

Section II

Infantry Battalion Operations

2201. Overview. This section addresses some of the operations that a task-organized and/or reinforced infantry battalion could conduct in MOUT. These operations are seldom conducted independently and are usually part of a larger joint operation. In the example given below, the battalion has seized a foothold and is operating in its sector of a town of 100,000 people. Concurrent operations are on-going through other parts of the town. The threat in the battalion sector is a company (-) with a capability to reinforce.

2202. Seizure of a Key Objective. The tactical situation may require the immediate seizure of a building, industrial complex, or transportation site that is deemed decisive terrain. Examples of such objectives may include key bridges, intersections, railheads, or facilities that constitute the center of gravity for the enemy. As an example, a battalion may be assigned the mission of seizing the only bridge that is capable of supporting armored vehicles and resupply by heavy transports along a river bisecting a town. The intent is to isolate enemy forces and secure the bridge for follow-on forces. Intelligence indicates that the bridge is lightly defended at this time. In this case, speed of attack and surprise is critical to capture the objective. Some key intelligence information is required prior to the attack. This would include the number of enemy defending the bridge, their weapons, disposition, their ability to reinforce their defense, location of LZs near the bridge, whether the bridge has been set for demolition, and the location of enemy indirect fire assets that can range the objective.

The commander decides to conduct a penetration using a combination of helicopterborne attack to rapidly seize the bridge followed by a mechanized ground attack to link-up with the helicopterborne forces (Figure 2-10). The helicopterborne force can achieve surprise and speed of movement required while the mechanized force can thrust quickly along high-speed avenues to minimize the time the helicopterborne force must hold the objective against enemy counterattack.

For the ground attack, the battalion commander makes a determination that speed of movement outweighs the risks of rapidly extending his lines of communication. He directs, on the basis of his knowledge of the enemy situation and his mission, that his maneuver forces avoid decisive engagement with the enemy along the route to minimize the time it takes to link up with the helicopterborne force. The commander provides guidance on those enemy forces that should be bypassed and those that should be isolated and reduced.

The commander task organizes his battalion for rapid movement on two axes to allow flexibility in reacting to unexpected enemy contact. Lead and rear security is conducted throughout the operation. As lead units locate enemy positions, they fix them by fire, and quickly reduce or bypass them. They also report the contact so that follow-on forces can then deal with the threat.

As the ground attack force reaches the edge of the built-up area, Marines remain mounted so as not to slow the advance. All vehicle machine guns fire to flanks and into doors, windows, and

