

Section III

Rifle Company Operations

This section addresses some of the missions the infantry battalion could assign to the rifle company. For the purpose of this publication, the rifle company is a task-organized and/or reinforced unit. Assigned missions are normally part of a larger battalion operation.

3301. Defense of a Village. Once the commander has completed his reconnaissance of the village and the surrounding terrain, he develops his plan for the defense (Figure 3-12). The commander must decide whether to defend on the leading edge of the village or within the village.

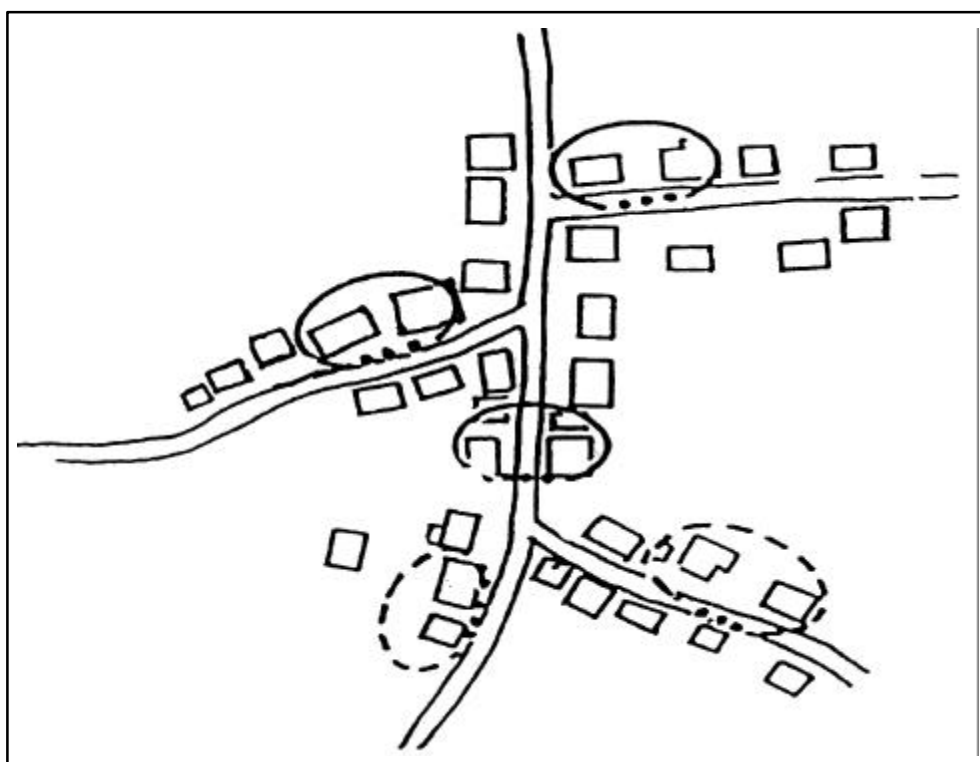


Figure 3-12. Defense of a Village

a. Several factors influence his decision. First, he must know the type of enemy that he will defend against. If the threat is mainly dismounted infantry, the greatest danger is in allowing them to gain a foothold in the town. If the threat is armor or motorized infantry, the greatest danger is that the company's defensive positions can be destroyed by direct fire. The commander must also consider the terrain forward and to the flanks of the village from which the enemy can direct fires against his positions.

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- b.** The commander places platoons in a small group of buildings where each platoon leader establishes mutually supporting squad-sized positions. This positioning increases the area that the rifle platoon can control and hampers the enemy's ability to isolate or bypass a platoon. A rifle platoon can be responsible for the road through a village. The rest of the rifle company is positioned to provide all-around security and defense in depth.
- c.** Mortar positions must be protected from direct fire and allow for overhead clearance.
- d.** Combat vehicles should be assigned primary, alternate, and supplementary positions as well as primary and secondary sectors of fire. They should be positioned in defilade behind rubble and walls or inside buildings for cover, concealment, and movement into and out of the area.
- e.** If the company is reinforced with antiarmor weapons, the reinforcements should be positioned on high ground in and around the town to attain good fields of fire.
- f.** If the company is reinforced with tanks, the commander could place the tanks along the leading edge complement the other antiarmor weapons. The tank platoon leader selects exact firing positions and assign sectors of fire. If attacked by enemy infantry, the tanks should move to alternate positions protected by infantry. The alternate positions should allow the tanks to engage to the front and flanks with as little movement as possible. Tanks can be used as a mobile reserve after withdrawal from the leading edge of the town.
- g.** Obstacles are easily constructed in a built-up area. Commanders must stop enemy vehicles without interfering with his own movement in the village. Command detonating cratering charges at key street locations may be used to hamper enemy mobility. Mines should be laid on the outskirts of the town and along routes that the company will not use.
- h.** Engineers assist rifle platoons to prepare defensive positions. Engineers use explosives to make firing ports, mouseholes, and demolition obstacles. They also assist in the emplacement and recording of the minefields.
- i.** Ammunition expenditure is increased when fighting in an urban environment. Ammunition should be stockpiled at each squad position.

Other factors that the company commander may consider are:

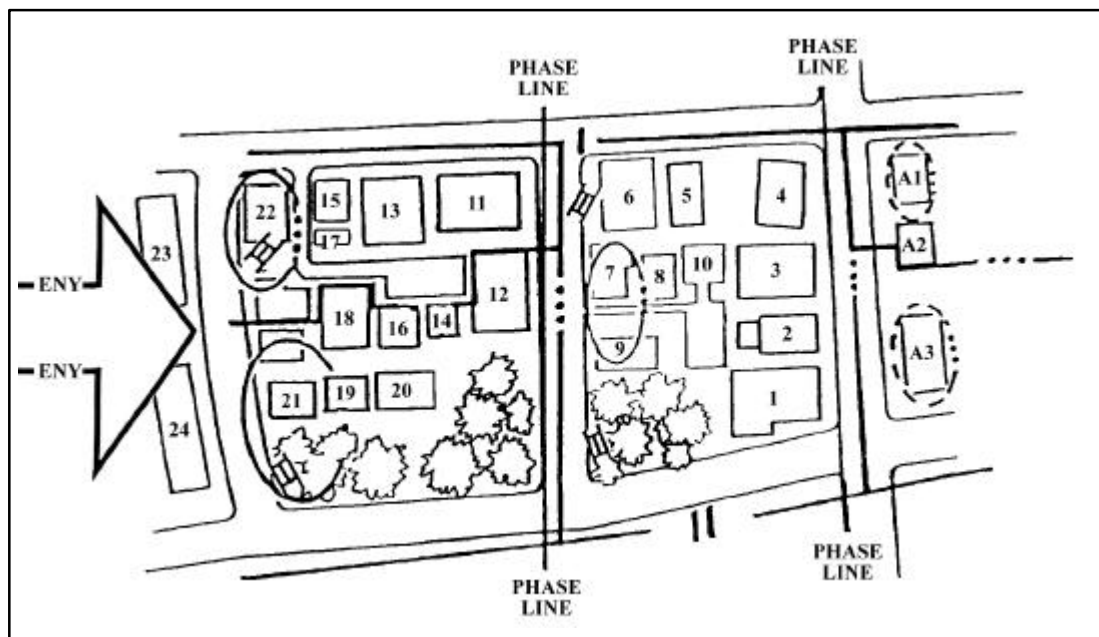
- Resupply
- MEDEVAC
- Communications
- Firefighting

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- Sleep and alert plans
- Security
- Limited visibility
- Control of noncombatants.

j. The company should install a wire net and develop a plan for pyrotechnic signals to ensure adequate communications. Backup wire should be laid in case primary lines are cut by vehicles, fires, or the enemy. The commander also plans for the use of messengers .

3302. Delay in a Built-Up Area. A rifle company may be assigned the mission to delay in a built-up area.(Figure 3-13). To perform this mission, a rifle company can destroy enemy reconnaissance elements forward of the outskirts of the town, prevent their penetration into the built-up areas, and gain and maintain contact with the enemy to determine the strength and



location of the main attack.

Figure 3-13. Delay in a Built-Up Area

- a. Platoons delay by using patrols, OPs, and ambushes. Following each action, a platoon will disengage and withdraw.
- b. The company's sector should be prepared with obstacles to enhance the delay. Engineers should prepare obstacles on anticipated enemy main routes of advance.

c. Antiarmor weapons may be positioned on the outskirts of the town to destroy the enemy at maximum range. They should be located in defilade positions or in prepared shelters. They fire at visible targets and then fall back or proceed to alternate positions.

d. Tanks in support may be used to engage enemy tanks, provide reinforcing fires, aid the disengagement of platoons, and cover obstacles by fire.

