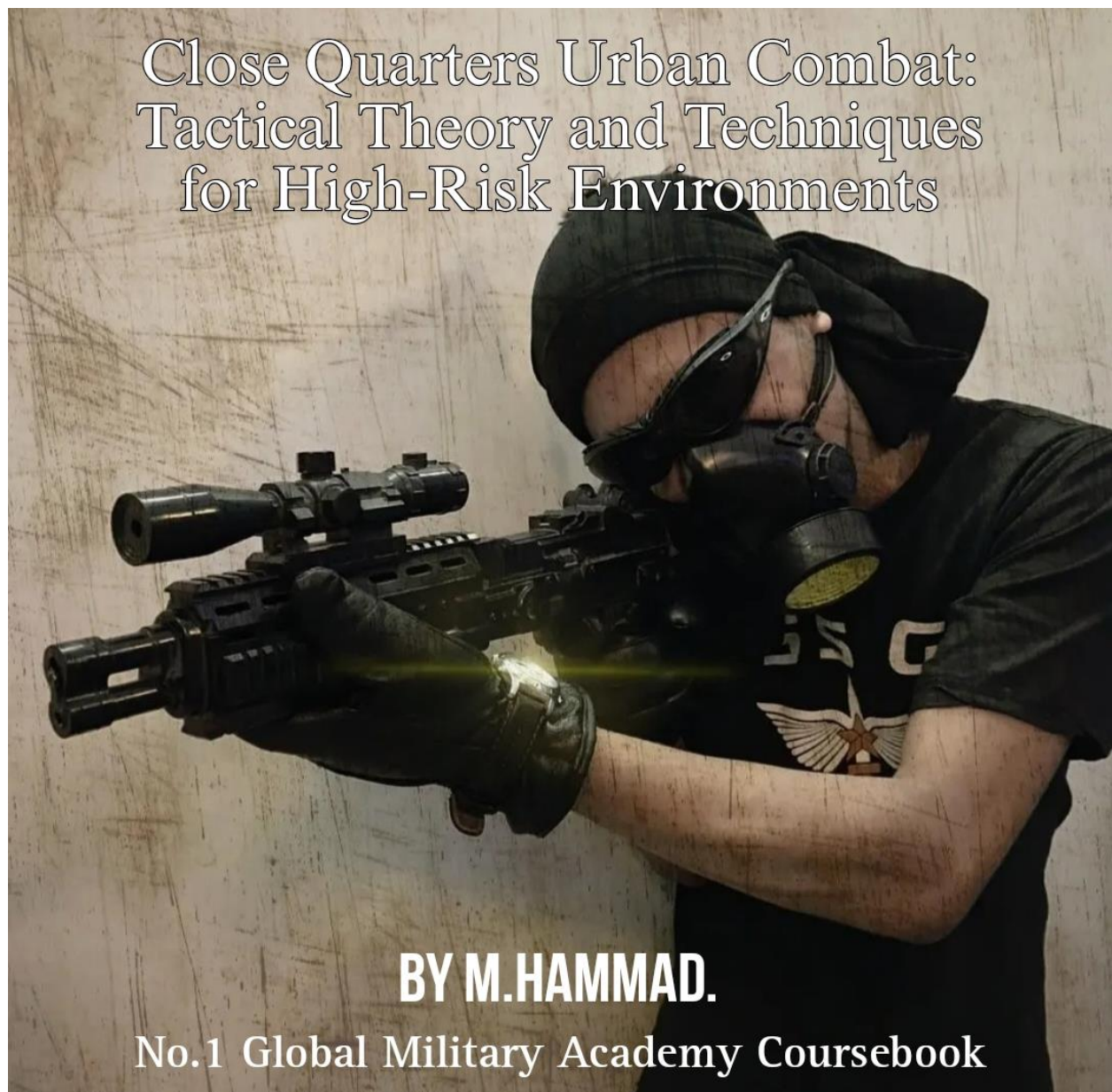


Close Quarters Urban Combat: Tactical Theory and Techniques for High-Risk Environments

A Book by Special Forces Analyst, Military Enthusiast, Actor, Filmmaker, Survival expert, Global Special Forces Consultant and Businessman.

