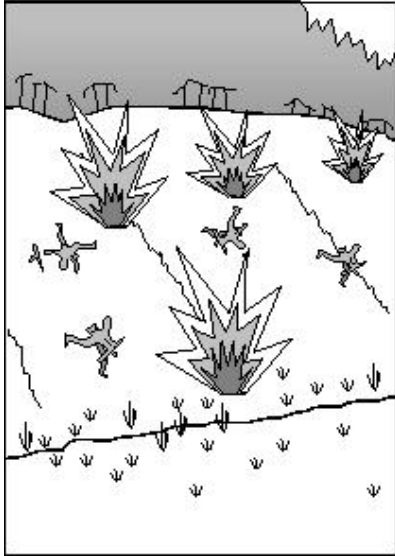


MORTAR Tactics in Open Terrain

Mortar fires are inherently inaccurate. Mortars are an area weapon. Mortars are best used for suppression, not destroying point targets.



Infantry in the open are particularly vulnerable to mortar fire, especially when combined with direct fire.

Good Targets

Fire mortars at vulnerable targets in the open:

- Infantry in the open
- Infantry under trees
- Infantry behind one-sided defilade like walls or hills
- Stationary soft vehicles
- Stationary crew-served weapons, especially heavy weapons that cannot be moved quickly

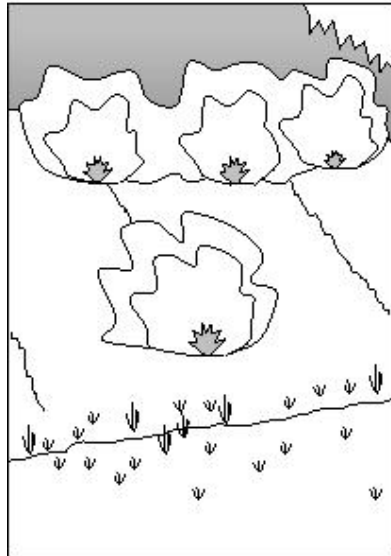
Mortar suppression is not destruction. Suppression needs to be combined with other weapons. Limited rounds limit the duration of mortar suppression.

Enemy infantry in the open should be attacked with a combined arms mortar and direct fire attack.

Bad Targets

Do not fire mortars at invulnerable targets:

- Buildings. Blasting through ceilings with mortar fire is a waste of rounds.
- Bunkers and entrenchments.
- Tanks and armor. Mortar fire can only button them up and slow them down.



Mortar smoke blinds the enemy and reduces the accuracy of his fire.

Don't Waste Ammunition

Rounds are limited. Save rounds for lucrative targets. Mortar rounds are heavy to carry and consumed rapidly. Don't waste rounds on:

- Unobserved targets
- Bad targets
- Distant targets that do not support your mission. Select targets carefully.

Mortar Smoke

Mortar smoke provides more obscuration at greater range than grenade smoke. Fire mortar smoke:

- To blind the enemy during an attack.
- In front of a distant enemy that is firing on you.
- In front of your position when pinned by the enemy to permit withdrawal.
- To deceive the enemy by misdirecting his attention.

What's He Doing?

Enemy Mortars

Pay attention to the enemy's mortars.

- If you are under mortar fire, you are under observation. Move.
- If he is saving rounds, he probably doesn't have many to waste.
- If he is using smoke, he's hiding something. Fire into his smoke.

When you are pinned down in the open by enemy fire, expect to be mortared. Use **bounding overwatch** to avoid being fixed.

Find and attack his mortars. Study the terrain for potential positions. Listen for mortar fire to determine his location.

MORTAR Techniques

Mortar Units

Mortar crews are valuable support units. Do not use mortar crews to assault or engage in direct fire combat.

Light, Medium or Heavy?

Light mortars move faster and are more responsive than medium or heavy mortars. Medium and heavy mortars move slowly, and their ammunition is heavy, but they are more destructive. Heavy mortars usually need vehicles to move on the battlefield.

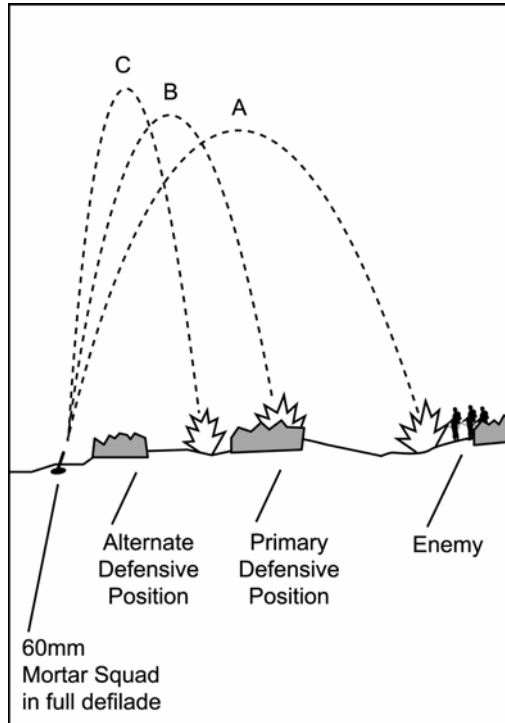
On the Move

While on the move, mortars are an infantry commander's most responsive and immediate fire support available. A mortar unit's ability to set up and fire quickly is critical.

MOUT

Mortars are valuable in MOUT because of their high rate of fire, high angle of fire, and short minimum range.

Positions in existing structures and narrow alleys provide maximum protection for minimum effort. Avoid rooftop positions for mortars. Observers should use tall buildings to control fires.



Defilade mortar position supports both the primary and the alternate platoon defensive positions without moving tubes or ammunition.

Mortar Positions

The best mortar position is a compromise between *defilade*, *security* and *communications*.

Defilade:

- Provides protection from enemy direct fire weapons
- Minimizes the requirement for security
- Helps the unit avoid detection by the enemy
- Avoids trees and overhead cover

But... light mortars are more accurate when firing at targets they can see.

Security. Mortar crews provide their own security. They should stay close to the units that they are supporting to minimize security needs.

Communications. Light mortars should stay within signal range of the units that they are supporting, even when connected by radio. Mortars are difficult to adjust when visibility is poor. Medium and heavy mortars operate almost exclusively by radio.

Shifting Positions

Once they are set up, avoid moving guns unnecessarily. Moving mortar ammunition is much more difficult task than moving the tubes.

Planned Targets

In stationary positions, plan and register targets. Target dead space, choke points, and Final Protective Fires.