

APPENDIX F

ROUTE CLEARANCE

The purpose of this appendix is to assist field units in route-clearance operations. The TTP that follow establish basic guidelines for conducting this combined-arms combat operation. They are not all encompassing and may be modified to meet the needs of the user.

OVERVIEW

To clear a route, the battalion focuses one company / team as the main effort on the route proposed as the MSR, and the remainder of the battalion conducts clearance-in-zone operations on terrain that dominates the MSR. The brigade retains an air-assault or a mechanized company in reserve. During route-clearance operations, the TF could perform the following missions:

- Conduct a deliberate breach through a known minefield or obstacle.
- Conduct an in-stride breach through an unknown minefield.
- React to a near or far ambush.

FACTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In a route-clearance operation, the following facts and assumptions apply:

- Noncombatants are in the area.
- Noncombatants use the MSRs.
- ROE are in effect.
- MSRs are limited and the terrain is restrictive.
- The terrain limits communication capabilities.
- Enemy teams, squads, and platoons conduct decentralized operations; they can mass to a company-level operation.
- The enemy makes extensive use of minefield, indirect fires, snipers, and shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).
- The enemy can infiltrate to ambush, emplace minefield, reseed cleared minefield, erect obstacles, emplace explosive devices, and conduct acts of terrorism.
- Buried point minefield can be emplaced in 1 to 1 1/2 hours on an unimproved road and 2 hours on an improved road.
- Point minefield consists of 5 to 35 mines with a mix of 10 to 25 AT mines and/or 5 to 10 AP mines.
- Minefield and obstacles may be covered by direct and indirect fires.
- All obstacles are considered to be booby trapped.
- Cleared minefield can be reseeded, which indicates the presence of mine caches.

- All movements are considered combat operations.
- Clearance operations are conducted during daylight hours.
- MSRs must be swept daily.
- Each convoy has a security escort that can also breach minefield, if required.
- Aviation, fire support, engineer, MI, MP, ADA, civil affairs, and psychological operations (PSYOP) assets are available.
- Dismounted forces can clear 700 meters (766 yards) of route per hour, using a minimum of four mine detectors, in a deliberate-sweep operation.
- Mounted forces can clear 5 to 15 km (3 to 9 miles) of route per hour, using a minimum of three mine-clearing rollers.
- A reserve is available.
- US forces have air supremacy.
- Light, mobile security elements have a mix of M60 machine guns and MK19 40-millimeter (mm) grenade launchers.
- Security forces move on their organic combat vehicles.

TASK-FORCE TASKS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

You must accomplish the following tasks for route-clearance operations:

- Conduct deliberate-sweep operations.
- Detect obstacles.
- Secure the area to be cleared.
- Conduct breaching and clearing operations.
- Conduct route reconnaissance.
- Conduct cordon and search operations.
- Conduct mounted-movement drills.
- Conduct road movement.
- React to enemy contact.
- Conduct a hasty attack.
- Deploy a reserve.
- Conduct an air-mission brief (AMB), if air-assault operations are planned.
- Develop a fire plan/suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD).
- Conduct emergency resupply operations.
- Conduct casualty-evacuation operations.
- Conduct vehicle-recovery and -evacuation operations.
- Collect and disseminate intelligence information.
- Provide C².
- React to civilians on the battlefield.
- Conduct liaison with civil authorities.
- Respond to press interviews.

RECOMMENDED TASK ORGANIZATION

Table F-1 shows an example of the company/team organization for route-clearance operations. See Figure F-1, page F-4, for an exam-

ple of a graphic illustration of a route-clearance operation.