3303. Defense of a City Block. The rifle company may be assigned to defend a city block. The company actions should be coordinated with those of the security forces charged with delaying to the front of the company's position. The defense should take advantage of the protection of buildings that dominate the roads.

a. A well-organized company defense:

- Stops the attack of the enemy on the roads by using obstacles and enfilade fire
- Destroys the enemy by ambush and direct fire from prepared positions
- Ejects the enemy from footholds or fixes them for the battalion's counterattack.

b. The defensive forces should prepare ambushes on the avenues of approach, cover the obstacles by fire, and build a defense inside the buildings (Appendix D). The reserve can be tasked:

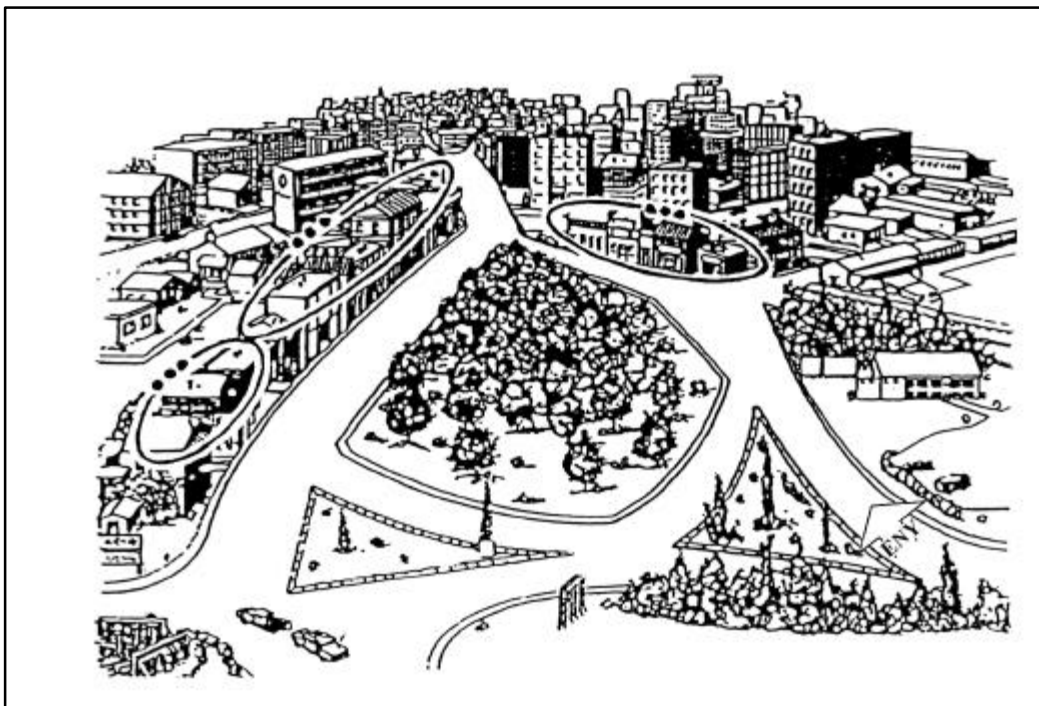
- To reinforce the fires of the defense
- To react to a danger on the flank
- To counterattack to throw the enemy from a foothold.

c. Engineers should be employed in GS to construct obstacles, prepare access routes, and assist in preparing defensive positions.

d. Tanks attached to the rifle company may be used to direct-fire support, engage enemy tanks, and support a counterattack.

3304. Defense of a Traffic Circle or Key Intersection. A rifle company may be assigned the mission to defend a key traffic circle or road junction (Figure 3-14).

a. The commander analyzes enemy avenues of approach and buildings that dominate those avenues. He plans to focus all possible firepower on the traffic circle and its approaches. He also plans for the all-around defense of the buildings that dominate the traffic circle to prevent encirclement. The commander prepares as many covered and concealed routes between these



buildings as possible. These routes make it easier to mass or shift fires and to execute counterattacks.

Figure 3-14. Defense of a Traffic Circle

b. Obstacles can be used to deny the enemy the use of the traffic circle. In this case, obstacle planning should consider whether friendly forces require access to the traffic circle. Antiarmor weapons can be employed across the traffic circle if designated fields of fire exist. Tanks can be used to engage enemy tanks and provide direct-fire for counterattacks.