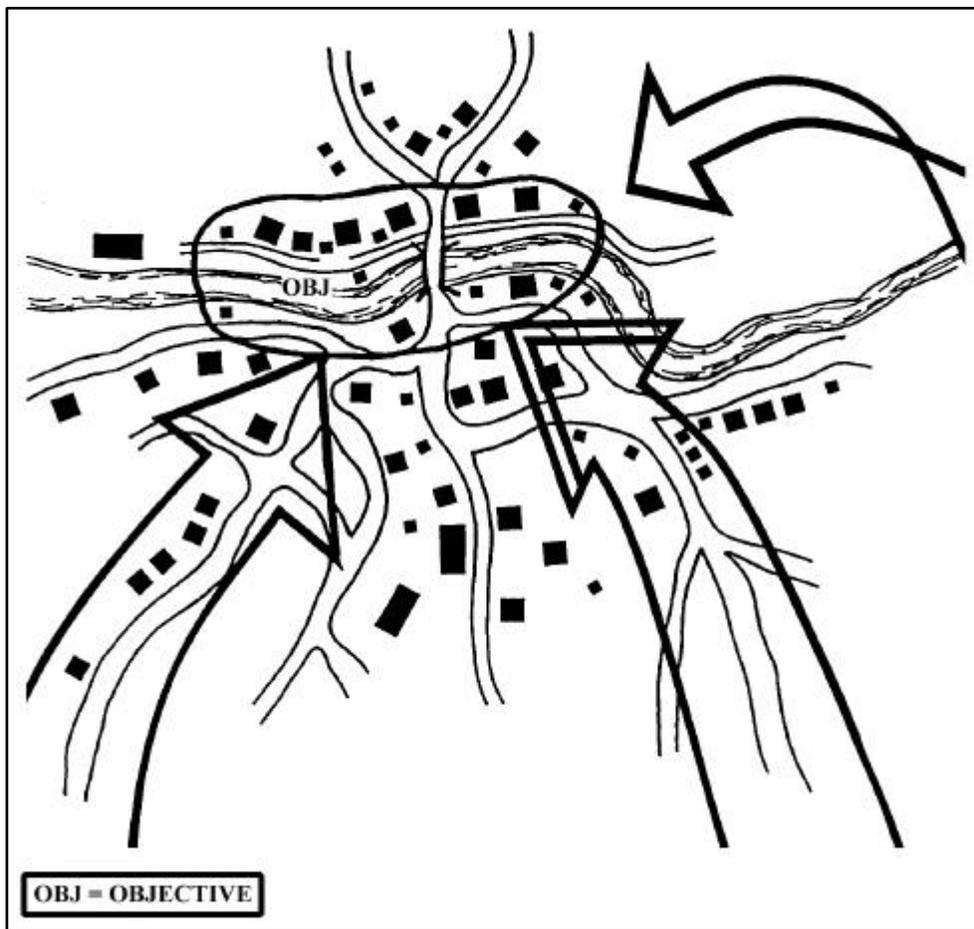


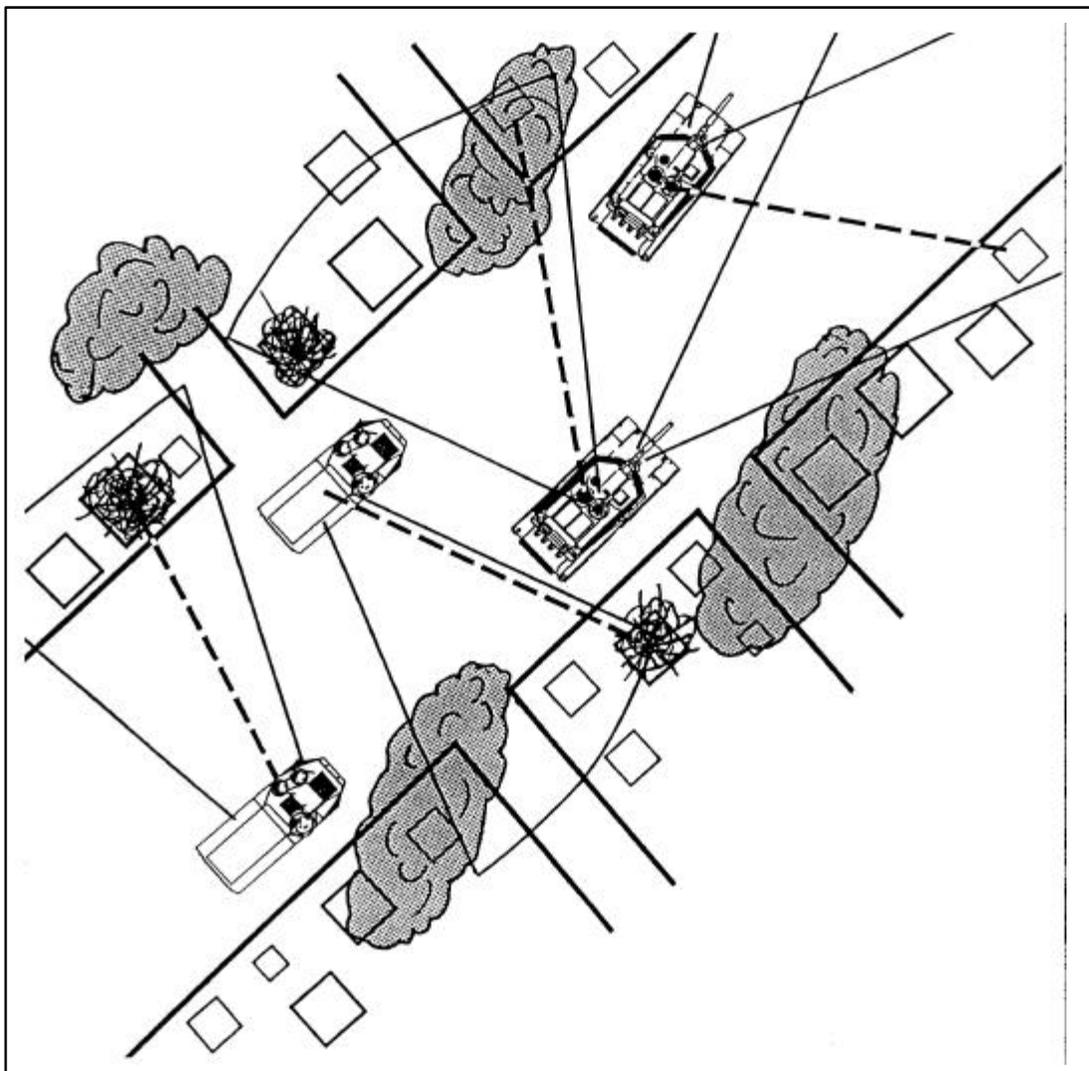
Figure 2-10. Seizure of a Key Objective

alleys to provide suppressing fires (Figure 2-11 on page 2-26). If heavy resistance is met and the column is halted, Marines dismount and the enemy and/or obstacles are cleared as quickly as possible. Once resistance and/or obstacles are cleared, the attack is immediately resumed. If necessary, units are dropped off to assume blocking positions and await follow-on clearing forces.

Once the objective is seized or linkup is accomplished, the battalion establishes a perimeter defense. The companies seize buildings around the objective and expand the size of the perimeter until it is large enough to secure the bridge. Attached engineers can then examine the bridge and clear it of any explosives.

2203. Infiltration. Infiltration is “*the movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. When the term is used in connection with the enemy, it infers that contact is avoided*” (Joint Pub 1-02).

Figure 2-11. Rapid Advance Movement



The outskirts of a town may not be strongly defended. The town's defenders may have only a series of antiarmor positions, security elements on the principal approach, or positions blocking the approaches to key features in the town. The enemy strongpoints and reserves may be positioned deeper in the city. In such a situation, an infantry battalion may be able to seize a part of the town by infiltrating companies and platoons between the enemy positions on the outskirts (Figure 2-12).

Moving by stealth on secondary streets, using the cover and concealment of alleys and buildings, the battalion may be able to seize key street junctions or terrain features, isolate enemy positions, and help following units move into the built-up area. Such an infiltration should be performed when visibility is poor.

