

## CHAPTER 8

# RELIGIOUS SUPPORT OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Army forces conduct defensive operations as part of major operations and campaigns in combination with offensive operations. The immediate purpose of defensive operations is to defeat an enemy attack. Military forces defend only until they gain sufficient strength to attack. Though the outcome of decisive combat derives from offensive operations, it is often necessary, even advisable, to defend.

### INFANTRY OR ARMOR BATTALION/TASK FORCE

travel with the tactical operations center (TOC) and the combat trains command post (CTCP).

#### PHASE I: Occupation of Battle Positions

As soldiers prepare defensive positions, the TF executes the counter-reconnaissance mission. This mission is meant to deny the enemy information about friendly dispositions and friendly preparations for battle. The counter-recon force typically consists of the scout platoon, ground surveillance radars, and maneuver elements.

**Starting as far forward as possible, the UMT makes brief visits to soldiers in fighting positions.**

Throughout this phase soldiers are digging in and preparing fighting positions for the coming enemy attack. The UMT keeps movement to a minimum to avoid disclosing fighting positions, paying close attention to cover and concealment. Starting as far forward as possible, the team makes brief visits to soldiers in fighting positions, working rearward towards the combat trains. The UMT coordinates its

**The UMT must carefully plan movement and religious support to avoid being caught in the confusion.**

#### PHASE II: Passage of the Covering Force

The rearward passage of lines by the covering force causes considerable movement and confusion. The UMT must be cautious when planning movement and religious support to avoid being caught in the confusion. The UMT locates with the battalion aid station or LOGPAC, communicates its location to the TOC and CTCP, and deliberately avoids the passage lanes.

#### PHASE III: Enemy Reconnaissance and Preparatory Fires

Enemy artillery poses a significant threat to the safety of the UMT. The UMT must be near adequate overhead cover for protection.

Gathering soldiers for worship may involve undue risk.

If the enemy uses chemical or biological agents, the team will make adjustments in religious support. The team may need to postpone religious activities until the hazard is eliminated or reduced to a safe operating level. Several factors which the UMT considers include:

- Degree of engagement with enemy forces.
- Level of exposure and risk to soldiers and equipment.
- Priorities for religious support.
- Anticipated operations in response to enemy attack.

**The chaplain offers sacraments and ordinances to soldiers before combat.**

Sacraments and ordinances are not celebrated in contaminated areas. The UMT does not resume services until soldiers have moved to safe areas. Therefore, the chaplain takes advantage of every opportunity to administer the sacraments before soldiers engage in combat, or before soldiers are exposed to a contaminated environment.

#### PHASE IV: Enemy Approach

The UMT carefully coordinates movement around and through obstacles set in for the defense. Obstacles installed after the team has departed its base of operations can put the team at risk. The team should know the breach marking system and main supply route (MSR). To avoid obstacles, it carries a copy of the obstacle overlay.

**The team carries a copy of the obstacle overlay when traveling.**

#### Phase V: Enemy Assault

The UMT must be prepared to adapt to the changing tactical situation of a mobile defense which combines offensive, defensive, and retrograde actions. This combination results in a nonlinear front to create confusion for the attacking forces.

As the enemy begins the attack, the UMT shifts its attention to soldiers in the battalion aid station (BAS). From this point on, the UMT's main effort will be the care of casualties as they are brought to the BAS.

**The UMT must be prepared to move on a moment's notice.**

During the enemy attack, the BAS may move frequently, evacuation routes may be blocked by an enemy penetration, and defending elements may become temporarily encircled or bypassed by enemy forces. Rapidly moving enemy units may threaten or overrun the BAS. The UMT must be prepared to move on a moment's notice. Equipment and supplies not required immediately should be stowed in the team's vehicle. The vehicle should be parked in a manner which allows for rapid departure if the BAS is threatened.

#### PHASE VI: Consolidation and Reorganization

As the TF consolidates and reorganizes after the battle, the companies evacuate the remaining casualties to the aid station. Once the UMT has ministered to the casualties, it assesses METT-T to determine its next actions.

If the unit is planning a counterattack, the UMT prepares to move with the unit. If not, the team moves forward to units on the forward line of own troops (FLOT) to visit soldiers.

## BRIGADE

In the mobile defense, battalions engaged in offensive, defensive, and retrograde actions present a challenge for the brigade UMT. The UMT plans religious support for each of the units based on METT-T. The area defense differs from the mobile defense in that all units are engaged in defensive operations.



**Memorial service after the battle.**

## DIVISION

Division religious support during the defense is similar to religious support during the offense. However, the fixed nature of the battlefield causes UMTs to adjust their operations slightly. Access to subordinate UMTs is easier, but travel may be complicated by enemy

reconnaissance and preparatory fires.

As in the offense, the division UMT coordinates with the CSG UMT for mutual support. The DISCOM UMT coordinates area support in the DSA.

The division UMT may assist the division cavalry squadron UMT to coordinate casualty care with the brigades. It also helps the brigade UMTs with additional faith group support.

## DIVISION CAVALRY SQUADRON

The division cavalry squadron normally operates as the division covering force in a defensive operation. When acting as a covering force, the Squadron UMT locates in the vicinity of one of the brigade UMTs. The Squadron UMT coordinates its activities with the brigade UMT to avoid confusion and to provide mutual support. As the covering force withdraws, casualties may be high. With the squadron operating across the division front, the casualties may pass through several different aid stations. The Squadron UMT positions itself to provide care for most casualties.

## COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS

Field artillery units move frequently, especially when the striking force maneuvers beyond conventional artillery range. Engineer assets are heavily engaged during preparation for combat. Mobility, countermobility, and survivability missions will significantly reduce UMT access to soldiers. Combat support UMTs must synchronize their activity carefully for all soldiers to receive religious support.

## **COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT UNITS**

Conducting defensive operations places great demands on CSS units. The defending force requires large quantities of barrier material and ammunition, while the striking force requires greater amounts of fuel, ammunition, and maintenance. Soldiers in CSS units may be unable to gather for worship services. In such

cases, religious support is often provided to soldiers one-on-one.

Medical evacuation from the striking force will pose significant challenges. When there is a great distance from the supporting trains, intermediate support bases may be employed. UMTs must include these bases in their planning.