

## Reuther Von Totmann's primer on defensive platoon maneuvers

The goal of the defender is either to completely halt the attacker or to delay and attrit him until the situation shifts to the defenders advantage, while also avoiding becoming overwhelmed and destroyed by the attacker in return. Successfully pulling this off requires a good eye for terrain, concealment and discipline to choose the right location and the right time to fight as well as the right time to fold. This short primer will hopefully help you lead your platoon to victory, or at least let them survive defeat.

You should always strive to make the most out of the advantages you have and mitigate the advantages the enemy holds. So the question then becomes, what advantages does the defender have? In short, cover and concealment. By taking advantage of the terrain a defender can set himself up in good positions which protect him and his men. This is a powerful advantage, but easily nullified by the attacker. Weight of numbers or artillery support, cover can be overcome, quite easily if the attacker has the tools he needs. Since he is attacking you should probably assume that is the case. Therefore it is concealment that is the more important advantage.

Concealment seems to work like cover; it is something that reduces the amount of fire you take from the enemy. However, where cover reduces the effectiveness of enemy fire, concealment will prevent it from targeting you in the first place. There are only so many times you can get shot at and come out unscathed; you can not get shot at forever and be just fine. Effective use of concealment will allow you to dictate the pace of your battles and wrench the initiative away from the enemy, if only for a moment. A moment is all that is needed in the modern battlefield to turn the tide.

How do you actually put that into practice? In short, get into a good, concealed position, wait for the enemy to present an opportune target, shoot and then scoot to safety. Here are some examples of how to do that:

### 1. Reserve Fire

By forgoing your ability to move in this turn, you can delay your attack until the movement phase at which point you'll shoot at an enemy which has moved into range and line of sight. This will both secure you the first shot of the engagement as well as an inherent advantage in the exchange of fire, as the enemy, having moved, is not able to fire back in the same turn.

### 2. Fire and Maneuver

By using up your movement in a turn you can prepare Fire and Maneuver instead of moving. Then, next turn you can immediately move 1 tile after shooting, during the shooting phase. This allows you to 'dodge' enemy return fire if you roll higher initiative than them. In addition you will be able to move your full movement during the movement phase. It is important to keep in mind that you are not able to both reserve your fire and set up Fire and Maneuver during the same turn.

Now, these two are better looked at as building blocks for your platoon maneuvers when conducting them in the field. In practice you will string a maneuver together for several turns to achieve the result you desire:

### 3. Reserve fire - Fire - Fire and Maneuver

This shows a three turn string of actions where a platoon starts an ambush with reserve fire, shooting at the enemy during the movement phase. Next turn he shoots again, but doesn't move, instead preparing Fire and Maneuver. Then during the next turn the platoon will shoot and activate Fire and Maneuver, moving out of LoS of the enemy and preventing attacks aimed at him by enemies with less initiative from hitting.

This maneuver trades time and a guaranteed turn of enemy fire in return for maximizing the amount of damage dished out in return; if all goes well the defending platoon will be able to shoot thrice while enemy platoons only once. Take care that this would give mortars time to hone in on your position, but assuming the enemy hasn't already zeroed in with artillery before the ambush starts anything heavier should be just too late to catch your men.

You should use this maneuver if you believe the following exchange of fire favors you significantly.

### 4. Reserve fire - Fire + Movement

This is a two turn variant of the previous maneuver, trading an extra shot in return for being able to reposition faster. The enemy is still guaranteed a turn of return fire, so it is the less preferred option. However, sometimes it is simply necessary to move immediately instead of waiting for maximal effect.

You should use this maneuver if you believe the exchange of fire favors you, but staying a third turn is unacceptable for whatever reason.

### 5. Fire and Maneuver (again)

This is just Fire and Maneuver immediately. Instead of relying on Reserve Fire to start off the engagement. You will have to prepare Fire and Maneuver the turn before you activate it. The advantage of this maneuver is that the platoon will be able to get a shot in without the enemy being guaranteed return fire, and will be able to reposition very quickly. The disadvantage is that you will give up a fighting position for little effect.

You should use this maneuver if you believe the exchange of fire wouldn't favor you, or if it is critically important to reposition quickly.

For all these maneuvers it is critical that you have depth to work with. These maneuvers give up a fighting position in return for avoiding enemy fire, but if you have no new fighting position to take up you could be in serious trouble. Fighting an appropriate amount of time for each position will be a judgment call, but as you experience combat you will grow more secure in said judgment.

Just remember that in order to survive on the modern battlefield you need to maneuver. No matter how strong your position is, the enemy will be able to mass combat power against you whether it is infantry, tanks or artillery and destroy you if you do not maneuver. How strong your position is does not change this basic fact, we learned that lesson with the failures of the Fortress Lines.

There is no need to relearn this lesson in the blood of your men.