

Appendix C

Attacking and Clearing Buildings

Offensive operations on urbanized terrain will require Marines to attack and clear buildings.

1. Introduction. At the rifle platoon and squad level, the major offensive tasks for combat in built-up areas are attacking and clearing buildings. This involves:

- Suppressing defensive fires
- Advancing Marine assault forces
- Assaulting buildings
- Clearing buildings
- Reorganizing assault forces.

To accomplish these tasks, the assaulting unit task organizes into assault, security, and support forces or elements. (See Appendix A)

2. Requirements. There are five interrelated requirements for attacking a defended building: *fire support, movement, assault, clearing, and reorganization*. Proper application and integration of these requirements reduce casualties and hasten accomplishment of the mission. The proper integration of these requirements are determined by METT-T. For example, larger cities may have high-rise apartment buildings and industrial complexes that are separated by parking areas or parks. Increased fire support may be required to suppress and obscure enemy gunners covering the open terrain and spaces between buildings. Conversely, a built-up area with few open areas can provide numerous covered routes that may decrease fire support requirements.

3. Fire Support. Fire support necessary to advance the assault force may include:

- Suppressing and obscuring enemy gunners within the objective building(s) and adjacent structures
- Isolating the objective building(s) with fires to prevent enemy withdrawal, reinforcement, or counterattack
- Breaching walls en route to and in the objective structure
- Destroying enemy positions with direct-fire weapons

.3

- Securing cleared portions of the objective
- Providing replacements for the assault force
- Providing resupply of ammunition and explosives
- Evacuating casualties and prisoners.

a. The size of the support force is determined by the type and size of the objective building(s), whether the adjacent terrain provides open or covered approaches, and the organization and strength of enemy defenses.

b. The support force for a Marine rifle squad may consist of one fire team that could be reinforced with heavy machine guns, antitank weapons, and/or armored vehicles. In situations involving a larger assault force, a rifle platoon or company reinforced with armored vehicles, engineers, and/or artillery may be required to support the movement and assault of an adjacent platoon or company.

c. After seizing objective buildings, the assault force reorganizes and may be required to provide supporting fires for a subsequent assault. Each weapon is assigned a target or area to cover. Individual small-arms weapons place fires on likely enemy weapon positions—loopholes, windows, and roof areas. Snipers are best employed in placing accurate fire through loopholes or engaging long-range targets. M203 fires are directed through windows or loopholes.

d. AT4s and demolitions are employed to breach walls, doors, barricades, and window barriers on the ground level of structures. The tank cannon or LAV-mounted 25-mm gun engages first-floor targets and breaches walls for attacking Marines. Armored vehicle- or wheeled vehicle-mounted machine guns can engage suspected enemy positions on upper floors and in adjacent structures. In addition to destroying or weakening structures, the tank's main gun rounds cause casualties by their explosive effects and by hurling debris throughout the interior of structures.

e. NGF, artillery, and mortars should initially use time fuzes to initially clear exposed enemy personnel, weapons, OPs, and radio sites from rooftops. They should then use delayed fuze action to cause casualties among the defenders inside the structure as a result of shrapnel and falling debris. They may also provide smoke to cover the movement and assault phases of the attack. Artillery can also be used in the direct-fire mode.

f. In support of the movement and assault phases of the attack, buildings can be attacked by fixed-wing aircraft or by attack helicopters.

4. Movement. The assault force minimizes the effects of enemy defensive fires during movement by:

- Using covered routes
- Moving after defensive fires have been suppressed or obscured
- Moving at night or during other periods of reduced visibility
- Selecting routes that will not mask friendly suppressive fires
- Crossing open areas (e.g., streets and spaces between buildings) quickly under the concealment of smoke and suppressive fires
- Moving on rooftops that are not covered by enemy direct fires.

a. The requirement for speed may dictate movement through streets and alleys without clearing all buildings. When moving in this manner, the maneuver force should employ infantry to lead the column, and supported by AAVs, LAVs, wheeled vehicle-mounted machine guns, or tanks following.

b. Marines should move along each side of a street with the leading squad staying abreast of armored vehicles. When not accompanied by armored vehicles, Marines move in a single file along one side of the street under cover of fires from supporting weapons. Individual Marines should be detailed to observe and cover a specific area, such as second-floor windows on the opposite side of the street.

