

## CHAPTER 7

## OPERATING MOBILE ELEMENTS IN CONCERT (SQUAD-MINUS TO PLATOON-PLUS)

**W**hen rear operations intensify, your priority of action in the rear areas shifts to meet the commander's need. As his "combat multiplier" in the rear area you can be called on to task-organize and operate as a light, mobile force. MP encountering enemy forces engage them with individual and crew served weapons, interdicting enemy elements within their capability. On an AirLand battlefield, for example, Threat intensity depends not on geographical location but on what operations the enemy believes must be mounted, and to what degree, to achieve its objective. In the rear area, where defensive deployment is critical to prevent enemy interdiction, MP are one of the first mobile fighting forces available to fight the rear battle.

### CONDUCTING COMBAT PATROLS

The size of an MP combat patrol is set by METT-T and the MP chain of command.

On patrol you act to maintain or restore control to areas vulnerable to saboteurs, terrorists, and enemy forces operating in the rear. You prevent Threat activity when possible. You respond to resolve it when required. You use both preventive and reactive measures to prevent and disrupt enemy operations. And at all times you coordinate closely with HN officials.

You focus on preventive measures like "hardening" potential targets with physical security measures. But you undertake aggressive combat patrols as well. MP security patrols, raids, and even ambushes can be used to help deter, detect, and disrupt enemy actions against CPs, bases and base clusters, and key personnel. *See FM 19-10 for discussion on vulnerability assessments and on procedures to detect and deal with terrorist actions.*

#### SECURITY PATROLS

MP security patrols help protect critical assets in the rear area. You operate multiple security patrols as a "mobile screen" around critical facilities. Screening helps prevent infiltration and surprise attack on CPs, ammunition supply points, bases/base clusters, pipelines, dams, bridges, and tunnels. The patrols detect and defend against the Threat before it reaches direct-fire range of the facilities. They-

- Maintain surveillance.
- Provide early warning.
- Impede and harass the enemy with supporting indirect fires.
- Destroy enemy recon elements within their capability.

One MP team may be able to conduct a security patrol if the Threat level permits. But most often a security patrol comprises more than one MP team. The size of the facility or area being patrolled or the degree of risk to which the asset is exposed influences the MP resources needed. When operating as part of a mobile screen, you must know the plan for 360-degree security around the facility, including-

- AO boundaries of adjacent elements/patrols.
- Call signs of other elements.
- Positions of OPs/LPs.
- Where dismounted patrols will operate to cover dead space.
- Where mounted patrols will operate to maintain contact with OPs/LPs.
- What actions are to be taken on contact with the enemy (attack/withdraw).

Prepare the patrol (*see Chapter 2*) using your troop-leading steps. Base your choice of movement technique on METT-T and the likelihood of enemy contact. Security patrols most often use traveling overwatch. A security patrol must always be ready to engage the enemy.

To conduct the patrol, pick a series of objectives (and en route rally points) in the area where you will reconnoiter. Have the patrol move from objective to objective until the area has been reconnoitered. Coordinate contact points on AO boundaries with adjacent screening elements. When checking on OPs/LPs be careful not to expose their position by needless contact. Report contact with friendly and enemy elements to higher HQ.

### RAID PATROLS

MP patrols may raid a known enemy base camp in the rear area or even one of their "special-purpose force" safehouses to—

- Destroy the position.
- Capture personnel or equipment.
- Liberate "friendly" personnel.

A successful raid requires—

- Surprise to allow the patrol to attack when the enemy least expects it (in the dark, in limited visibility, or from an unexpected direction).
- Firepower to concentrate fire at critical points to suppress the enemy.
- Violence to allow the patrol to attack aggressively, with massed firepower.

The size of your raiding force (squad-size or larger) depends on the amount of time needed to consolidate teams versus the urgency of the raid. A raiding force is often divided into three elements:

- The assault element (the patrol leader and most of the patrol) assaults the objective to destroy or capture the enemy.
- The support element (the assistant patrol leader and crew-served gunners) provides suppressing fire on the enemy while the assault element is en route to and from the objective.
- The security element (a number of MP teams, varying with the size of the patrol) provides flank security for the support/assault elements. It also provides security at the ORP. It blocks avenues of approach to the objective and prevents enemy escape.

Prepare the patrol (*see Chapter 2*) using your troop-leading steps. Base your plans on METT-T Task members for EPW, aid/litter, and demolition functions. During the patrol submit SPOTREPs as events occur. Select your movement technique based on the likelihood of enemy contact. Make sure the patrol is always ready to engage the enemy. You should never be surprised by the enemy. At the objective—

- Ensure your security element moves into position early enough to warn you if the enemy approaches and to overwatch the movement of the support element.
- Position the support element where it can suppress the objective and shift fire once the assault begins (pre-arranged signal).
- Deploy the assault element close enough to the objective to permit immediate assault if detected by the enemy.
- Begin the assault by directing the highest casualty-producing weapon to fire.
- Control and direct the maneuver of the assault element to close with and destroy or capture the enemy.
- Seize and secure the objective, direct the withdrawal from the objective.

