

Chapter 3

In - Stride Breach

The in-stride breach is a special type of breaching operation used by maneuver brigades and TFs to quickly overcome unexpected or lightly defended tactical obstacles. Brigade and TF commanders plan and prepare their force for an in-stride breach by task organizing subordinate TFs or company teams with the forces necessary to conduct independent breaching operations. The actual breach is conducted at the subordinate level. The subordinate commander designates specific support, breach, and assault forces based on his task organization. He is also responsible for synchronizing the SOSR breaching fundamentals through his own detailed breach planning or well-rehearsed immediate action drills. In short the in-stride breach tactic enables a TF to seize and maintain the initiative through simple, decentralized, independent breaching operations conducted under the responsive command and control of company team commanders.

A commander is driven to organize his force for an in-stride breach when—

- An unclear situation (including enemy and friendly obstacle locations) makes it necessary for several lead subordinate units to be capable of independent breaching operations to accomplish the mission.
- The enemy defense (obstacles and fires) is so weak that the forces necessary to support, breach, and assault can be reasonably task organized into a subordinate unit and do not require the maneuver of other subordinate units to adequately suppress, secure, or reduce the obstacle.

In either case, the commander relies on his subordinates to organize for and synchronize the SOSR breaching fundamentals. In-stride breach planning, therefore, focuses on allocating sufficient support, breach, and assault forces to subordinate TF or company team commanders. Specific actions at obstacles are planned, rehearsed, and executed at the subordinate's level and do not involve the entire force, thereby maintaining momentum. The commander planning for an in-stride breach must consider missions for his maneuver and engineer forces that allow quick transition to a deliberate breach should attempts at an in-stride breach fail.

IN-STRIDE BREACHING FUNDAMENTALS

Force allocation is not limited to combat and engineer forces. It includes allocating priority of artillery and mortar fires, close air support, air defense coverage, and smoke

targets and generators. The commander planning an in-stride breach develops a scheme of indirect fires, smoke employment, and air defense coverage based on the IPB that shifts priority to the unit that will most likely encounter obstacles. Synchronizing the employment of the assets still remains the subordinate commander's responsibility. The discussion below concentrates on how the commander applies the SOSR breaching fundamentals using force allocation in a TF in-stride breach. The same principles apply to the brigade in-stride breach where the commander allocates forces and resources to TFs; the only difference is the amount, type, and diversity of forces available.

Suppress

The key to any successful breach is quick and accurate suppression. The TF commander organizes his force for an in-stride breach by allocating sufficient maneuver platoons to deal a lethal volley of direct fires. The TF commander gives the priority of indirect fires to the company team most likely to encounter an obstacle. The commander may split allocation of indirect suppression between two lead company teams by giving priority of artillery to one company team and priority of mortars to another. When maneuvering in a bounding or traveling overwatch, priority of fires shifts to the forward or bounding unit.

When the situation is unclear, company teams must be organized with a balance of weapons that are able to rapidly suppress both an armor and dismounted threat. The range of weapons must be compatible with the terrain. For example, an armor-pure force is not an appropriate in-stride organization when conducting a movement through a defile. Company teams must be balanced with Bradley infantry fighting vehicles (BIFVs) and infantry able to provide suppression into surrounding high ground—a death trap for an armor-pure force. Suppression is achieved through well-rehearsed company and platoon actions-on-contact drills, and calls for immediate suppression of indirect fires.

If the size of the enemy force covering an obstacle is known or can be sufficiently templated, the commander skates combat power to his subordinates to achieve a 3:1 advantage. Therefore, a TF can breach an obstacle in stride when the enemy covering the obstacle is platoon-sized or smaller. When the enemy strength is a platoon, priority of indirect fires using mortars and/or artillery targets is critical to ensure successful suppression. The commander allocates

priority targets to make indirect fires more responsive to company team execution. Targets are triggered by the PL and remain under the control of the company team fire support team (FIST) executing the breach for the TF.

Obscure

Obscuration is the most difficult resource to allocate for an in-stride breach. The TF mortars are the primary source of obscuring smoke. The TF allocates the priority of mortar fires to company teams most likely to encounter an obstacle. When the situation is unclear, the TF maneuvers the mortars by section so that one section is able to fire at all times. Smoke generators, when available, are employed to haze or screen the entire force, concentrating on where obstacle contact is most likely or most dangerous. At the company team level, obscuration is achieved through the use of on-board smoke as part of the company team immediate action drills.

Obscuration is less difficult when the situation is clear. The TF allocates smoke targets to the company team conducting the breach for the TF. The TF fire support officer (FSO) plans smoke targets to be executed under the control of the company team FIST. The mortar platoon or section is pre-positioned to fire the mission. The smoke targets are fired simultaneously with suppressive fires so that the smoke builds before the breach and assault forces move forward. Smoke is targeted and adjusted to obscure the breach without degrading direct-fire target acquisition by the support force. In unfavorable winds, smoke may be placed directly on the enemy position. Smoke generators are also positioned to establish a smoke line that specifically attacks the known or suspected enemy position.

The TF commander also considers the cover and concealment which an axis of advance offers his company teams during an in-stride breach. However, the commander must consider the mission and weigh the trade-off of using a more covered and concealed axis against rapidly moving his force.

Secure

Security for the in-stride breach is primarily achieved through effective supporting fires and the speed of the breach. Securing the far side by force slows company team momentum, strains company team command and control, and is an indication that the obstacle cannot be breached in-stride. However, the TF commander still allocates sufficient forces to his company teams to locally secure the obstacle reduction effort. The same force usually assaults the enemy position for an in-stride breach. When the situation is unclear, the forces needed to secure the breach force during obstacle reduction drive the task organization. However, when the size of the enemy force is known, force allocation is driven by the size of force required to assault the enemy position.

Reduce

Mobility assets are allocated to company teams to drive lanes through the obstacle to support an attack on an enemy position or the movement of follow-on forces. In general, the mobility assets available restrain a TF from providing breaching capability to all of its company teams. Therefore, priority of engineer force allocation goes to the company teams most likely to execute a breach. The engineers are under the command and control of the company team commander, move in their formation, and are included in the company team's actions on contact. This minimizes response time at the cost of massing breaching assets. The commander uses infantry and tank plows to provide breaching capability to units not task-organized with engineers. The commander uses available engineers to assist his infantry in preparing equipment and conducting breaching rehearsals during mission preparations.

When available, mobility assets are also maintained under TF control. This gives depth and flexibility to the in-stride force enabling the commander to shift engineer forces to where they are needed. This is particularly important when the formation is dispersed and obstacle locations are unknown. It also allows the commander to quickly mass engineer forces to transition to a deliberate breach.