5. Assault. Assault forces quickly and violently execute their assault and subsequent clearing operations. Momentum is maintained to prevent the enemy from organizing a more determined resistance on other floors or in other rooms. Small-unit leaders should keep the assault force moving without allowing the operation to become disorganized.

a. An assault in a built-up area involves the elementary skills of close combat. Leaders must:

- Be trained in the required techniques to defeat the enemy in a face-to-face encounter
- Keep themselves in excellent physical condition
- Have confidence in their abilities and those of their unit.

b. The composition of the assault force will vary depending on METT-T; however, its basic organization at the squad level consists of two assault elements carrying a fighting load of equipment and as much ammunition as possible, especially grenades.

6. Clearing. Entering at the top and fighting downward is the preferred method of clearing a building. Clearing a building is easier from an upper story because gravity and building construction become assets to the assault elements when throwing hand grenades and moving from floor to floor. However, this method is only feasible when access to an upper floor or

.3

rooftop can be gained from the windows or roofs of adjoining buildings and assault elements can be transported to the rooftops by helicopter (Figure C-1). Helicopters should land only on those buildings that have special heliports or parking garages on the roofs. When these are unavailable, Marines can rappel or fastrope onto the roof or dismount as the helicopter hovers a few feet above the roof. Assault elements then breach the roof or common walls with explosives and use ropes to enter the lower floors. Stairs are guarded by a covering team or security force when not in use to protect the assault force from a flank attack.

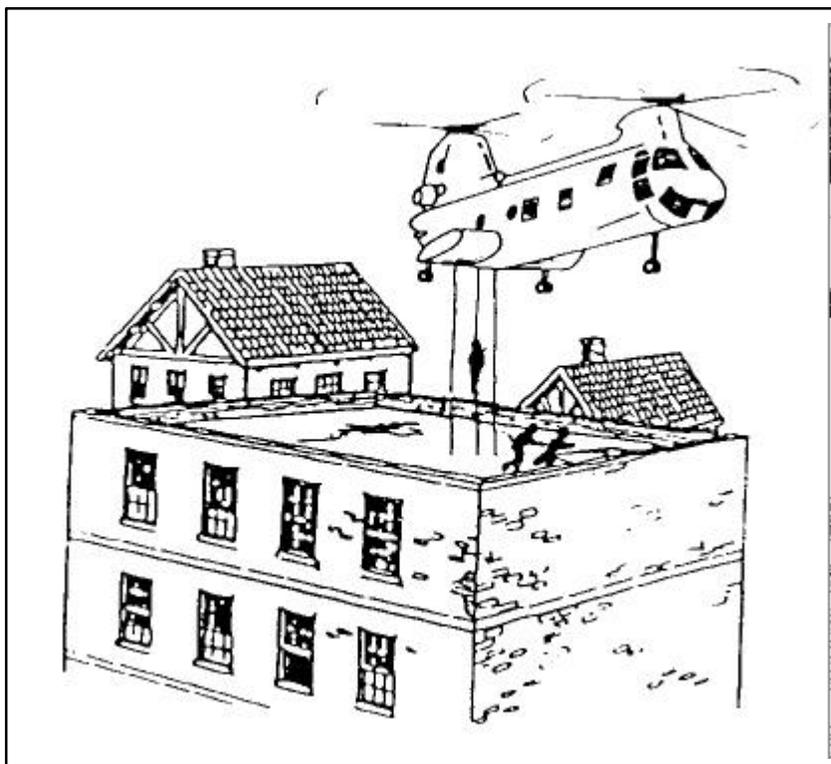


Figure C-1. Helicopters Used To Clear Buildings

- a.** Although the top-to-bottom method is preferred for clearing a building, assaulting the bottom floor and clearing upward is a common method. When using this technique, the assault force closes on the flank(s) or rear of the building. It then clears each room on the ground floor and then, moving upward, begin a systematic clearance of the remaining floors.
- b.** Entry can be gained through walls breached by explosives or gunfire. Assault elements should avoid windows and doors because they are usually covered by fire or boobytrapped. If tanks are attached to the company, they can breach the wall by firing their main gun (Figure C-2).

