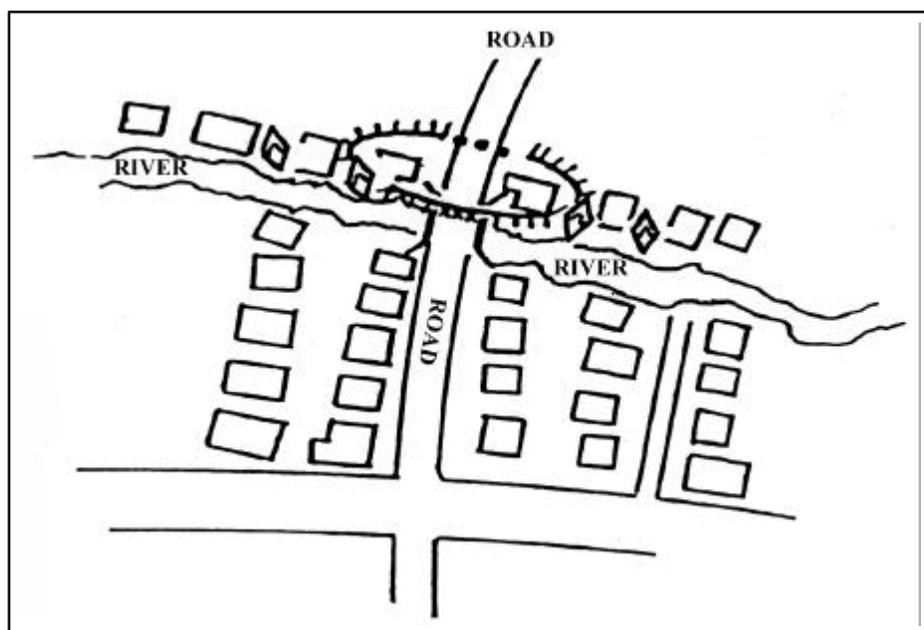


## Section IV

### Rifle Platoon Operations

This section discusses some missions the rifle company might assign to a rifle platoon.

**3401. Defense of a Strongpoint.** A rifle platoon may be given the mission to provide or conduct the strongpoint defense of a building, part of a building, or a group of small buildings (Figure 3-15). The rifle platoon's defense is normally integrated into the rifle company's defense. The rifle platoon must keep the enemy from gaining a foothold in its assigned buildings. It makes the best use of its weapons and supporting fires, organizes all-around defense, and counterattacks or calls for a rifle company counterattack to eject an enemy that has a foothold. The platoon leader analyzes his defensive sector to recommend to the company commander the best use of obstacles and supporting fires. (See Appendices B and D.)



**Figure 3-15. Defense of a Strongpoint**

- a. The rifle platoon should be organized into a series of firing positions located to cover avenues of approach, cover obstacles, and provide mutual support. Snipers may be located on the upper floors of the buildings. Unengaged units should be ready to counterattack, fight fires, or reinforce other elements of the rifle platoon.
- b. Depending on the length of the mission, the rifle platoon should have available:
  - Pioneer equipment (axes, shovels, hammers, picket pounders)

- Barrier material (barbed wire, sandbags)
- Munitions (especially grenades)
- Food and water
- Medical supplies
- Firefighting equipment.

**3402. Defense Against Armor.** Urbanized terrain is well suited to an infantry's defense against mechanized infantry and armored forces. Armored forces will usually avoid built-up areas but may be forced to pass through them.

**a.** Built-up areas have certain aspects that favor infantry antiarmor operations.

(1) Buildings provide cover and concealment for defending infantry.

(2) The streets restrict armor maneuver, fields of fire, and communications, thereby reducing the enemy's ability to reinforce.

(3) Rubble in the streets can be used to block enemy vehicles, conceal mines, and cover and conceal defending infantry.

