

Section III

Rifle Company Operations

2301. Overview. This section addresses some of the operations the infantry battalion could assign to the rifle company in MOUT. For our focus, the rifle company is a task-organized and/or reinforced unit. Company operations will normally be conducted as part of a larger battalion operation.

2302. Attacking within a Built-up Area. Attacking within a built-up area is a task the rifle company may be assigned (Figure 2-14). This task involves the isolation, attack, and clearing of a specified block of structures. It is usually conducted in conjunction with adjacent friendly attacks or security operations. (See Appendix A.)

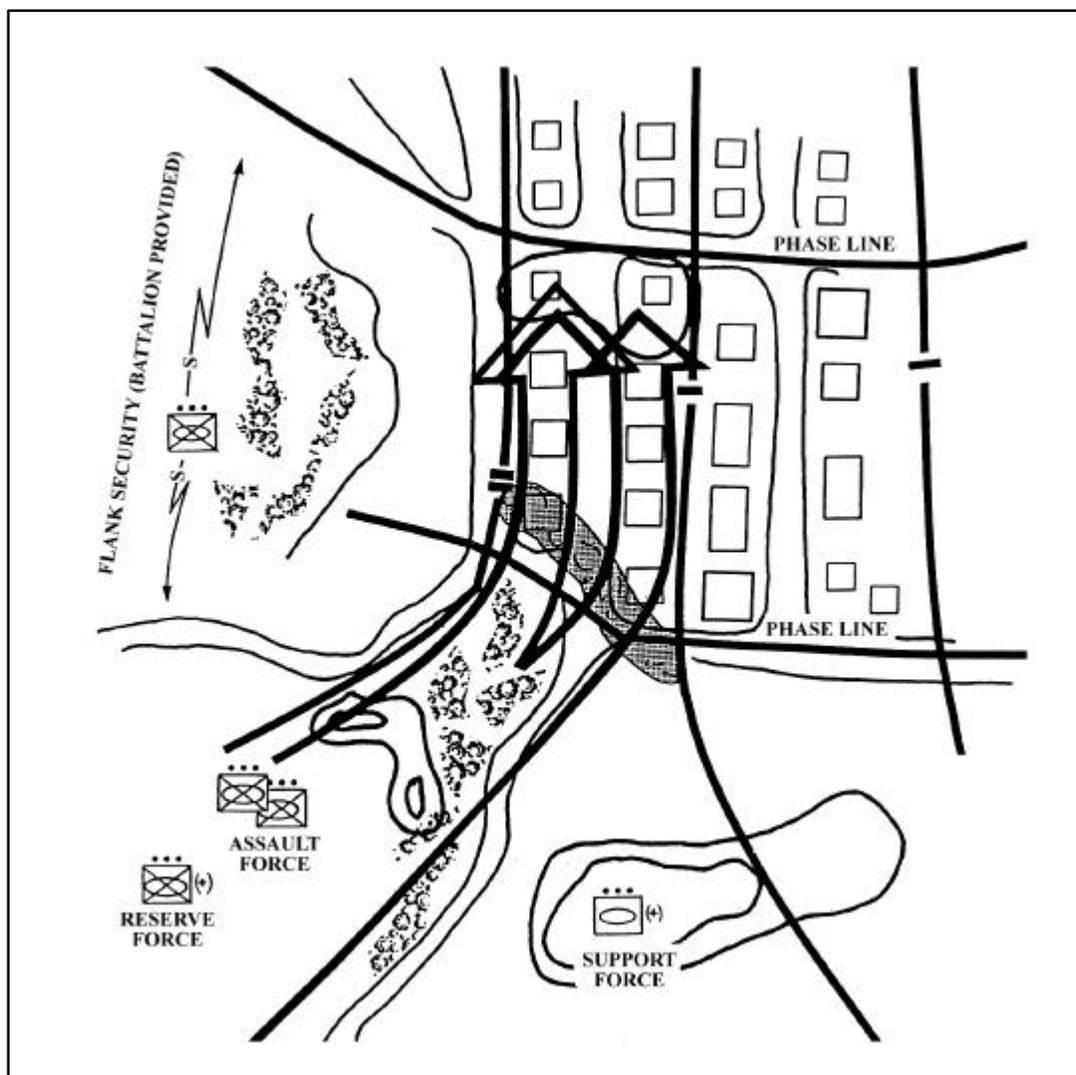


Figure 2-14. Company Attack of a Block

Before an assault, the company commander employs smoke to conceal the movements of assaulting platoons. He provides suppression fires to their flanks with direct-fire weapons. The battalion may provide additional security forces for flank protection.