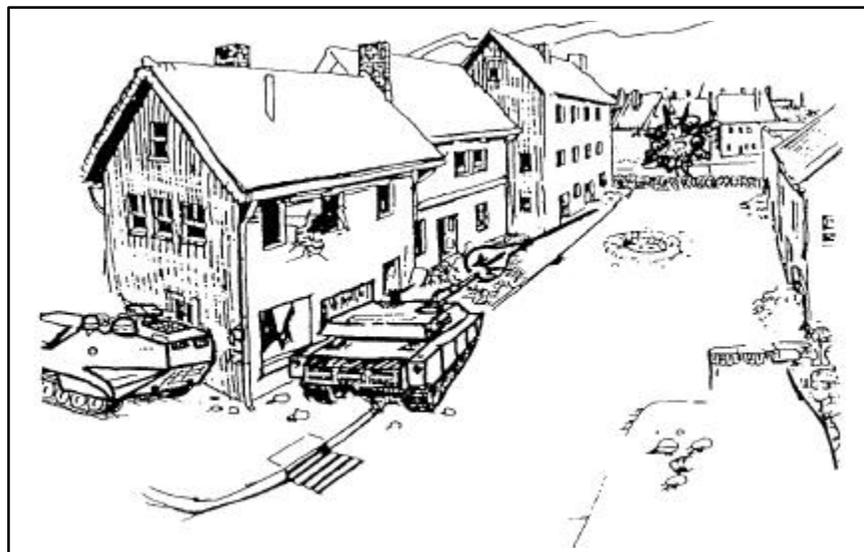


Figure C-2. Main Gun Used To Breach Exterior

c. Shortly before the assault, suppressive fires on the objective should be increased until masked by the advancing assault force. Once masked, fires are shifted to upper windows and continued until the assault force has entered the building. At that time, fires are shifted to adjacent buildings to prevent enemy withdrawal or reinforcement.

d. Hand grenades should be used to clear the space before assault element members enter through a breached wall. Immediately after the explosion, the assault element clearing team enters and uses three round bursts to fire into the interior of the room, concentrating on areas that are possible enemy positions.

e. Once inside the building, the assault force must cover staircases and seize rooms that overlook approaches to the building. These actions are required to isolate enemy forces within the building and to prevent reinforcement. Assault elements should clear each ground floor room and then the basement. Sequence for the assault is that:

(1) The assault force leader determines which room(s) to clear first.

(2) The support force provides suppressive fire while the assault force systematically clears the building. It also provides suppressive fire on adjacent buildings to prevent enemy reinforcements or withdrawal. The support force destroys any enemy trying to exit the building.

(3) The security force isolates the immediate area.

(4) After assault elements establish a foothold in the building, the assault force leader proceeds with the systematic clearing of the building.

f. When clearing a building from the top floor down, assault forces should gain entrance through a common wall or the roof of an adjoining building (Figure C-3). Demolition charges are used to breach the wall and gain entrance to the top floor. Access to lower floors and rooms may be gained by breaching holes in the floor and having the Marines jump or slide down ropes to the lower floors. Stairs can be used if they are first cleared.

g. When using the top-to-bottom method of clearing, requirements remain the same as for other methods. After the floor is breached to gain access to a lower floor, a grenade is allowed to cook-off and is dropped to the lower room. A Marine then sprays the lower room with gunfire using three-round bursts and drops through the mousehole.

