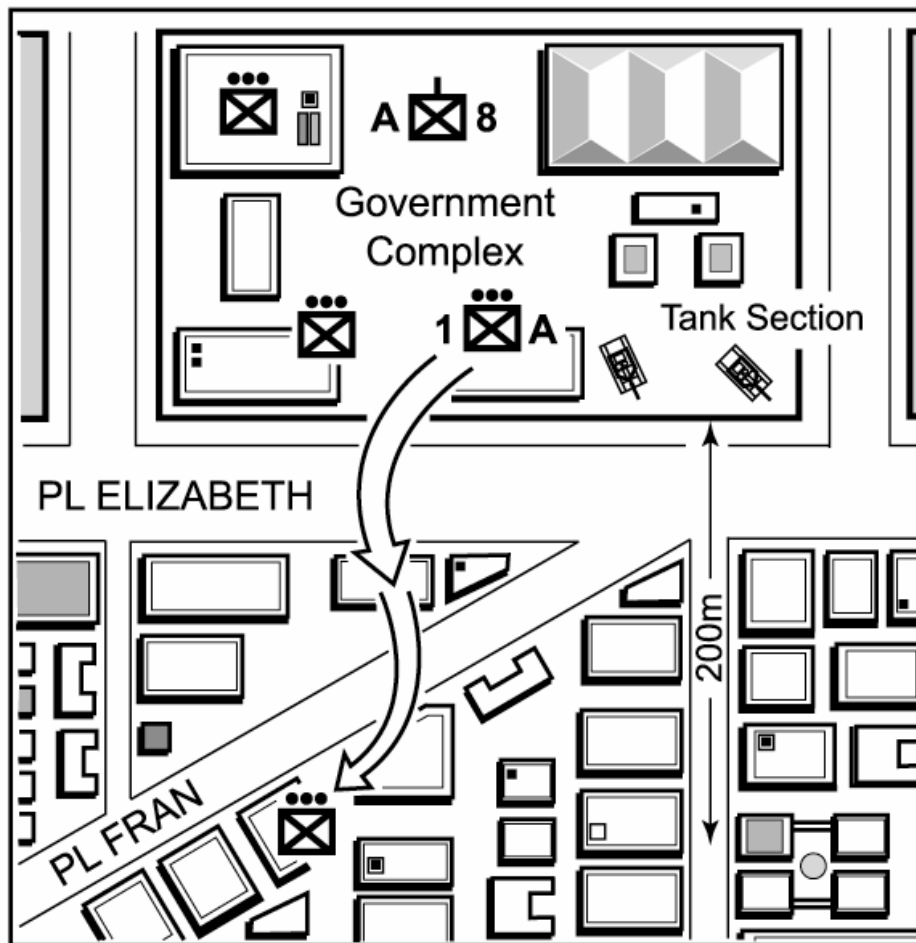


Tank-Infantry Fight in Fallujah

The following combat action took place on 11 November 2004 in Fallujah, Iraq as part of Operation Phantom Fury. 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines consisted of three squads, an attached machinegun squad and an attached assault squad, totaling forty-six Marines. The Company was positioned in the Government Complex in anticipation of receiving orders to clear a sector south of the complex. Footnotes in the following account refer to TTPs outlined in the Tank-Infantry SOP.



Map 1. 1st Platoon moves into position before dawn.