As the patrol withdraws from the objective, the raiding force returns to the ORP—

- One element at a time — if security is needed more than speed. The support/security elements cover the movement of the assault element. Each element moves to the ORP on order or by prearranged signal.
- All at the same time — if speed is needed more than security. All elements return at the same time.

Reorganize at the ORP. Then, suiting your movement technique to the situation, return to your vehicle assembly areas or to a preset pickup point. *See Appendix D for information on SPOTREPs.*

### AMBUSH PATROLS

On an AirLand battlefield MP elements (usually platoon-sized) use ambush patrols along suspected enemy routes and elsewhere against enemy forces in the rear area.

An ambush enables a small unit with light weapons to harass or destroy a larger, better-equipped unit. A surprise attack from a concealed position on a moving or temporarily halted target, the ambush may be an assault. Or it may be an attack by fire only. A successful ambush requires—

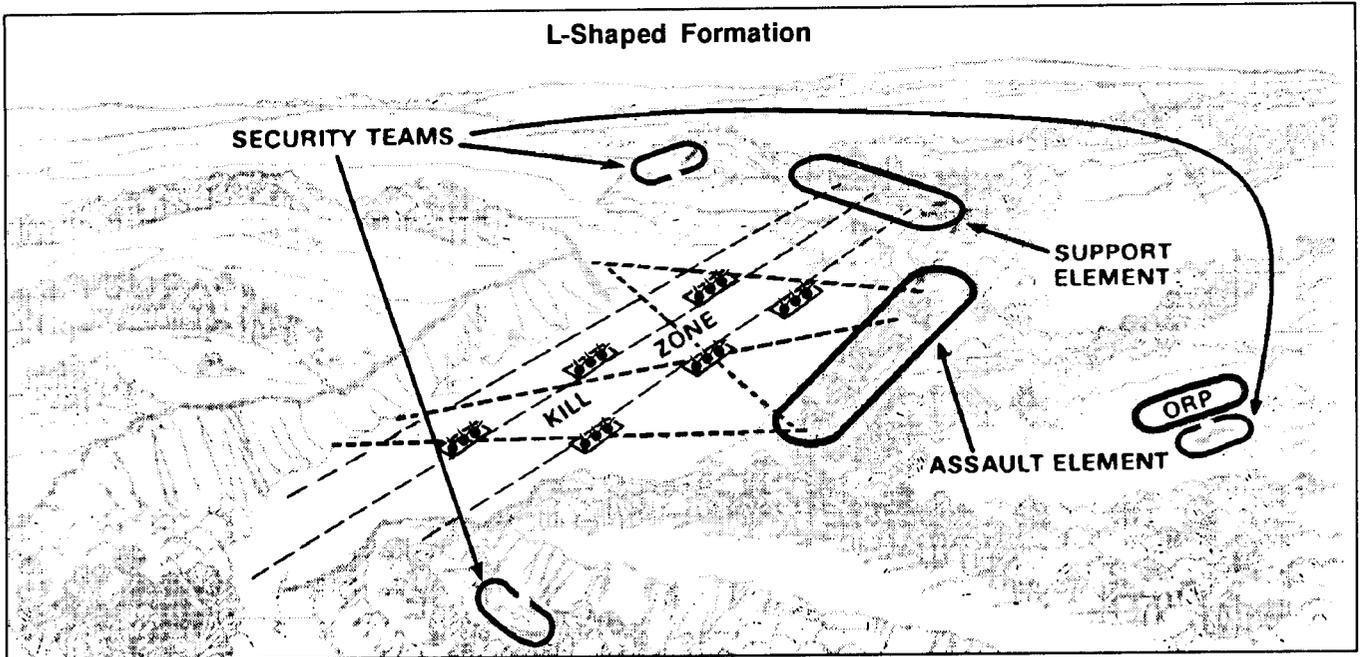
- **Surprise.** The patrol must seize control of the situation.
- **Coordinated fire.** The patrol must deliver a large volume of fire into the kill zone and (using individual and crew-served weapons, mines, demolitions, and indirect fire) isolate the kill zone to keep the enemy from escaping or being reinforced.
- **Control** before, during, and after the ambush. Elements must be able to receive detailed instructions (by communications and signals) on their activities.

An ambush patrol, like a raid patrol, has assault, support, and security elements. But the assault element of an ambush patrol does not always advance on the objective (the kill zone).

An ambush is laid on an enemy's expected route of approach. The leader picks the site. Members are positioned to have—

- Good visibility of avenues of approach and of the kill zone.
- Good fields of fire into the kill zone.
- Cover and concealment.
- Obstacles between the teams and the kill zone.
- Covered and concealed withdrawal routes.

A good ambush site restricts the enemy's movement to one flank by natural or man-made obstacles. Natural obstacles include cliffs, steep embankments, swamps, steep grades, sharp curves in the road, narrow trails, streams, and heavily wooded areas. Man-made obstacles can include mines, booby traps, and roadblocks.