M.Hammad.



Introduction: My name is Muhammad Hammad, a military enthusiast, actor, filmmaker, survival expert, global special forces analyst and businessman. I wrote this book in the name of my passion and dedication to the national service.

Abstract: CQB or CQC (Close Quarter Battles or Combat) is the art of specializing in rapid close-ranged warfare which occurs in confined spaces (typically in a range of a few meters). It is characterized by the need for swift decision-making, precision, and coordination and in-depth understanding of the environment. In this book, we will be discussing the art of close combat and the basic principles on which it is based and integrated into the trainings of many special forces around the globe.



1. Orientation Check Before Breaching

This refers to the critical step where the team or personnel assesses the situation and objectives prior to entering or breaching a potentially hostile area. In CQC, breaching operations are highly dangerous due to limited information, visibility, and close proximity to threats. Hence orientation checks are crucial to the initiation and overall success of the remaining operation.

In an Orientation Check:

- Every team member, wingman or pointman, (we will come to this later) or if operating solo, the special operative physically and psychologically assesses the area.
- **Activating the 5 senses;** He inspects, for the most common e.g. Before a breach, the special operative will scan the door, determine where and how to open it, where it's hinges might be, what is the material of the door, are there any wires or cameras, any signs of IED's (Improvised Explosive Devices). Does he hear anyone inside, how many voices are coming, how many people can be in there by judging the voices, what language are they speaking, are they Arabic, African, which nationality does he think they are. Are there any potential hostages? Does he smell anything, smoke? Odoured explosive material from the room?
- Equipment readiness (weapons, grenades, etc.) is verified.
- Operatives perform communication checks to ensure all devices (radios, hand signals) are functioning.
- Operatives are also taught to take one deep breath, take a final look around before commencing. They are furthermore taught to not neglect their gut feeling, instinct or their 6th sense if you may. If they seriously feel something is very off about the situation, immediately relay the information to higher command after evacuating and establishing distance between the hostile compound and your location.

This step is essential to maintain coordination and prevent disorientation in high-stress environments, where split-second decisions can mean the difference between success and failure.

2. Negative Corner-Fed, Positive Corner-Fed & Tubular Room Clearance

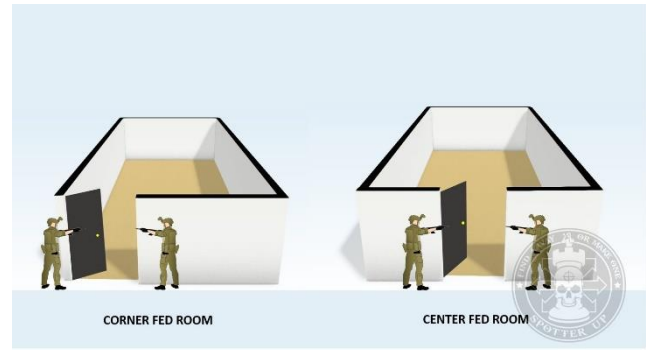
Negative Corner-Fed Room: This term refers to rooms where the doorway is positioned near a corner, creating blind spots or "dead space" immediately upon entry and the operative cannot see any wall adjacent to the door. These rooms are particularly challenging as they leave operatives exposed to hidden threats without clear lines of sight. Examples include bedrooms, classrooms, dining rooms etc.

Tubular Room Clearance: This is a method used in narrow spaces, such as hallways, corridors, or tubular-shaped rooms. It involves a single-file line, and the major area is cleared once you clear one angle or threshold. There might be further cavities in a tubular room, like hallway doors, windows, or even seats in a bus or airplane but if you ask me, based on my experience, these are technically the

rooms one can clear with most ease compared to negative and positive corner-feds. Examples include buses, planes, attics.