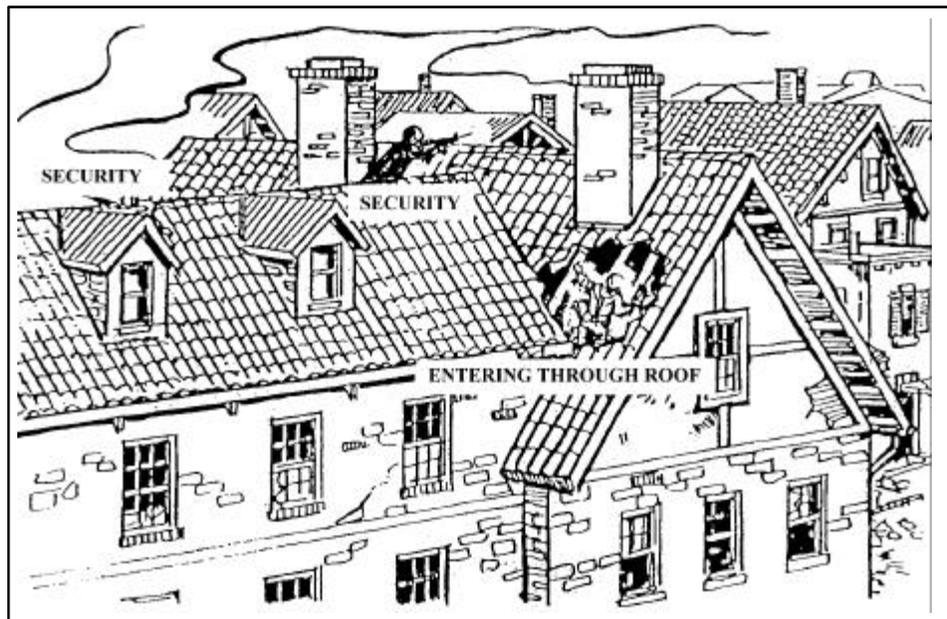


Figure C-3. Upper Floors Secured

h. Marines should avoid predictability when entering and clearing rooms. They should vary entry through doors and mouseholes to keep the enemy off guard (Figure C-4). As rooms are cleared, doors should be left open, and a predetermined mark (cloth, tape, spray paint) should be placed on the doorjamb or over the door, as established by unit SOPs.

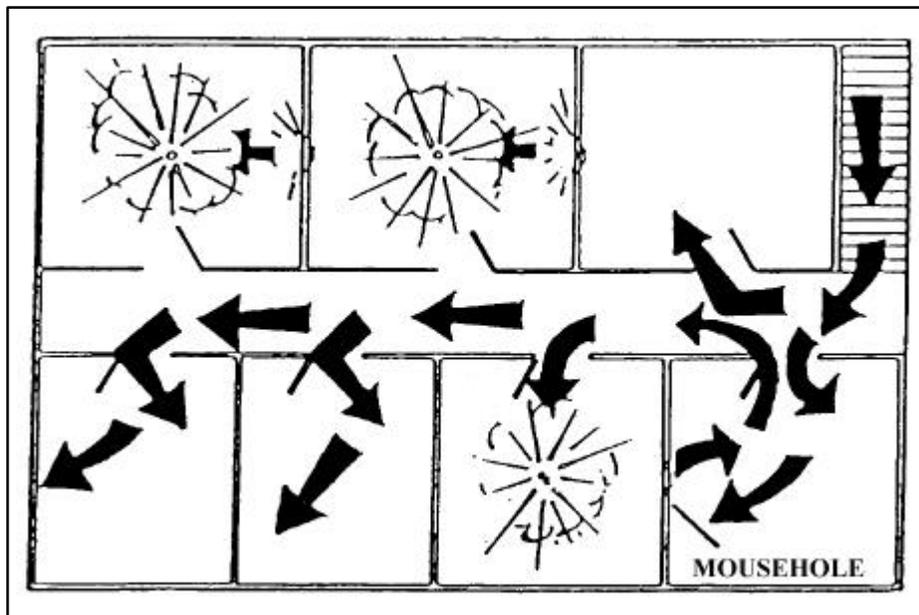


Figure C-4. Varying Techniques for Clearing Rooms

- i. If there is a basement, it should be cleared as soon as possible, preferably at the same time as the ground floor. The procedures for clearing a basement are the same as for any room or floor. However, basements often contain entrances to tunnels such as sewers and communications cable tunnels. These should be cleared and secured to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into cleared areas.
- j. Types of buildings that may be cleared include brick buildings and houses, box-wall buildings, heavy-clad framed buildings, and light-clad framed buildings.

(1) Brick Buildings and Houses. The best way to enter a brick building is to blow a breaching hole in the side by using a tank firing HEAT ammunition (Figure C-5). If tanks are not available, a door or window in the rear of the building usually provides better cover and concealment for entry than one in the front. If there is enough cover and concealment, the assault force should enter the rear of the building at an upper level by using a fire escape or grappling hook.