Configure your ambush to suit the—

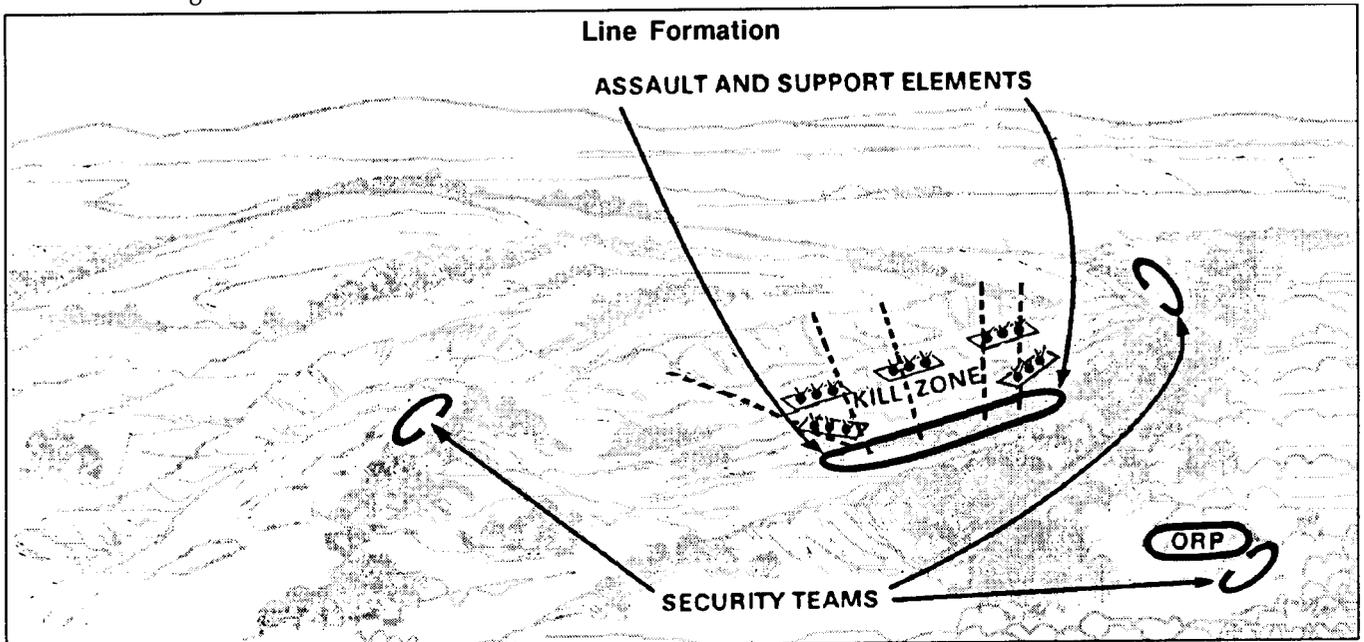
- Type of ambush.
- Terrain.
- Troops available.
- Weapons.
- Equipment.
- Ease of control.
- Overall combat situation.

A **line formation** is easy to control and is useful in all levels of visibility. The assault and support elements parallel the long axis of the kill zone to engage the enemy with flanking fire. (But your target may be so dispersed that it extends beyond the kill zone.) You must—

- Position the assault and support elements parallel to the route of movement of the enemy (road, trail, stream).
- Limit the kill zone to the size area that the ambush can cover with a great volume of fire.

- Place obstacles (Claymore mines or use existing natural obstacles) between the kill zone and the ambush element to prevent counterambush actions.
- Leave access lanes through the obstacles so the kill zone can be assaulted (if directed).

An **L-shaped formation** is useful on a straight stretch of a trail, road, or stream. It also works well at a sharp bend in a trail, road, or stream. The assault element is the long leg of an "L," paralleling the kill zone to provide flanking fire. The support element is the short leg, capping the end of the kill zone at a right angle to the assault element. The support element provides enfilade fire to interlock with fire from the other leg.



**To conduct an ambush—**

- Position flank security elements.
- Emplace obstacles and mines.
- Improve fighting positions if time permits.
- Report to higher HQ when the ambush is in place.
- Position yourself where you can best control your teams. Normally you are with the crew-served weapons or the LAW/AT4 (if the enemy has armor).
- A crew-served weapon should be emplaced to cover the left and right limits of your kill zone. These weapons must ensure that once an element is in the kill zone, it cannot leave it laterally.
- Begin the ambush by prearranged signal.
- Ensure the remainder of the squad opens fire once the ambush has begun.
- If the enemy is close to finding or tripping the mines or devices, start the ambush immediately.

If you are setting up an antiarmor ambush (against one or two armored vehicles), plan your actions to the type of enemy armor:

- Equip selected personnel with LAWs/AT4s.
- Pick targets, usually the lead and trail vehicles (if there are more than two vehicles), for the gunners to engage.
- Begin the ambush by directing the gunners to engage the targets you have selected.
- Be ready to spring the ambush, break contact, and leave the area quickly. Keep in mind the speed and responsiveness of enemy armored vehicles. You must

specify how to engage armor vehicles (volley or sequence).

- Engage tanks with LAWs/AT4s; engage mounted infantrymen with individual/crew-served weapons.
- If dismounted enemy troops precede armored vehicles, and the enemy can outflank your patrol before you can hit the armor, avoid contact at this time and, if possible, set up another ambush.

Most often you will deploy a squad-size element for an attack on a single kill zone (a “point” ambush). But if you are deploying a platoon-size force to conduct a number of coordinated, related ambushes (an “area” ambush), the principles are the same. An area ambush works best where close terrain keeps enemy movement largely limited to trails or roads. For an area ambush –

- Choose one central ambush site around which you can control and organize the outlying ambushes.
- Select outlying ambush sites on the enemy’s possible avenues of approach and escape from the central site.
- Set up and maintain communications with all outlying sites.
- Assign general locations of the outlying sites to your squad leaders. They will each set and conduct a point ambush.
- Direct the squad leaders to let the enemy pass through their kill zones until the central ambush begins.
- Provide specific instructions to the squad leaders in case an outlying site is detected by the enemy before the central ambush begins.

## CONDUCTING DELIBERATE AND HASTY ATTACKS

Deliberate and hasty attacks are similar offensive operations. They differ mainly in the depth of planning and preparation required to ensure success.

A **deliberate attack** is planned well in advance of the action. It is made only after a careful evaluation of recon data, current intelligence, relative combat strength, and a thorough consideration of all possible outcomes.

MP are unlikely to conduct a deliberate attack unless contingency plans call for an MP platoon-plus-size or larger response force such as that which would be used to counter an urban area Threat having well-prepared defenses.

A **hasty attack** is an immediate action taken—

- Without extensive preparations.
- With the resources at hand.
- If, by so doing, you can maintain momentum or take advantage of the enemy situation.

MP teams making unexpected contact with a small enemy force are unlikely to be ordered to make a hasty attack. But MP squads or platoon-plus-size elements

responding to a base under attack or countering a small incursion operation quite possibly would be ordered to do so.

You would consider making a hasty attack if the enemy could be surprised because they—

- Are moving undeployed.
- Have an exposed flank.
- Are not ready to react.

Make a hasty attack only when you see that by acting immediately you can successfully seize and retain the initiative. To carry out a hasty attack you must act quickly to be able to make use of opportunities as they arise.

### PREPARING TO ATTACK

On enemy contact or upon identifying a tactical situation that may call for an attack, you—

- Immediately assess the situation. (Can I defeat the enemy with the assets I have?)
- Send a SALUTE report to your higher HQ.
- Start your troop-leading steps. *See Chapter 2.*

- Estimate the situation and develop a plan of attack. No matter what the Threat level, your estimate and plan are based on METT-T.
- Develop a scheme of maneuver and a fire support plan.
- Break your force into two elements; one to be the moving element, one to provide fire support.
- Decide how you want each element to carry out its mission.
- Select a route that makes use of cover, concealment, and supporting fire.
- Decide what formation and movement technique to use. Base your choice on the unit's position, the likelihood of enemy contact, the terrain, visibility, and speed desired.
- Plan to place yourself where you can control the entire force. (This is usually with one of the movement squads or at the center rear of the platoon.)
- Select the means of communicating with subordinate leaders (hand-and-arm signals, radios, or other).
- Decide how, when, and where the crew-served weapons will displace.
- Await the order to attack.

**PLANNING FIRE SUPPORT**

You plan your fire support to complement your scheme of maneuver. Your goal is to kill as many enemy as possible and suppress the rest to keep them from seeing or shooting the maneuver element as it closes on the objective. Your plan includes the use of all available direct and indirect fire. (MP leaders mainly plan and direct the fires of their organic MGs, M203s, LAWs, and MK19s. The fire element's makeup depends on how much direct fire support is needed and on what support is to be provided by other platoons/squads.)

Plan control measures at the objective and initial employment of the fire element. If you have time before moving to the assault position, make a second recon to see if your plan needs changing.

Initial Employment of Fire Element	
Position	When
Crew-served weapons on or near the LD.	Objective and the route to it can be seen and covered by fire from position on or near the LD.
Some crew-served weapons on or near the LD and some to go with the moving element.	Objective can be seen and covered by fire from the LD, but only a part of the route is visible. OR
	All of the route can be seen from the LD, but the objective is not visible or is out of range.

**CONDUCTING THE ATTACK**

Move to where you can lead the force and influence the fight. Move a fire element into overwatch position. Then have the attacking element move from the line of departure (LD) to the assault position, using covered and concealed positions. If, en route to the objective, you—

- Receive indirect fire, move quickly out of the impact area to a preset point.
- Meet obstacles, breach or bypass them. Tell higher HQ of the obstacles if they might affect units following you. Take special care when your unit crosses a danger area like a field, roadway, or creek. *See Moving in Contact, Chapter 2.*
- Meet direct enemy resistance before you reach the objective, return fire. If indirect fire or air support is available, call for and adjust fire on the enemy. *See Calling for Fire, Chapter 2.* Use aggressive maneuver against the enemy. Coordinate actions so your unit hits the enemy with its full combat power. **Do not commit your soldiers piecemeal.** Maneuver your force to strike the flank or rear of the enemy positions. While in contact—
  - When moving, immediately assume the best available covered positions and, at the same time, return fire in the direction of the enemy.
  - Locate actual or suspected enemy positions and engage them with well-aimed fire.
  - Distribute fires evenly over the objective when no individual positions have been identified.
  - Report and monitor the situation and recommend courses of action.
  - Make visual or verbal contact with soldiers on left or right. (Platoon members and team leaders make frequent visual contact with squad leaders. Squad leaders make frequent visual contact with the platoon leader. All hand-and-arm signals from the platoon chain of command are relayed.)

When resistance is destroyed, continue quickly onward to the assault position.

Just before reaching the assault position, deploy on line. To maintain your momentum, pass through the assault position and attack the objective. Halt at the assault position only if you must briefly do so to allow all soldiers to attack at once. The assault position should be as close to the objective as possible to prevent needless exposure to enemy fire.

As your force attacks, the fire element in its overwatch position will cover the attacking element by shooting at the enemy. Before the attacking element moves beyond support range, the fire element moves up to a position from which it can continue its support and shoot at the enemy.

With the fire element in its overwatch position, give the command or signal to open fire. The fire leader will control the method and rate of fire. He and the gunners watch the progress of the attacking element and engage targets that threaten it. When crew-served weapons are close together, the fire leader anticipates the masking of their fire and moves the weapons one at a time. When the crew-served weapons are separated, each crew displaces, under control of its gunner, when its fire is masked or when it can no longer support the attacking element. Displacement of weapons in a fire element is timed so that the attacking element has continuous fire support.

When the attacking element makes contact with the enemy, maneuvering begins. As the attacking element maneuvers near the objective, the fire element in overwatch suppresses the enemy with a high rate of fire.

When the attacking element reaches the objective and closes with the enemy, the fire element walks its fire across the objective in front of the maneuvering element. Then it shifts its fire to supplementary targets (rear of objective, escape routes) or lifts its fire to keep from endangering the attack element. Soldiers in the element closing with the enemy move singly, by pairs, by teams, by squads, or by a combination of these, using

all the cover they can. As they close, they fire on selected targets to suppress the enemy. Automatic rifles are fired in short bursts across the forces' front. Rifles, M203s, hand grenades, bayonets, and MGs are used to overcome pockets of resistance. The advance continues past the objective far enough to shoot at any withdrawing enemy. Firing continues until the enemy is killed, is captured, or withdraws.

### CONSOLIDATING AND REORGANIZING

Once past the objective, consolidate and reorganize your force. You must be ready to repel a counterattack (or to resume the attack if so directed).

**Consolidate** by positioning your teams, squads, and weapons where they can defend the objective against a counterattack. Consolidation at the objective can be by either the clock method or the terrain feature method. In the clock method, each element is assigned a sector described by clock time, such as 12 o'clock to 3 o'clock. In the terrain method, each element is given two easily identifiable terrain features as the right and left limits of its sector. Elements consolidate at their assigned sectors and provide 360-degree security. It is vital during consolidation to set up OPs/LPs. You must ensure that enemy avenues of approach for a counterattack are properly covered.

**Reorganize** your elements and supplies:

- Report your situation, position, casualties, equipment and ammunition status, and captured equipment, material, and personnel to your superior.
- Redistribute/resupply ammunition.
- Treat and evacuate casualties as needed.
- Fill vacancies in key positions.
- Search, silence, segregate, tag, and safely send prisoners under guard (consider having your walking wounded take them as they travel to an aid station) to collecting points as soon as possible.
- Collect and report enemy information.

Unless otherwise directed, prepare to move back to the assembly area using an alternate route.

### ATTACKING ON URBAN TERRAIN

In military operations on urban terrain (MOUT), you must be able to find, isolate, and evict enemy concealed in hardened structures. When attacking and clearing a building in an urban area, try to—

- Determine and isolate the area around the objective. (In urban terrain it is often hard to pinpoint the enemy's position.)
- Number the area's buildings and use those numbers as reference points to control movement and for clearing operations.

Searching Hints	
<b>TANKS</b>	
What to Look and Listen For	Where to Look
Engine noise, truck clatter. Exhaust smoke, dust, and shine. Firing signature (flash, blast).	From 0 to 2,000 meters out. Near crest, next to buildings, in tree lines.
<b>ATGMs</b>	
What to Look and Listen For	Where to Look
Smoke trail of missile in flight.	May be launched from behind crest. Between 400 and 4,000 meters out.
Missile controller	May be up to 100 meters from launch site.
<b>OTHER ANTITANK WEAPONS</b>	
What to Look and Listen For	Where to Look
Firing signature.	From 0 and 1,000 meters out. Usually well camouflaged. 360-degree observation for tank-ambush teams using hand-held weapons.
Hand-held and crew-served weapons systems.	May be employed in reverse slopes in pairs or more, and protected by mines. Usually on flank.