TASK FORCE IN-STRIDE BREACH

The in-stride breach is the most common breaching tactic used at both brigade and TF level. A TF organizes for the in-stride breach when conducting passage of lines (forward or rearward), movements to contact, hasty attacks, movements through defiles, and when participating in an exploitation or pursuit. These missions are characterized by an unclear situation and usually drive the commander to organize for an in-stride breach.

Planning

Breach planning begins with IPB and engineer battlefield assessment (EBA) as part of the command and engineer estimate. The TF S2 and engineer jointly develop a situation template of the enemy disposition and most probable course of action (COA). The situation template is the focal point of force allocation and breach planning. If little is known about the situation, the S2 and the engineer identify areas where the enemy is likely to use obstacles or has used obstacles in recent activities. Likewise, the engineer and S3 request information from higher headquarters on recent friendly use of obstacles in the area of operations.

The commander and staff use this information to anticipate which units are most likely to encounter obstacles based on the scheme of maneuver. The commander task

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organizes his subordinates with the combat power required to support and assault using the force ratios discussed in *Chapter 2*. The engineer recommends a task organization of engineer platoons and critical breaching equipment to create enough lanes for the breaching unit. The engineer maintains a mobility reserve under his control which is able to create additional lanes for follow-on forces. This mobility reserve is also used to mass mobility assets if transition to a deliberate breach is required. The TF FSO designs his fire plan to provide priority of fires and smoke to company teams likely to conduct a breach. The air defense officer (ADO) decentralizes the positioning of air defense weapons to provide local coverage of company teams during actions on contact and at obstacles. Above all, company teams are task organized for the mission first. The task organization is then modified where necessary to provide company teams with the additional forces needed to conduct independent breaching operations as part of the TF in-stride effort.

A force plans for an in-stride breach by appropriately task organizing subordinate TFs or company teams. The details necessary for success are developed by the subordinate commander. In a TF in-stride breach, the company team commander further task organizes his force and designates specific support, breach, and assault forces. Since conducting the breach only involves committing the combat power within the company team, the team commander incurs the responsibility to develop plans that synchronize the breaching effort and achieve the SOSR breaching fundamentals. Company team breach planning is deliberate, since it requires the team commander to develop a team scheme of maneuver or an immediate action drill that maneuvers support, breach, and assault forces (platoons) to apply SOSR breaching fundamentals on obstacle contact. If the enemy situation is unknown, support, breach, and assault forces execute their missions on order as part of an action-on-contact drill. However, these missions are part of the overall scheme of maneuver and are executed as a phase of the attack when the enemy and obstacle locations are known.

Preparing

Preparation for the in-stride breach fixes on subordinate TF or company team-level rehearsals. Since the success of a TF in-stride breach does not depend on the synergistic maneuver of company-sized support, breach, or assault forces, there is little need for a TF-level rehearsal. Instead, the success of the TF in-stride breach depends on the ability of company teams to quickly react to enemy and/or obstacle contact. The TF assists company teams in preparing for the mission by constructing and managing rehearsal sites that team commanders can use to drill their units on actions on contact and at obstacles. The TF engineer ensures that engineer platoons and breaching equipment link up with maneuver units early to maximize the opportunity

to rehearse as a combined arms team. Company team commanders include their complete task organization in all orders, back briefs, rehearsals, and precombat inspections (PCIs). The TF minimizes the time spent on TF rehearsals and back briefs to allow company team commanders the time with their units. During TF rehearsals, discussion centers on how critical breaching assets will be shifted to support company team breaching operations and the transition to a deliberate breach.

Collecting Obstacle Intelligence

The ability of the force to collect timely and accurate intelligence both before and during the attack has tremendous impact on the success of the in-stride breach. A TF commander elects to breach in stride when the situation is vague or when intelligence indicates that enemy obstacles and fires can be overwhelmed by a company team. The breach will fail if the company team does not have sufficient combat power to suppress the enemy's fires or enough breaching equipment to reduce the obstacles. Therefore, confirming assumptions about the enemy and obstacles becomes critical to mission success. The size of the enemy force and the type of obstacle become priority information requirements for reconnaissance.

Engineer forces (usually a squad at TF level) are attached to the scouts to gather detailed intelligence on obstacle locations, composition, orientation, and so forth. Like any specialized collection asset, the engineer squad works for the scout platoon leader and is integrated into the total TF collection plan. The S2 and engineer provide the scout with specific NAIs for the engineer squad to reconnoiter; the squad sends its reports on the scout net.

OBSTINTEL collection is particularly difficult when the in-stride breach is used as part of a movement to contact. Again, engineers may be attached to the scouts. However, their ability to close with and gather detailed OBSTINTEL in time for the advance guard or main body to react is limited. Furthermore, organizing for an in-stride breach in a movement to contact quickly consumes the number of engineers available for the reconnaissance effort. The commander must weigh the impact that dedicating an engineer squad to reconnaissance has on his in-stride organization and ability to transition to a deliberate breach as well as on other engineer missions.

A force breaching in stride must continue to gather intelligence and develop the situation during the attack. Early detection of obstacles is essential in maintaining momentum and to the timely commitment of engineers. One technique is to assign the advance guard and lead units in the main body NAIs to watch for obstacles along the axis of advance. Company teams then assign a tank or BIFV section to scan these NAIs during movement, looking specifically for evidence of enemy or friendly obstacles.

Executing

Execution of the in-stride breach is completely up to the subordinate commander. For a TF in-stride breach, the company team commander applies the SOSR breaching fundamentals by synchronizing the efforts of his tanks, infantry, indirect fires, and engineer assets. When the in-stride breach is used because the situation is unclear, the company team commander achieves synchronization by executing well-rehearsed actions at obstacles. Platoons execute their support, breach, and assault missions as part of the scheme of maneuver when the company team's breach is, in turn, part of the TF plan of attack. In either case, it is a company team fight.

The TF commander has two roles in a TF in-stride breach which are crucial to company team breaching efforts. First, he ensures that the company teams receive the planned priority of indirect fires and smoke but still allows the company team commander to fight his battle. Second, the commander ensures that the additional combat power and mobility assets needed to transition to a deliberate breach are positioned for immediate response. The commander closely monitors the company team breaching effort so he can decisively commit his force to a deliberate breach, if necessary, with minimal cost in momentum.

ENGINEER INTEGRATION INTO THE FORCE

The in-stride breach is normally conducted by a TF or brigade during a movement to contact or hasty attack. The in-stride breach maintains the momentum of the attack by denying the enemy time to mass forces to cover the obstacles. Proper integration of engineers and breaching assets into TF and company team formations is critical to in-stride breach success. Because the exact location and nature of threat forces and obstacles are unknown, engineers and breaching assets must be distributed carefully to allow the commander to move securely while maintaining forward-deployed breach and assault forces.