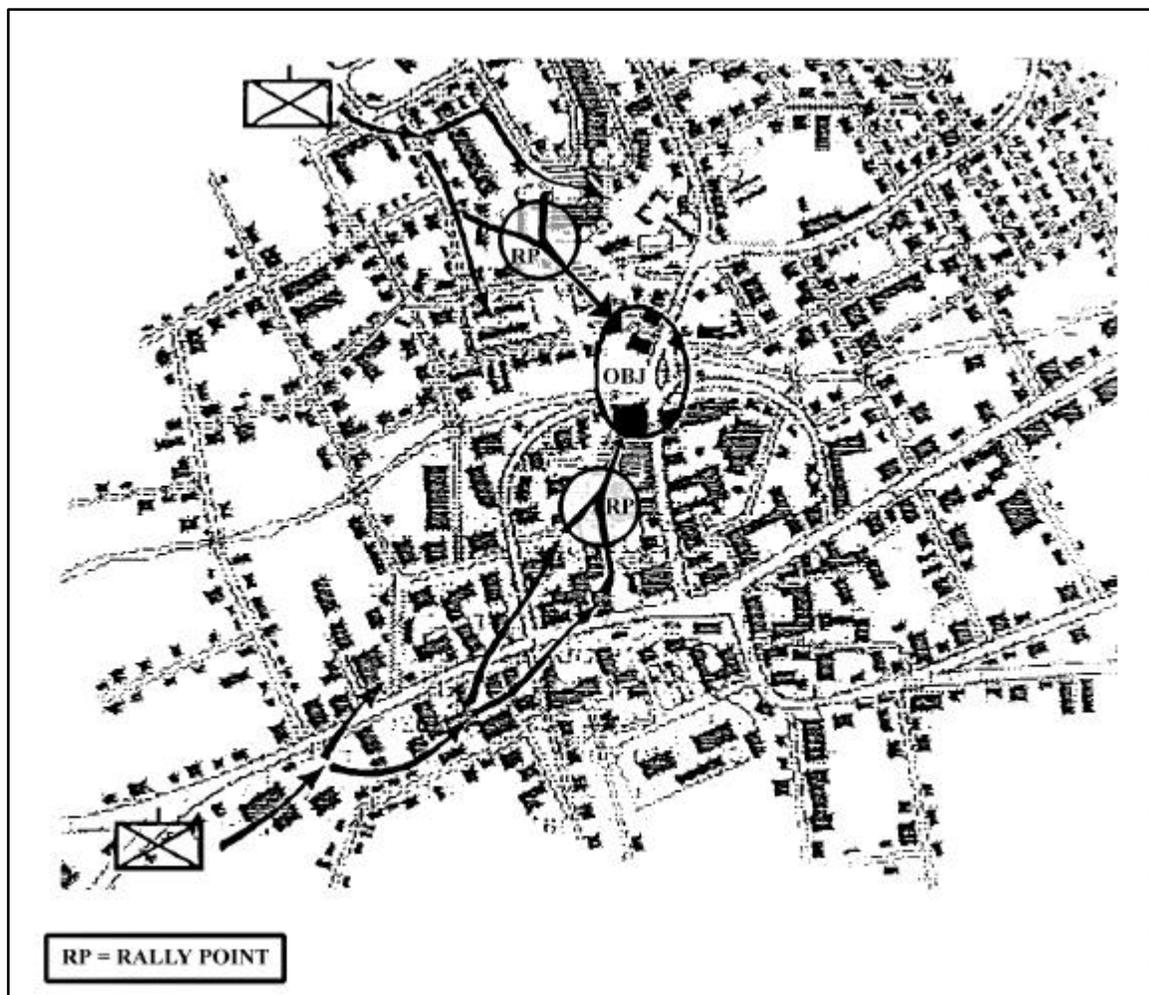


Figure 2-12. Infiltration

The infantry battalion is organized into infiltration companies with engineers attached and a designated reserve. Each company is assigned an infiltration lane that allows for infiltration by company-sized or smaller units. Depending on the construction of the built-up areas and streets, the infiltration lane may be 500 to 1,500 meters wide.

Mortar and artillery fire can be used to divert the enemy's attention and cover the sound of infiltrating forces. Armored vehicles and antitank weapons should be positioned to cover likely avenues of approach for enemy armored vehicles. Designated unit(s) provide isolation and security for infiltrating rifle companies. As the companies move into the built-up area, they secure their own flanks. Security elements may be dropped off along the route to warn of a flank attack. Engineers assist in breaching or bypassing minefields or other obstacles. Enemy positions are avoided but reported. The infiltrating companies proceed until they reach their rally points. At that time, they reorganize and make final preparations for attack of the objective.

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2204. Route Security. In MOUT, a battalion may be tasked to provide route security. The process of securing the route may consist of a series of small-unit actions to clear buildings along the route. Fires should be planned to isolate the route as well. It may also require the reduction of obstacles and the emplacement of flank security along the entire route. In an outlying area, the forward units may proceed by bounds from road junction to road junction. Other units could augment flank security by moving down parallel streets and by probing the flanks.

The speed of movement required and the enemy situation determine whether the unit should be mounted or dismounted. For mechanized forces, narrow streets should be avoided if possible to avoid being trapped. Designated armored vehicles overwatch the squad to its front, keeping watch on the opposite side of the street. While armored vehicle movements and positioning provide mutual support, armored vehicles should be protected by dismounted infantry.

When contact is made with the enemy, armored vehicles seek covered positions and provide direct-fire support. Supporting fires fix and isolate enemy positions. Infantry dismount then maneuver to attack. Phase lines are used to coordinate movement along the route. For example, at each phase line, the forward companies might reestablish contact, reorganize, and continue clearing (Figure 2-13).

2205. Battalion Considerations. Some of the concerns for the commander to consider include:

- a. Command and Control.** CP location can be critical due to line of sight restrictions in the urban environment. Consideration should be given to maintaining a highly mobile CP with links to airborne retrans stations.
- b. Intelligence.** Organic collection capability resides primarily from units in contact with the enemy. The Scout Sniper Platoon also provides information but they may have obstructed visibility in the urban environment. Commanders may chose to employ them more often in a sniper role. Links to higher command intelligence sources may be key to maintaining current information on the enemy. The same line of sight restrictions encountered with command and control will also restrict intelligence dissemination. Commanders may have to rely on messengers.
- c. Maneuver.** Maneuver of mechanized forces in an urban environment may be restricted to the size, width, and load capabilities of the streets. Consideration must be given to plan for alternate routes for any attack. Significant manmade obstacles can be encountered throughout the battlespace. Additionally, the reserve is normally kept closer to the assault force. Movement of forces by aviation is less restrictive, but may also be vulnerable to surface to air missiles and small arms threat. Availability of LZs may also be a limiting factor.
- d. Fires.** A key consideration on the use of fires will be the ROE and the collateral damage that can result by their use. Rubbling of buildings can complicate an already restricted maneuver capability. Weapons effects can be more pronounced and can create a hazard for friendly forces. IPB determines potential firing positions for indirect fire assets that accounts