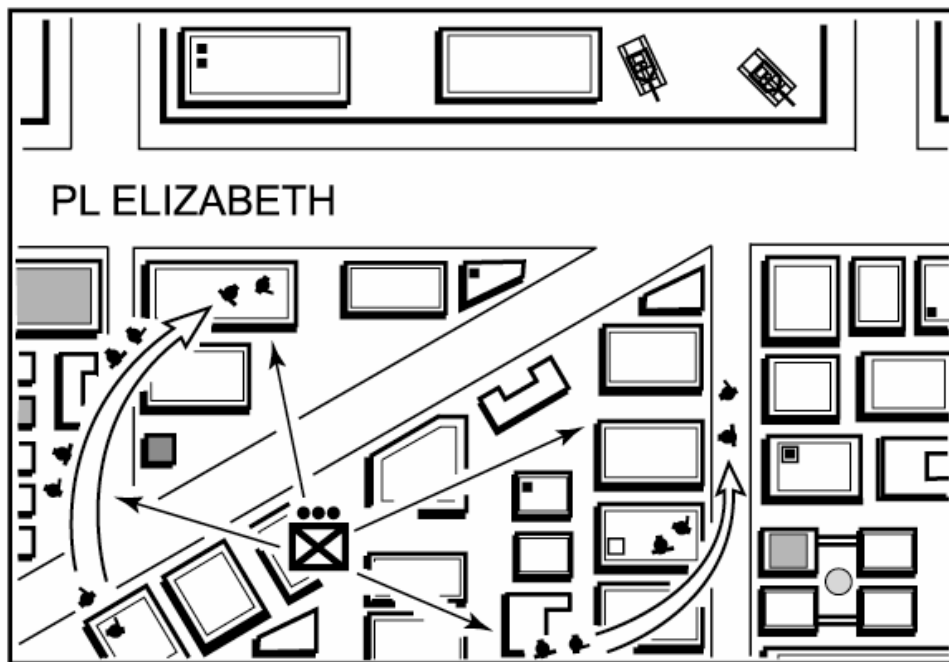
1. On the night of 10 November, 2004, 1st Platoon received orders to **seize a dominant building in order to overwatch the Company's advance the following day**. The Platoon planned to infiltrate from the Government Complex across Phase Line ELIZABETH – a road approximately 30 meters wide – and

gain a foothold for the Company's planned attack into the city.

At 0400 1st Platoon moved to a three-story structure immediately across the road. The Marines bounded by squad with an assault element in the lead, a support element behind, and a security element providing overwatch from the previous position.

Upon reaching the building that the Platoon had intended to occupy, the Platoon Commander realized that the structure was untenable due to damage done by the previous day's fighting. The decision was made to push across Phase Line FRAN to another building approximately 200 meters in front of the main body of the Company.

By the time the Platoon had consolidated in this position it was 0530. Half an hour still remained until sunrise. As the sun came up that day, the Platoon's overwatch position was well forward of the Company and was, in effect, an ambush position as well. A section of tanks, staged in a cold position back at the government complex, was attached to Alpha Company and on call to support 1st Platoon.

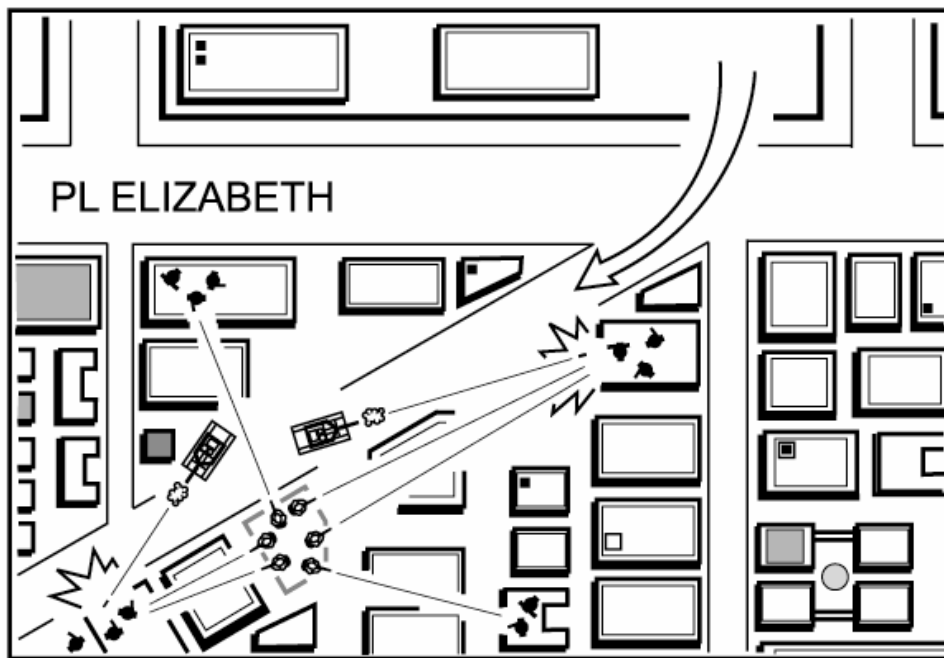


Map 2. 1st Platoon engages multiple enemy positions.

2. As it got light that morning, the Marines were able to observe enemy moving from south to north in an attempt to resume the fight against the main body of the Company in the Government Complex. The enemy moved about in the open not expecting any Marines to be this far to the south.