A TF needs a minimum of two lanes separated by at least 100 meters to pass through an obstacle. This is the standard TF in-stride breach requirement. Constructing and marking each lane requires an engineer platoon reinforced with breaching equipment such as MICLICs and mine plows. A third platoon is required to provide depth and flexibility to the TF mobility effort. A main effort TF, therefore, integrates an engineer company throughout its maneuver formations when breaching in stride. Supporting a TF in-stride breach with fewer engineers decreases the probability of success.

Figures 3-1 through 3-6, pages 3-4 through 3-6, show engineers integrated into a TF column, V-, echelon right, box, wedge, and line formations. Engineer integration into TF formations must provide lead company teams with

immediate breaching capability and maintain the flexibility to shift assets to where they are needed. Engineer platoons reinforced with special breaching assets from the engineer company are integrated directly into the combat formations of the lead company teams. An engineer platoon is usually maintained under TF control as a mobility reserve. This platoon maneuvers the center of the TF formation or echelon off the company team most likely to need engineer support. Additional specialized breaching assets from the engineer company also travel to the center of the TF under centralized control. The engineer commander moves with the TF, positioning himself where he can best control assets under his control and track the efforts of his detached platoons.

The tactical situation often requires a TF to modify its combat formation. Maneuver units train constantly to accomplish this quickly and efficiently; field SOPs outline required actions in great detail. Engineers integrating into the formation must adjust rapidly to maintain engineer and breaching assets with lead companies. Transition from a V-formation to a column formation and vice versa is not complicated; engineers remain integrated in lead company team formations. Transitioning from a wedge to a column, however, can be more difficult. Ideally, transition to a column formation should end up with engineers supporting the first two company teams in the column.

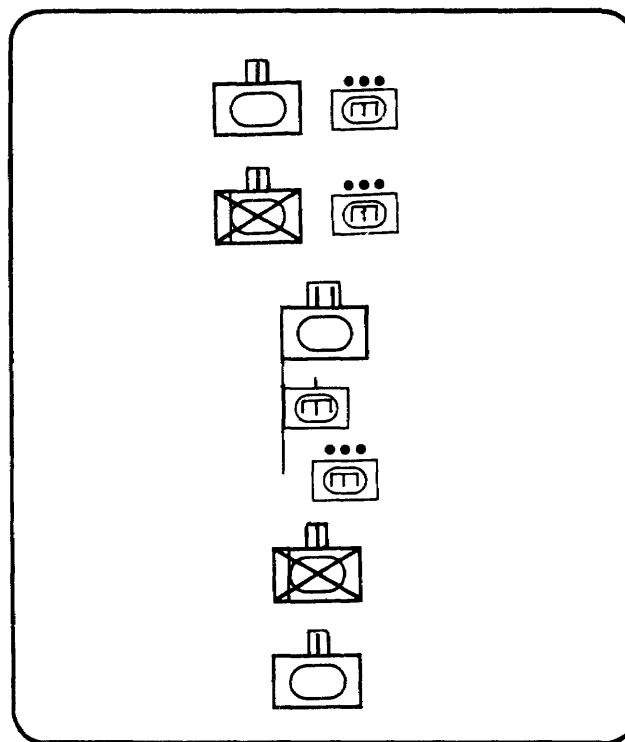


Figure 3-1. Integration of engineers into a task force column formation.

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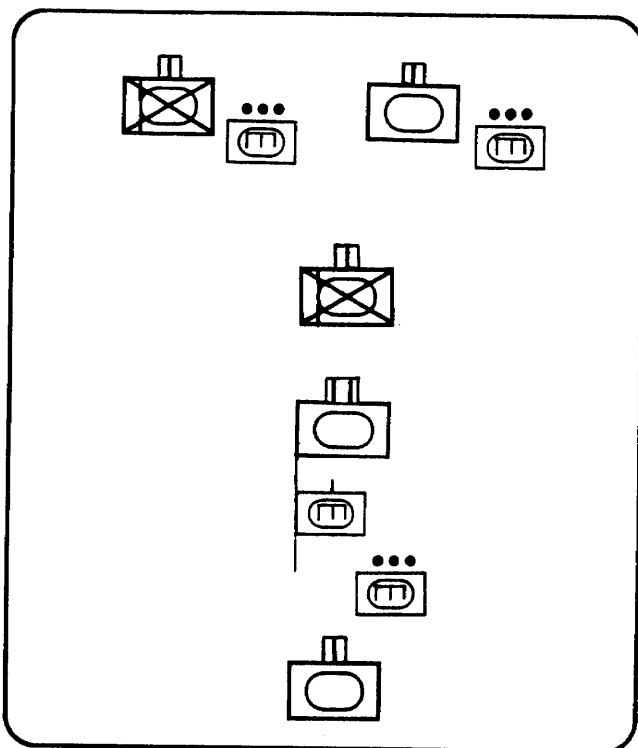


Figure 3-2. Integration of engineers into a task force V-formation.

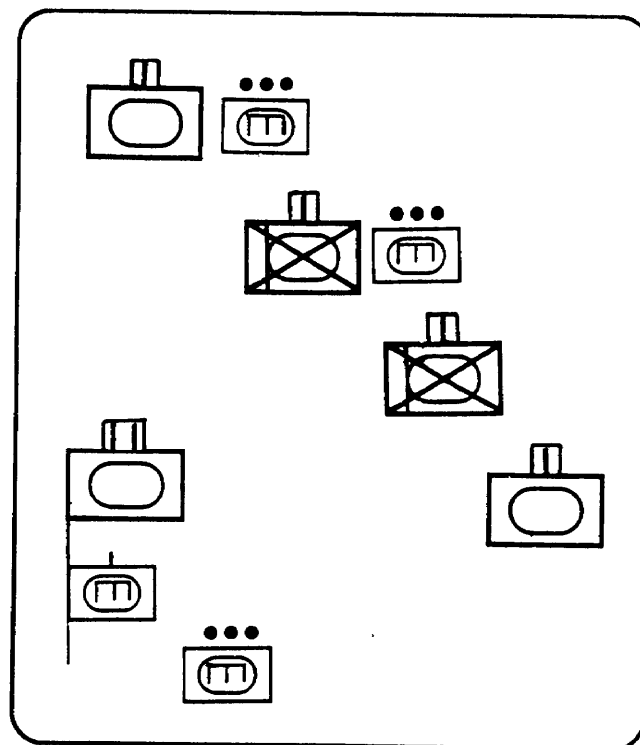


Figure 3-3. Integration of engineers into a task force echelon right formation.

