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MM1300
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INTRODUCTION TO THE 0341 MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY

STUDENT OUTLINE

LESSON PURPOSE. The purpose of this period of instruction is to familiarize the student with the organization of the mortar units within the infantry battalion. The lesson consists of the following main ideas:

- a. Mission of the 60mm mortar section.
- b. Organization of the 60mm mortar section.
- c. Mission of the 81mm mortar section.
- d. Organization of the 81mm mortar section.

1. **PURPOSE OF MORTARS.** Mortars are the infantry units' most responsive source of indirect fire. Without mortars the infantry unit would have to rely on other units for fire support. This can take a large amount of time to coordinate, which in the end could equal mission failure and the loss of Marines.

a. **Offense.** There are three major tasks given to mortars in the offense. They are:

(1) Suppress the enemy prior to and during the attack and support the attacking unit throughout the assault.

(2) Obscuring enemy observation in order to support the breaching unit can be done with use of RP and WP smoke rounds from mortars.

(3) Illumination of the battlefield is of major importance to the attacking unit. With mortars the 0311's have the ability to see what they are attacking and adjust the attack as necessary.

b. **Defense.** The mortars have two major tasks in the defense, they are:

(1) Final Protective Fires (FPF) is used to stop the enemy's assault during the attack. The 81mm mortar platoon FPF has a width of approximately 300 meters and the 60mm mortar section FPF has an approximate width of 90 meters.

(2) Illumination of the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) allows the front lines of the defense to actually see what is attacking them as well as detect any surprise enemy assaults on the defensive lines.

c. Combined Arms. Mortars are used in combination with close air support. Mortars can do this two ways.

(1) Mortars can be used to suppress the enemy air defense weapons to enable friendly aircraft to drop all ordnance while taking little or no enemy fire.

(2) Marking targets for air strikes can ensure that the aircrafts ordnance is effective, accurate, and minimizes fratricide.

2. WEAPONS COMPANY. The weapons company is located in an infantry battalion. The weapons company is organized into a company headquarters, a mortar platoon (81mm mortars), an anti-armor platoon (M220E4 TOW and M98A1 Javelin), and a heavy machinegun platoon (M2 HMG, and MK 19 MOD 3 AGL).

a. Mission. The mission of the 81mm mortar platoon is: To provide continuous indirect fire support to an infantry battalion and its subordinate elements in the offense and defense.

b. Employment. The infantry battalion commander is ultimately responsible for the employment of the 81mm mortar platoon. He has three options for employment.

(1) General Support. The mortar platoon fires in support of the entire battalion, receiving requests for support from each of the rifle companies. The mortar platoon commander is responsible to the battalion commander for the tactical, administrative and logistic control of the platoon. General support allows flexibility, coordination, massing and timing of fires to be exercised fully.

(2) Direct Support. The mortar platoon or one section fires in support of a specific rifle company. The mortar platoon commander exercises tactical control by taking necessary actions to deliver fire requested by the supported commander. The mortar platoon commander remains responsible to the battalion commander for the administrative and logistic control of the platoon. Direct support allows the supported commander to control the use of his allotted fires. Direct support does not prevent the platoon from providing fire support to the rest of the battalion; however, the company being directly supported has a priority of fire.

(3) Attachment. One or more mortar sections are placed temporarily within a rifle company. The rifle company commander is responsible to the battalion commander for the tactical and logistical control of the mortar section(s). Attachment allows the supported commander to receive mortar fire in situations where it might otherwise not be available.

c. Platoon Organization. The 81mm mortar platoon is organized into a platoon headquarters and two 81mm mortar sections. There is 1 officer and 68 enlisted men. The weapons company commander has administrative control (feeding, billeting, clothing, etc.) but tactical control is directly in the hands of the battalion commander working through the 81mm mortar platoon commander. The 81mm mortar is the infantry battalion commander's organic indirect fire weapon in the same manner as the 60mm mortar is the rifle company commander's organic indirect fire weapon. The 81mm platoon is commonly referred as the Battalion Commanders hip pocket artillery.