Immediately, the Marines from 1st Platoon engaged the enemy with direct fire, air, artillery, and 81mm mortars. As the enemy pinpointed the Platoon's position, they began to engage the Marines from multiple fortified structures. Some of the enemy had moved around the Platoon's northern flank and tucked into the buildings between 1st Platoon and Alpha Company. This made geometries of fire to the north very challenging.

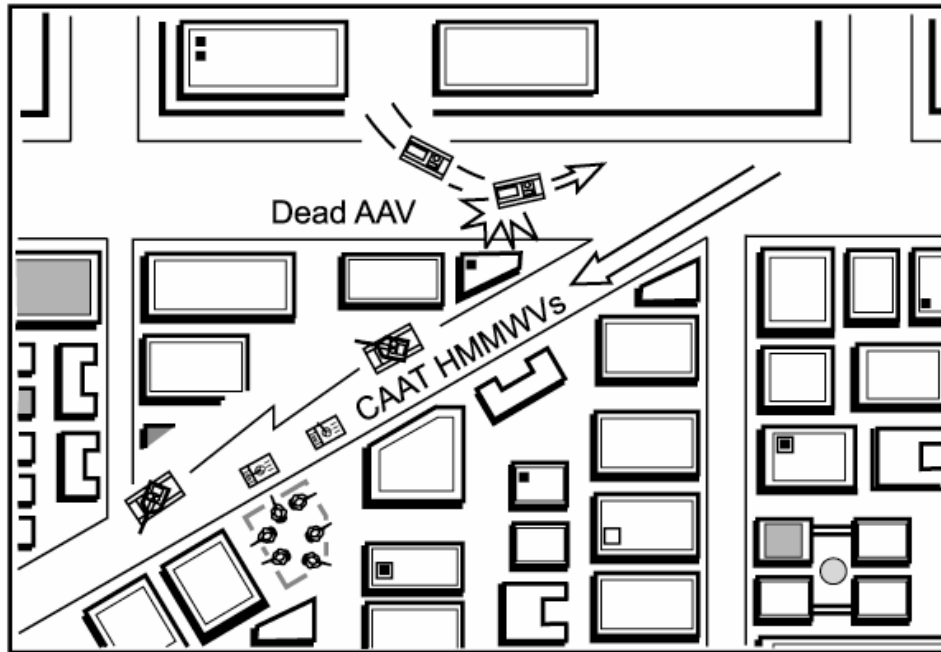
Because the enemy had pinpointed the Platoon's position, rocket employment became very difficult. Marines could not remain exposed for an extended period to get off a good shot.



Map 3. 1st Platoon fights a series of tank-infantry engagements.

3. At this point, the tank section became invaluable. After multiple enemy positions had been located, the Platoon Commander called the tanks over the company tactical net and moved them from their cold position to a hot position adjacent to the Platoon. [TTP 401] As the tanks moved down the street, the Marines provided security for them from their overwatch position. [TTP 201, TTP 202] While the Platoon suppressed the enemy positions, the Platoon Commander talked the tank section onto the targets. Using multiple techniques in combination – the clock method, target reference points, and 7.62 tracer to mark targets – the Platoon Commander oriented the tanks onto their targets and the tanks proceeded to destroy the enemy positions one after another. [TTP 301, TTP 302]

After all the known enemy positions were destroyed, the tanks moved back to their cold position. Throughout the course of the day, as the enemy attempted to reoccupy many of the buildings or moved to new buildings, the same process was repeated fifteen to twenty times. The Platoon would pinpoint the enemy's location, suppress the position, and then talk-on the tanks to destroy the enemy.