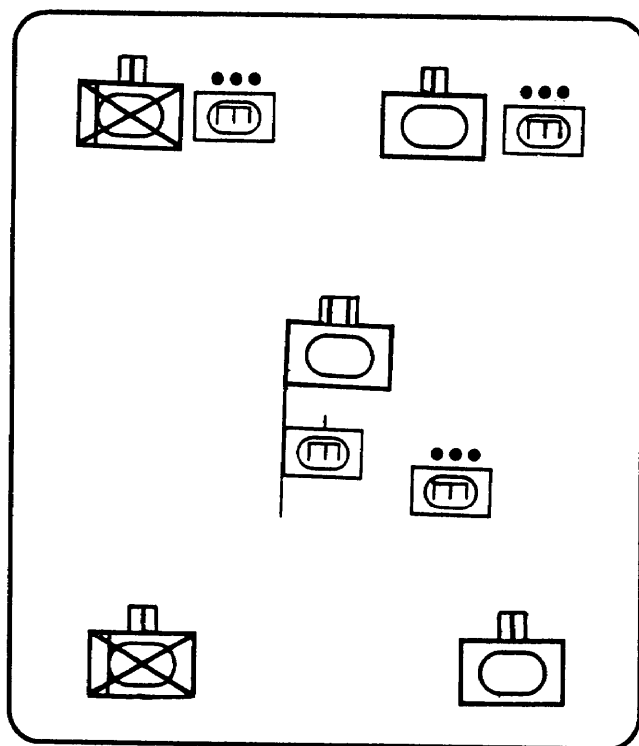


Figure 3-4. Integration of engineers into a task force box formation.

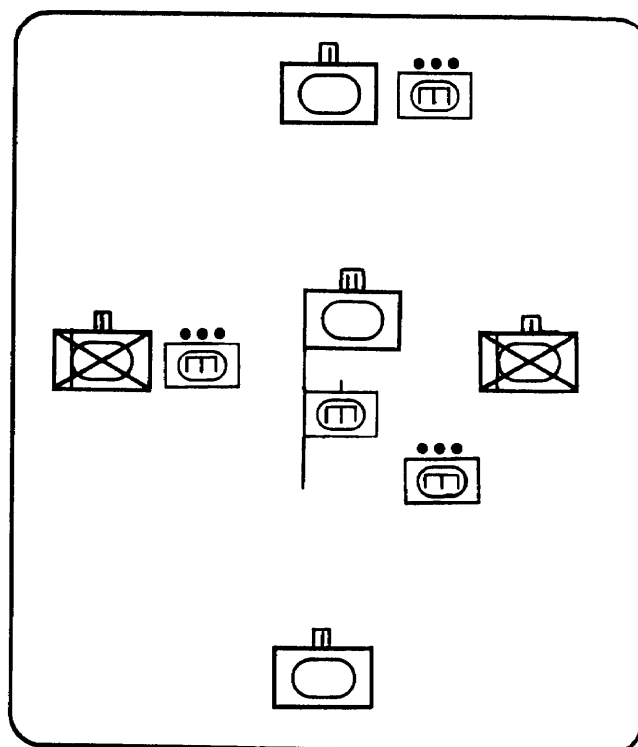


Figure 3-5. Integration of engineers into a task force wedge formation.

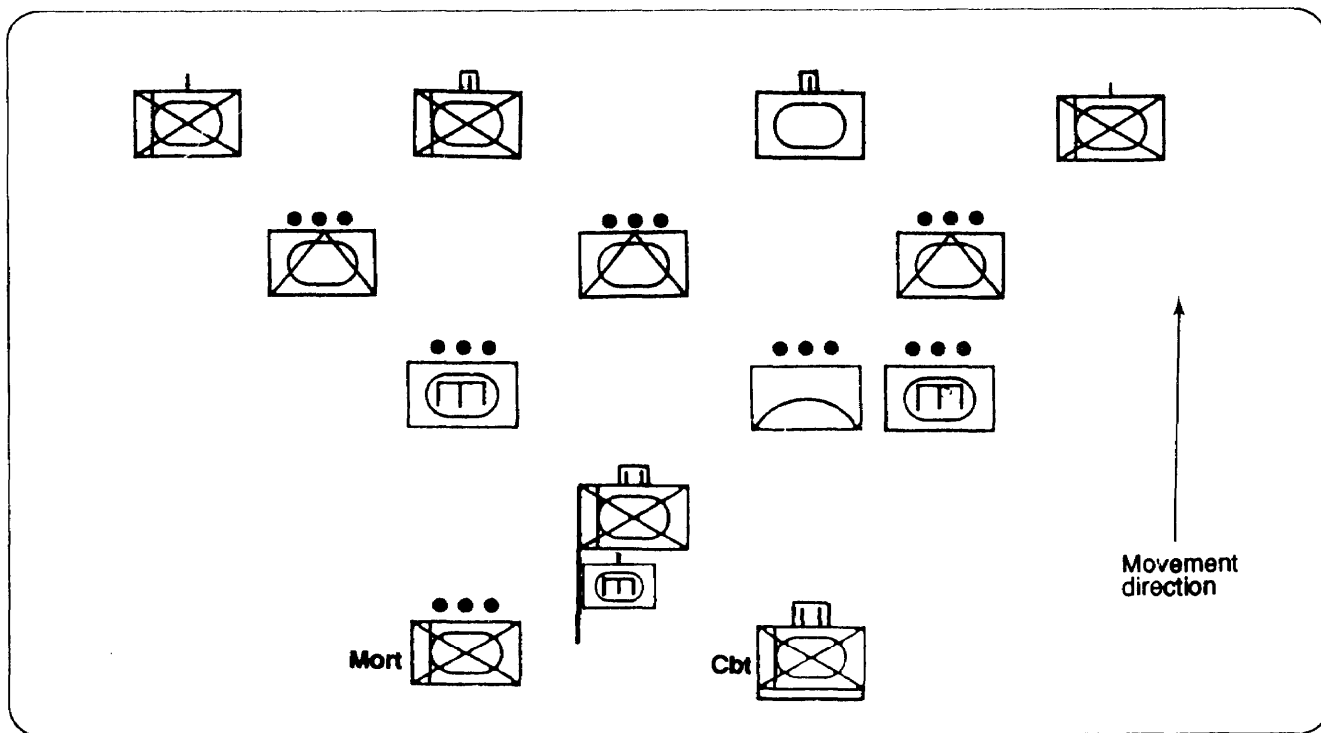


Figure 3-6. Integration of engineers into a task force line formation.

