



Act or Die: Why Close-Quarters Combat in Urban Areas Is Essential for Compagnie Fucilieri

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In contemporary military debate, attention often focuses on suicide drones, artificial intelligence, and electronic warfare. However, the experience of today's conflicts demonstrates an incontrovertible truth: **the final decision on the battlefield still depends on physically clearing the last 150 meters.**

Despite the widespread presence of advanced technological systems, **the ability to seize and hold ground remains the exclusive domain of land forces and, specifically, the rifleman.**

The reality of the modern battlefield: Ukraine and Gaza

Current operational environments — such as those seen in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip — reveal a lethal combination of fifth-generation technology and traditional close-combat dynamics.

- **Trenches, built-up areas, and tunnels:** Soldiers are constantly required to clear urban buildings, deep trenches, and underground tunnel networks.
- **Short-range lethality:** The Chief of the General Staff of the British Army, General Sir Roly Walker, has emphasized that lessons learned from recent conflicts demand absolute excellence in the "40-meter shot." Whether in an urban environment or a trench, engagements take place at extremely close range and with minimal reaction time.
- **Irreplaceable physical presence:** Although the use of drones makes it possible to neutralize many threats before an assault, the final clearing of a room or fortified position requires the soldier's physical presence.

Making CQB a widespread skill across the infantry

To ensure operational effectiveness, Close Quarter Battle (CQB) can no longer be regarded as a discipline reserved exclusively for special forces or elite units. It must become a **standardized, routine skill** for all line infantry units.

The key principles of effective training:

1. **Universal language and tactics:** Unified commands and tactical procedures must be adopted. This enables units to transition smoothly from an urban environment to woodland or a trench system without losing offensive momentum and lethality.
2. **High standards and excellence in training:** training must maintain extremely rigorous selection and assessment criteria (an 80% minimum passing threshold and significant attrition rates). Qualified instructors form the backbone for the widespread and safe dissemination of proper tactics throughout all regiments.
3. **Full confidence and dynamic firing (Advanced Field Firing):** Improved short-range shooting accuracy directly increases the force's overall lethality. Intensive training enhances the safety and operational effectiveness of infantrymen from the earliest stages of enlistment.

3. The fundamental importance of dedicated facilities (*Facility*)

The only way to ensure that training in built-up areas and complex environments is **frequent, safe, and realistic** is to invest in **dedicated training facilities (facilities)**.

Why dedicated facilities are essential:

- **Ammunition expenditure and live-fire exercises:** A high-level CQB course requires the use of exceptionally large quantities of ammunition (thousands of rounds per operator between pistol and assault rifle). Dedicated facilities enable 360° dynamic firing and training in enclosed environments in complete safety.
- **Modular and multidomain environments:** Modern ranges and training villages (*Kill Houses*, simulated urban complexes, trench networks, and tunnels) make it possible to recreate realistic and complex scenarios, including simulated booby traps and aerial threats.
- **Low instructor-to-student ratio:** The availability of adequate facilities ensures close oversight by instructors (up to 1 instructor for every 6 students), ensuring compliance with the highest safety standards and immediate performance feedback.

Conclusion

Technology has changed the face of war, but it has not eliminated the need for close combat. Only armies that control the ground can determine the final outcome of a conflict. For this reason, investing in **dedicated training facilities** and making training for combat in built-up areas and CQB a routine practice for **all infantry** is a priority that can no longer be postponed: a genuine matter of "*Act or Die*".