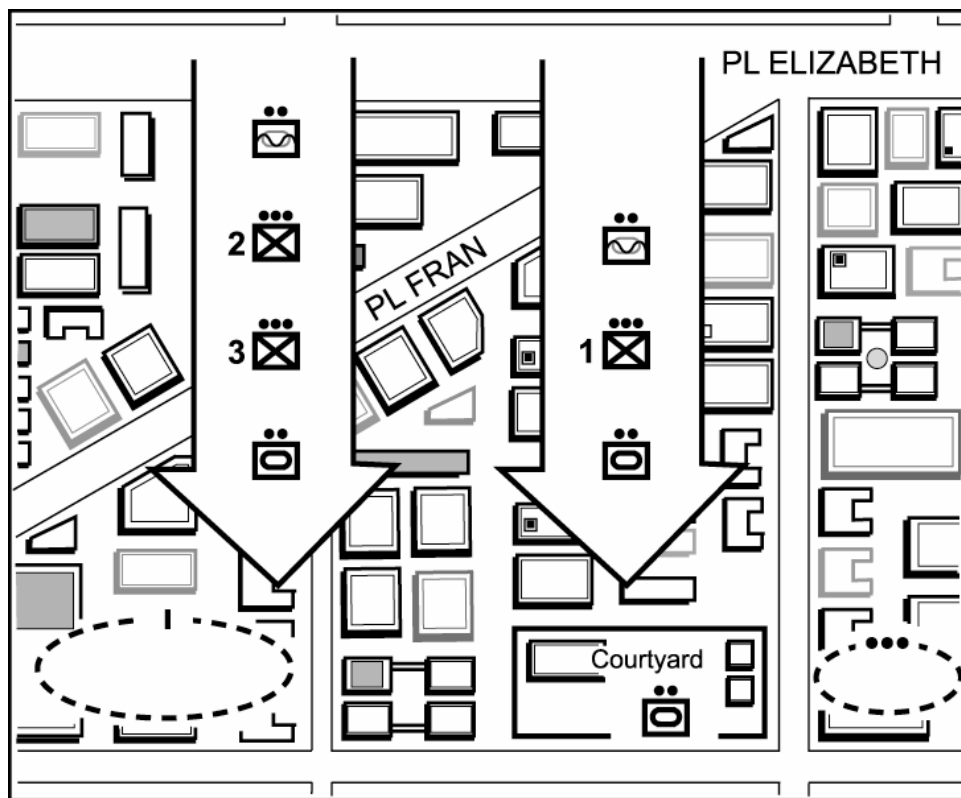


Map 4. Tanks screen HMMWV casevac.

4. That afternoon, the Platoon sustained two urgent casualties. One Marine was shot in the head and another was shot in his femoral artery. Time was critical.

The initial casevac was composed of one AAV that was destroyed by an enemy RPG north of the Platoon on Phase Line ELIZABETH.

The second casevac was made up of several CAAT vehicles. Before the CAAT vehicles could approach the Platoon, the tank section moved up to the casevac site and effectively suppressed the enemy to the north, west and south. This allowed the vulnerable CAAT vehicles to move in and pick up the casualties. The CAAT vehicles would surely have been destroyed if it was not for the effective screen provided by the tanks.



Map 5. Alpha Company attacks south on two parallel alleyways.

5. After the casevac, 1st Platoon continued to engage enemy targets with tanks. At 1500, the Platoon received a frago to **attack 200 meters to the south with the rest of the Company in order to destroy the enemy in zone.** The Company would attack and clear two parallel axis on adjacent alleyways.

The main body of the Company pushed out of the Government Complex with tanks in the lead, a main body of dismounted infantrymen following, and AAVs in the rear serving as armored ambulance and resupply vehicles. 1st Platoon conducted a linkup with the tank section that had been supporting them throughout the day.

At the time of the linkup, the only exit from 1st Platoon's position was effectively covered by enemy fire. The tank section suppressed the enemy positions around the Platoon, which allowed the Platoon to create an explosive breach in the building they occupied, and attack south with the tanks.

As the three rifle platoons attacked down the Company's two axis of advance, the infantry squads cleared houses until they made contact with the enemy. [TTP 204, TTP 205] Each time they made contact, the infantrymen called for tank support, which then destroyed the enemy-held building. While moving, the tanks were positioned at the front of the Platoon's column to engage targets of

opportunity. The 400-meter attack took over five hours.

Upon consolidation at the next phase line, the tanks occupied clearings in the city and continued to engage targets with the help of the infantry, who now occupied platoon-sized battle positions adjacent to the tanks. [TTP 201]

By the end of the attack, the Company had engaged between 150 to 200 enemy and sustained thirty percent casualties.

6. Key Insights. 1st Platoon's ability to integrate tanks into their urban combined-arms team was a direct result of the training the Platoon had undergone in the weeks before the Fallujah fight.

2nd Tank Battalion provided a four-day familiarity training exercise on their tanks. Tank sections were assigned to the same company, where in turn they would be assigned to support a specific platoon when required.

Infantry squads, weapons sections, engineers, mortars, aircraft, and tanks fought as combined arms teams led by leaders who understood how to integrate these units and weapons on the urban battlefield.

Lt Elliot Ackerman commanded 1st Platoon, A/1/8 during this fight in Fallujah.