(1) Concealed by smoke and supported by direct-fire weapons, an assaulting platoon attacks the first isolated building. The platoon must close on the building quickly while the enemy is still stunned by supporting fire. The company commander must closely coordinate the assault with supporting fire so that the fire is shifted at the last possible moment.

(2) The platoons continue to seize each building until the block is cleared. (See Appendix C for a detailed discussion on clearing of buildings.) After seizing the block, the company consolidates and reorganizes to repel a counterattack or to continue the attack.

The company commander directs platoon attacks on a designated front supported by direct and indirect fires. Success depends on isolating the enemy positions (which often become platoon objectives), suppressing enemy weapons, securing a foothold in the block, and systematically clearing the block's buildings room by room.

During the attack of a block, the company is usually task organized usually into four elements: *assault*, *support*, *security*, and *reserve*. The assault force is organized to conduct the actual assault of the objective. The support force provides direct- and/or indirect-fire support. The security force isolates the objective area and provides security. The reserve is organized, equipped, and positioned to exploit success. For example:

(1) The rifle company fighting in the outskirts of a city might organize as follows:

- Assault force: two platoons reinforced with the assault section
- Support force: armored vehicles, mechanized squad, and other direct- and indirect-fire weapons
- Security force: one reinforced squad.
- Reserve: mechanized platoon (-) reinforced.

(2) In a core or core periphery area (See Chapter 1), that same company might be organized as follows:

- Assault force: one rifle platoon, reinforced with engineers, SMAWs, Dragons, and a tank section (two tanks) per platoon
- Support force: One squad with direct- and indirect-fire weapons

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- Security force: one rifle platoon (-)
- Reserve: one rifle platoon, mechanized.

c. Armored vehicles, machine guns, and other direct-fire weapons under the company commander's control are assigned to isolate the objective and provide suppressive fires from covered positions. These weapons should not be fired for prolonged periods from one position. The gunners should use a series of positions and displace from one to another to gain better fields of fire and to avoid being targeted by the enemy. Direct-fire support tasks are assigned as follows:

- Machine guns fire along streets and into windows, doors, alleys, etc.; however, innovative use of direct fire weapons can be key in MOUT
- Tanks, ATGMs, and AT4s fire at enemy tanks and other armored vehicles.
- SMAWs can be used to make entrances in buildings and destroy identified bunker/fighting positions.
- Tanks can fire at targets protected by walls, make entrances in buildings, and engage enemy armored vehicles with their main gun and other targets with their machine guns.
- Riflemen engage targets of opportunity.

2303. Attack of an Enemy Outpost. A motorized or mechanized force may encounter enemy outposts, checkpoints, or strongpoints. In a hasty attack on an enemy outpost, the company commander makes a quick assessment based on the mission and situation, and then reacts in accordance with the commander's intent. If not able to bypass an enemy outpost, he may have to attack and reduce it.

The company occupies positions of advantage. The tanks or other armored vehicles support the dismounted infantry in the attack by assuming support-by-fire positions from which they can fire on the outpost, prevent the enemy from escaping, and destroy any reinforcements.

The infantry platoons dismount and move to engage the enemy (Figure 2-15). They should attack from a covered route to hit the outpost at a vulnerable point. As the platoons approach the outpost, smoke may be employed to screen their movement, and supporting fires are shifted. After platoons close on the outpost, they clear the buildings quickly and consolidate. The company is then ready to continue operations.

