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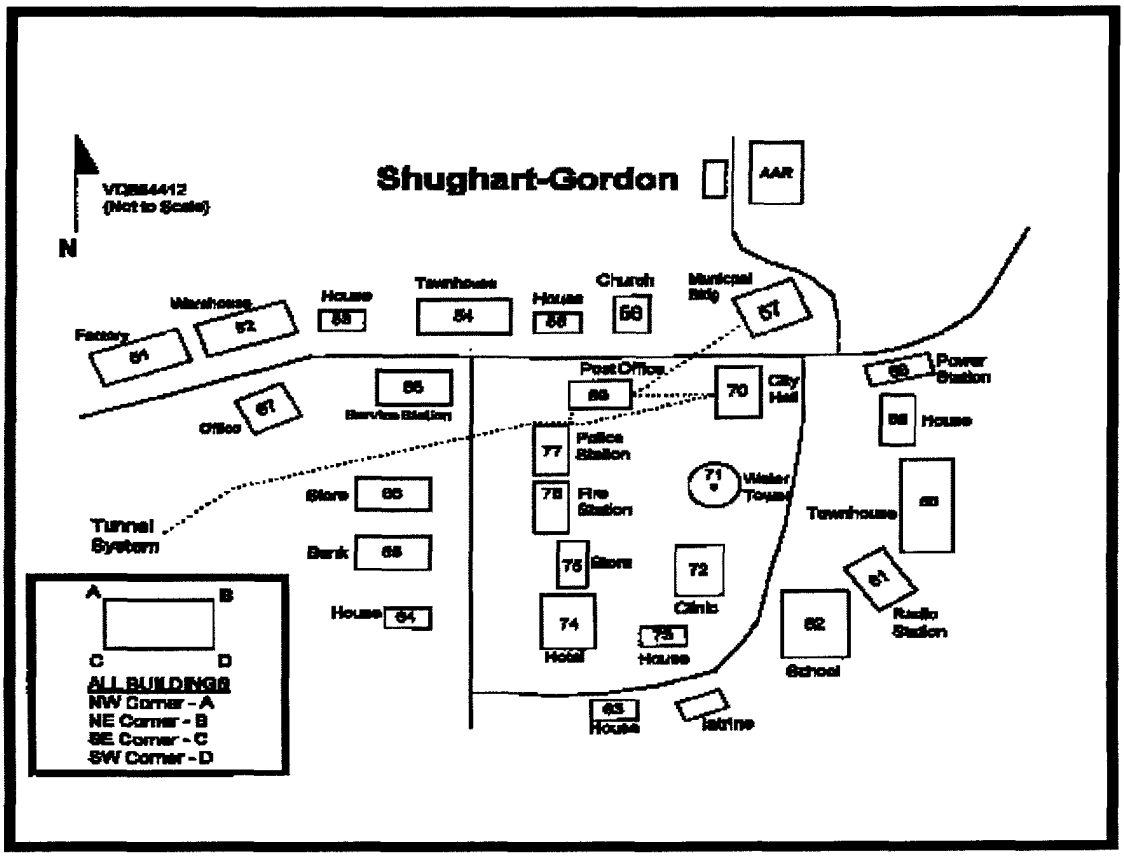
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Battles From Cortina

3-D MOUT

by MAJ Jeffrey D. Kulmayer

The Atlantican Army had been defeated, but its remnants had retreated into the Cortinian town of Shughart-Gordon. The U.S. brigade charged with attacking the town decided to have one battalion attack from the northwest and seize a foothold in the first three buildings. The main effort battalion would then pass through and continue clearing the town. Their first objective beyond the foothold was the northern three buildings -- 53, 54, and 55. The battalion identified building 54, the townhouse, as the key terrain in their initial objective and assigned the seizure of that building to the lead company.



The assault began at 0425 as the company passed through its sister battalion and moved along the northern side of the city toward the house just to the left of the townhouse. It took only minutes for the lead platoon to clear the unoccupied house. A second platoon rushed the townhouse through the open area between the two buildings and pressed against the left side of the townhouse while a squad attempted to breach the door of the first apartment. The third platoon, meanwhile, stacked up on the north side of the house, waited for the call to follow and support.

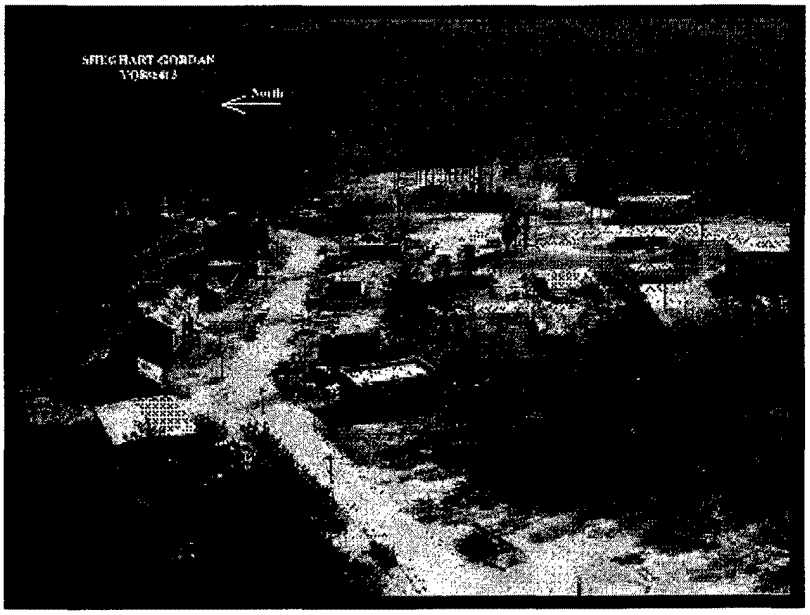
The enemy opened up with whithering fire from the upper windows of the townhouse onto the breach squad. They then fired from the service station (bldg. 68) into the platoon between the house and the

