Chapter 4
Offensive Combat

Section 1. General

4101. Purpose
The purpose of offensive combat is to destroy the enemy or his will to fight.

4102. Offensive Combat
The offensive purpose of the squad is to attack. Offensive combat may be conducted by three events: preparation, conduct, and exploitation. Each event is subdivided according to the mission and/or unit involved. In planning and execution, some of the events may be shortened, omitted, or repeated. Events and other actions pertinent to the squad are as follows:

a. Preparation
   - Reconnaissance and rehearsals.
   - Movement to the assembly area.
   - Movement to the line of departure.

b. Conduct
   - Movement forward of the line of departure to the assault position.
   - Advance by fire and maneuver.
   - Arrival at the assault position.
   - Fire and movement through the enemy unit or assigned enemy position.

c. Exploitation
   - Continuation of the attack.
   - Pursuit by fire or movement.
   - Consolidation and reorganization. (Note: Consolidation and reorganization are continuous actions for combat leaders and should be SOP upon completion of each fire and maneuver event.)

Section II. Preparation
4201. General

Preparation begins with the receipt of the warning order. It ends when the lead element crosses the line of departure or when contact is made with the enemy--whichever comes first. It is usually accomplished in three steps: movement to the assembly area, final preparations in the assembly area, and movement to the line of departure.

4202. Movement to the Assembly Area

The disposition of the squad during the movement to the assembly area is influenced by the size and proximity of the enemy, as well as the squad's location in the column. The route column, tactical column, and approach march (see par. 4204a) are troop formations used in the movement to the assembly area.

a. Route Column. When probability of contact with the enemy is remote the movement is made in route column. Units within the column are administratively grouped for ease of control and speed of movement. Commanders normally march at the head of their units. This formation may be called an administrative column.

b. Tactical Column. The tactical column is adopted when the enemy situation changes from contact remote to contact possible. Units within the column are grouped to permit prompt movement into combat formations. The rifle squad may be used as:

(1) Part of the Main Body. When the squad marches as part of the main body, the squad leader's primary duties involve the supervision of march discipline within his squad.

(2) Connecting Elements. Connecting elements are files or groups which are used to maintain contact between the units of the command. Connecting files are individuals who are sent out to maintain contact between units. A connecting group consists of one or more fire teams. They may be classified as either flank or column connecting files or groups, depending upon their mission. (See fig. 4-1.) The use of connecting files or groups is governed primarily by visibility.

Figure 4-1. Connecting Elements in a Tactical Movement
(a) **Flank Connecting Files or Groups.** Connecting files or groups that maintain contact with units, guards, or patrols on the flanks are called flank connecting files or groups. The primary mission of the connecting files or groups is to report the location and situation of the unit on the flank with which they are maintaining contact. They may also cover any gaps which exist between the units, giving warning of and resisting any hostile penetration.

(b) **Column Connecting Files or Groups.** Individuals or fire teams used to maintain visual contact between elements in the tactical column are called column connecting files or groups. Contact between the point and the advance party is provided by either connecting files or a connecting group consisting of one fire team. Between larger units of the advance guard, main body, and rear guard, a connecting group may consist of a squad.

(3) **Point of Advance Guard**

(a) The point precedes the advance party along the axis of advance (the general direction of movement for a unit). The distance between the point and advance party is prescribed by the commander of the advance party. Its mission is to prevent an enemy in the immediate vicinity of the route of march from surprising the following troops, and to prevent any undue delay of the column. Possible ambush sites such as stream crossings, road junctions, small villages, and defiles are thoroughly probed by the point.

(b) Formations for the point are prescribed by the squad leader. Generally, the squad uses a wedge or open column formation depending on the terrain. (See fig. 4-2.) When the squad is advancing in the wedge formation, the leading fire team moves on the edges of the road or trail. The two fire teams in the rear march off the road or trail, one team on either side of it. When the road or trail is bound by thick vegetation, or there is a need for haste, the formation of the point is usually a squad column. The fire teams may also be in column formation and advance along alternate sides of the road or trail. In any case, the formation for the point is prescribed by the squad leader, and it is his responsibility to change the formation when the need arises.

![Figure 4-2. The Point in Open Terrain.](image)

(c) The squad leader assigns each fire team a sector of observation and the fire team leaders assign each individual a sector of observation. Individual sectors of observation should overlap, so there are no gaps in the squad or fire team sectors of observation. This ensures the all round observation essential for the proper security of the point. (See figs. 4-3 and 4-4.)
Figure 4-3. Fire Team Sectors of Observation

Figure 4-4 Individual Sectors of Observation

(d) The squad leader of the point generally places himself just to the rear of the leading fire team. From this position, he can most effectively control his squad. He is far enough to the rear to avoid being pinned down by the initial burst of any enemy fire, and yet far enough forward for continuous reconnaissance which enables him to make his estimate of the situation and decision in a minimum of time. The squad leader of the point and the fire team leaders must continually check to see that all members of the squad are alert and vigilant at all times. Weapons are carried ready for instant use. Whenever possible, the point uses armandhand signals for communication.

(e) The point engages all enemy elements within effective range. The squad leader reports contacts to the advance party commander and informs him of the enemy situation and the action he is taking. If the enemy resistance is weak in comparison to the strength of the point, the squad leader initiates a plan to close immediately with the enemy and destroy him. If the enemy resistance is greater than the strength of the point, the squad attacks in a manner that forces the enemy to open fire and disclose his disposition and strength. Such aggressive action materially assists the advance party commander in arriving at a correct estimate of the situation. When the point makes visual contact with an enemy along the route of march but beyond effective range, the advance party commander is notified and the advance continues until contact is made with the enemy. When the enemy is observed beyond effective range to aflank, the point does not proceed to make contact with the enemy, but instead notifies the advance party commander.

(4) Rear Element. In the same manner that the advance party dispatches a point forward, the rear party employs a unit to cover its rear. The formation of the squad serving as the rear element is similar to that of the point of the advance guard, but in reverse order. The squad generally employs a vee or a column formation. The squad leader positions himself at the head of the rear most fire team. This formation is easy to control, provides allround security, favors fire and maneuver to the flanks, and the fire is adequate in all directions. (See fig. 4-5.) The rear unit stops to fire only when enemy action threatens to interfere with the march. Any observed enemy activity is reported to the rear party commander. The rear point cannot expect reinforcement by other troops. It repels all enemy attacks vigorously. If the enemy threatens to overrun the rear unit, a covering force from the rear party takes up a position to cover the rear point. When forced back, the rear unit withdraws around a flank or along a designated route so as not to mask the fire of the covering force. (See fig. 4-6.)
(5) **Point of a Flank Guard.** The missions, actions, and formations of a squad when serving as the point of a flank guard are the same as when the squad is acting as the point of an advance guard.

**Figure 4-5. The Squad as Rear Element.**

**Figure 4-6. Withdrawal of the Rear Element.**

(6) **Flank Patrol**

(a) Rifle squads are often detailed as flank security patrols. A flank patrol may be ordered to move to and occupy an important terrain feature on the flank of the advance, or to move parallel to the column at a prescribed distance from it, the distance depending on the speed of the column and the terrain. When vehicles or helicopters are available and terrain permits their use, it is highly desirable to provide the patrol with transportation.

(b) When moving on foot parallel to the column, the patrol adopts formations based upon considerations of terrain, speed, and self protection. In open terrain, a wedge formation is usually the best. In heavily wooded terrain, the patrol might use the squad column. The leading fire team serves as the scouting element of the patrol.

(c) The patrol moves so as to prevent the enemy from placing effective small arms fire on the column. It investigates areas likely to conceal enemy elements or provide them good observation. The patrol observes from commanding ground and moves rapidly from point to point, keeping between the protected unit and possible enemy locations.

(d) Enemy patrols moving away from the main body are reported, but are not fired upon unless otherwise directed. All other hostile forces within effective range are engaged immediately by the patrol. If the enemy opens fire on either the patrol or the column, the patrol determines the strength and dispositions and reports this information promptly to the unit or column commander. The patrol resists any enemy attack until ordered to withdraw.