(1) The Platoon Headquarters. The platoon headquarters contains 1 officer and 4 enlisted Marines. Of these, the functions of the platoon commander and the platoon sergeant are the most relevant.

(a) Platoon Commander. This billet calls for an infantry lieutenant who is directly responsible to the battalion commander for the employment of the mortar platoon. He normally remains with his platoon for reconnoitering new positions and displacements. His primary job is to remain close to the battalion commander, advising him on the employment of his 81mm mortar platoon in much the same manner as a staff officer. Also, as a member of the infantry battalions Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC), the platoon commander helps to ensure that all supporting arms are working together and that the weapons supporting a particular unit do not produce casualties in adjacent friendly units.

(b) Platoon Sergeant. This billet is the only one within the infantry battalion that is held by a Marine with an artillery MOS (0848). The platoon sergeant is a gunnery sergeant responsible to the platoon commander for the functioning of the platoon's Fire Direction Center. The platoon sergeant ensures that proper fire direction and safety procedures are maintained.

(c) Other members of the platoon Headquarters are an ammunition NCO, 1 ammunition technician and messenger/driver. Their functions are self-explanatory.

(2) The 81mm Mortar Section. There are two 81mm mortar sections in the platoon. This allows flexibility in organic fire support for the rifle companies. The 32 men of the section are divided up into a section headquarters and four mortar squads consisting of 6 Marines per squad. The 81mm mortar section is the lowest echelon of the mortar platoon that can be employed independently.

(a) Section Headquarters. The primary function of the section headquarters is to provide command and control to the section. To accomplish this, each headquarters contains 3 Marines in the fire direction center (FDC), 2 forward observers, 1 section leader, 1 ammo man, 1 ammo/driver and enough communication equipment to maintain contact with the forward observers while operating with the rifle companies.

(b) Fire Direction Center. This section allows the mortar section to function independently from the platoon if required. The FDC is the brains of the platoon. The FDC receives the "call for fire" from the FO, computes firing data and issues the fire commands to the gun line. However, when the sections operate as part of the platoon, only the platoon FDC is activated, though it is advisable to activate one of the section FDC's as a backup unit, in case the platoon FDC is knocked out by enemy fire.

(c) Forward Observer Team. Each mortar section has 2 forward observers (FO). This team accompanies the rifle company during operations and requests mortar fire via radio or field phone to the mortar FDC. The team's mission is to report targets, inform the FDC of the target's location, adjust fire on the target, and report the effect of the mortar fire to the FDC.

(d) 81mm Mortar Squads. There are four 81mm mortar squads within each section. Each squad consists of six Marines who are responsible for the operation of one (1) mortar. Specifically, the squad consists of:

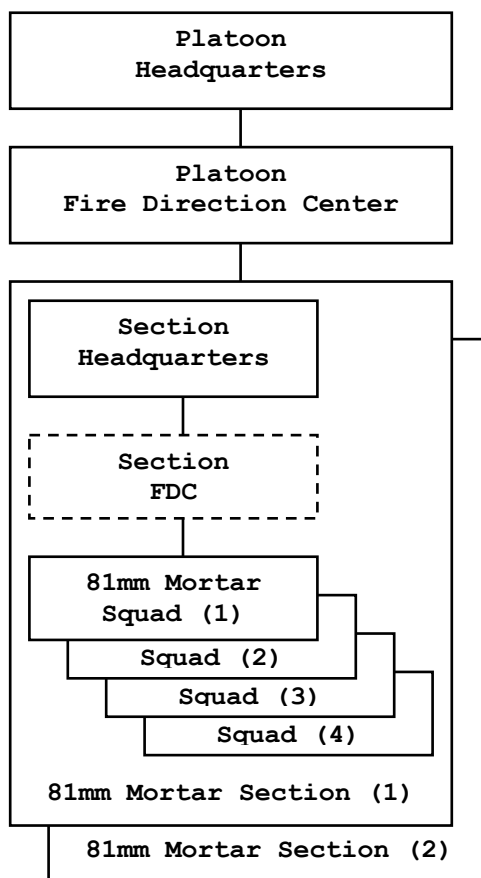
1. Squad Leader (Sgt. 0341). Supervises the emplacement, laying, and firing of the mortar, he supervises all other squad activities.