Brick houses usually have similar floor plans on each floor (Figure C-6); therefore, ground floors are cleared the same way as upper floors.

Converely, the floor plans in larger brick buildings typically are different on ground-floor levels than on upper levels (Figure C-7).

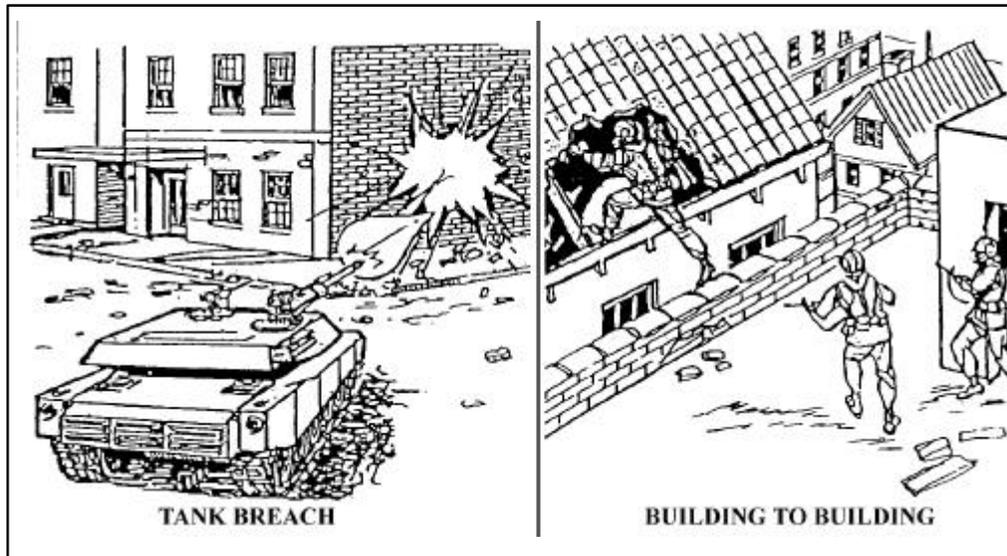


Figure C-5. Entering a Brick Building

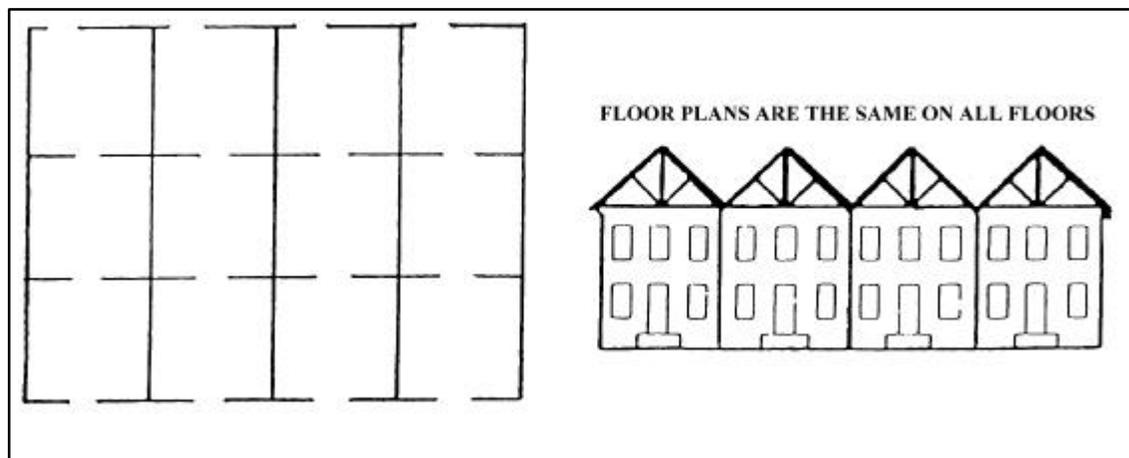


Figure C-6. Brick Houses Have Similar Floor Plans

To clear from building to building, the best method is to move from rooftop to rooftop because the roofs of brick buildings are usually easy to breach. The walls between buildings are at least three bricks thick (total of six bricks between buildings) and require large quantities of demolitions to breach. Walls are normally easier to breach on an upper floor than on a lower floor because the walls are thinner on upper floors. If rooftops are covered by fire and there are not enough demolitions to breach walls between buildings, clearing from rear to rear of buildings is safer than clearing from front to front.