Regardless of which formation the TF uses, the TF combat trains usually travel just in front of or just behind the trail company. Critical engineer Class V materials, such as an emergency resupply of demolitions and MICLIC reloads, are transported in the combat trains. Breaching equipment such as unmounted mine roller sets are also carried in the combat trains. The commander, engineer, and supply officer (S4) (US Army) anticipate when these assets might be used and develop a plan for rapidly moving them forward.

Integrating engineers into the force continues at the company team level. The company team commander determines which combat formation is appropriate for each phase of the attack. Much of the engineer equipment (armored vehicle-launched bridges (AVLBs), combat engineer vehicles (CEVs), and vehicles towing MICLICs) cannot maintain the same rate of advance as tank and mechanized infantry platoons equipped with M1s and M2s. Therefore, the engineer platoon leader must fully understand the company team scheme of maneuver and which formations will be used and anticipate changes in formation. Close coordination between the engineer and maneuver company team commander is vital to ensure support is at the right place at the right time.

An engineer platoon normally maneuvers with four M1 13s and a CEV. The carriers do not tow trailers, except for MICLIC launchers. AVLBs and armored combat earthmovers (ACEs) augmenting the platoon move behind the company team. They remain one terrain feature back,

guiding on the trail element, and are always within support range. A good technique is to maneuver AVLBs and ACEs with the company trains. They move under the control of the engineer platoon leader. Figure 3-7 illustrates a lead company team maneuvering as part of a TF in-stride breach in an echelon left formation. Figure 3-8, page 3-8, depicts the breaching capabilities represented within this formation.

TASK FORCE IN-STRIDE BREACH SCENARIO

The TF mission is to attack to secure a terrain-oriented objective (OBJ Red) and prepare a hasty defense to destroy the enemy forward security element (FSE) and advance guard main body of an attacking motorized rifle regiment (MRR). The brigade main effort will attack along Axis Strike to destroy the MRR main body. The S2 and engineer know the terrain west of OBJ Red was recently used in an enemy defense. Intelligence sources indicate that there is no organized combat force left defending the area, although groups of one or two armored vehicles have been observed. The location and composition of obstacles remaining in the area are unknown. However, the S2 has a general idea of where the enemy established its defensive positions. The engineer and S2 template how they believe the enemy defense was arrayed. Figure 3-9, page 3-9, shows the situation template and brigade maneuver graphics the commander used for planning.

3-6 In-Stride Breach

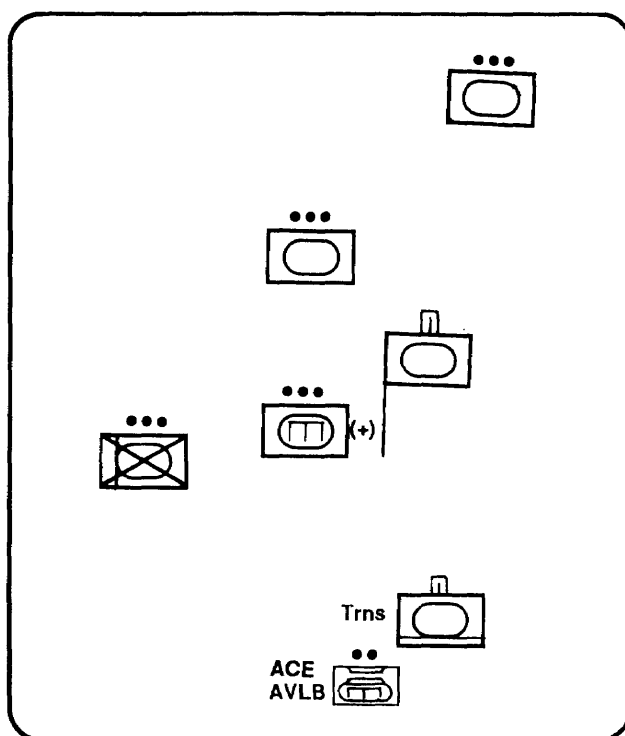


Figure 3-7. Integration of engineers into a company team echelon left formation.

The TF commander is faced with an unclear situation and considers rapid movement along Axis Flash critical to securing OBJ Red in time to establish a hasty defense. The TF commander chooses a COA that organizes his force for a movement to contact on Axis Flash. Scouts reconnoiter along Axis Flash as the security force and provide one section to guard the TF southern flank orienting on CP 9. Team A is the TF advance guard and leads Axis Flash. The TF main body moves in a V-formation with Company B leading on the left, Team C leading on the right, and Company D trailing Company B (see *Figure 3-10, page 3-10*). Team A secures OBJ Red occupying battle position (BP) A1. The TF main body moves through OBJ Red and establishes a hasty defense oriented into engagement area (EA) Tiger. Company B, Team C, and Company D occupy BPs B1, C1, and D1 respectively. The scout platoon (minus) establishes mounted operations forward of EA Tiger to identify the enemy's main effort.

The unclear obstacle situation, the need to maintain TF momentum, and the likelihood that company teams will have to conduct independent breaching operations drive the engineer to recommend organizing the TF for an in-stride breach. The engineer considers the type of obstacles he is likely to encounter and the assets he has available in task organizing mobility assets.

The scheme of engineer operations is to provide redundant and diverse breaching capability to the advance guard and

lead company teams of the main body. A mobility reserve is maintained under TF control that is able to shift where it is needed if heavy contact is made and transition to a deliberate breach becomes necessary. The priority of engineer effort is to support the advance guard with the mobility it needs to develop the situation. The lead teams in the TF main body, Company B and Team C, are each supported with mobility assets based on their organic weaknesses. Company B (tank-pure) receives an engineer platoon (plus) to give it a dismounted breaching capability. Team C (mechanized heavy) is task organized with two plows and a roller from Company B to give the team mechanical breaching capability. The engineer company (minus) maneuvers in an echelon position left of Team C. From there it can shift its remaining engineer platoon to support Team C or Company D should the need arise. The engineer company keeps two AVLBs, two ACEs and a CEV forward under its control (see *Figure 3-10, page 3-10*).

The engineer recommends using PL Levis to indicate where company teams are likely to encounter obstacles and to trigger company team commanders to deploy available rollers. He further recommends that Team A and Company B focus observation on CP 11 while Team C observes CP 10 during movement for probable locations of obstacle (see *Figure 3-11, page 3-10*).

The TF commander ensures that other combat multipliers are positioned to support company team breaching efforts. Priority of artillery and mortar fires is given to Team A as the advance guard. Priority of mortar fires shifts to Company B once Team A is at PL Bandit. The mortars will operate in split section to provide continuous coverage. Initially, the entire mortar platoon moves with Team A. One section drops off at PL Levis and occupies CP 8 to provide immediate suppression and smoke as the advance guard moves to PL Bandit. The other mortar section continues with Team A and occupies BP D1 to provide support while the trailing section picks up and moves with the main body. Air defense assets move with company teams under armor to provide local coverage during company team breaching operations.

The TF execution matrix is shown at *Figure 3-12, page 3-11*. The plan is to transition to a deliberate breach by giving company teams in the main body prepared support and assault missions. The mobility reserve mission is to move Team C, which now becomes the breach force (see PL Redman - PL Bandit of execution matrix). Company B establishes an ABF position and controls indirect fires. Company D becomes the TF assault force.

An excerpt from the Team A commander's execution matrix and an immediate action drill sketch used during his operation order (OPORD) are shown at *Figure 3-13, page 3-12*. These illustrate how the Team A commander has developed an immediate action drill to support the

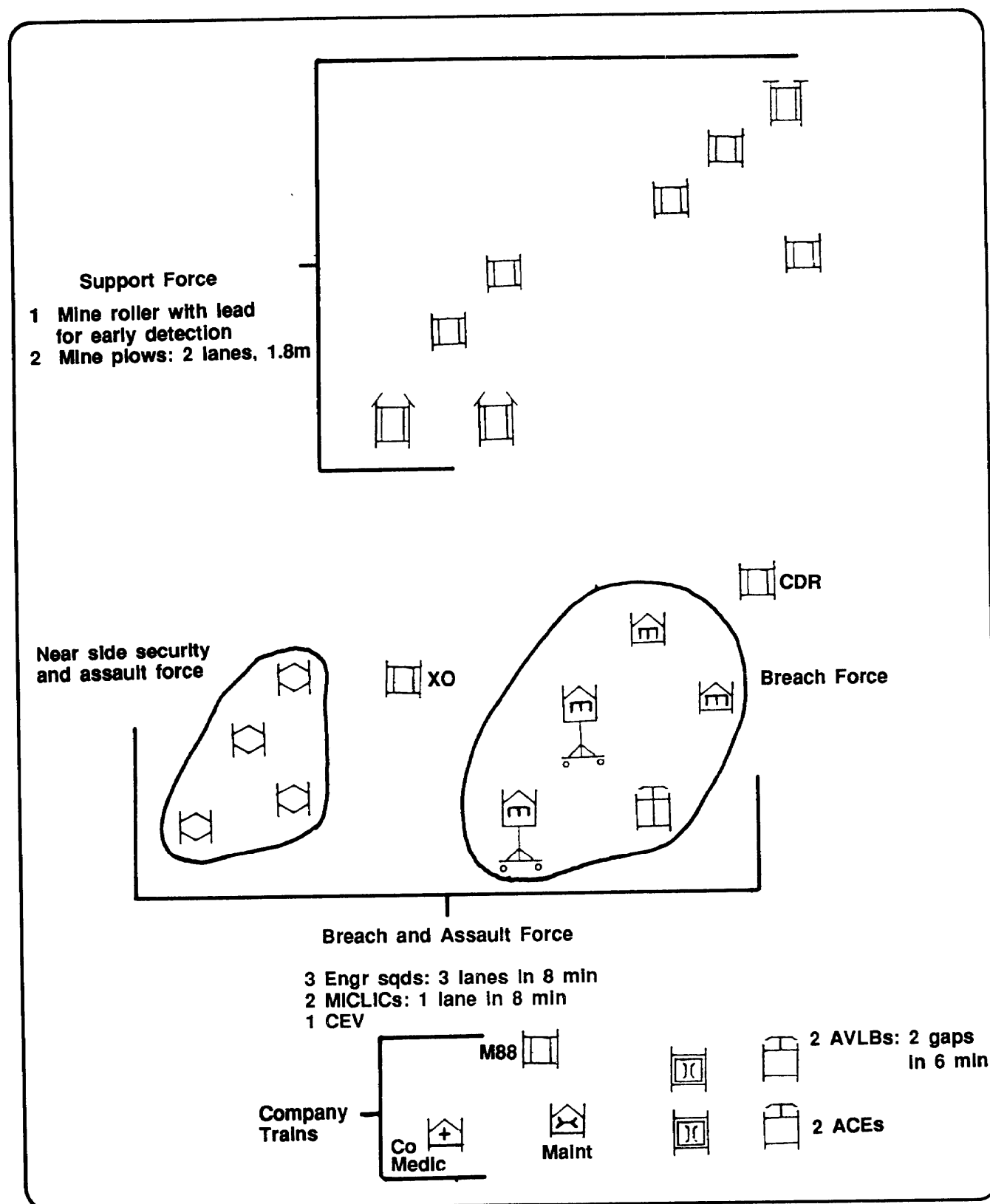


Figure 3-8. Breaching capabilities of a lead company team in a task force in-stride breach.

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TF in-stride breach. First and second platoons are the designated support force. The mechanized infantry and engineer platoons form a breach and assault force and maneuver together. The infantry provide local security for the engineers during obstacle reduction, if necessary,

and assault through the lanes to conduct a hasty attack. If there is no contact, the infantry continues to overwatch and assist in passing the tank platoons through the lanes. The tanks lead through the lanes and the team resumes its formation.

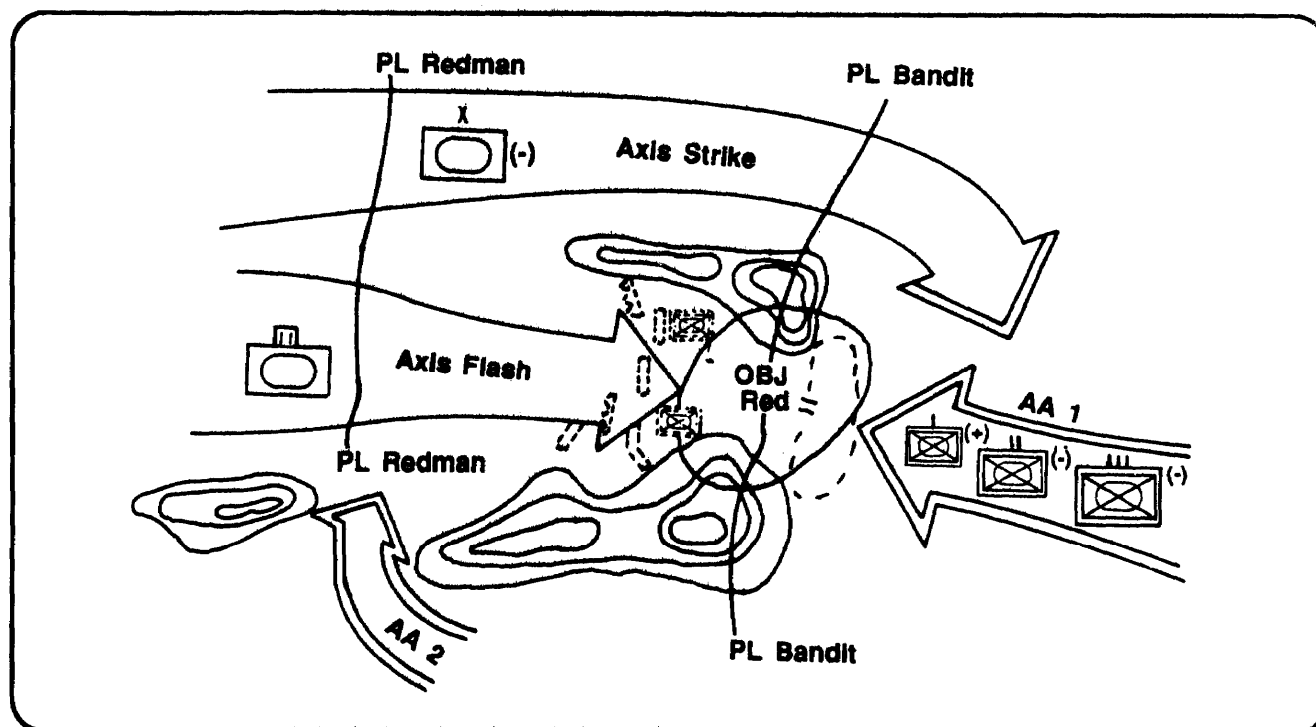


Figure 3-9. Brigade graphics and situation template.

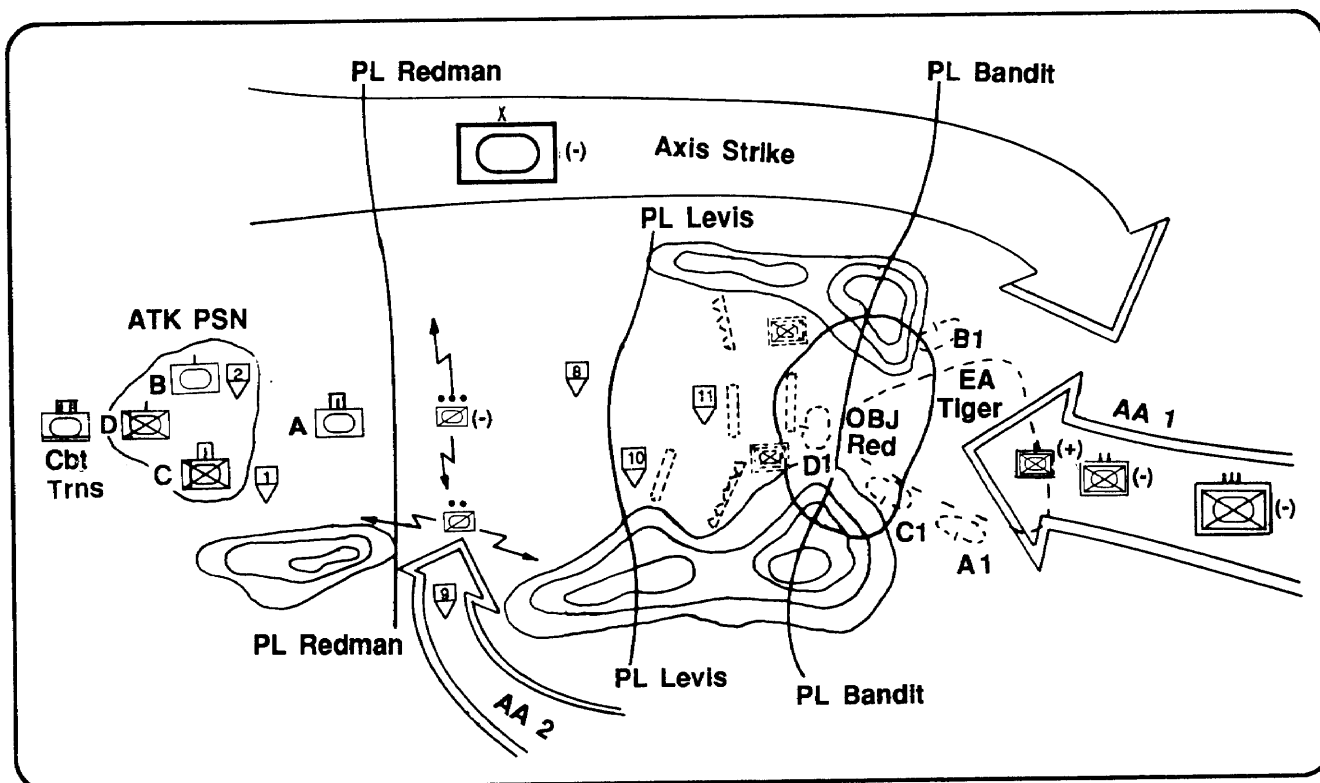


Figure 3-10. Task force for maneuver graphics and situation template.

