move forward from a company rendezvous point to a single attack position on one route or it may move in multiple routes

from platoon rendezvous points to platoon attack positions. Rifle companies employ raid or attack techniques depending on the operation planned.

31004. SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS

a. Attack Operations.--In attack operations the objective is normally retained. If so, it is consolidated and defended against counter-attack. In the consolidation, emphasis is placed on the perimeter defense as most objectives seized by infiltration are in enemy rear areas. A link-up with other forces may require special consideration and attention after consolidation. Visual and sound recognition signals, radio communications, and fire controls must be effected to prevent engagement of friendly linkup forces.

b. Raid Operations.--The objective is not retained once the raiding force has accomplished the task assigned. The attacking force withdraws either to a clandestine assembly area or to friendly lines. Normally, additional raids or attacks are conducted from the clandestine assembly area. A withdrawal to friendly lines may be made by helicopter or by exfiltration.

Section XI. HELICOPTERBORNE UNITS IN SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS ASHORE

31101. GENERAL

This section primarily concerns the rifle company in the planning and conduct of helicopterborne operations as part of the infantry battalion. A suitably reinforced rifle company is capable of independent helicopterborne operations; however, the rifle company and/or its subordinate elements may utilize the helicopter as a means of mobility in accomplishing a wide variety of missions.

31102. CONCEPTS

a. In offensive combat, helicopters are employed to provide mobility and to accomplish rapid troop movement, logistic support, and exploitation of supporting fires. The rapid concentration of forces at a decisive place and time is the paramount aim. Helicopterborne forces are not employed in assault landings against heavily defended areas; however, helicopters may be used to transport assault troops to a nearby undefended area from which the defended area may be attacked. Helicopterborne forces avoid meeting the main enemy strength in the initial assault by landing in areas which are either undefended or are lightly defended.

b. The greatest single threat to helicopterborne forces is the threat of an enemy counterattack with armor. Helicopterborne forces are physically removed from other friendly forces and have a limited antitank capability. In the event the enemy has an armor capability, plans should provide for an early linkup by a ground force having an antitank capability.

31103. PLANNING

a. General.--As in planning for the amphibious assault, the helicopterborne operation ashore involves concurrent, parallel, and detailed planning. The planning period may involve several days or weeks, or it may consist of a matter of hours during which plans are made to employ a helicopterborne force in ground combat. The basic nature of the helicopterborne operation prevents personal reconnaissance on the part of unit commanders. To this extent, the troop leading procedures are modified and the information usually gained by personal reconnaissance is obtained by the use of whatever planning aids and information the infantry battalion can provide.

b. Planning Sequence.--The planning sequence normally begins at the battalion level with receipt of the battalion mission. The sequence varies with the scope and complexity of the operation, but it is usually very similar to the form for the amphibious assault. The planning sequence commences with the formulation of the battalion's scheme of maneuver and fire support plan. Once these are known, the battalion commander selects the primary and alternate landing zones which best support the battalion's plan after considering the advice of the helicopter unit commander. The helicopter unit commander considers the aviation aspects such as obstacles, approaches, wind direction, etc., in making his recommendations. He also selects approach and retirement lanes and control points for the helicopters which permit direct movement, precise timing, coordination, and aircraft economy. The rifle company commander commences planning on receipt of the

battalion warning order. The company commander is also informed concerning attachments to the company for the operation and the availability of helicopters. Based on the scheduled employment on landing, a loading plan is formulated to prescribe the proper enplanement of troops and equipment.

c. Landing Documents.--From the standpoint of control, the movement of a helicopterborne force from the location at which it is enplaned to the landing zone may be equated to the ship-to-shore movement in the amphibious assault. The control organization must be provided with detailed information concerning the employment of the helicopters and the troop units involved. In the amphibious operation, the landing documents described in paragraph 2507c must be prepared to support the written plan for the helicopterborne force. In fast moving operations ashore, time may not permit the formal preparation of these plans; however, the battalion S-3 must consider all information required by these documents and disseminate their substance to the lifted units.

d. Plan of Attack.--The plan of attack consists of the scheme of maneuver, a fire support plan, and the landing plan.

(1) Scheme of Maneuver.--The scheme of maneuver selected will depend on the tactical situation anticipated, the assigned mission, the helicopter availability, etc. However, any scheme adopted must accomplish the following: first, the scheme must establish immediate tactical control over subordinate units; and second, gain control over the landing site and those terrain features that dominate the landing site. One problem frequently encountered in helicopterborne operations is that of troop orientation on the ground. It is often difficult for helicopterborne troops to orient themselves on the ground when landing in unfamiliar terrain. This problem may be alleviated somewhat by a thorough map and aerial photograph study prior to the operation and by the helicopter crew informing the heli-team commander of the helicopter heading on landing. The helicopter crew should also inform the heli-team commander of any enemy activity noted in the area.