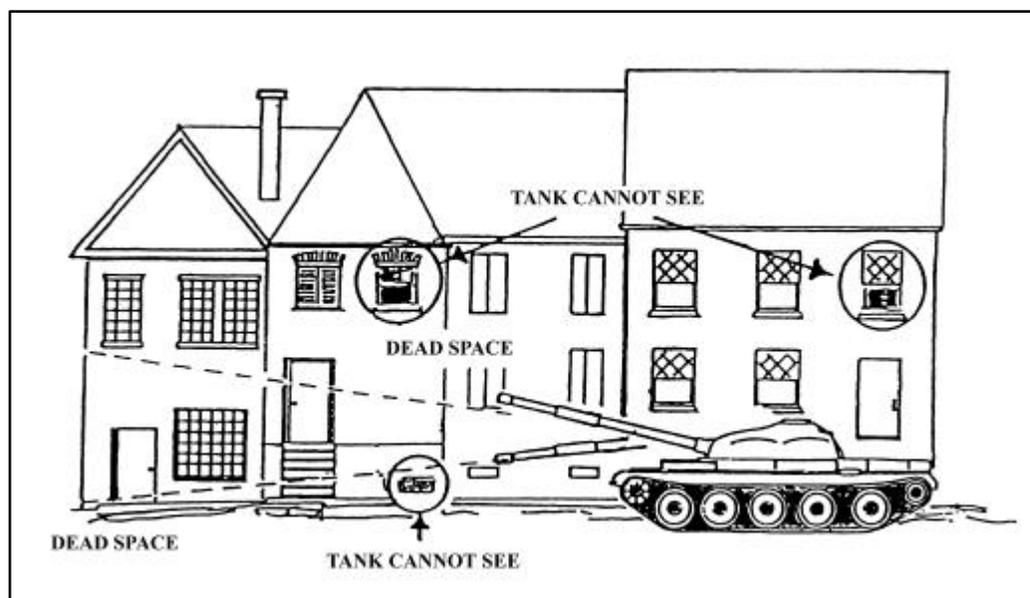
(4) Rooftops, alleys, and upper floors provide good positions for flanking and overhead fire.

(5) Sewers, storm drains, and subways provide underground routes for infantry forces.

**b.** To prepare for antiarmor operations, a platoon should:

(1) **Choose a Good Engagement Area.** The best way for infantrymen to engage tanks is one at a time so that they can destroy one tank without being vulnerable to the fires of another. Good engagement areas include narrow streets, turns in the road, "T" intersections, bridges, tunnels, split-level roads, and rubble areas. Less obvious locations can also be created by using demolitions or mines to create obstacles.

(2) **Select Good Weapons Positions.** The best weapons positions are places where the tank is weakest (tank deadspace) and the infantry is most protected. Forcing tanks to button up greatly reduces their ability to see and fire on close-in street and overhead targets. Figure 3-16 (on page 3-38) shows close-in tank weapon vision and engagement limitations (tank buttoned up) at street and overhead levels.



**Figure 3-16. Close-in Tank Limitations at Street and Overhead Levels**

**(3) Assign Target Reference Points and Select Method of Engagement.** After selecting the weapons positions, target reference points should be assigned to ensure adequate coverage and control fires. The target reference points should be clearly visible through the gunner's sights and should be relatively resistant to battle damage (for example, large buildings or bridge abutments, but not trees or cars). The three types of antiarmor engagement techniques are frontal, crossfire, and depth. Frontal fire is the least preferred because it exposes the gunner and it attacks the tank where the armor is the thickest. (For more information on target engagement techniques, see MCWP 3-15X *Antiarmor Operations*.)

Infantry forces should fire at tanks on the flanks and rear from ground level or at the top of tanks from an elevated position. A suitable antiarmor defense might be set up as shown in Figure 3-17. For a safe engagement from an elevated position, Marines should allow the tank to approach to a range three times the elevation of the weapons. However, engagement at longer ranges risks counterfire because the attacking weapon's position will not be in the tank's overhead dead space.

**(4) Coordinate Target Engagement.** Tanks are more vulnerable to infantry operations when they are buttoned up. The first task is to compel the tanks to button up by using direct and indirect fire. The next task is to coordinate the fires of the antitank weapons so that all targets in the engagement area are attacked simultaneously (Figure 3-18).

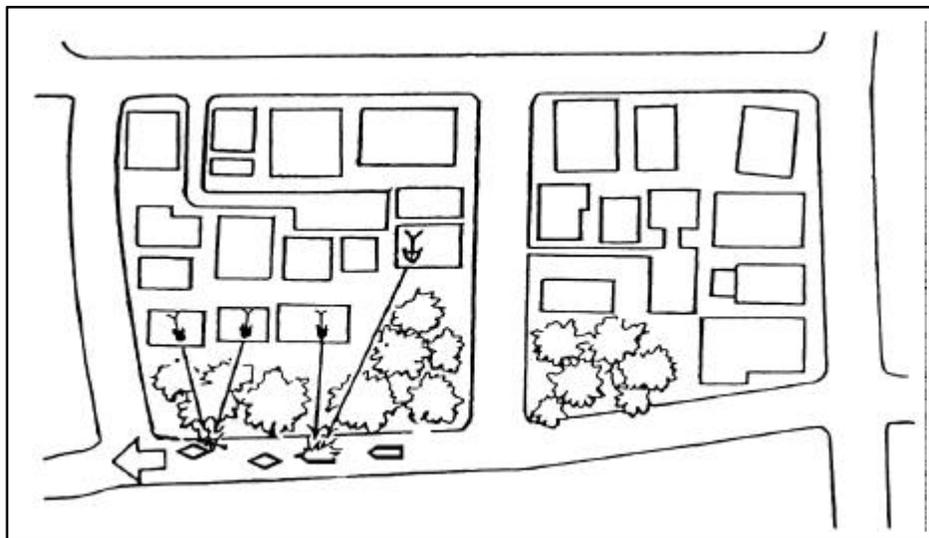


Figure 3-17. A Rifle Platoon's Antiarmor Defense

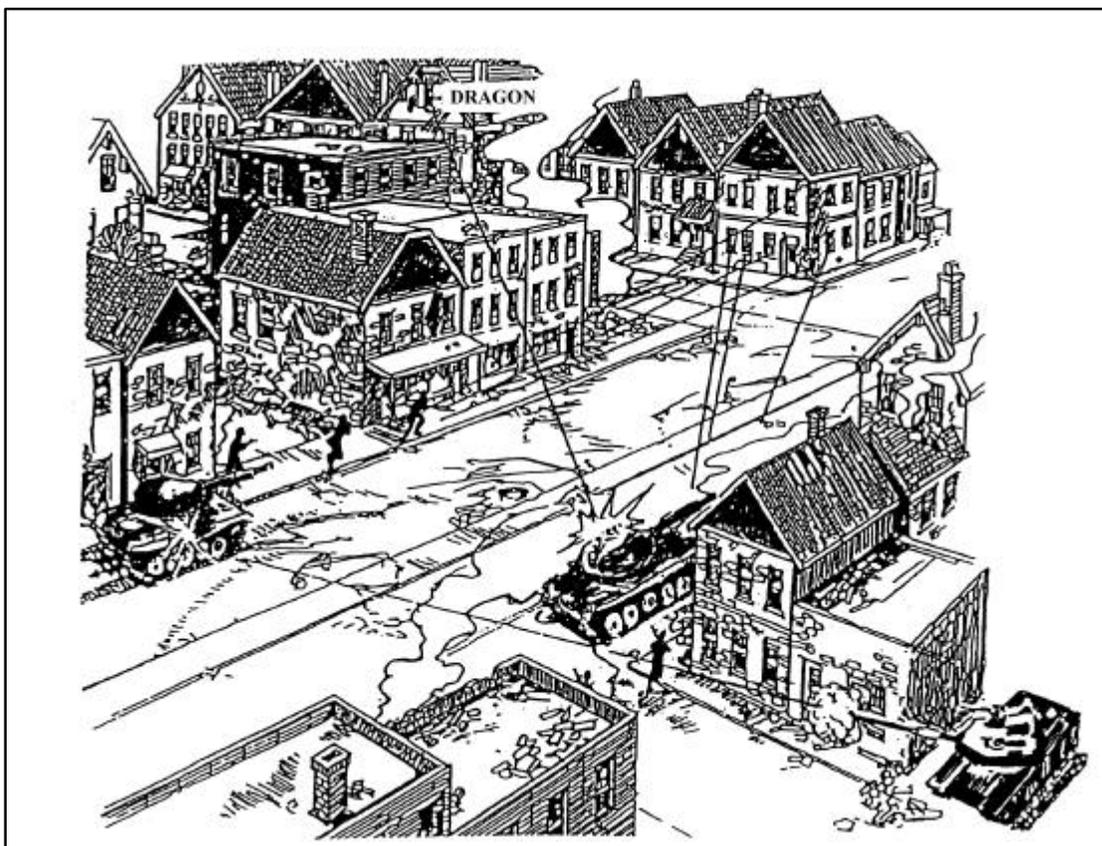


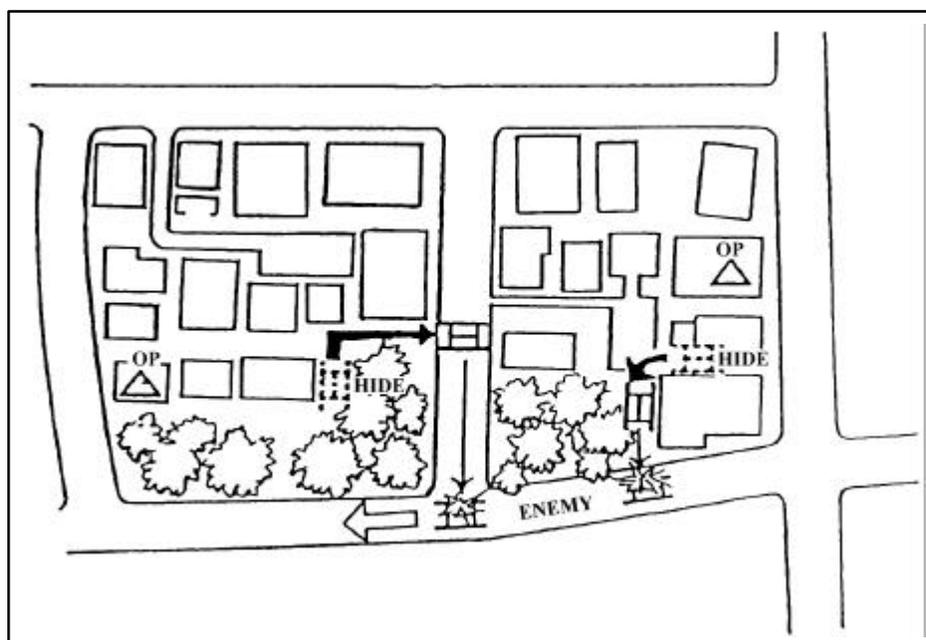
Figure 3-18. Coordinated Antiarmor Ambush

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c. Infantry often accompany armored vehicles in built-up areas to provide them with close-in protection. Antiarmor weapons should be supported by an effective antipersonnel defense.

d. At a planned signal (for example, the detonation of a mine), all targets in the engagement area are attacked at the same time. If that is not possible, then the most dangerous target should be engaged first. Although tanks present the greatest threat, BMPs are also dangerous because their infantry can dismount and destroy friendly antiarmor positions. Rubble and mines should be used to reduce target mobility so that a target's time in the engagement area is increased.

**3403. Conduct of an Armored Ambush.** A rifle company can use an attached tank platoon to conduct an armored ambush (Figure 3-19). The tank platoon should be reinforced with infantry.



**Figure 3-19. Armored Ambush**

a. An armored ambush requires maneuver on obstacle-free roads. Obstacles outside the ambush area can be used to canalize and delay the enemy.

b. Ambushing tanks should hide approximately 1,000 meters from the expected enemy avenue of approach. A security post, located at a chokepoint, observes and reports the approach, speed, security posture, and activity of the enemy. When the enemy is reported at a trigger point or target reference point, the tank platoon leader orders the ambush.

c. The tanks move quickly from their hiding positions to firing positions, taking advantage of all available concealment. They attempt to fire flank shots on the approaching enemy at an

## **Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain**

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average range of 300 to 400 meters. Firing at these ranges does not expose tanks to enemy infantry. After the engagement, the tank breaks contact and moves to a rally point with close security provided by infantry. They may then move to a new ambush site.