In both scenarios, operatives must:

- Enter quickly but cautiously, using dynamic movement to reduce exposure. (Fun Fact: The Russian Special Forces, Spetsnaz, are given the most immense and aggressive training on how to clear tubular shaped rooms in transportation vehicles with the most dynamic way possible! I'll leave the rest for you to research yourself!)
- Avoid bunching up, which increases vulnerability to attacks from multiple directions.



Positive Corner-Fed Room

In the scenario of corner-feds, the rooms are perspective based, meaning I will call a room a negative corner-fed if I am approaching from the right, and, I will call the same room a Positive corner-fed if I approach from the left. So, a positive corner-fed room is the same room but it provides operatives with more visibility into the room upon entry, (usually the visibility of the wall adjacent to the door). Unlike negative corner-fed rooms, positive setups reduce the number of immediate blind spots, allowing for a clearer view of the room's layout.

In these situations, operatives can:

- **Engage threats more quickly** since the entry point offers better visibility.
- **Use the central positioning** of the door to minimize the need for aggressive angle slicing.
- Focus on sweeping the left and right flanks evenly, rather than dealing with immediate "dead space" near the entry.

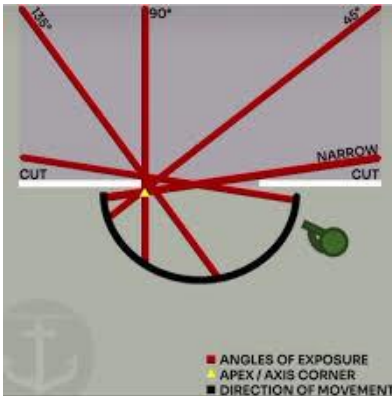
3. Slice-Based Entry

This technique, also known as "slicing the pie" or "pieing," involves a methodical approach to clearing corners or doorways without fully exposing oneself to potential threats. Instead of rushing through, operatives "slice" the corner or doorway into smaller, manageable sections called thresholds or angles.

Steps for slice-based entry:

- Approach the corner at a 90-degree angle.
- As you advance, lean incrementally to reveal small portions of the room at a time.

- Scan each slice before moving on to the next, ensuring no enemies are lurking.



This technique minimizes risk by allowing operatives to clear a space without making themselves vulnerable to direct fire, allowing them to maintain the element of surprise.

4. 30, 60 Degree Thresholds (Angles) Clearance

Clearing a room involves understanding the angles that expose or protect an operative. The 30, 60-degree threshold refers to the degrees of exposure you face when entering a room or a zone.

- **30-degree clearance:** Also called the narrow angle, is often the primary angle into the room which is exposed, when first entering a room. The operative must carefully clear this threshold, offering him little, but some information into the room.
- **60-degree clearance:** This wider angle is used when somewhat of the room has been cleared and the operator needs to sweep larger sections, and he gradually proceeds from the 30 degree to the 60 degree.

By controlling these angles, operatives limit their exposure to enemy fire while ensuring that threats are eliminated.

5. The “60 to 90” Technique

This technique involves quickly transitioning from a 60-degree to a 90-degree angle of coverage, essentially clearing larger sections of a room with a wider field of view. Once the 60-degree zone has been secured, the operator can confidently open up to a 90-degree coverage.

The movement should be:

- **Controlled but swift**, ensuring you’re not caught out of position, one must focus on his footwork a lot at this crucial transition, as we have seen cases of new operators “tripping” during this transition, added to the operational scenario is stress and duress which makes it even more practice demanding.

The 60 to 90 technique is a staple of room-clearing maneuvers in close quarters and is the best way to transition to the end without exposing yourself and minimizing the chance of potential enemy fire.



6. Weak Side Door Opening

When approaching doors in CQC, operatives must often open doors using their "weak" hand (non-dominant hand) to keep their strong hand free to control their weapon. This allows them to engage threats immediately after entry.

Key considerations:

- **Positioning** the body in a way that exposure is minimized. We call doors 'fatal funnels' in the special forces, because one can be easily ambushed during door manipulation from the enemy side and be sent straight to heaven! It is best to take cover behind the wall adjacent to the door and only allow your hand to reach out to the door in order to open it or plant a breach charge in case of dynamic entries.

