

# Mortars: The Guerrilla's Artillery



This article is part of the [Antistasi Commander's Handbook](#).

## Battle Quotes

“Artillery adds dignity to what would otherwise be an ugly brawl.”

— Frederick the Great

## 1. PURPOSE

To establish the doctrine for the acquisition and employment of mortars. As an irregular force, we cannot afford the attrition of direct, frontal assaults on fortified positions. Mortars provide the capability to strike the enemy from concealment, bypassing their cover and fortifications. This is our primary tool for breaking stalemates, suppressing enemy strongpoints, and enabling the maneuver of our infantry with minimal risk.

## 2. SITUATION

### a. The Guerrilla's Dilemma

The enemy occupies fortified outposts, roadblocks, and bases. These positions are protected by sandbags, H-barriers, and crew-served weapons, making a direct infantry attack a costly, often suicidal, proposition. Our riflemen are stymied by enemy cover they cannot penetrate.

### b. The Indirect Solution

The mortar defeats cover by attacking from above. Its high-angle trajectory allows shells to plunge directly into trenches and behind walls, striking targets that are immune to direct fire. A well-placed mortar barrage can neutralize an enemy position, allowing our assault elements to close in and destroy a suppressed and disorganized foe.

## Battle Quotes

“The Lord is on the side with the best artillery.”

### 3. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The employment of guerrilla mortars is governed by three principles: **Surprise, Precision, and Mobility**. A mortar's greatest strength is its ability to fire from a hidden position. Its greatest weakness is its vulnerability to counter-attack once that position is revealed. Therefore, the mortar team must strike accurately and then immediately displace to a new firing point.

graph TD  
subgraph "Guerrilla Fire Mission Cycle"  
A(**Find Spotter IDs Target**) --> B(**Fix Fire Ranging Shots**)  
B --> C(**Fire Unleash Fire For Effect**)  
C --> D(**Finish Assault Element Attacks**)  
D --> E(**Flee Mortar Team Displaces**)  
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style B fill:#9A6A23,stroke:#333,stroke-width:2px,color:#fff  
style C fill:#962D2D,stroke:#333,stroke-width:2px,color:#fff  
style D fill:#2874A6,stroke:#333,stroke-width:2px,color:#fff  
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#### a. The Four Roles of Mortar Fire

##### (1) Suppression

This is the mortar's primary role. By dropping high-explosive (HE) rounds onto an enemy position, we force them to take cover, reduce their volume of fire, and disrupt their command and control. This pins the enemy, allowing our infantry to maneuver safely.

##### (2) Destruction

Against "soft" targets like unarmored vehicles, static weapons, or light structures, a concentrated mortar barrage can achieve a destructive effect.

##### (3) Obscuration

Smoke rounds are a critical tool. They can be used to blind enemy observation posts, conceal the movement of our assault teams across open ground, or mask our withdrawal.

##### (4) Illumination

During night operations, parachute flares can be used to illuminate a battlefield, revealing enemy positions and aiding our own forces in an attack or defense.

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## 4. TACTICAL APPLICATION: THE MORTAR TEAM

A mortar is not a single weapon, but a system requiring a trained and coordinated team.

### a. Team Composition

#### (1) Forward Observer (FO) / Spotter

The most critical role. The FO is the eyes of the mortar. They must be concealed in an Observation Post (OP) with a clear view of the target area. They identify targets, call for fire, and provide corrections.

#### (2) Gunner

The gunner operates the mortar itself, aiming the tube based on the FO's instructions and firing the weapon.

#### (3) Assistant Gunner

The assistant prepares and hands rounds to the gunner, allowing for a high rate of fire during a "Fire for Effect" mission.

### b. Ammunition Types

#### High Explosive (HE)

The standard round for suppression and destruction of personnel and light vehicles.

#### Smoke

Creates a thick screen of white smoke. Use it to blind the enemy or cover your movement.

#### Illumination (Flare)

Deploys a parachute flare to light up an area at night. Be aware this illuminates your forces as well.

## 5. THE FIRE MISSION: FROM CALL TO IMPACT

A disciplined fire mission ensures rounds are on target quickly and efficiently.

### (1) Target Identification

1. The Forward Observer identifies a high-value target (e.g., an HMG nest, a command vehicle, massed infantry).

### (2) Establish Firing Point (FP)

1. The Gunner establishes the mortar in a concealed position with a planned escape route. This should be done *before* the fire mission is called.

### (3) Call for Fire & Ranging

1. The FO sends the target's grid coordinates to the Gunner.
2. The Gunner fires a single ranging shot. The FO observes the impact and provides a correction (e.g., "Add 50, Left 25").
3. This process repeats until the ranging shot impacts on or very near the target.

### (4) Fire For Effect (FFE)

1. Once the mortar is zeroed, the FO calls "Fire for Effect."
2. The Gunner and Assistant Gunner fire a rapid succession of 5-10 rounds to saturate the target area.

### (5) End of Mission & Displace

1. Immediately upon completion of the FFE, the FO calls "End of Mission."
2. The mortar team packs up their weapon and **displaces immediately**. This is the most critical step for survival.



#### The Law of Counter-Battery

The moment your first round leaves the tube, you have broadcast your location to the enemy. Their own artillery, mortars, and QRF will be vectored to your Firing Point. The mantra of the mortarman is "**Shoot and Scoot.**" Lingering is a death sentence.

## 6. SUMMARY

The mortar is the guerrilla's personal artillery. It allows a small, agile force to bring devastating firepower to bear from unexpected directions, breaking fortifications and enabling victory. Its power, however, is matched only by its vulnerability. A disciplined team that masters the "shoot and scoot" principle will sow terror and confusion among the enemy. A lazy or slow team will be found and annihilated. Use it wisely, use it quickly, and disappear.

"Ultima Ratio Regum." (The Last Argument of Kings)

— Inscription on cannons of Louis XIV

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