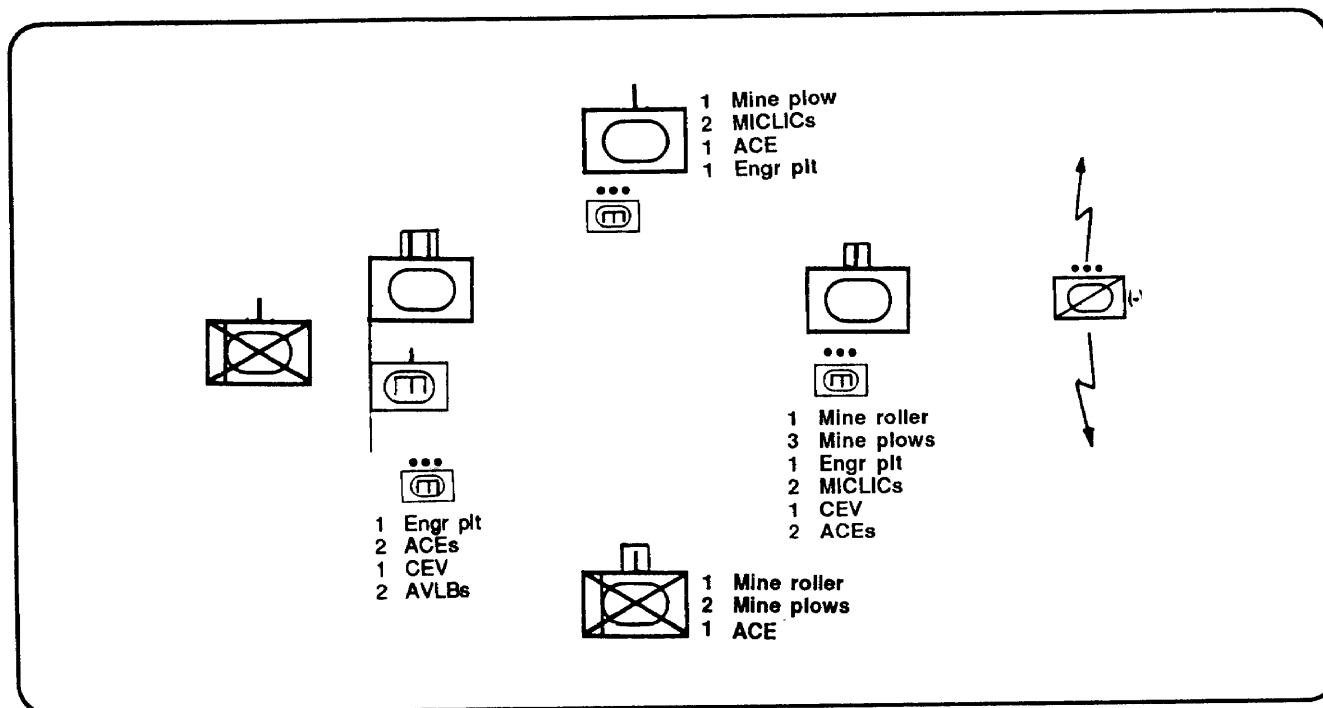


Figure 3-11. Mobility force allocation.

























Units	Team A	Company B	Team C	Company D	Engineer (-)	Scouts	Mortars
	  3/C  1/EN 	   3/EN 	  3/A 	  	3/EN  2  2  1 	SEC 1  SEC 2  SEC 3 	SEC 1  SEC 2  
Attack Position	Move to PL Redman	OCC CP 1	OCC CP 2	Echelon left of Team C	Center between B & C	Screen PL Redman	Move with Team A
PL Redman to Levis	Orient CP 8 & 11	O/O lead left TF(-) in a V	O/O lead right TF(-) in a V	Trail TF(-) in a V	Echelon left of Team C	PL Bandit CP 10 & 11	Move with Team A
PL Levis to OBJ Red	Secure OBJ Red Orient D1	Orient CP 11	Orient D1	Trail TF(-)	Echelon left of Team C	OCC A1	SEC 1 OCC CP 8
OBJ Red Secure	Report OBJ Red secure	B/P TF Support Force	B/P TF Breach Force	B/P TF Assault Force	B/P SPT Team C & D	Collapse guard at CP 9	SEC 2 move with Team A
Hasty Defense EA Tiger	A1	B1	C1	D1	Consolidate all engineer D1	Establish OP s 1, 3, & 4	SEC 1 & 2 OCC D1
Consolidate	A1	B1	C1	D1	Begin clearing operations PL Levis to PL Bandit		

Figure 3-12. Task force execution matrix.

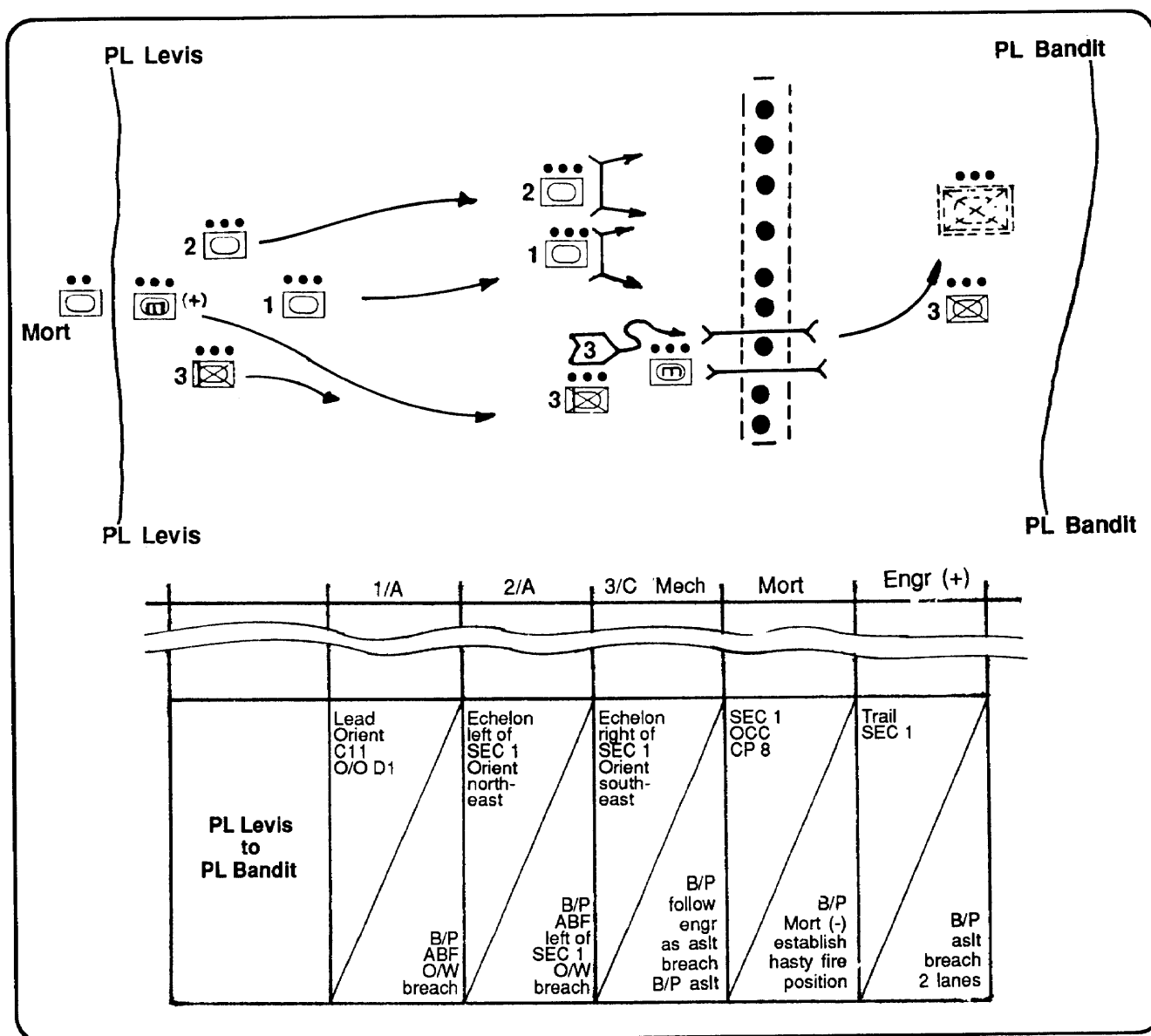


Figure 3-13. Team A's immediate action at obstacles drill and matrix extract.