- Clear buildings from the top down if possible.
- Retain a reserve force to have the flexibility essential for urban combat.

The support element isolates the building to keep its defenders from escaping or being reinforced. The assault element conducts the actual assault and clearing operations. (Exact makeup is based on METT-T.) The security element protects the unit's rear and flanks. The assault and support elements closely coordinate their actions using radios, telephones, pyrotechnics, or hand and arm signals.

The security element provides suppressive fire. The security element usually fires the MGs. But the assault force may find a MG useful for its power. The assault element attacks the building to gain a foothold. Then the support element moves into the building and secures the foothold while the assault element clears the building. The support element usually has one or more elements ready to replace the initial assault element if it runs out of ammunition or takes casualties. When moving into the building—

- Enter at the least defended point. It is best to enter where walls have been breached by explosives or gunfire. Be wary at doors and windows: They are usually covered by fire or are booby-trapped.
- If possible, start at the top of the building to fight downward. (Let gravity and building construction help you as you move and throw hand grenades from floor to floor.)
- Use ladders, drainpipes, vines, or ropes to reach the top of the building. Or move from roof to roof if buildings are close together.

Before entering a room the assault party (two-person minimum)—

- Determines how it will clear the room. (Do not clear rooms in the same way every time. Vary the technique so the enemy cannot predict the assault.)
- Prepares to react automatically to any situation inside the room.
- As walls of rooms are usually thin, scans for cover to take after throwing the grenade.

- Allows a grenade to cook off for two seconds and throws it through the doorway of the room. (Throw grenades vigorously. They will bounce about the room before exploding, denying the enemy the chance to throw them back.) Then enter the room through the doorway.
- Can blast a hole in the room's wall (a "mousehole") with demolitions, cook off and throw in a grenade, and enter through the hole.
- Using existing mousehole between rooms, can throw a grenade in through the mousehole, and then enter the room through its doorway.

To enter each room, one man quickly moves through the room's opening (to one side or the other). He sprays the room with automatic fire as he moves through the opening. Inside, he takes up a position where he can see the whole room. The rest of the assault party takes care not to be silhouetted in the opening. A second man shouts, "coming in," enters, and conducts a systematic search of the room. He avoids silhouetting himself in windows. To leave the room each man shouts, "coming out," before passing through the guarded exit.

Assault party members must—

- Be aware of each other's whereabouts at all times.
- Avoid all food, furniture, and potential souvenirs. These items could be poisoned or booby-trapped with explosives.
- Leave doors open as rooms are cleared.
- Place a predetermined mark (chalk, tape, spray paint) on the doorjamb or over the door of cleared rooms.

You must clear and secure basements carefully to keep the enemy from infiltrating back into cleared areas. Basements often offer access to sewers and communications cable tunnels. If there is a basement, clear it as soon as possible. If you can, clear it at the same time the ground floor is cleared. Use the same method for clearing basements that you use for clearing rooms.

*For other information on fighting in urban terrain, see FM 90-10 and FM 90-10-1. For discussion of clearing buildings in hamlets, see FM 90-8.*

## DELAYING THE ENEMY

A delay is conducted to slow an enemy's advance to gain time without having to commit a force heavy enough to ensure destruction. MP patrols, even in multiples, do not have the combat power to conduct a combat delay. They do, however, conduct very limited defensive, delay-type actions to hinder the enemy. But they do not become decisively engaged. As a combat

multiplier for rear operations MP can be called upon to buy time for base defense forces to reactor for the base to displace. Or they may buy time for additional response forces to assemble. MP deliberately conduct a delaying action only when directed to do so by higher HQ. (In which case, higher HQ determines the size of the MP force.)

### Choosing Your Ground

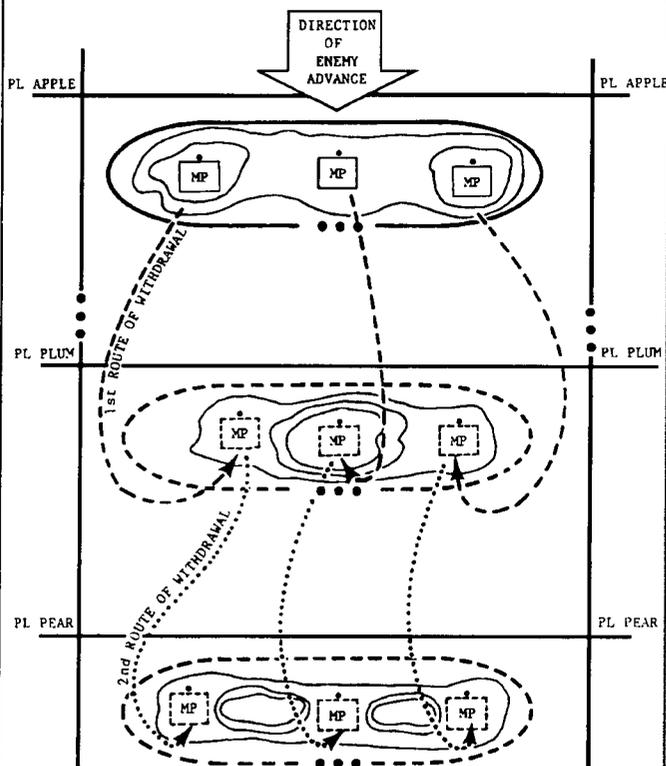
Delay forward of a specified line or terrain feature if you have —

- A narrow sector.
- Cross-compartmented terrain.
- An area restrictive to armor and the enemy can be canalized into a selected area.
- Terrain dominating mounted avenues of approach.

Delay in sector if you have —

- An area of responsibility that cannot be adequately covered from one battle position.
- Multiple enemy avenues of approach.
- Limited fields of fire and observation.

#### Delay By Successive Withdrawal Positions

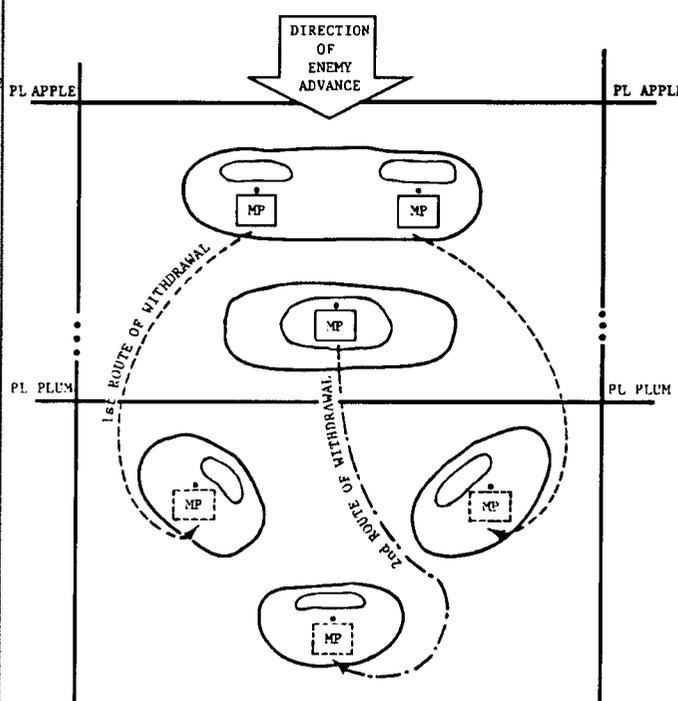


Delay from successive positions when you —

- Have wide sectors or limited observation, fields of fire, and visibility.
- Have a mobility advantage over the enemy.
- Can disengage elements simultaneously or one or two at a time.
- Are in less dangerous sectors.
- Lack good defensible terrain in depth.

This method simplifies command and control. But you have few forces in depth and little time to prepare your positions.

#### Delay By Alternate Withdrawal Positions



Delay from alternate positions when —

- The sector is narrow or there is long-range observation and fields of fire.
- The enemy is superior in combat power.
- There is good defensible terrain in depth, and the terrain facilitates movement by bounds.

This method places forces in depth, enhancing security with overwatching fires. It provides more time to prepare or improve subsequent positions. But it requires continuous coordination of fire and movement, which complicates command and control within the element. And it is less certain to maintain contact with the enemy.

### PLANNING THE ACTION

You delay either from successive positions or from alternate positions. When **delaying from successive positions** you fight rearward from one position to another, holding each position for a given time or until you are likely to become decisively engaged.

When **delaying from alternate positions** you fight rearward with your force deployed so elements can provide overwatch and subsequent maneuver. While the forward element is fighting, the rear element prepares to assume the action. The forward element disengages.

It passes through or around the rearward element to prepare to assume the action from a position in greater depth.

Develop your plan of action, using the factors of METT-T and your understanding of the commander's concept and intent. Give priority to—

- Obtaining a detailed knowledge of the terrain.
- Gearing your terrain analysis to the enemy's intent, his avenues of approach, and his likely positions and targets.

- Gaining information from aggressive patrolling and recon of the area.
- Choosing ground where you will have long-range fields of fire.
- Checking for rivers, defiles, chokepoints, or gaps you may need to cross while delaying. (You must protect crossing sites to keep from being cut off if the enemy becomes able to bypass or break through.)
- Rehearsing movements. Your force must gain the advantage to be successful. Delay actions are more likely to be a series of coordinated independent actions than other defense operations, thus **rehearsing is essential**.
- Having alternate communications, both sound and sight, ready to be used in case radio communications are disrupted.
- Forecasting time. You must consider how fast the enemy will close, how long it will take to move off your positions, how long to get to and occupy your next positions. In delaying actions, timing can be critical.
- Requesting fire support along the route.