- **Opening the door swiftly** but in a controlled manner.

Doorways are notorious chokepoints, and handling them with proper technique ensures operatives are not caught off-guard.

7. Stock Manipulation

This refers to the ability to control and adjust a firearm's stock (the rear part of the weapon) to fit the operational needs of the situation. In close-quarter combat, space is often restricted, and full-sized rifles can be cumbersome.

Key points in stock manipulation:

- **Shortening the stock** to reduce the weapon's profile and make it easier to maneuver in tight spaces.
- **Contracting and repositioning the firearm** when necessary to avoid the muzzle getting stuck in objects. This advice especially goes for M4's and guns with longer lengths.

In CQC, the ability to smoothly manipulate your weapon's stock enhances both combat effectiveness and risk mitigation for yourself and your teammates in dynamic situations.



8. Sidearm (Pistol) Manipulation

In urban warfare, operatives frequently need to transition from their primary weapon (usually a rifle) to a sidearm, especially in close-quarters where rifles can become unwieldy, due to their length and weight. Moreover, during reloads if a person is confronted with an enemy, it is always a good option to switch to your sidearm.

Pistol manipulation involves:

- **Quickly drawing the sidearm** when the primary weapon malfunctions or becomes impractical.
- **Reloading in confined spaces**, where movements are limited.
- Mastering the ability to swiftly and smoothly holster and un-holster the sidearm with efficiency while under stress and duress.

A sidearm is often a lifesaving tool in CQC, where split-second transitions between weapons can be the difference between life and death.

9. In-Combat Magazine Reload

Reloading during combat, especially in an urban or confined space, must be done efficiently and swiftly to avoid unnecessary vulnerability. This technique, often referred to as "tactical reload" or "combat reload," ensures that the operator never runs out of ammunition in critical moments.

The process involves:

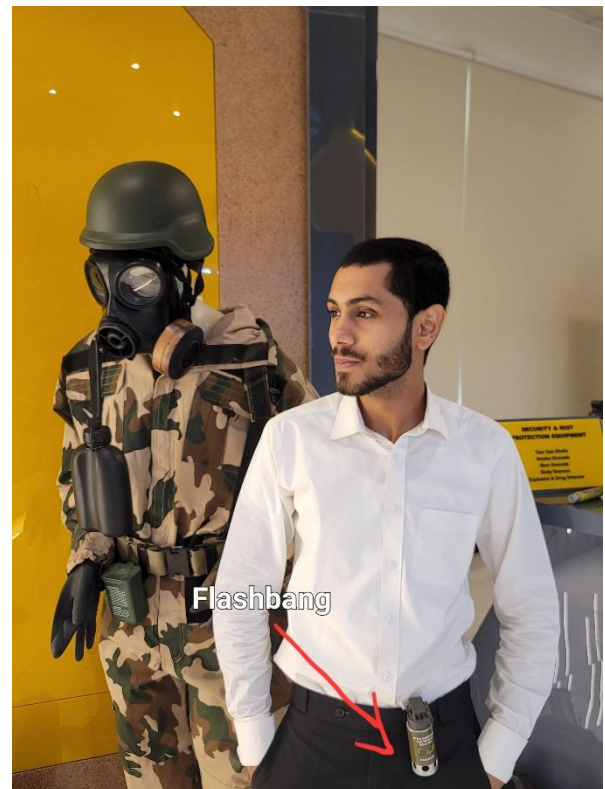
- **Tactical reloads**, where a partially empty magazine is replaced with a full one during a brief lull in the firefight, ensuring the operator is always at maximum capacity.
- **Speed reloads**, when the magazine is entirely empty and must be replaced as fast as possible while still under threat.
- **Retention of magazines**, where possible, to avoid losing valuable ammunition.

Training ensures that the operator performs these reloads instinctively, without needing to look away from the threat.