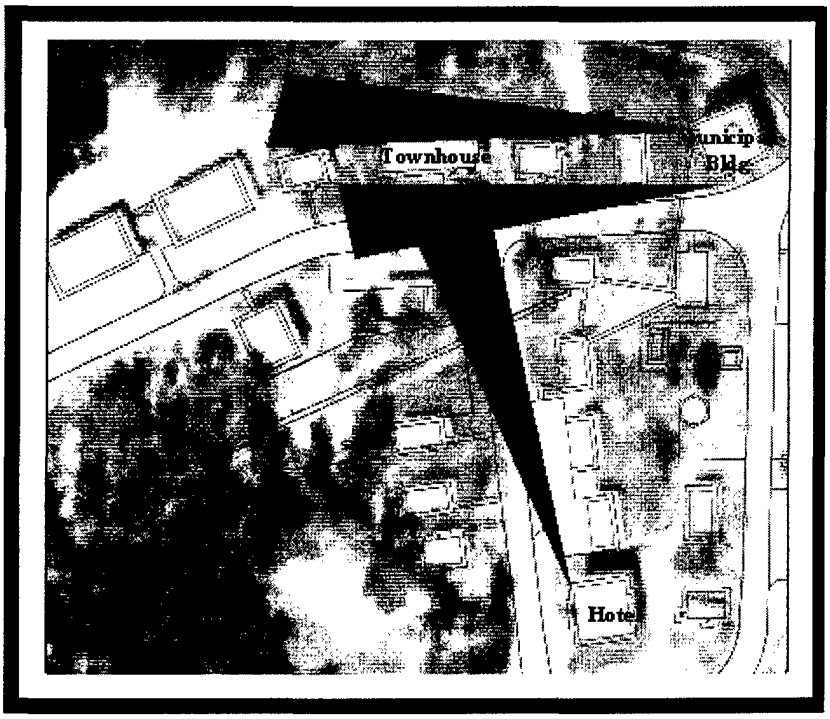
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townhouse. The enemy in the dominating municipal building (bldg. 57) on the east side of the city cut down a number of soldiers in the third platoon waiting on the north side of the house. Finally, snipers and a machine-gunner in the hotel (bldg. 74) on the southern edge of the city added their fire to that of their comrades in the service station to completely dominate the southern side of the townhouse with direct fire. The company ultimately seized the townhouse, but was combat-ineffective due to casualties incurred approaching the building.

The assault on the townhouse illustrates the importance of three-dimensional terrain analysis in support of MOUT assaults. The fight inside a building is a difficult one, requiring infantry squads and platoons to perform room-clearing techniques as documented in **FM 90-10-1, *An Infantryman's Guide to Combat in Builtup Areas,*** to standard. But in the monthly battle for Shughart-Gordon, units sustain eight times as many casualties outside of buildings as inside. These casualties are typically the result of enemy fire from buildings other than the one being assaulted. The fight inside a building is difficult, but getting to the building is deadly.





TACTICS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

A successful assault of the townhouse in the situation described above requires the isolation of the point at which friendly units want to enter the building from enemy direct fire. A two-dimensional map view leads one to develop a course of action focused only on buildings immediately adjacent to the townhouse. A three-dimensional view of the problem reveals that in addition to the immediate tasks of suppressing the enemy in the townhouse (to include upper floors), the unit must also identify and suppress surrounding buildings and dominating terrain much deeper in the town. The hotel and the municipal building -- both four-story structures -- give the enemy the ability to dominate both northern and southern approaches to the townhouse. Absent action by the battalion to isolate the townhouse from the enemy in the hotel and municipal building, the assaulting company will surely sustain tremendous casualties even before getting to the difficult task of room clearing.

The isolation of the townhouse is a battalion fight, requiring the synchronization of a variety of assets in support of the company's assault. Given an opportunity to replay the battle, the following tasks could be assigned to "set the conditions" for a successful assault:

- Kiowa in support by fire position oriented on the north and west sides of bldg. 57, the municipal building.
- Kiowa in support by fire position oriented on the north side of bldg.74, the hotel.
- Mortar smoke target 50m northwest of bldg. 57 and at the intersection southeast of the building for obscuration of enemy fires.
- Adjacent battalion's infantry in foothold, bldg. 52, suppresses the north side of bldg. 68.
- Adjacent battalion's infantry in foothold, bldg. 67, suppresses the south side of bldg. 54.

- One company from the assault battalion establishes a support-by-fire position in the woods north of bldg. 53 and suppresses the north side of bldg. 54 and any visible targets in bldg. 57.

- The platoon from the assault company in bldg. 53 establishes a support-by-fire position and suppresses the north side of bldg. 68 and overwatches the lead platoons movement into the first apartment.

- The platoon to assault bldg. 54 employs smoke to obscure enemy from bldg. 54, 68, and other unknown enemy positions to the southeast as it crosses from bldg. 53 and enters the front apartment of bldg. 54.

MOUT is more than room clearing. A 3-D view of the terrain is essential to gaining a complete understanding of observation and avenues of approach. The close fight -- inside the building -- is difficult and decentralized, with control of the movement from room to room most often in the hands of squad and platoon leaders. Success in the movement from building to building is a combined arms fight, the control of which requires the active involvement of a battalion command post. Seeing the terrain in 3-D will identify the opportunities for employment of all the battalion's combat power and enable the battalion to "set the conditions" for successful platoon and company assaults.

Table of Contents

Previous Article Medical Operations and Civil Affairs During Stabilization and Support Operations

Next Article The Physical Destruction Component of IO in Peace Enforcement