(7) **Security for the Halted Column; March Security**

(a) March security is always established by a marching unit making any temporary halt. It is established by the advance, flank, and rear guards who occupy critical terrain features controlling the approaches to the halted column. Special attention is given to the flanks.
(b) The mission of the March security is to protect the halted column from surprise attack by the enemy. If attacked, the March security engages the enemy, thus allowing the column time to take up a position from which to repel the attack.

(e) The squad is often detailed as an element in March security. When the squad is so detailed, the platoon commander informs the squad leader of the situation, the security position to be occupied, to whom and where reports of enemy activity are to be sent, and the anticipated duration of the halt.

(e) Upon arriving at the prescribed location and making a hasty reconnaissance, the squad leader positions his fire teams where they can observe and defend all avenues of approach leading into the squad area of responsibility. He ensures alert observation by detailing sentinels in pairs and arranging for frequent reliefs. The squad does not abandon its outpost until it receives explicit orders to rejoin its unit. (See Fig. 4-7.)

Figure 4-7. The Squad as an Element of March Security.

(8) Termination of the Tactical Column. The tactical column normally ends when a unit occupies an assembly area to prepare for the attack. However, the enemy situation may cause a unit to deploy into the approach march from the tactical column without occupying an assembly area.

4203. Final Preparations in the Assembly Area

a. Assembly Area. An assembly area is an area where units assemble prior to further tactical action. An assembly area should provide cover, concealment, and security from ground or air attack; it should be large enough to allow for unit dispersion and have ready access to suitable routes forward. When possible, the assembly area should be located beyond the effective range of hostile flat trajectory weapons. Final preparations for the attack are normally completed when the squad is in the assembly area. Those not completed may be accomplished in the attack position. These preparations include reconnoitering, formulating plans, and issuing orders. Also, but not limited to, the following should occur:

- Rehearsals
- Additional ammunition is drawn and distributed.
- Weapons, equipment, and personnel are checked for readiness.
- Equipment not required for the attack is collected and staged for later pickup.
· Extra or special equipment needed for the operation is obtained and issued.

· Personnel are allowed to rest as much as possible.

· Communication equipment is checked. Leaders must ensure that the required frequencies and call signs are on hand.

b. The six troop-leading steps: Begin Planning, Arrange
for Reconnaissance and Coordination, Make Reconnaissance, Complete Plan,
Issue Order, Supervise Activities (BAMCIS) are the sequence by which a
leader receives, plans, and executes his mission. It can be viewed as elements of
planning and decision making. These steps are also contained in the observe,
orient, decide, action decision making cycle. Combat orders are developed along
with the troop-leading steps. The development of the combat order begins at the
receipt of the mission and does not end with combat, but continues throughout and
after the fight in anticipation of the next mission. It includes the techniques by
which orders and instructions are organized, sequenced, and transmitted from leaders to
subordinates. The combat order is a continuing process with accomplishment
of the mission as its main goal. Among combat orders, there are: the Warning Order,
the Operation Order, and the Fragmentary Order. Orders generally adhere to the
five-paragraph (SMEAC) format though each will differ due to time available and
information available or required. (Explanation of these procedures is included in
appendix C).

c. Attack Plan. Following a brief time of mission analysis (METT-T), arranging for and
making reconnaissances, the squad leader completes his attack plan. There are two
methods of attack for a squad: (1) (a flanking attack) (see par. 4302h[1]), and (2) a
frontal attack (see par. 4302h[2]).

d. Issue Attack Order. Once the leader completes the tactical plan, he issues his
order to his subordinates. A five-paragraph order gives subordinates the essential
information needed to carry out the operation. It sets forth the Situation, the Mission,
the plan and method of Execution, Administration and logistics, and Command and
signal information. This format is commonly referred to and remembered by the
acronym SMEAC. The order converts the leader’s plan into action, gives direction to
the efforts of his unit, and provides specific instructions to subordinate elements. At the
rifle company level and below, orders are most commonly issued orally with the aid
of a terrain model. The following contains information that might be included
in a squad leaders order.

ORIENTATION. Prior to issuing an order, the unit leader orients his
subordinate leaders to the planned area of operation using a terrain model, map, or
when possible, the area of operation. The purpose of the orientation is to simply
orient subordinates prior to the issuing of the order. Keep the orientation simple
and brief. Orientations typically include:
- Direction of north
- Present location (grid)
- Unit objectives (grid, terrain feature and designator)
- Key features and their potential effects on your mission to include:
  - Land forms (hill, valley, finger, draw, depressions, etc.)
  - Streams, rivers and lakes (names and general direction of flow)
- Roads (names and general direction)
- Firebreaks, trails and power lines
- LZs, and beaches (grid and designator)
- Vegetation and its potential effect on the mission (forest, jungle, desert, etc.)
- Boundaries outlining your planned area of operation
- Weather forecast and its potential effect on terrain, personnel, equipment, and mission
- Astronomical data that is applicable to the mission (BMNT, sunrise, sunset, EENT, lunar and tidal data)
- Time zone (when applicable)

1. **SITUATION.** The situation paragraph contains information on the overall status and disposition of both friendly and enemy forces. The information provided is that deemed essential to the subordinate leader's understanding of the current situation. The situation paragraph contains three subparagraphs: Enemy Forces, Friendly Forces, Attachments and Detachments.

a. **Enemy Forces.** Information about the enemy contained in this subparagraph includes intelligence provided by higher headquarters and information gathered (facts and assumptions) which pertain to the accomplishment of the mission. Analysis of the enemy is conducted during your estimate of the situation (METT-T). The Enemy Forces subparagraph has three subparagraphs within it.

(1) **SALUTE.** This information is usually obtained directly from your higher commander's order and should be tailored to what is needed by subordinates. This subparagraph provides information on such things as known and suspected enemy locations, current/recent activities, what type of unit the friendly force is facing, (i.e., light infantry, mechanized, armored) the strength estimate with respect to equipment, personnel and support capabilities (mortar, artillery, air, NBC, recon, patrols, etc.). A helpful acronym to remember when developing this paragraph is **SALUTE.** In relation to enemy forces, this acronym stands for: Size of the enemy force, their Activity, last known Location, Unit type/designation, Time the enemy was last observed, and Equipment they possess. The purpose of SALUTE is to focus thinking about identifying and locating enemy weaknesses that can be exploited.
(2) **DRAW-D.** An acronym to assist the leader in determining the enemy's capabilities and limitations is **DRAW-D**, which stands for: Defend, Reinforce, Attack, Withdraw, and Delay. There is no requirement to mention every action the enemy might possibly take, only those that are likely.

(3) **Enemy most probable course of action.** (EMPCOA) Anticipating the EMPCOA is based on DRAW-D. EMPCOA includes combining pertinent information provided by higher with other facts and assumptions about the enemy. Considering the enemy most probable course of action is an essential element in the development of the scheme of maneuver. This is also called war gaming.

**b. Friendly Forces.** Information contained in this subparagraph is obtained directly from your higher commander's order. It contains the missions and locations of higher, adjacent, and supporting units, and the next higher commander's intent for the operation. Information should be limited to that which subordinate leaders need to know to accomplish their assigned mission. It can be remembered by the acronym **HAS** and includes in order:

1. **Higher.** The location, mission and intent of the next higher unit (for a squad leader's order, the platoon's mission and the platoon commander's intent).

2. **Adjacent.** The mission and location of units to the left, right, front and rear having effect on the unit’s mission, as well as units tasked with a reserve mission. Listed is the unit providing security, their mission and general location.

3. **Supporting.** Nonorganic units providing fire support or combat service support are addressed here. Listed are the units providing support, the location of the supporting unit, the command relationship (DS, GS, etc.), priority of the support and the unit being supported, if known.

