



FIGURE 8.8 Fine structure of the active zone at a neuromuscular junction. (A) As revealed by electron tomography, synaptic vesicles (silver) are seen docked adjacent to the plasma membrane (white) and associated with the proteins that make up the active zone (gold). (B) Viewed from the cytoplasmic side, the proteins are seen to extend from the vesicles and connect in the center. (C) Schematic rendering of an active zone based on the tomographic analysis. An ordered structure of ribs, pegs, and beams aligns the vesicles and connects them to the plasma membrane and to one another. After Harlow *et al.* (2001) *Nature* 409:479–484.