

Section IV

Rifle Platoon Operations

2401. Overview. This section discusses some of the various tactical missions that might be assigned to a rifle platoon.

2402. Attack of a Building. One offensive mission assigned to a rifle platoon in MOUT is the attack of a building. The attack requires isolating the building and entering the building at the least-defended point or through a breached hole (Figure 2-19 on page 2-38). When possible, clear the building from top to bottom. Close coordination between the assault and support forces is required.

When attacking a building, a platoon should be organized into an assault force, a support force, and a security force. The assault force provides the forces that actually conduct the assault. A support force provides supporting fires and efforts that assist the assault force. A security force covers the platoon's flanks and rear. (See Appendix A.) The platoon may be augmented by armored vehicles and from the company's weapons platoon or the battalions weapons company. If a reserve is required it should be provided by the company.

The assault consists of three steps:

- (1) Isolate the building and deny the enemy the ability to maneuver or reinforce.
- (2) Enter the building to secure a foothold for further action.
- (3) Clear the building systematically.

Clearing is performed by individual squads and teams, which leapfrog as rooms and floors are secured. Platoons tasked to clear buildings may be reinforced with combat engineers.

2403. Movement Down a Street. When moving in urban terrain, a rifle platoon normally follows the same principles of movement as in other environments. However, some movement techniques must be modified to adjust to the unique dangers encountered in an urban environment. (See Appendix A, Section VII.) This section describes the movement down the street of the lead platoon of a company.

The speed of movement depends on the enemy situation. In outlying or lightly defended areas, a mechanized platoon may proceed along the street mounted but send dismounted infantry forward to reconnoiter danger areas. In the center of a built-up area the platoon dismounts to move on foot with two squads leading—one on each side of the road, using all available cover. They move through the buildings, if feasible, to avoid exposure on the streets. The squads coordinate to provide each other with all-around observation and mutual support.



Figure 2-19. Attack of a Building

The platoon should organize and practice to move as two forces: a *maneuver* force and an *overwatch* force. The maneuver force (normally of one squad on narrow streets or two squads on wide streets) moves forward, scouts danger areas, and closes with the enemy. An *overwatch* force (the remainder of the platoon and its attached or supporting crew-served weapons), moves behind the maneuver force, secures the platoon's flanks and rear, and provides direct-fire support when needed. These two forces, can exchange roles from time to time to avoid overfatigue of the maneuver force (Figure 2-20).

2404. Utilization of the Reserve. In the offense, a rifle platoon may be assigned as a reserve. The reserve can be used to reinforce and attack or exploit success. Reserves are normally held at the company level.

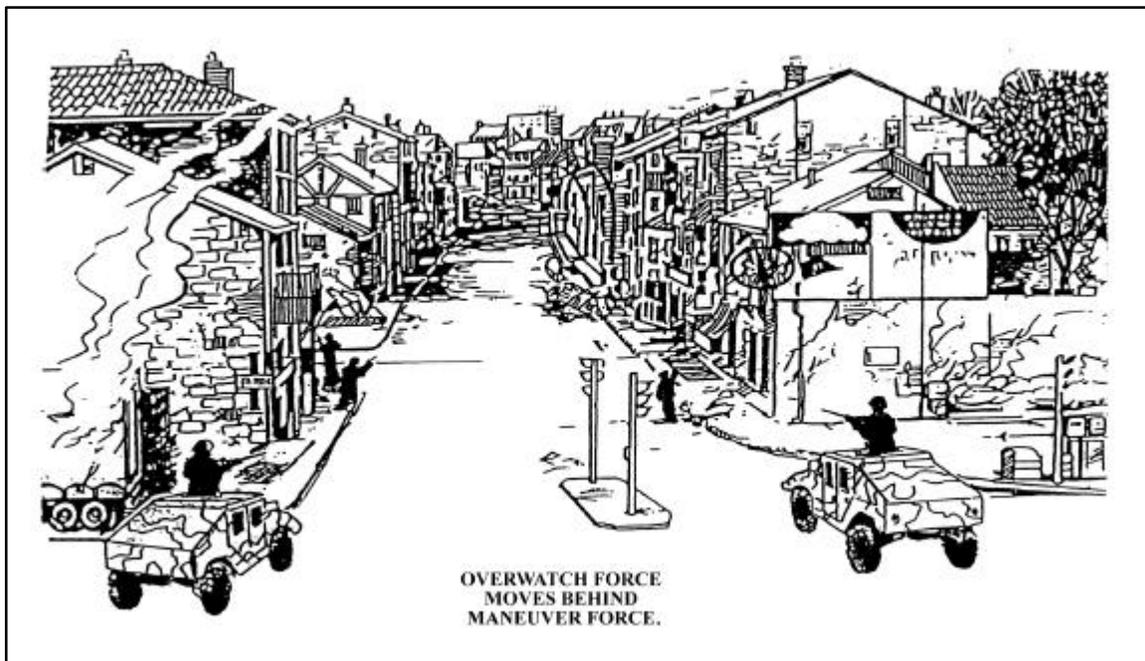


Figure 2-20. Movement Down a Street

In outlying areas, where the terrain is relatively open, a tank platoon reinforced with mechanized assets (tank-heavy task force) may be tasked as the reserve. However, if inside the urban area, a mechanized platoon reinforced with tanks (mech-heavy task force) would most probably be directed to provide the reserve. Regardless of what unit is designated as the reserve, the following items must be considered for their employment in an urban environment:

- The reserve should plan to use a different axis of advance
- Route selection for the reserve may be more constructive since it may have to use building, side streets, sewers, etc.
- Reserves are kept closer to assault forces in MOUT than on open terrain
- Engineers should normally be attached
- Reserves should maintain a high degree of mobility