

## TACTICAL EMPLOYMENT OF MORTARS

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## PREFACE

This publication serves as the doctrinal reference for the employment of mortar squads, sections, and platoons. It contains guidance on tactics, techniques, and procedures that mortar sections and platoons use to execute their part of the combat operations described in battalion-, squadron-, troop-, and company-level field manuals. This publication also contains guidance on how the mortar unit's fires and displacement are best planned and employed to sustain the commander's intent for fire support.

The target audience of this publication includes mortar squad, section, and platoon leaders, company and battalion commanders, battalion staff officers, and all others responsible for controlling and coordinating fire support during mounted or dismounted combined arms operations. This manual is also for use by training developers as a source document for the combat critical tasks and missions of mortar sections and platoons. Combat developers must use this manual as a source document when refining and revising operational concepts for infantry and cavalry mortar organizations. This publication serves as the primary reference for both resident and nonresident mortar tactical employment instruction presented to cadets, officer candidates, and both commissioned and noncommissioned officers.

This publication is not intended to be used alone. It is part of a set of doctrinal and training publications that together provide the depth and detail necessary to train and employ mortar units. Users must be familiar with the appropriate company-level and battalion-level maneuver manuals, FM 23-90 and FM 23-91, as well as mission-training plans and drill manuals for mortars.

This publication complies with the following international agreements:

STANAG 2020 Operational Situation Reports

STANAG 2022 Intelligence Reports

STANAG 3204 Aeromedical Evacuation

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Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

## CHAPTER 1

### MORTAR SECTIONS AND PLATOONS ON THE AIRLAND BATTLEFIELD

**All maneuver units require indirect fire to win. Mortar sections and platoons provide unique indirect fires that are organizationally responsive to the ground maneuver commander. Military history has repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of mortars. Their rapid, high-angle, plunging fires are invaluable against dug-in enemy troops and targets in defilade, which are not vulnerable to attack by direct fires. Although they are part of the total fire support system, mortar sections and platoons are not simply small artillery batteries. They play a unique and vital role on the AirLand Battlefield. By virtue of their organization at both company and battalion levels, they provide valuable and responsive fires that ease the combat tasks of company, battalion, and brigade commanders.**

#### 1-1. ROLE OF MORTARS

The primary role of mortars is to provide immediately available, responsive indirect fires that support the maneuver of the company or battalion, and that reinforce direct fires during close combat.

In the attack, effective maneuver requires a base of fire, both direct and indirect, to do the following:

- To establish the conditions for maneuver.
- To suppress the enemy.
- To fix him in place.
- To provide close supporting fires for the assault.

In the defense, this base of fire is used as follows:

- To force armored vehicles to button up.
- To breakup enemy troop concentrations.
- To reduce the enemy's mobility and canalize his assault forces into engagement areas.
- To deny him the advantage of defilade terrain and force him into areas covered by direct fire weapons.
- To break up the enemy combined arms team and destroy his synchronization.
- To protect the infantry against a close dismounted assault.