**c. Attachments and Detachments.** Nonorganic units attached, and/or organic units detached from the issuing unit by higher headquarters are addressed here. The unit and effective time of attachment/detachment are given. If there are no attachments or detachments state "none."

2. **MISSION.** The mission statement is a clear and concise statement of what the unit is to accomplish. The mission statement is derived from the leader's mission analysis. It expresses the unit's primary task and purpose by addressing the "five Ws" -- **Who** (unit), **What** (task), **When** (time), **Where** (grid), and **Why** (purpose ...in order to...) for the mission assigned. The mission statement should also include the type of operation (attack or defend) and the control measures that will be used (such as "objective" and "battle position"). The task describes the action to be taken while the purpose describes the desired result of the action. Of the two, the purpose is predominant. While the situation may change, making the
task obsolete, the purpose (short term intent) continues to guide our actions when communication is lost or the situation changes.

3. EXECUTION. The execution paragraph contains the "how to" information needed to conduct the operation. This paragraph consists of Commander's Intent, Concept of the Operation, Tasks to subordinate unit leaders, and Coordinating Instructions.

a. Commander's Intent. The commander's intent is a vision provided to subordinates which enables them to act in a changing environment in the absence of additional orders. It describes the commander's long term purpose of the operation with respect to the relationship among friendly forces, the enemy and terrain. At the tactical level, intent is conveyed throughout the order because the commander personally drafts and delivers the order; he can therefore emphasize key points that he believes are vital to the success of the mission.

b. Concept of the Operation. The concept of operation includes the scheme of maneuver, fire support plan, and when applicable, the employment plan of other combat multipliers such as obstacles used in the defense.

(1) Scheme of Maneuver. Using a graphic, sketch, or terrain model, the leader explains his plan to accomplish the unit's assigned mission. It should be described in general terms without identifying specific units. Brief the scheme of maneuver in logical sequence; begin at the current location and brief the unit's actions through completion of your mission. For an offensive operation the scheme of maneuver includes: form of maneuver, planned distribution of forces (including main effort and supporting effort), direction of movement, tactical control measures, and consolidation instructions. For a defensive operation, the scheme of maneuver includes: defensive technique, planned distribution of forces, general direction of fires/location of planned engagement areas, counterattack plan, and security plan. When applicable, reserve forces are also briefed.

(2) Fire Support Plan. Describes how fire support will be used to complement the scheme of maneuver. The fire support plan ties in directly with the scheme of maneuver. Organic, attached and supporting indirect fires may be included. In some instances, this paragraph can also be used to describe how direct fires will be used to support the scheme of maneuver. Included in the fire support plan may be:

- the purpose/concept of fire support and how it will integrate with and support the scheme of maneuver.
- the priority of fires and when priority shifts within the unit
- the location, description and target designation of preplanned targets that support the scheme of maneuver.
c. Tasks. The specific missions to be accomplished by each subordinate element of the unit will be listed in a separate numbered subparagraph, including reserves. Task statements are your subordinate unit's mission statements, and as such, should be written in the same manner as any mission statement. Just as your mission statement from higher, your subordinate task statements should answer the "5 Ws," Who, What (task), When, Where, and Why (purpose/in order to ...) for the missions you assign. When tasks are multiple, they are itemized with subparagraphs. If there is a priority or sequence of accomplishment, it is stated. When a subordinate unit is designated the main effort, state it in the tasking statement. Anticipated (...be prepared to...) missions should be included (i.e., pursuit, defense). Subordinate unit tasks should be listed in a logical sequence (i.e., from start to finish; or most important to the least important missions, followed by anticipated missions). Leaders should not leave to interpretation of subordinates tasks must be accomplished.

d. Coordinating Instructions. Coordinating instructions are those specific instructions that tie the plan together. Included are details of coordination and control applicable to two or more units in the command. Items commonly addressed in coordinating instructions include:

1. Order of movement and planned formations during movement
2. Movement into the defense (used for deliberate occupation of the defense only).
3. Location/grids for tactical and fire control measures--these control measures should also be depicted on your terrain model/operational graphic.

   Examples include: check points, phase lines, release points, battle positions, SP/LP, TRPs, etc. When briefing tactical control measures, point out the location on your terrain model and then give grid coordinates.
4. Target precedence--assigned to specific units/weapon systems to provide guidance on what targets to engage when multiple targets are presented.
5. Security plan--the plan to provide early warning/protection to the unit to prevent surprise upon enemy contact.
6. Engagement and disengagement criteria and instructions
7. Priority of work (used for defensive operations)
8. Reporting requirements
9. Rules of engagement (if applicable)
10. MOPP level
11. Planning and execution time lines
4. **ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS.** This paragraph contains all the information necessary for subordinate units to coordinate their resupply, recovery of equipment, and evacuation of wounded and prisoners. This paragraph addresses the "FIVE Bs" -- BEANS (chow), BULLETS (ammunition), BATTERIES (COMM/NVG), BAND-AIDS (MEDEVAC) & BAD GUYS (EPWs) and is divided into two subparagraphs.

- **a. Administration**
  1. Medical evacuation plan for wounded (Band-aid)
  2. Enemy prisoners of war (EPW) handling procedures and evacuation plan (Bad-guys) * Admin subparagraphs should outline POCs at your level and at least one level up. Specific instructions such as when to evacuate casualties and location of collection point are also included.

- **b. Logistics**
  1. Initial issue and resupply plan (ammo, chow, water, batteries) (Beans, Bullets, Batteries)
  2. Any other logistical concerns to include transportation, etc. * Also included in logistic subparagraphs should be who is responsible for drawing, who gets special gear and any POCs necessary for coordination.

5. **COMMAND AND SIGNAL.** This paragraph contains instructions and information relating to command and communications (control) functions. It contains two subparagraphs--signal and command.

- **a. Signal.** Specifies the signal instructions for the operation. Include both the primary and alternate signal plans as well as methods of communication in priority (example: primary means of communication is land line, alternate is radio, then messenger). Also included are the times when the signal plan changes.
  1. Communication plan to include primary and alternate call signs/frequencies (CEOI index number if applicable) should be specified as well as time of change.
  2. Visual signals required to coordinate the concept of operations (examples include: signals to commence, shift, and cease the base of fire; signal for displacement of the base of fire force; signals to commence, and cease the FPF; signal to break contact).
  3. Challenge/Password (primary & alternate)/running password and time of change.
  4. Brevity codes and code words

- **b. Command.** Identifies leader location and the location of other leaders as required.
  1. Location of the higher commander. (key leaders)
  2. Leader location before, during and after the battle.
  3. Succession of command (i.e., sqd leader, 1st fire team leader, etc.)
4204. Movement to the Line of Departure

Upon leaving the assembly area, the squad makes a rapid and continuous advance to the line of departure. If necessary, a brief halt to effect last minute coordination and to assume initial combat formations may be made in the attack position. If the squad is subjected to artillery or mortar fire along the route, it moves quickly through or around the impact area. See figure 4-8 for tactical control measures used by the squad in an attack.

Figure 4-8. Typical Control Measures Used by Rifle Squad on a Dismounted Daylight Attack (Schematic)

a. Approach March. The squad leaves the assembly area and continues the movement toward the enemy in the approach march formation. The approach march formation is used when enemy contact is imminent. The column establishes guards to the front, flanks, and rear, as appropriate. Elements within the column may be fully or partially deployed in the attack formation. Recognizable terrain features to coordinate the advance. During the approach march, the squad and fire teams take maximum advantage of cover and concealment along the route. (See fig. 4-9.)

Figure 4-9. Rifle Platoon from Assembly Area to the Assault Position

(1) Initial Formation. Upon assuming an approach march formation, the platoon commander may prescribe initial squad formations. As the march progresses, however, the squad leaders order formation changes in accordance with the terrain, the frontages assigned, and the likelihood of enemy contact.

(2) Base Squad. A base squad is designated by the platoon commander to assist in maintaining direction, position, and rate of march. Other squads will guide on the base squad. When applicable, the Main Effort is assigned to the base squad.

(3) Duties of the Squad Leader. The squad leader regulates his squad's advance on the base squad, or if his squad is the base squad, he advances it as directed by the platoon commander. As he moves, he studies the ground to the front in order to take advantage of cover and concealment and to control the movement of his fire teams. He also maintains direction and makes minor detours to take advantage of better terrain.

(4) Scouting Fire Team

(a) When a rifle platoon in the approach march is not preceded by friendly troops, it uses its own scouting elements. The scouting element is usually one fire team; however, an entire squad may be used. A fire team used as a scouting element is called a scouting fire team and is controlled by the platoon commander, assisted by the squad leader. A squad leader whose squad is
providing the scouting fire team normally marches near the platoon commander to assist in the control of the scouting fire team. A scouting fire team moves aggressively to cover the front of the advancing platoon and to force the enemy to disclose his position. Formations generally used by a scouting fire team are the wedge or skirmishers. Normally, a scouting fire team scouts a frontage of 50 to 75 meters. If a wider frontage must be covered, the entire squad must be employed, normally using the vee or wedge formation. Scouting fire teams are covered by the platoon or, when the platoon is masked, the fire team covers its own advance. The fire team leader watches constantly for signals from the platoon commander, remaining in visual contact at all times. The distance that the scouting fire team moves ahead of the platoon varies with the terrain. This distance is normally the limit of visibility. In open terrain, the platoon commander usually directs the scouting fire team to move by bounds along a succession of objectives.

(b) When a scouting fire team is directed to advance over open ground to the edge of a wood line, two members go inside the wood line for 50 to 60 meters while the other men of the fire team cover them. When it is determined that the area near the edge of the woods is clear, the fire team leader signals the platoon commander that it is safe to move forward and then moves the remainder of the fire team into the woods. The scouting fire team then occupies and holds a line 50 to 75 meters within the woods and observes toward the front until the platoon comes up. The scouting fire team leader awaits further word from the platoon commander before moving the team further into the woods. When directed, he moves the team forward until they reach the far edge of the woods. The team holds at the edge of the woods and notifies the platoon commander of the situation. The platoon commander moves the platoon to a position where it can cover the scouting fire team and directs the team leader to move out and continue his scouting mission.

(c) When a scouting fire team is fired upon, the individuals immediately take cover, locate targets, and return fire. The scouting fire team leader then determines:

- Location of enemy (range and reference points).
- Extent of position (location of flanks).
- Types of positions (fighting holes, bunkers, obstacles, etc.).
- Number of enemy.
- Enemy weapons (mortars, tanks, etc.)

(d) The platoon commander contacts the leader of the scouting fire team to obtain as much information as possible. The platoon commander then returns control of the scouting fire team to the squad leader. The platoon commander may bring up the remainder of his squads, set up a base of fire, and assault the
enemy position. Should the enemy position prove too strong for the platoon, the platoon usually remains engaged with the enemy as a base of fire while units of the advance party are committed to clear the enemy resistance.

b. Attack Position. The attack position is the last concealed and covered position occupied by assault echelons before crossing the line of departure. It is the location where final coordination, last minute preparations, and, if not already accomplished, deployment into initial attack formations are effected. When all preparations for the attack are completed in the assembly area, there should be no delay when passing through the attack position. (See figs. 4-8 and 4-9.)

4205. Special Situation
Paragraph 4102 states that in planning and execution, some of the phases of offensive combat may be shortened, omitted, or repeated. An example of this would be when a unit that is occupying defensive positions is in contact with the enemy and is ordered to conduct an attack. Since the unit is already in contact with the enemy, the advance to contact would be omitted. Due to the danger of enemy observation, direct fire weapons and ability to mass indirect fire weapons (artillery and mortars), it is not always possible to move the unit out of the defensive positions back to an assembly area. In this situation, the unit's present defensive positions become the assembly area, attack position, and line of departure. All of the actions and final preparations, which under normal circumstances would be accomplished in the assembly area and attack position, will be accomplished while the majority of the unit remains in place.