10. Flashbang and Strobe to Disorientate the Enemy

In urban combat, disorientation tools like flashbangs and strobes are very helpful in surprising and bewildering the enemy. Flashbangs are non-lethal stun grenades which produce a blinding bright flash and deafening sound on exploding, momentarily stunning enemies, they are also simply called stun grenades in some militaries around the world. Strobes on the other hand, are automatic flashing on-off lights which flash at one second time intervals, usually attached to the lower part of the barrel on the gun. They are most usually used in night ops, not only helping the operator disorientate the enemy, but also provide him the ability to engage without revealing his own location in dynamic situations.

Effective use of flashbangs and strobes can drastically reduce the risk to operatives when clearing rooms or buildings in urban warfare.



11. Team Movement in CQB

In CQB you either operate solo (alone) or in a team environment. There will be two terminologies used in identifying the operators, namely, **Wingman** and **Pointman**. The wingman, also called the Team Commander leads the operational team unit throughout the op. He is the center and leading position in the team, and all the other team members are supportive pointmans who rotate their movement around the wingman taking care of left and right flanks, helping the wingman to concentrate to the front. In team movement, it is crucial to neutralize enemy threat and to simultaneously defend your comrades from the enemy threat and from friendly fire. Hence the Special Forces have derived certain formulae and principles to operate in certain environments. Here we will talk about the main two ways used in CQB to carry out operations with a team.

- **The Online Rule:** 'Online' actually derived from the phrase 'one-line' means to position one's self in a single horizontal line, side by side with other operatives. This rule is usually applied it rather wide, more spacier areas. Examples include parkings, mezzanines, halls. With the wingman positioned in the centre of the line and the pointmans beside him on both sides, the team proceeds to move in a single direction while maintaining their positions. The online rule is made as so to integrate clearances of all angles at the same time. Furthermore, when all operatives are in a single line, the risk of friendly fire is

mitigated, for example if operatives were in a disordered formation, a slight movement could result in friendly fire as the teammates are not aware of each other's positions.

- **Muzzle Before Flesh:** The 'Muzzle Before Flesh' technique technically means that the muzzle of the gun should be adjacent and in contact with the teammate's body armor. By keeping the



muzzle in front, an operative reduces the risk of being caught off guard or becoming a target before they are ready to fire. This formula is used in rather constricted environments like hallways, rooms, general residential indoors. The principle enhances survivability and readiness, ensuring the operators can react to danger instantly, rather than reacting after the fact. Now how does this help? For example, the pointman faces enemy fire from the left. Now the natural human instinct to such a loud sound and flash at such a close distance is to flinch a little, no matter how trained you are. Now as his muzzle and right arm is in contact with the wingman, not only is he avoiding friendly fire, but when he is gonna jerk back from the enemy threat on the left, he will take his teammate wingman on his right with him, and the wingman will also be saved from the threat and become aware of the direction it came from.

Conclusion:

Close-quarter urban combat (CQUAC) is an intense and highly specialized field of warfare, requiring operatives to master a diverse set of tactics, techniques, and principles to ensure mission success and personal safety. From the meticulous room-clearing techniques like negative corner-fed and tubular clearances to the essential concepts of muzzle discipline, sidearm manipulation, and disorienting the enemy with flashbangs, each skill is vital in overcoming the challenges of urban warfare. However, I must state the fact that no matter how much you may be trained or educated on CQB, the key to surviving is staying humble and not remain in any sort of delusion. One must always have in mind that

mistakes can be made, lives can be lost, operations can be unsuccessful, but a good Special Forces operator is the one who learns from those mistakes, corrects them, and passes them onto his students and fulfils his duty to the nation not only as a good operator but also as a good instructor. The constant need for awareness, precision, and adaptability underpins every decision made in close-quarters combat. By internalizing these principles, operatives not only increase their tactical effectiveness but also safeguard their teams and improve their chances of mission success in hostile environments. Mastery of these techniques ensures that when the time comes to breach a door or clear a room, every movement is calculated and purposeful.