Table F-1. Sample task organization for route-clearance operations

• Heavy team Assault force (platoon leader/XO) 2 infantry platoons on Bradley fighting vehicles Support force (mechanized platoon leader) 1 Bradley platoon 1 engineer squad 1 120-mm mortar section 1 medical team (two FLAs) 1 PSYOP team 1 FO Breach force (company commander) 1 engineer platoon (-) with organic vehicles (HMMWVs or M113s) 1 infantry platoon (light) on three 5-ton trucks 1 tank section (two M1s with mine-clearing rollers) • Light team Assault force (platoon leader/XO) 2 infantry platoons (light) on six 5-ton trucks Support force (platoon leader) 1 AT/MP section with M60/MK19 mix 1 engineer squad 1 60-mm mortar section 1 medical team (two FLAs) 1 PSYOP team 1 FO Breach force (company commander) 1 engineer platoon (-) 1 infantry platoon (light) on three 5-ton trucks 1 AT/MP section with M60/MK19 mix

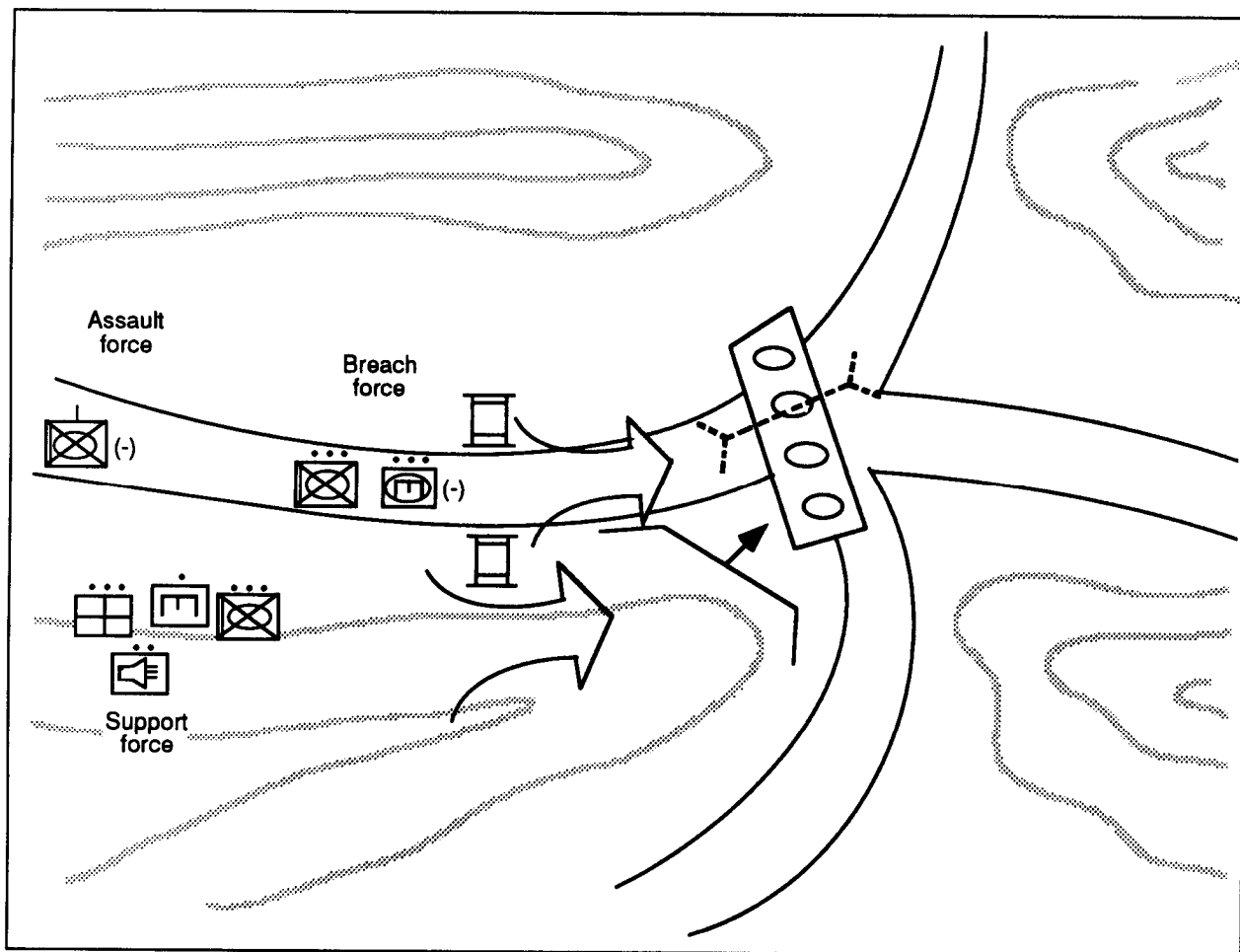


Figure F-1. Route-clearance operations

OPERATIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The following items should be considered by the TF when planning route-clearance operations:

INTELLIGENCE

The supporting staff conducts IPB to identify choke points, bridges, tunnels, critical road junctions, and other built-up areas. However, depending on its overall mission, the enemy may not always emplace obstacles at these locations. This is especially true if its goal is to psychologically disrupt our convoys. The following are factors that should be included in the IPB:

- A situation map should be maintained.
- An incident map should be maintained to facilitate a pattern analysis.
- A threat order-of-battle data base should be maintained.
- A detailed R&S plan, incorporating modern battlefield techniques to monitor the route (such as ground sensors, forward-look airborne radar, infrared radar, and satellite images), should be developed.
- The unit should coordinate for “quick fix” and unmanned airborne vehicle (UAV) support.
- The IPB should focus on the most probable enemy attack method and point obstacle and ambush locations.

- A daily flight should be conducted over the area by attack-helicopter teams to provide up-to-the-minute intelligence. The route should be filmed using an AH-64, if possible.
- The unit should coordinate with the Air Force to check routes periodically (for example, using the C-130 Specter gunship).
- An intelligence update should be provided to company/team leaders before departure his includes a 1:50,000 enemy situation overlay.