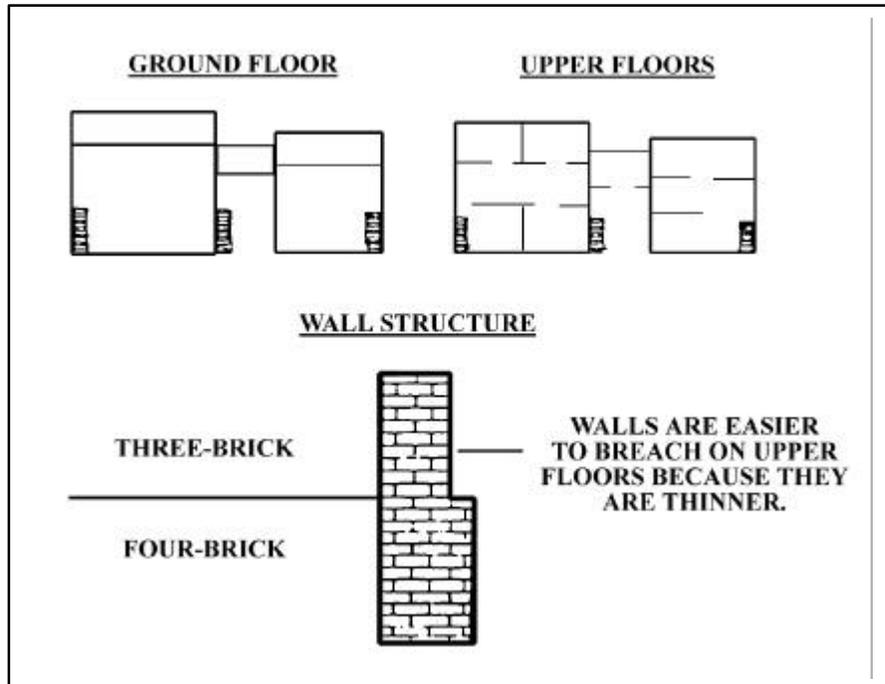


Figure C-7. Floor Plans of Brick Buildings

(2) **Box-Wall Buildings.** Box-wall buildings often have reinforced concrete walls (Figure C-8), which are difficult to breach because of reinforcing bars. Therefore, the best way to enter is to blow down the door or to blow in one of the side windows. The floor plans of these buildings are predictable; clearing rooms is usually done from one main hallway. Interior walls are also constructed of reinforced concrete and are difficult to breach. The stairways at the ends of the building must also be secured during clearing.

