

MEAN STREETS

In the teeming streets of an enemy capital, the U.S. military loses many of its advantages. Army and Marine units have done intense training for urban combat and are equipped with some new gadgets to help them fight.

KEY



U.S. OPERATIONS



IRAQI DEFENSES



BIOCHEM PROTECTION

Troops may wear biochemical suits and masks. Pocket and badge sensors can detect chemical and biological agents.

BARRICADES

Wrecked cars and trucks, especially when set afire, can slow the progress of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles.

MH-6 (LITTLE BIRD HELICOPTER)

These small helicopters are used by Army special operations units to land on top of buildings and insert combat teams into urban battle.

RIFLE SQUAD

Made up of 13 marines: one commander and three fire teams of four. They are the eyes and ears for advancing tanks. **FIRE TEAM** The smallest unit, a group of four men advance down city streets, run covering maneuvers, and watch for snipers.

M1-A1 TANK

Tanks provide critical firepower to Army and Marine units advancing down city blocks but are big targets for antitank weapons.

MACHINE GUNS

A machine gun behind sandbags or inside a building can sweep the streets, impeding the advance of U.S. troops.

BLACK HAWK

Black Hawk helicopters can ferry small teams into urban areas. Yet helicopters become easy targets while hovering above insertion and extraction points.

DRAGON EYE

Small enough to fit into a marine's backpack, this 5-pound reconnaissance craft can show troops what lies ahead, beaming video to tiny screens on their wrists.

SNIPERS

Windows and rubble can hide snipers equipped with small arms or rocket-propelled-grenade (RPG) launchers.

BUILDINGS Tall objects such as towers or even telephone poles can complicate low-altitude helicopter flying and landing.

COMMANDO SOLO

The military's "flying radio station." The EC-130E is equipped with the latest radio and surveillance technology and broadcasts radio transmissions to civilians and combatants.

PREDATOR

The Predator drone's video can provide critical information to commanders and can even fire missiles at ground targets.

CIVILIAN THREATS/HUMAN SHIELDS

U.S. troops must try to avoid civilian casualties. But the enemy may pose as ambulance drivers or firefighters and might even use noncombatants as shields.

OIL-FILLED DITCHES

Burning oil can stop the progress of tanks and can reduce visibility for street fighting.

MINES

Antitank mines can stop tanks. Even mines that are visible present danger until they can be removed.

ENEMY TANKS

Enemy tanks may confront U.S. vehicles. In urban warfare, fighting close up, the M1-A1 loses its standoff advantage.

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC