

Section V

Clearing Techniques

This section will discuss basic clearing techniques; however, the fundamentals may have to be modified depending on the various situations and building/room layouts that Marines may encounter. Caution should be taken when using a stacked type of position as personnel may be concentrating in a danger area where they could be exposed to fires penetrating walls or explosive effects from boobytraps or grenades thrown by the enemy. *Marines should always remain aware of the protective, or lack of protective, capabilities of the materials comprising the walls, floors, ceilings, and doors within the areas they are clearing.*

19. Clearing a Room, Door Closed or Open, From Stacked Positions. The following discussion and series of figures will focus on the two-man clearing team in the conduct of clearing a room. The covering team is positioned by the assault element leader to provide security as the clearing team begins its procedures to enter and clear a room.

- a. Shooter Number Two is behind Shooter Number One (stacked position). This positioning is the same if the door is already open or nonexistent (Figure A-29).

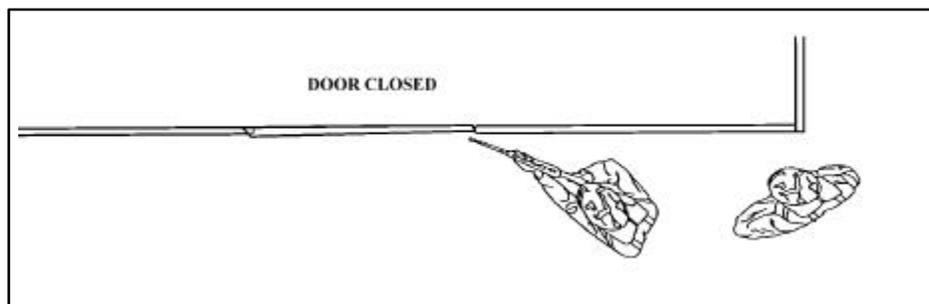


Figure A-29. Clearing a Room, Door Closed

- b. Shooter Number One determines the direction in which the door opens then quickly informs Shooter Number Two and forces the door open.

When a door is the only means of entering a room, Marines should beware of fire from enemy soldiers within the room and of boobytraps. When opening a door, Marines should not expose themselves to fires through the door. The two-man clearing team forces the door open by directing a short burst of automatic fire through the door around the latch (Figure A-30) and then kicking it open. Another method of opening the door is to use a shotgun with 12-gauge slugs to shoot the hinges and/or the latch. When the doorknob is locked and/or deadbolt locks are present, shooting the hinges of the door is recommended. The door may then be opened by kicking or using a battering ram.



Figure A-30. Shooting the Door Open

Marines can also use an ax or demolitions if they are available. As a last resort, Marines can kick the door open with a front kick (Figure A-31) or mule kick. This is the least preferred technique because it is difficult and tiring to the Marine. It also rarely works the first time, thereby giving any enemy units within the room ample warning (and giving the enemy time to shoot through the door). In situations where restrictions on firing and limiting structural damage have been imposed and/or boobytraps are not expected, using the door handle to open the door may be appropriate (apply METT-T).



Figure A-31. Opening a Door With a Front Kick

c. Once the door is open, Shooter Number Two immediately throws a hand grenade into the room. Shooter Number One maintains cover for Shooter Number Two as he prepares to throw the grenade into the room. Shooter Number Two then returns to the original stacked position behind Shooter Number One (Figure A-32). If Marines have no grenades, the procedures remain the same except for throwing the grenade. *Note: When the door is already open or nonexistent, the stacked position is always used.*

WARNING

Because fragments from M67 fragmentation grenades may injure Marines outside the room, they should not be used. Marines should use MK3A2 offensive hand grenades instead. Also, the technique of cooking-off hand grenades can be deadly unless properly performed.

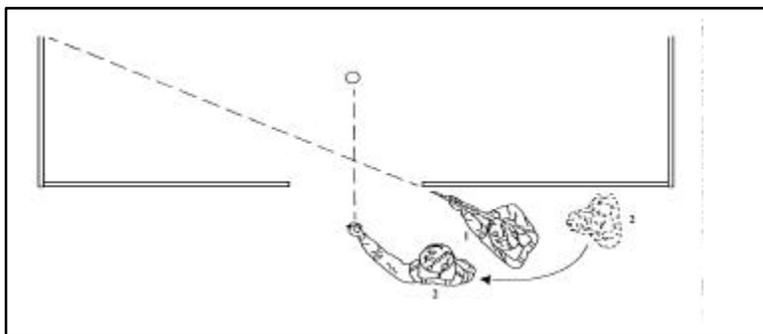


Figure A-32. Throwing a Grenade Into a Room

(1) **Throwing Grenades.** Two techniques are available for using grenades in room clearing. The *preferred technique* for Marines is to throw a concussion hand grenade into the room so hard that it skips and bounces, making it difficult for the enemy to pick up and throw back. The skip/bounce technique should be used by Marines during training and combat. The *least preferred technique* is to cook-off a concussion hand grenade by removing the grenade's safety pin, releasing the safety lever, counting off two seconds by thousands (one thousand and one, one thousand and two), and then throwing the grenade into the room. Cooking-off the grenade will be used only as appropriate during combat.

(2) **Nonverbal and Verbal Alerts.** To alert all that a grenade will be thrown, a visual showing of the grenade is made to assault element members, and a visual acknowledgment from them is received. A nonverbal alert may ensure that the enemy is surprised when the grenade is thrown. If the situation demands, a voice alert can be used, but the element of surprise may be lost. When or if a voice alert is used, the voice alert is "FRAG OUT;" when an enemy grenade has been identified, friendly forces shout, "GRENADE." This allows Marines to distinguish between warnings for outgoing and incoming grenades.

d. After the grenade explodes, Shooter Number One steps across the threshold and clears his immediate area (Figure A-33). He engages targets from the ready carry position. Shooter Number Two follows immediately behind Shooter Number One, buttonhooks, and clears his area.

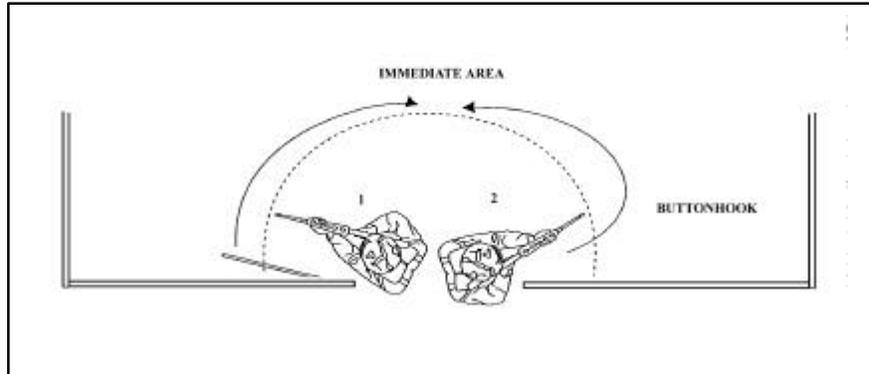


Figure A-33. Shooters Enter the Room

e. Both shooters clear the immediate area and along their respective walls, starting from the nearest respective corner and continuing to the farthest respective corner (Figure A-34). Shooters use the pieing technique to systematically clear the room by sector. (See Paragraph 3.a. of this appendix.)

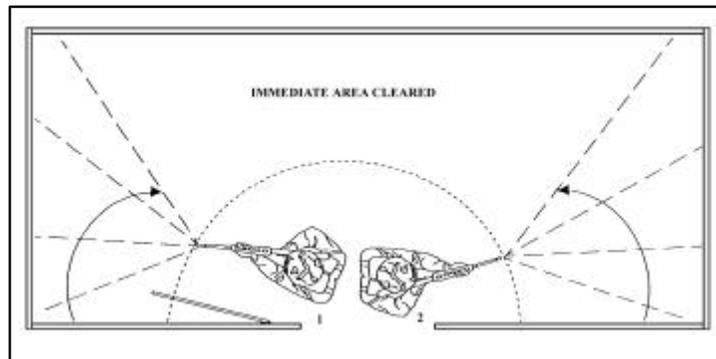


Figure A-34. Clearing a Room

f. Both shooters then establish a dominant position in the room one step away from the wall and two steps into the room and clear the room by sector, pieing to the opposite side of the room (Figure A-35). Meanwhile, the covering team (two-man team) in position outside the room being cleared provides security.

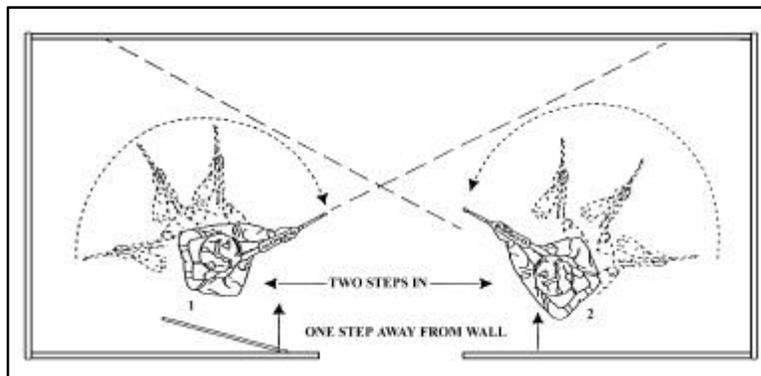


Figure A-35. Clearing a Room (Continued)

g. Another option for entering a room (situation dependent): If Shooter Number One of the clearing team enters a room without Shooter Number Two immediately following him (this could be due to room size, entering the room through a narrow opening, or a number of factors caused by the situation), then Shooter Number One will position himself inside the room to the left or right of the door and quickly scan the entire room. He then gives the command to Shooter Number Two, “**NEXT MAN IN, LEFT (RIGHT).**” Shooter Number Two shouts, “**COMING IN, LEFT (RIGHT),**” enters the room, positions himself up against the wall to the left (right) of the entrance as designated, and scans the room. Once in position, the clearing team leader can call in additional members with the “**NEXT MAN IN**” command, as the situation dictates. It is critical that all assault element members tell each other where they are to avoid fratricide.

h. When the clearing team has cleared the room and is ready to exit the room, it uses the following voice alerts. Once a room has been cleared, the clearing team yells, “**CLEAR,**” to inform the covering team. Before leaving the room and rejoining the covering team, the clearing team yells, “**COMING OUT**” and waits to hear the covering team yell, “**ALL CLEAR.**” The clearing team then executes its movement out of the room. The assault element then marks the room according to unit SOP.

When moving up or down a staircase, the appropriate team yells, “**COMING UP**” or “**COMING DOWN.**” As before, it waits for the response “**ALL CLEAR**” before executing movement and rejoining its element. When exiting a building, the clearing team or assault element yells, “**COMING OUT**” and waits for the support force or covering team to respond with “**ALL CLEAR.**”

20. Clearing a Room, Door Closed, Split Positions

a. Before opening a door, Shooter Number Two of the clearing team positions himself opposite Shooter Number One on the other side of the door and away from the wall in a safe position that allows Shooter Number One to shoot the door-opening mechanism (Figure A-36). This positioning allows Shooter Number Two to be in position to immediately move to a wall position opposite Shooter Number One. No matter what method is used to open the

door, Shooter Number Two should get in a position on the side of the door opposite Shooter Number One. If the door is already open, the stacked positions in Paragraph 19.a. of this section are used.

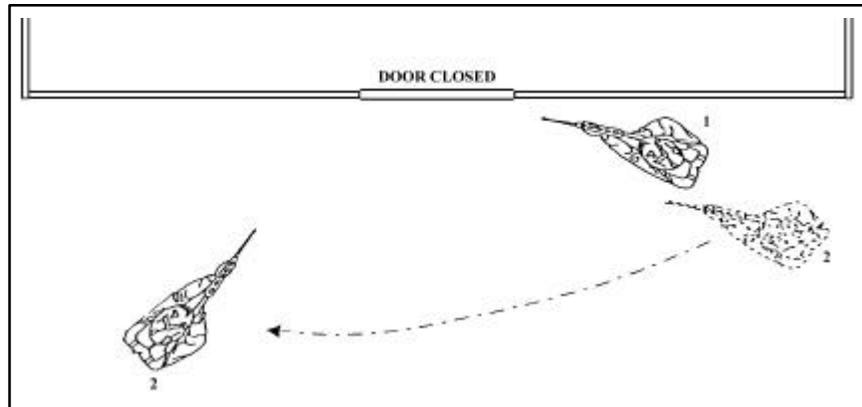


Figure A-36. Positioning To Open a Door

b. After Shooter Number One shoots the door open, Shooter Number Two immediately moves to a kneeling position against the wall (Figure A-37). Shooter Number One kicks the door open from a standing position. If the Marines have grenades, then Shooter Number Two immediately throws a grenade into the room as discussed in Paragraph 19.c. of this section. If the Marines do not have any grenades, the stand/kneel positioning of shooters places the shooters' weapons at different levels, thus allowing each shooter to engage targets inside the room while staying out of the other shooter's line of fire. The shooters scan the room for targets.

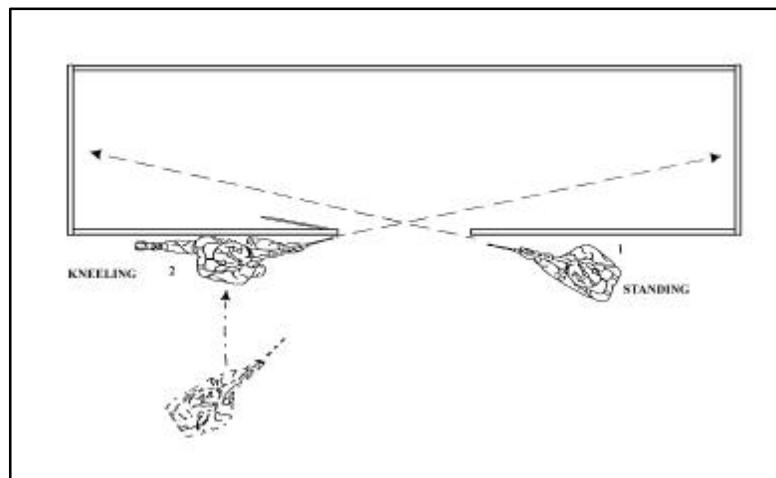


Figure A-37. Positioning To Enter a Room

c. If no grenade was thrown: Once the initial scan of the room is complete, Shooter Number One yells, "MOVE," and both shooters pivot from their respective positions toward each

other, pieing (see Paragraph 3.a. of this appendix) while maintaining eye-muzzle-target contact. Shooter Number Two is kneeling, and Shooter Number One is still standing (Figure A-38). Both shooters clear their respective sector of fire.

If a grenade was thrown: After the explosion, Shooter Number One yells, “**MOVE,**” and both shooters pivot from their respective positions toward each other, immediately enter the room, and buttonhook (Figures A-38, A-39A, and A-39B). Shooter Number Two goes from kneeling to standing as he pivots. Both shooters clear their respective sector of fire.

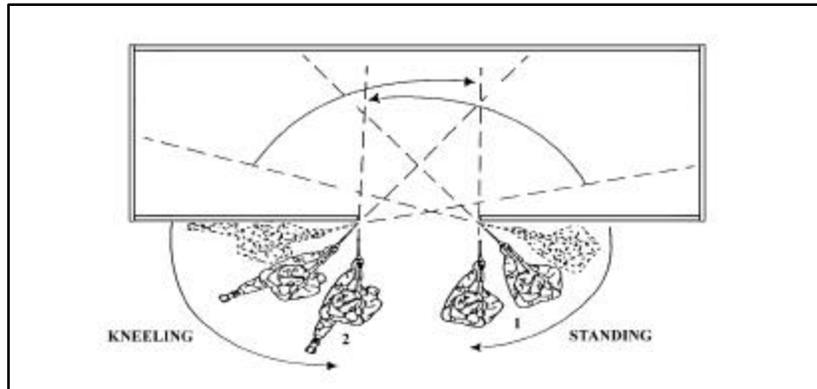


Figure A-38. Shooters Clear Sectors of Fire From Doorway

d. If no grenade was thrown: After scanning is completed, Shooter Number Two stands up and yells, “**READY,**” and Shooter Number One Yells, “**MOVE.**” Both shooters enter the room together (Figure A-39A).

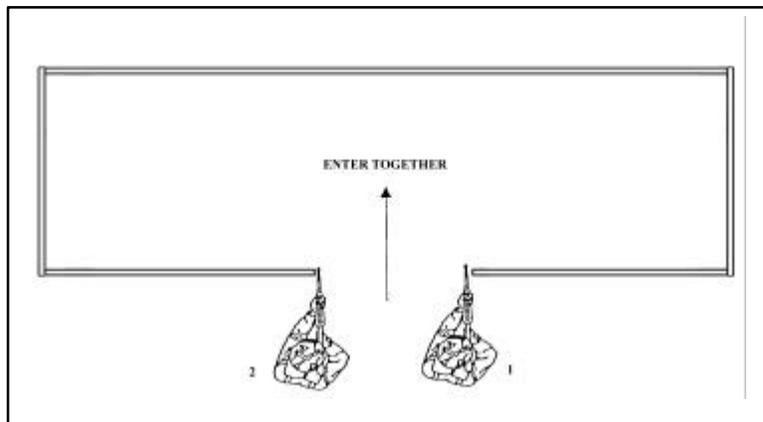


Figure A-39A. Shooters Enter the Room Together

e. Both shooters pass through the doorway together and immediately face respective corners, using the adjacent wall for cover. Both shooters buttonhook their respective areas (Figure A-39B). At this point, clearing the room is the same as discussed in Paragraphs 19.e. - 19.h.

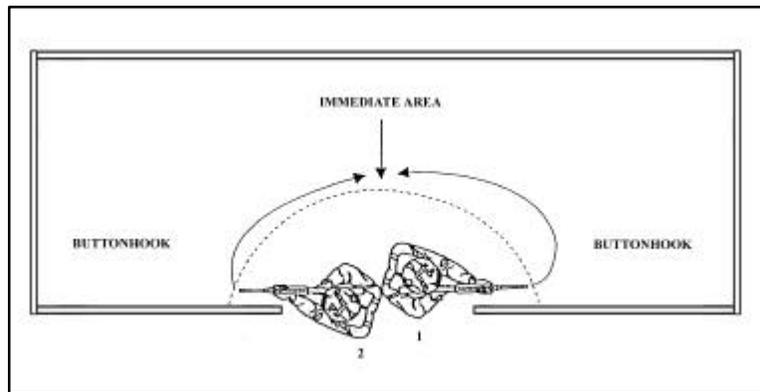


Figure A-39B. Shooters Clear Immediate Area

f. Cross Method. When employing the cross method, two Marines position themselves on either side of the entryway. Each Marine faces into the room covering the corner of the room opposite his position. On a prearranged signal, each Marine alternately enters the room. Each Marine crosses quickly to the opposite corner while covering the half of the room toward which he is moving. Once in the near corner, he assumes an outboard kneeling position to reduce his silhouette and continues to maintain coverage of his half of the room. He may change the position of his weapon to best cover the room. (Figure A-40)

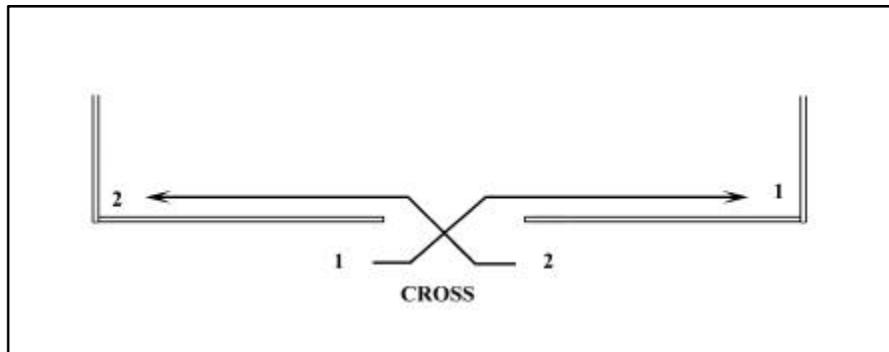


Figure A-40. Cross Method of Entering and Clearing Rooms

21. Covering Team Members Used To Support Clearing of a Room

a. Three Marines Clearing a Room. Clearing a room with three men involves the same procedures used by the aforementioned two-man clearing team, with a third Marine (from the covering team) following immediately (stacked) behind Shooters Number One and Two. Shooter Number Three moves to one side of the door and establishes a center sector of fire coverage (Figure A-41). The remaining covering team Marine provides outside security. If the split position is used, Shooters Number Two and Three are placed on the opposite side of the door.

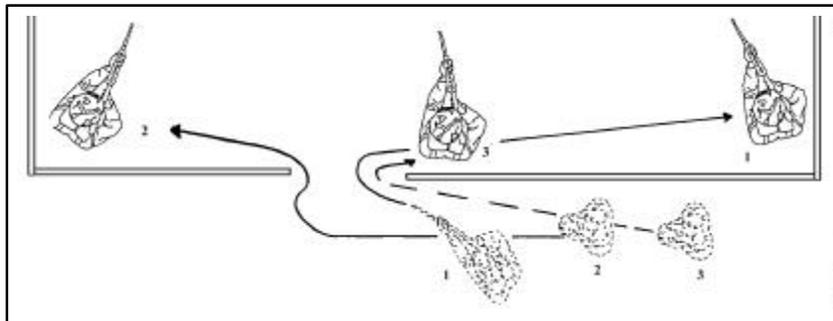


Figure A-41. Three-Marine Clearing Team (Stacked)

b. Four Marines Clearing a Room. When four Marines (entire assault element) are used to clear a room, outside security should be established by another assault element. (If outside security cannot be established, then the two- or three-Marine clearing team should be used.) The two-Marine clearing team procedures are used for initial entry into the room. Shooters Number Three and Four (split position example) stack up opposite Shooters Number One and Two. Shooters Number Three and Four follow Shooter Number Two into the room. Shooter Number Three crosses the threshold and establishes a center sector of fire coverage. Shooter Number Four follows Shooter Number Three and establishes a center sector of fire coverage opposite Shooter Number Three (Figure A-42). If the stacked position is used to enter a room, all shooters stack up on the same side of the door and follow each other in with the same positioning.

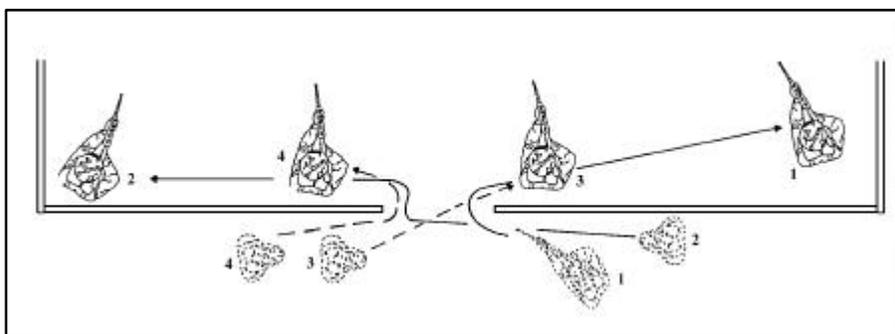


Figure A-42. Four-Marine Clearing Team (Split)

c. Single Marine Clearing a Room. This is the *least preferred* method of clearing a room. However, there may be times when this is the only method available, for example, when gaining access to an upper story window. When this is the case, the Marine gains entry to the room by shooting, kicking, ramming, or breaking a window. He then throws a grenade into the room if one is available and no restrictions apply and takes cover. Immediately after the grenade explodes, he crosses the threshold using the buttonhook technique depicted in earlier figures, scans the room for targets, and engages targets with two shots as they appear.