(2) Fire Support Plan.--The fire support plan provides for maximum effects in the employment of organic and attached weapons in addition to air, artillery, and naval gunfire support. The helicopterborne assault may take place beyond the ranges of artillery and/or naval gunfire support; therefore, air support may be the primary means employed by higher echelons to influence the action until such time as mortars and artillery are landed and prepared to fire. Heavy burdens are placed on available fire support agencies in providing fires to cover the approach, landing, and retirement of the helicopter waves requiring careful consideration in selection of initial supporting fires.

(3) Landing Plan.--The landing plan is very similar to that of the amphibious assault. The plan preserves the tactical integrity of the assault platoons and lands the company in the formation and sequence which best support the scheme of maneuver and fire support plan. (See pars. 2507 and 2602.)

e. Loading Plan.--As in the amphibious assault, a plan is developed which provides for embarking assault units in a manner which supports the landing plan. The plan includes passenger manifesting, organization of the helicopter loading site, and enplanement.

(1) Passenger Manifest.--An accurate record must be made of who is on which aircraft. This record must include the passenger's name, grade, and service number and be coupled with the aircraft side number. There are many methods of preparing such a manifest; however, one such method that has wide field acceptance is to have each heliteam member fill out the required information on a piece of paper such as a prepared manifest tag, a baggage tag, or even a page from a notebook. These individual pieces of paper are collected and placed into an envelope marked with the helicopter side number and given to the troop loading assistant or flight deck guide.

(2) Organization of the Loading Site.--A loading site from which troops ashore are lifted by helicopter is organized to provide an assembly area for troops, a control point, ready circles, and loading points for the helicopters. The battalion air liaison officer or forward air controller and battalion headquarters personnel normally control loading from a loading site. When more than one site is established, the group of loading sites comprises a loading zone. Figure 38 is a schematic diagram of a loading site. Normally, a rifle company is lifted from one loading site. In most operations, the control organization for the loading site is provided by the battalion. Company officers should not lose sight of the fact that in fast moving situations, the rifle company may be required to establish and operate loading sites from time to time in support of their operations.

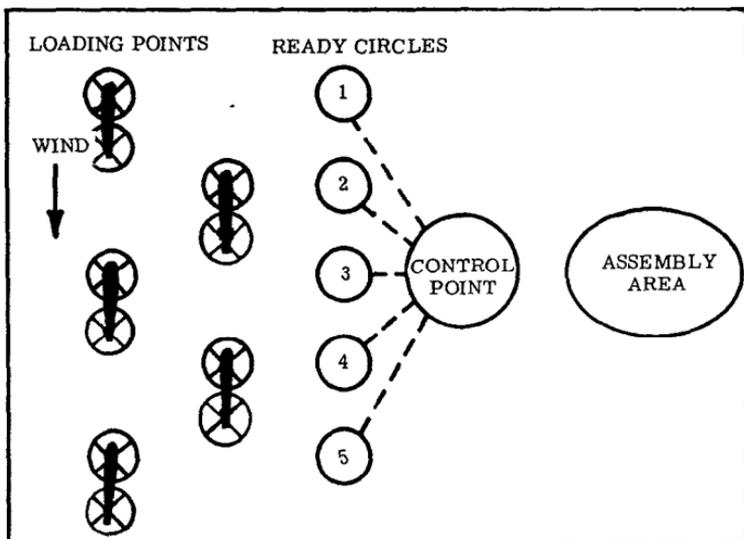


Figure 38.--Schematic Diagram of a Loading Site.

(a) Assembly Area.--The assembly area is that locality set aside within the loading site to assemble troops and make preparations for the lift. It should be centrally located with relation to the control point and ready circles. The unit to be lifted is organized into heliteams, passenger manifest tags are distributed and prepared, and preparations for combat are completed in the assembly area.

(b) Control Point.--The control point is a location within the loading site at which heliteams are positioned for enplanement. It should be near the assembly area. Just prior to the arrival of the helicopters, a number of heliteams equal to the number of loading points is summoned from the assembly area and reports to the control point. Heliteam manifest tags are collected from the heliteam commanders at the control point when troop loading assistants are not provided at the ready circles. One heliteam is then dispatched to each ready circle or to each loading point when ready circles are not used.

(c) Ready Circles.--The ready circles are alert points near the loading points from which heliteams are called for enplaning. They should be located close to the loading points and clearly marked by numbered stakes, flags, or other means. Easily identifiable ready circles obviate the necessity for stationing control personnel at the ready circles. On signal from the control point, heliteam commanders rapidly lead their teams to the aircraft and enplane them. When control personnel troop loading assistants are provided at the ready circles, heliteam commanders turn the manifest tags over to them on arrival at the circles. In small unit lifts and when other control means are adequate, ready circles may be dispensed with.

(d) Loading Points.--A loading point is a location within a loading site at which one helicopter enplanes a heliteam. Eight to 10 points is a practical limit to the number that can be controlled within a single loading site with loading points at least 100 feet apart for the loading of medium helicopters and 200 feet apart for heavy helicopters.

(e) Control.--Control of those functions concerned primarily with troop readiness and preparation for the lift are responsibilities of the lifted unit and involve those actions accomplished prior to reaching the loading points. Those functions concerned with enplaning passengers and safely delivering them to the landing zone are helicopter unit responsibilities.

1 Troop Loading Officer.--The battalion air liaison officer or forward air controller is usually stationed at the loading site control point and acts as troop loading officer. He ensures that loading is accomplished in accordance with the plan and maintains a record of the progress of the lift. By previous liaison, he has established the suitability of the selected site with such advice and assistance as may be necessary from the helicopter unit. In conducting uncomplicated loading operations from a single loading site, he usually functions as helicopter loading zone control officer as well as troop loading officer. In this capacity, he maintains communications with the helicopters and controls helicopter traffic in the loading site.

2 Helicopter Loading Zone Control Officer.--In complex loading operations, a helicopter loading zone control officer is assigned to the loading zone by the helicopter unit. He is the representative of the helicopter unit commander and is responsible for the following:

- a Providing advice and assistance to the troop unit commander during planning.
- b Controlling helicopter traffic in the loading zone.
- c Maintaining communications as required and directed.
- d Effecting liaison with the troop loading officers.
- e Supervising troop enplanement at the loading points.

3 Loading Supervisor.--The loading supervisor at each loading point is usually the crew chief of the aircraft. He is responsible to the pilot and ensures the aircraft is ready to load and assists the troops in loading. He notifies the pilot when the troops are properly loaded.

4 Troop Loading Assistant.--When a large number of loading points comprise the loading site and ready circles are not well marked, the troop loading officer may provide an assistant stationed at each ready circle. His specific duties include the following:

- a Collecting the passenger manifest tags and recording the helicopter side number on the manifest group. These actions constitute a passenger manifest which is retained until the lift is completed.
- b Ensuring that weapons are unslung and that equipment is held properly before dispatching troops to helicopter loading point.
- c Dispatching troops from the ready circle to helicopter loading point.

31104. ASSAULT

The assault proceeds as described in paragraph 2602 for the amphibious assault of helicopterborne units.

31105. NIGHT OPERATIONS

a. The planning and execution of a night landing is essentially the same as for a daylight operation; however, combat power will be built up at a considerably slower rate. Landing points are spaced farther apart. Unloading is slowed by restricted visibility and the greater separation of helicopters in flight.

b. Landing points must be marked with lights so that the pilots may find them and be assured that the point is unoccupied. Normally, assault heliteams do not immediately execute preplanned attacks to clear the landing site until they are first assembled and reorganized in preplanned assembly areas. Guides are normally provided to lead heliteams to the assembly areas by either the landing site control team or previously landed heliteams. Once tactical control has been established, preplanned offensive action may be taken to secure the landing site for succeeding waves. A slower rate of

activity must be accepted in loading helicopters at night. Fewer helicopter loading points are normally used. Dim or red-tinted lights are used in the vicinity of the loading site in order to preserve night vision and preserve secrecy. The loading site is organized the same as for daylight operations with the following special considerations:

(1) Helicopter loading points are suitably marked with identification lights for the pilots. The helicopter unit provides and installs the light system.

(2) Routes from the assembly area to the control point and from the control point to the ready circles are as short as possible. The lifted troop unit marks the routes with tapes or other suitable identification.

(3) Ready circles are located further away from the loading points and are marked for easy identification. Loading supervisors or troop loading assistants lead the heliteams from the ready circles to the loading points for enplaning.

31106. HELICOPTERBORNE TRAINING

The proper indoctrination and training of Marines in the techniques of the helicopterborne assault are continuing responsibilities of rifle company officers. Technical assistance and advice necessary to supplement the training may be obtained from the battalion air liaison officer and the helicopter unit. All personnel to be transported by helicopter should be indoctrinated in heliteam functioning and in enplaning and deplaning procedures. See FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad, for heliteam functioning and enplaning and deplaning procedures.