MANEUVER

The battle drill for the company/team, when encountering a known or suspected minefield, is as follows:

For a heavy team—

- The support force maneuvers to a position where it can overwatch the minefield and direct effective fires on possible enemy locations.
- The assault force dismounts and maneuvers using a covered and concealed route that avoids roads and does not mask supporting fires. The assault force may or may not be employed. If employed to seize terrain or destroy the enemy, it may or may not pass through the breach (METT-T dependent).
- The breaching force moves forward with tanks (with mine-clearing rollers) in the lead. The infantry platoon dismounts to protect the tanks and engineers. The engineer platoon conducts minefield-/obstacle-clearance operations and properly marks all lanes.
- The company commander moves with the breaching force or stays with the support force and controls indirect fires into the objective area. Indirect-fire assets capable of obscuring (with smoke) and suppressing the area are

ready to use based on the company commander's assessment of the situation.

- After clearance is completed, the company commander leaves a stay-behind force from the assault force (squad- to platoon-sized) to secure the site until it is relieved by follow-on forces (such as MP, local forces, or a reserve).
- The company/team then continues route-clearance operations.

For a light team, route-clearance operations are the same as those conducted by the heavy force with the following exceptions:

- Hasty-sweep operations employ engineers well forward and rely on visual indicators.
- The breaching force does not have tanks providing close-in security. It is provided by AT/MP assets armed with M60s. All other breaching procedures remain the same.
- The support force does not have the Bradley platoon. Overwatch is provided by an AT/MP section with MK19s.

FIRE SUPPORT

The following should be considered when planning for fire support:

- Priority targets shift in conjunction with company/team movement on the MSR. Smoke is planned for each target.
- A TF's 120-mm mortar section moves and sets up with the support force (if a light infantry company is used, they have an organic 60-mm mortar section).
- Clearance of fires is the responsibility of the maneuver commander in whose sector the target is located.
- Adequate Q-36 coverage is necessary for deliberate breaching operations.

MOBILITY/SURVIVABILITY

The following should be considered when planning for M/S:

- OBSTINTEL must include the description of the mines or explosive devices, the obstacle's composition, and the enemy actions or techniques used during obstacle emplacement.
- Upon visual identification of an obstacle, deliberate-sweep operations should begin and continue for 200 meters (219 yards) past the obstacle.
- All mines, obstacles, and explosive devices must be reported, cleared, and marked to facilitate unimpeded movement.
- Lane-marking materials and techniques are standard throughout the route.
- All radios, electronic equipment, and aviation assets must remain a safe distance away during breaching operations.

AIR-DEFENSE ARTILLERY

Despite air supremacy, the possibility of an air attack should be considered. Use the following passive air-defense measures:

- Eliminate glare by using mud, tape, cardboard, or camouflage nets to cover headlights, mirrors, and portions of windshields.
- Try to reduce dust clouds (reduce speed to reduce dust).
- Use routes that offer natural concealment.
- Use air guards.

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

The following should be considered when planning for CSS:

- Clearance operations are supported with a logistical/medical package operation out of the BSA.
- The priority evacuation method is by air; the routine method is by ground.
- An AMB should be conducted with aviation assets for MEDEVAC contingencies (rehearse evacuation-request procedures).
- A medical team traveling with the company/team should consist of one to two front-line ambulances (FLAs).
- All personnel wear flak vests.
- All vehicles carrying troops require hardening (sandbagging floors and sides).

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The following should be considered when planning for C²:

- The company/team commander has a requirement to operate on three separate frequencies: the battalion command, company/team command, and fire-support networks.
- Minefield indicators should be designated throughout the TF (see Table F-2 for a list of indicators).
- The battalion designates a reserve that is at least platoon-sized and is either mechanized or air-assault capable.
- Rehearsals should include—
 - Actions on the objective/obstacle.
 - Reaction to enemy contact.
 - Reaction to a near or far ambush.
 - A communications exercise.
 - Fire support.

F-6 Route Clearance

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

The following should be considered when planning for special operations:

- PSYOP teams should be employed forward to assist in dispersing civilians that could block the route.
- PSYOP/civil affairs support the counterintelligence in conducting civilian interviews.

- Civilians should be directed along the MSR to the displaced-personnel holding areas and the routes that the brigade has indicated for use.

REFERENCES

The manuals listed in Table F-3, page F-8, provide additional information on route-clearance operations.

Table F-2. Minefield Indicators

When conducting deliberate-sweep (mine detector and visual observation) or hasty-sweep operations, the presence of the following indicators may warn individuals of buried mines or hidden booby traps:

- Damaged vehicles.
- Dead animals.
- Avoidance by local population.
- Signs of digging.
- Signs of concrete removal.
- Holes or grooves in the road.
- Boxes or parcels placed along the road or shoulder.
- Parked vehicles and bicycles without operators.
- Wires on the road surface or extending to the shoulder.
- Metallic devices on the roadway surface.
- Evidence of mine-peculiar supplies (such as wrenches, shipping plugs, wrapping paper, and safety collars from fuzes).
- Disturbances in previous tire tracks.
- Disturbance of road potholes or puddles.
- Differences in amount of moisture or dew on road surface.
- Differences in plant growth (such as wilting, changing colors, or dead foliage).
- Signs posted on trees that covertly alert the local populace to the presence of mines.

Table F-3. References for route-clearance operations

FM 5-114. *Engineer Operations Short of War*. 13 July 1992.

FM 19-1. *Military Police Support for the AirLand Battle*. 23 May 1988.

FM 19-4. *Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations*. 7 May 1993.

FM 20-32. *Mine/Countermine Operations*. 30 September 1992.

FM 33-1. *Psychological Operations*. 18 February 1993.

FM 34-130. *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*. 8 July 1994.

FM 41-10. *Civil Affairs Operations*. 11 January 1993.

FM 63-6. *Combat Service Support in Low-Intensity Conflict*. 21 January 1992.

FM 90-13-1. *Combined Arms Breaching Operations*. 28 February 1991 (Change 1, May 1993).

Mine Recognition and Warfare Handbook. November 1990.