22. Clearing a Room, Entering Through Mousehole. Mouseholes measure about 2 feet wide and are blown or cut through a wall so that Marines can enter a room (Figure A-43). Mouseholes are safer entrances than doors, which can be easily boobytrapped and should be avoided. Procedures discussed in Paragraph 19 are used. The assault element leader positions the covering team to provide security.

- a. In this situation, Shooter Number One would enter the room through a mousehole after throwing a grenade and waiting for the detonation.
- b. Shooter Number One will position himself inside the room to the left or right of the mousehole and quickly scan the entire room. He then gives the command to Shooter Number Two, “**NEXT MAN IN, LEFT (RIGHT).**” Shooter Number Two shouts, “**COMING IN, LEFT (RIGHT),**” enters the room, positions himself against the wall to the left (right) of the entrance, and scans the room.
- c. The clearing team continues clearing the room as discussed in Paragraph 19.

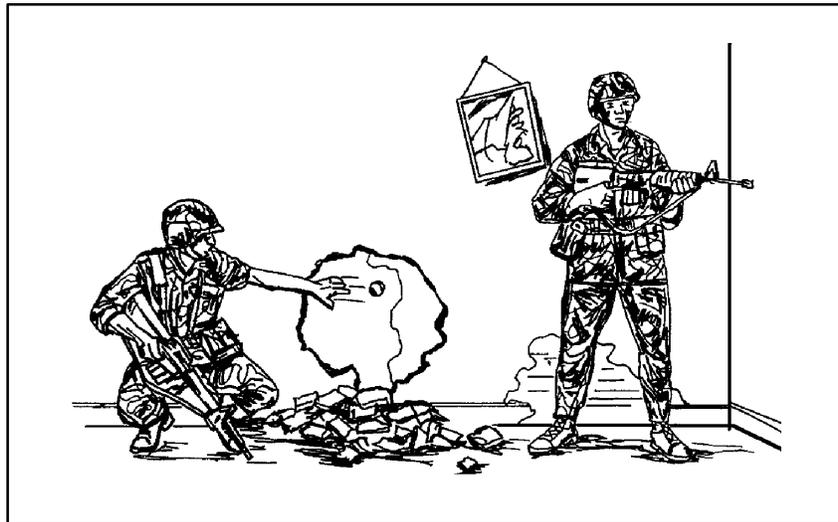


Figure A-43. Entering Through a Mousehole

23. Clearing an L-Shaped Hallway. After entering a room or building, the clearing team may encounter an L-shaped hallway that should be cleared. The following procedures are used:

- a. The clearing team finds an L-shaped hallway.
- b. Each shooter takes a dominant position.
- c. Shooter Number Two aims his weapon to cover the dead space (Figure A-44).

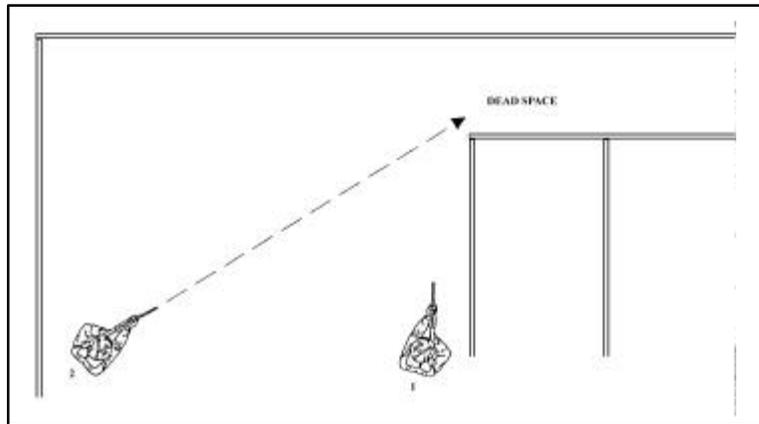


Figure A-44. Positioning To Clear an L-Shaped Hallway

d. Shooter Number Two, with his weapon covering the dead space, pries as far as possible and moves forward to increase his angle of fire further into the dead space. Shooter Number One moves accordingly with Shooter Number Two (Figure A-45).

e. Shooter Number Two stops prying just before he reaches the position where he cannot cover the dead space. Shooter Number One stops short of the hallway and goes to a kneeling position.

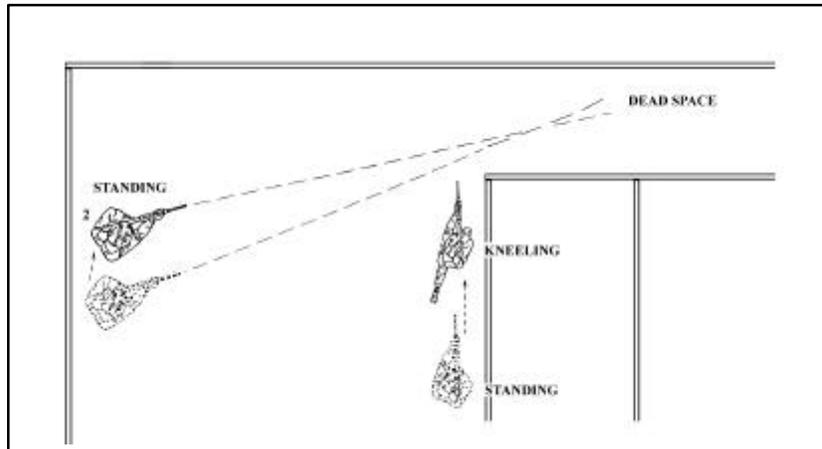


Figure A-45. Clearing an L-Shaped Hallway

f. Shooter Number One says, “**READY!**”

g. Shooter Number Two then says, “**MOVE!**” and both shooters move simultaneously to clear the hallway (Figure A-46). Shooter Number Two remains standing, and Shooter Number One remains kneeling as he pivots around the corner of the wall into the hallway.

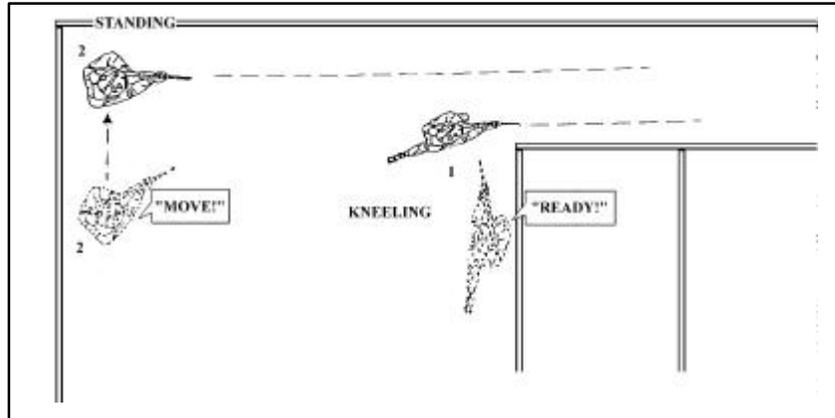


Figure A-46. Clearing an L-Shaped Hallway (Continued)

24. Clearing a T-Shaped Hallway. After entering a room or building, the clearing team may find a T-shaped hallway that should be cleared. The following procedures are used:

- a. Both shooters approach the T-shaped intersection together, piecing their individual sectors while maintaining eye-muzzle-target contact (Figure A-47).
- b. Both shooters move to dominant positions without entering the intersection.

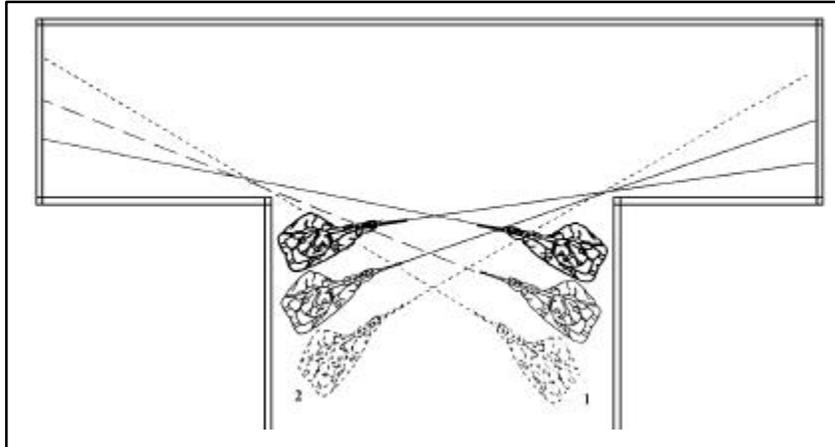


Figure A-47. Positioning To Clear a T-Shaped Hallway

- c. Shooter Number One clears his sector of fire and then says, "**READY!**" (Figure A-48).
- d. Shooter Number Two clears his sector of fire and then says, "**MOVE!**"
- e. Both shooters buttonhook into their next positions.

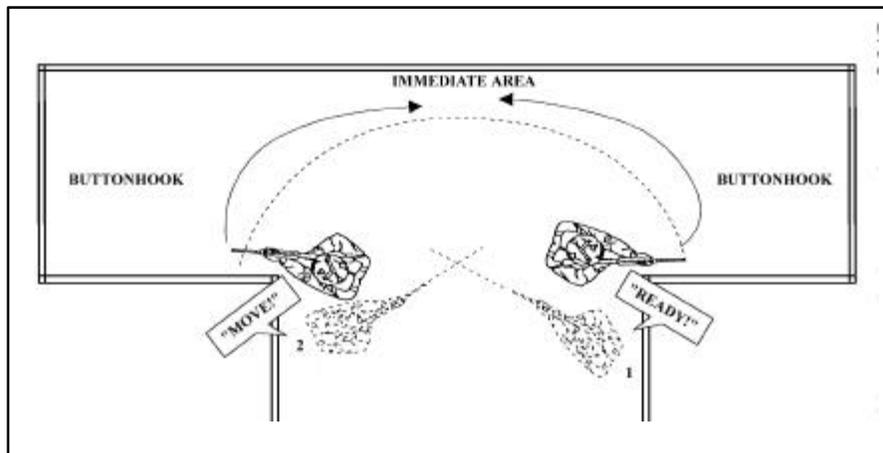


Figure A-48. Clearing a T-Shaped Hallway

f. Both shooters clear their immediate areas along their respective walls, starting from the nearest respective corner and continuing to the farthest respective corner (Figure A-49).

g. Both shooters establish dominant positions that give them control of the hallway and the doorways leading into hallways. The covering team can then be called forward to provide security while the clearing team clears one end of the hallway and associated rooms. The clearing team then clears the other end of the hallway.

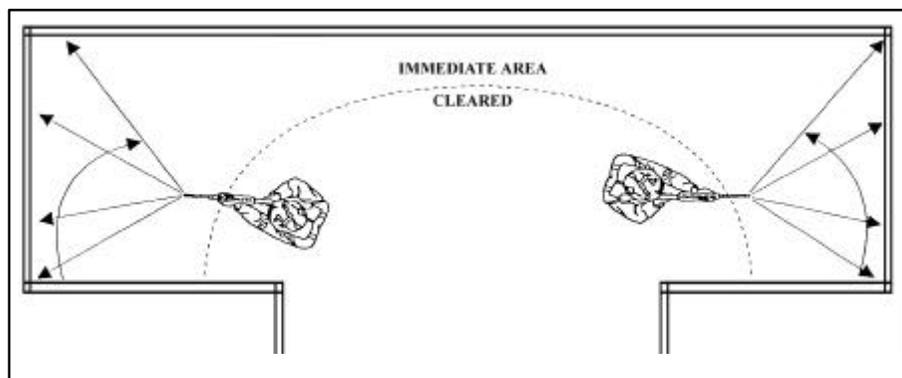


Figure A-49. Clearing a T-Shaped Hallway (Continued)

25. Clearing a Stairwell. After entering a building, the assault element may encounter stairwells. The following procedures are used:

a. Shooter Number One leads upstairs, one step ahead of Shooter Number Two (Figure A-50). Upon reaching the point just before he can be engaged from above, Shooter Number One turns around and covers overhead. From this point, Shooter Number One ascends the stairs, moving backward while covering behind and above.

b. Shooter Number Two follows Shooter Number One upstairs, one step behind and to the side of Shooter Number One. When Shooter Number One turns to cover overhead, Shooter Number Two remains oriented to the front, covering directly up the stairwell.

The clearing team's speed of movement is determined by Shooter Number One. Marines pick up as much of an area as possible before ascending each step.

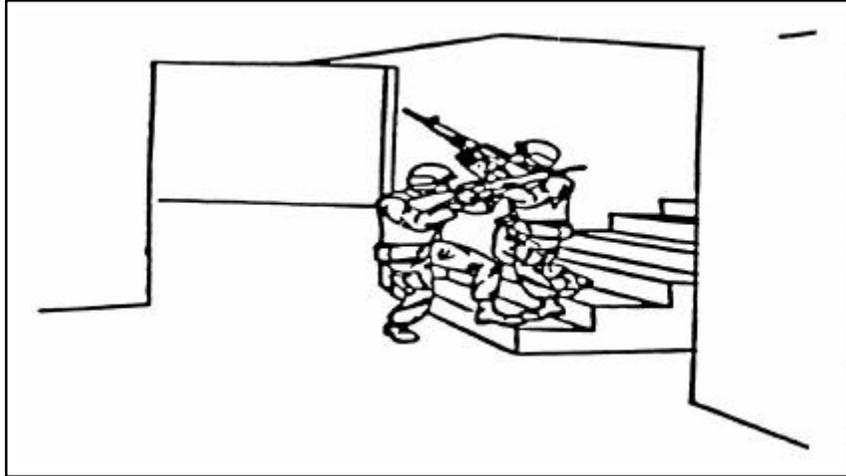


Figure A-50. Clearing a Stairwell