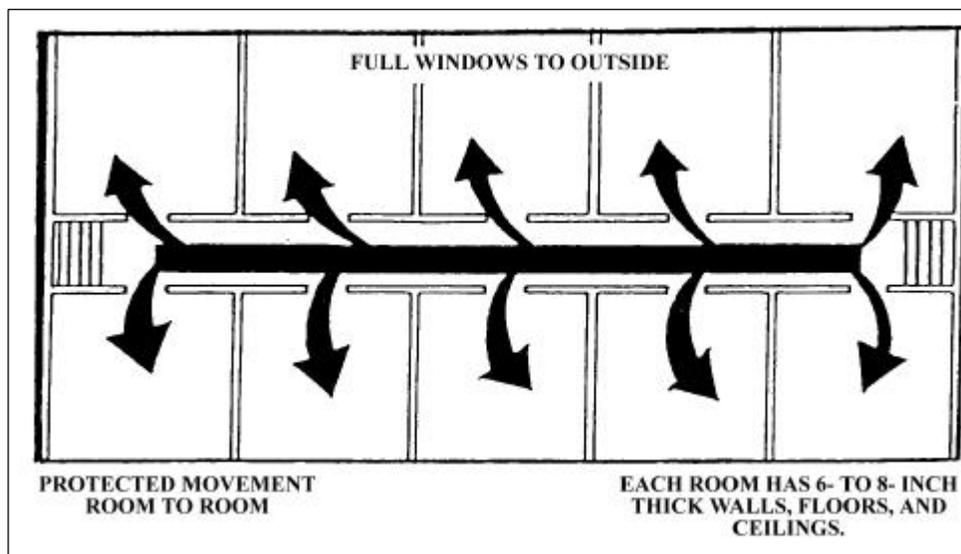


Figure C-8. Box-Wall Buildings

.3

(3) **Heavy-Clad Framed Buildings.** Tanks can be used to breach a hole in heavy-clad framed buildings. Their floor plans are normally oriented around a stairway or elevator. This must be secured during clearing (Figure C-9). The interior walls of these buildings can be breached, although they may require use of demolitions.

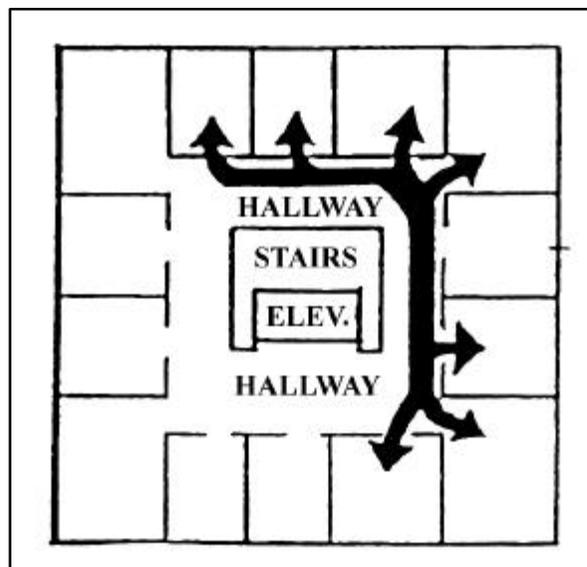


Figure C-9. Heavy-Clad Framed Buildings

(4) **Light-Clad Framed Buildings.** Light-clad framed buildings (Figure C-10), can be cleared in the same manner as heavy-clad buildings. Secure the central stairway and clear in a circular pattern. Walls are usually thin enough to be breached with an ax.

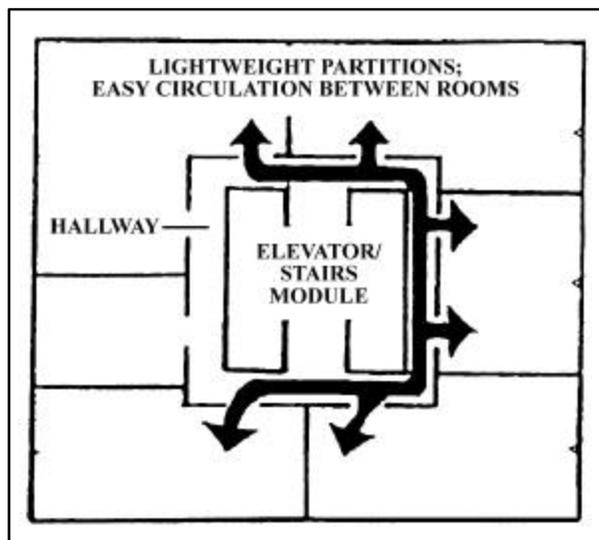


Figure C-10. Light-Clad Framed Buildings

7. **Consolidation and Reorganization.** Consolidation and reorganization of the assault force in a cleared building must be accomplished quickly to repel enemy counterattacks and to prevent the

enemy from infiltrating back into the cleared building. After securing a floor (bottom, middle, or top), selected members of the assault force are assigned to cover potential enemy counterattack routes to the building. Those sentinels alert the assault force and place a heavy volume of fire on enemy forces approaching the building. They should cover:

- Enemy mouseholes between adjacent buildings
- Covered routes to the building
- Underground routes into the basement
- Approaches over adjoining roofs.

As the remainder of the assault force completes search requirements, defensive positions are assigned and tasks are accomplished as established by the priorities of work in the defense. The following actions may then be taken:

- Resupplying and redistributing ammunition
- Marking the building to indicate to friendly forces that the building has been cleared
- Assuming an overwatch mission and supporting an assault on another building
- Treating and evacuating wounded personnel
- Further developing a defensive position if the building is to be occupied for any period.