2304. Seizure of a Traffic Circle or Major Intersection. A company may have to seize a traffic circle or major road or traffic intersection (Figure 2-16 on page 2-34). This operation consists of seizing the buildings adjacent to the traffic circle or intersection while bringing direct-fire weapons into position to fire on likely avenues of approach.

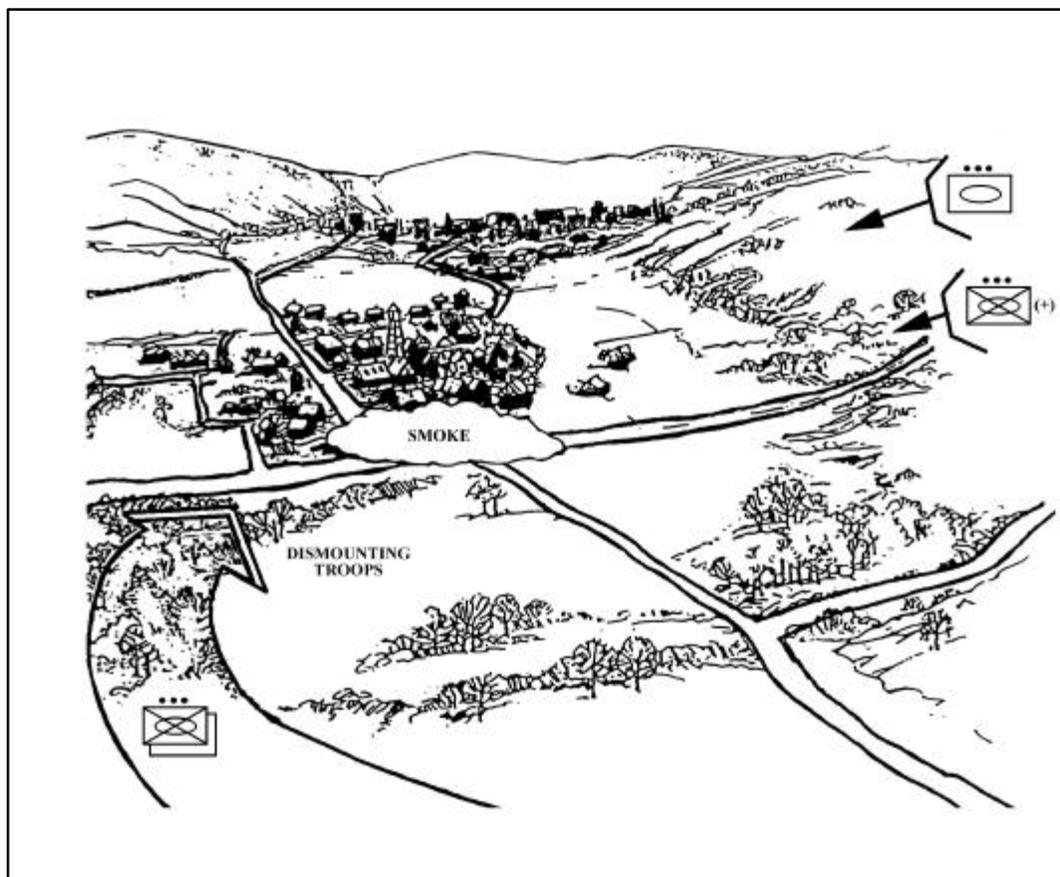


Figure 2-15. Hasty Attack of an Enemy Outpost

The company commander takes the following actions to seize a traffic circle or major intersection:

- Isolate the objective area.
- Seize and clear the buildings overlooking the traffic circle or major intersection under cover of direct-fire weapons.
- Secure the flanks against enemy attack.
- Consolidate and prepare for counterattack.

2305. Seizure of Key Terrain. The seizure of certain key terrain such as a bridge, intersection, facility, or structure may be critical to the success of an operation. Seizing key terrain for friendly use is a possible mission for a rifle company.

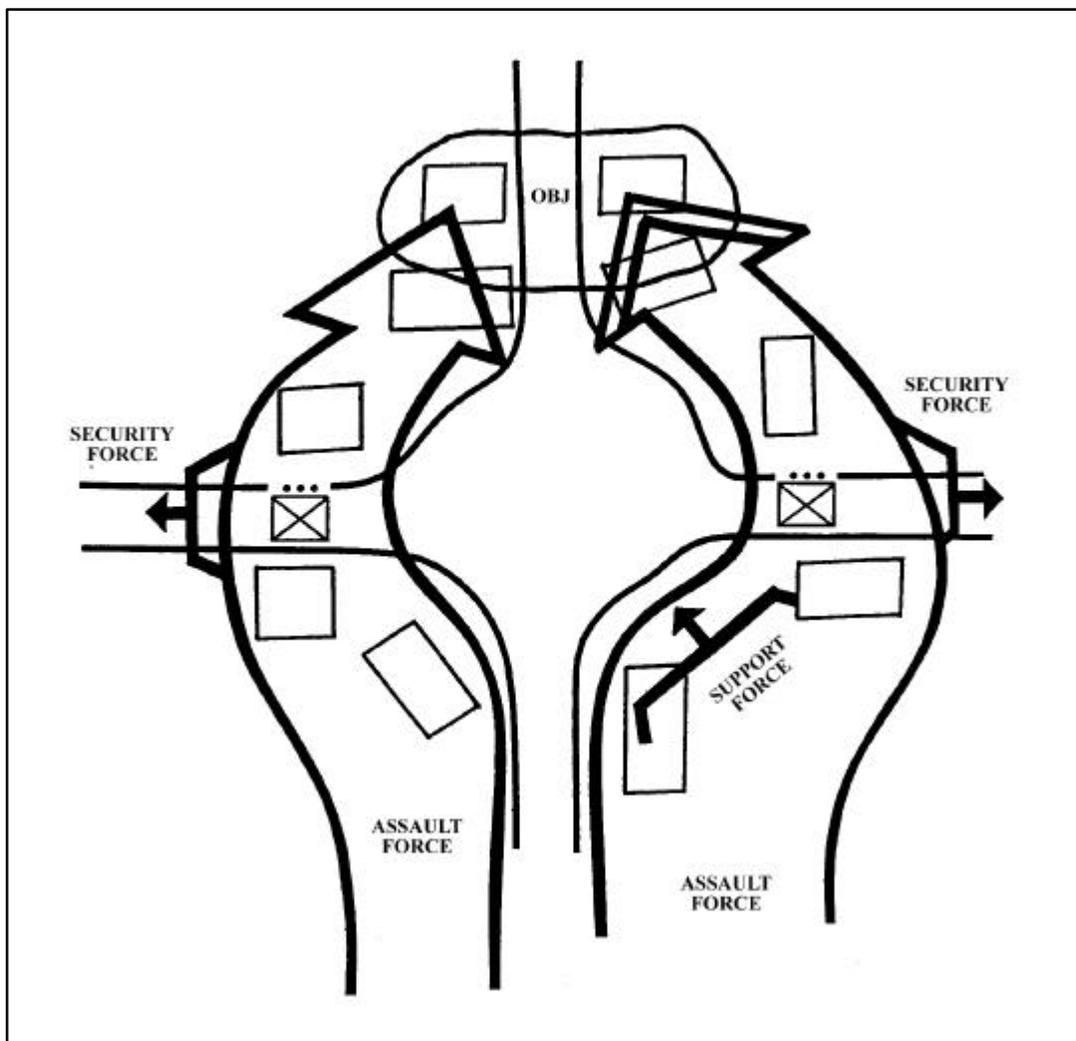


Figure 2-16. Seizure of a Traffic Circle or Major Intersection

To seize a bridge, a company should:

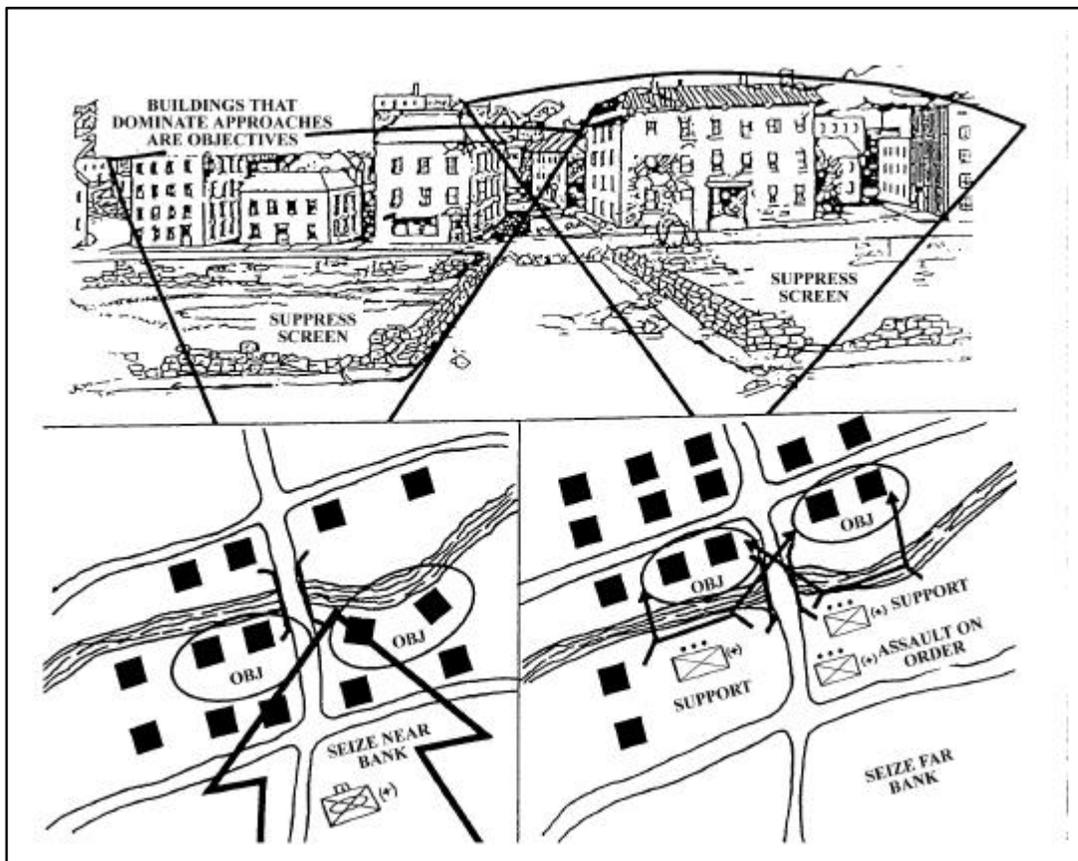
- Clear the buildings on the *near bank* that provide clear fields of fire for supporting weapons
- Suppress enemy weapons on the *far bank*
- Use screening smoke to obscure enemy observation
- Clear the buildings on the *far bank* that dominate the bridge
- Secure a perimeter around the bridge so that the engineers can clear obstacles or remove demolitions from the bridge.

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The commander determines which buildings dominate the approaches to the bridge. Buildings that permit him to employ AT4s, ATGMs, machine guns, and riflemen are cleared. Supporting fire prevents the enemy from reinforcing units on the far bank. Enemy positions that can fire directly onto the bridge should be destroyed first. The company's forward observer (FO) should plan artillery and mortar fires to suppress the enemy's positions on the far bank.

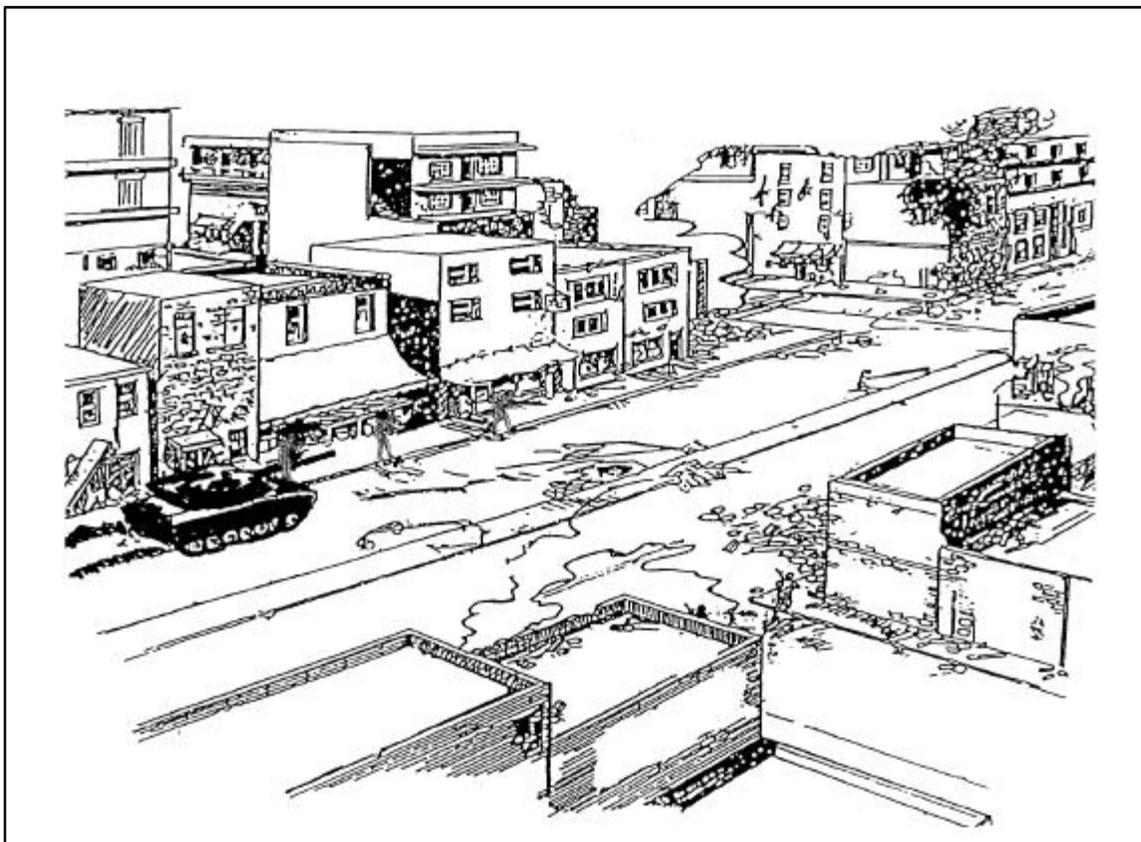
The objectives of the assaulting platoons are buildings that dominate the far side of the bridge. One or two platoons are supported by the remainder of the company and assault across the bridge. Supporting fires are shifted and the infantry start clearing buildings. The assault continues until all the buildings in the objective area are cleared.

At this point, the engineers clear the bridge and its approaches of all mines, demolitions, and obstacles. The company commander may expand his perimeter to prepare for counterattack. Once



the bridge is cleared, the armored vehicles are brought across to the far bank (Figure 2-17).

Figure 2-17. Seizure of a Bridge



2306. Movement to Contact. A rifle company may conduct a movement to contact along a road. Similarly, the company may have to reconnoiter such a route to prepare for a battalion attack. This type of mission can best be accomplished by a mechanized company with appropriate attachments. (Figure 2-18 on page 2-36).

Figure 2-18. Movement to Contact Along a Highway (Commercial Ribbon)

The speed of movement depends on the mission, terrain, and enemy situation. In open areas where rapid movement is possible, tanks should lead. In close terrain, the infantry may lead while being overwatched by the tanks. Artillery fire should be planned along the route. Engineers may accompany the lead platoon on the main route to help clear obstacles and mines as they may be encountered. Between key terrain, when contact is not likely, the company remains on their vehicles. At key terrain or when enemy contact is likely, the company moves on foot to clear enemy positions or to secure the key terrain. Armored vehicles support the infantry.