In your OPORD to subordinate leaders, include the—

- Concept of conducting the action.
- Initial delay positions.
- Trigger points, identifiable on the ground. (“Squad leader, I plan to initiate fires when the enemy reaches the railroad track.”)
- Phase lines/delay lines.
- Length of time to delay on or forward of the given position or phase line.
- Coordination/contact points.
- Indirect fire plan (smoke, high explosives [HE] munitions, artillery-delivered scatterable mines).
- Responsibility for adjacent unit coordination (passage and the like).
- Fire control measures, engagement areas, targets, and rate of fire.
- Disengagement criteria. (“Squad leaders, I plan to start disengagement when the enemy has three BMDs across the railroad tracks.”)
- Plan for moving after disengagement (signals, break-point, use of smoke, and the like).
- Subsequent delay positions, routes, and sequence of disengagement.

Most of your firepower will be oriented toward the enemy. But flank and rear security must be provided. Plan fire support for in front of, on top of, and behind your positions. Plan fires to cover your disengagement and move to subsequent positions. Have fires concentrate on breaking up the enemy’s advance at long range.

Higher HQ will resupply, rearm, and refuel you. On a platoon action the platoon sergeant is pivotal in ensuring the platoon has the required support to continue a delaying action. The OPORD should provide for a central point where the teams or squads can recover.

### CONDUCTING THE ACTION

If directed to delay the enemy, position yourself where you can best control the action. Make good use of terrain to mask your movement and to provide vantage points for observation and for harassing fire.

The enemy will try to bypass you. As you move, try to keep the enemy in front of or on an oblique angle to your position. Prepare positions as thoroughly as time permits. And reconnoiter routes to subsequent positions.

When selecting delay positions, look for—

- Clear observation and fields of fire onto the avenues of approach.
- Positions offering mutual support and interlocking and flanking fires where possible.
- Restrictions to canalize the enemy.
- Short, covered, concealed, and trafficable routes to rearward positions.
- Positions hidden from enemy observation and fires.
- Defilade positions for HMMWVs.

If you have time—

- Emplace obstacles to slow the enemy while you move to rearward positions.
- Block obvious routes rearward; direct your force to use more hidden routes.
- Continue preparation of positions.
- Consider preparing ambush sites along the routes to slow enemy pursuit.
- Select primary and alternate firing positions for your initial fighting positions and all subsequent positions.
- Have leaders familiarize themselves with the routes to these positions.
- Place OPs/LPs, PEWs, and/or other security means far enough forward to warn the platoon, particularly if the enemy is using a secondary avenue of approach.

### ENGAGING THE ENEMY

Fire control is extremely important. Engage the enemy at maximum range with all weapons systems. Fire on a prearranged signal or event (trigger point). Aim for leaders and command and control vehicles. Avoid premature firing. Consider holding your fire until the enemy reaches a preset point on the ground. Then use ambush-type fires to quickly destroy lead enemy elements. This also keeps the enemy from learning your size and location.

If the enemy forces cannot evade you, they will make every effort to envelop and destroy your delaying force. Avoid presenting an exposed flank to the enemy. (Using contact points can help ensure coordination of flanks.)

Each time you move back you will have less time to plan and prepare. Speed, firepower, and maneuver become ever more important. Call for added fire support or assistance from higher HQ if decisive engagement or envelopment seems likely.

If additional elements arrive, use them to augment the element in contact. Employ them on the left and right of the element in contact. Ensure that as the element in contact moves back the left and right elements know to also move, but not at the same time. As the element in contact moves back, the flank screens can open harassing fire. Drawing enemy attention to flank elements will allow the element in contact to disengage more easily.

Keep your higher HQ informed of the situation. Forward elements must not become so heavily engaged that they cannot be withdrawn effectively. If contact with higher HQ is lost, use initiative. Base your moves on METT-T, the events on the battlefield, and your commander's intent.

## DISENGAGING

Deciding when to disengage is difficult. If you remain too long, you risk decisive engagement or envelopment. If you move too soon, you give up ground unnecessarily and risk pursuit. The decision of which element to move depends on the factors of METT-T. But you usually move the least heavily engaged element first.

To disengage—

- Direct supporting elements to engage enemy forces forward of the disengaging element.
- Concentrate fires and mutual support.
- Give priority fires, if available, to the disengaging element to rapidly increase its firepower.
- Begin an orderly movement to successive or alternate positions.
- Use all available fires.
- Place the tires far enough forward to avoid impeding personnel leaving protected positions.
- Place smoke between you and the enemy.
- Move into subsequent positions from the rear to avoid skylining.
- Report your arrival to higher HQ.
- Tell elements left in contact to disengage and take their next positions.

When you must and can, replace key leaders, give crew-served weapons a priority of manning, evacuate casualties, and redistribute ammunition. *For more information on defensive tactics used for delays, see FM 17-95.*