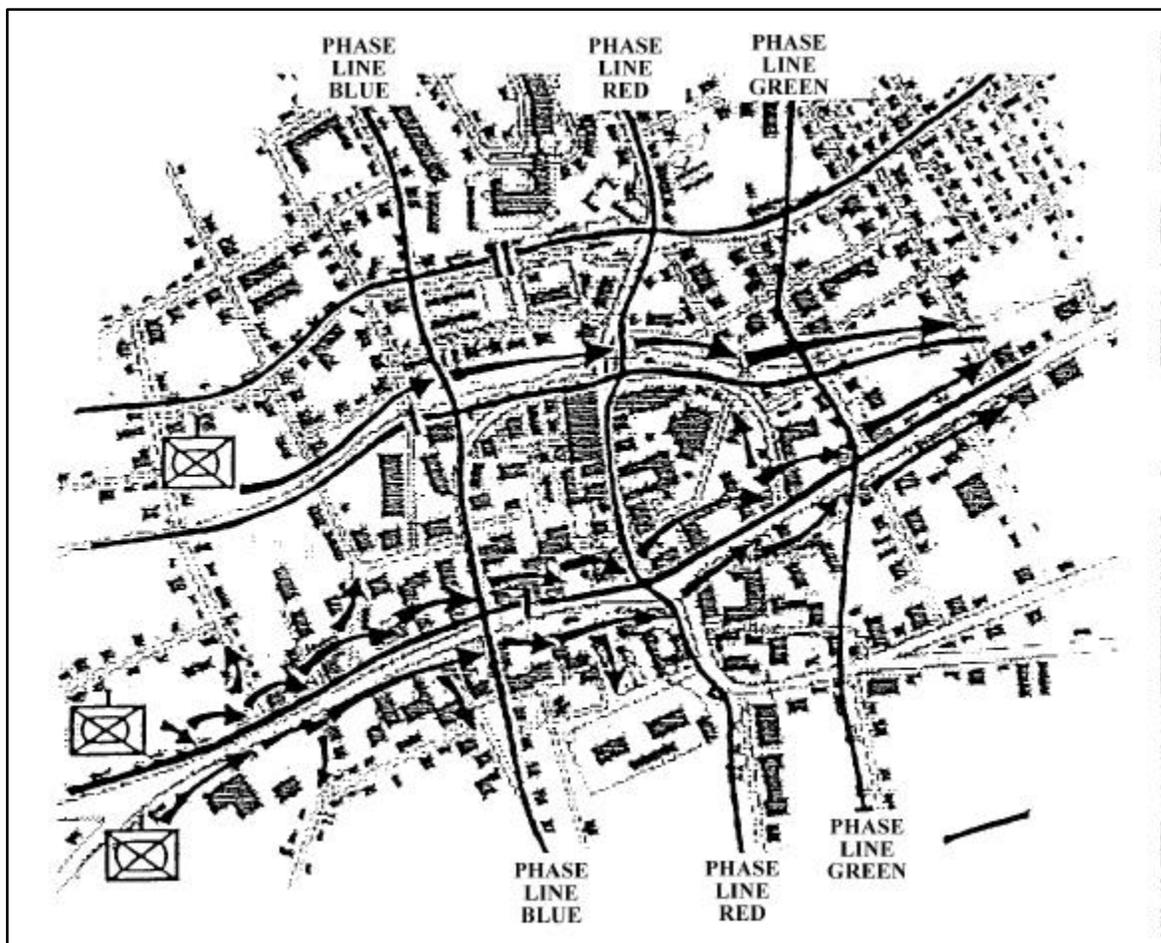


Figure 2-13. Clearing Along a Route

for the overhead masking by buildings and the ability to seat baseplates. Traditional indirect fire assets, such as artillery, may be used in the direct fire role.

e. Logistics. Historically in MOUT, the utilization of class I-V and VIII supplies is much greater. More vehicular assets should be allocated to the small unit level to transport ammunition and support the increased casualty evacuation requirements.

f. Force Protection. Lines of communication require extensive flank security in the urban environment. The commander must determine where his critical security requirements are and concentrate his force protection efforts in those areas while economizing in other areas. Manpower may further be depleted by security requirements for refugees and EPWs.