2. Gunner (Cpl. 0341). The gunner takes a knee to the left side of the mortar, places firing data on the sight and lays the mortar for deflection and elevation.

3. A-Gunner (Lcpl. 0341). The assistant gunner loads and fires the mortar. In addition to loading, he swabs the bore after 10 rounds have been fired or after each fire mission. He may assist the gunner in shifting the mortar when large deflection changes are required.

4. Ammunition bearer (Pvt. 0341). The first ammunition bearer prepares the ammunition for firing and passes it to the assistant gunner. The second ammunition bearer maintains ammunition for firing and provides local security for the mortar position. He performs other duties as the squad leader directs.

5. Ammo-man /Driver (Pvt. 0341). He is the squad driver. He maintains the ammunition for firing and provides local security for the mortar position. He performs other duties as the squad leader directs.



81mm MORTAR PLATOON ORGANIZATION

3. **WEAPONS PLATOON.** The weapons platoon is located in the rifle company of an infantry battalion. The weapons platoon, is organized into a platoon headquarters, a light company mortar section (60mm mortars), an assault section (MK-153 SMAW), and a M240G medium machinegun section.

a. Mission. The mission of the 60mm mortar section is to provide continuous indirect fire support to an infantry company and its subordinate elements in the offense and defense.

b. 60mm Mortar Employment

(1) The infantry company commander is ultimately responsible for the employment of the 60mm mortar section. This section provides the company with organic indirect fire capability. This enables the rifle company to respond rapidly to situations requiring indirect fire. The company commander can use his 60mm mortars to suppress enemy fires while calling for heavier fire support. They can also be used to deny key terrain to enemy ground elements.

(2) The three mortar squads provide sufficient indirect fire support for each of the rifle platoons. The Weapons Platoon Commander will advise the Company Commander on how to best employ the mortars.

c. 60mm Mortar Section Organization. The 60mm mortar section has a section leader and three mortar squads. Each squad mans one 60mm mortar.

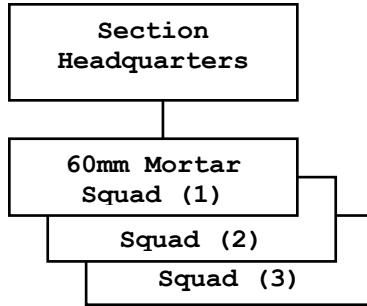
(1) Section Leader. He is a Staff Sergeant, with an MOS of 0369. He functions as both the FDC and Forward Observer (FO). He is positioned where he can best control the mortar squads.

(2) 60mm Mortar Squad. The mortar squad consists of three Marines. Each squad member is cross-trained to perform all duties involved in firing the mortar. The positions and principal duties are as follows:

(a) Squad Leader/Gunner. He is a Corporal. His responsibilities are, manipulating the sight, elevating handle, and traversing assembly. He places firing data on the sight, and lays the mortar for deflection and elevation.

(b) Assistant Gunner. He is a Lance Corporal. He assists the gunner as needed and loads and fires the mortar. He also swabs the barrel every 10 rounds or after the end of each mission.

(c) Ammunition Man. He is a Private or Private First Class. He prepares and inspects ammunition, and passes it to the assistant-gunner.



60mm MORTAR SECTION ORGANIZATION

References. FM 23-90, Mortars pages 3-1 through 3-6 and 4-1 through 4-6; TM 09922A-10/1, Operator's Manual for Mortar, 81mm, M252 pages 1-3 through 2-6; and TM 08206A-10/1A, Operator's Manual for Lightweight Company Mortar, 60mm, M224 pages 0003 00-1 through 0003 00-3.